

COMBAT UNITS

HQ. SQUADRON
548th BOMB SQ.
549th BOMB SQ.
550th BOMB SQ.
551st BOMB SQ.



**10th Reunion
42d Anniversary
1985
Los Angeles**



SUPPORT UNITS

424th AIR SVS. GP.
877th CHEM. CO. (AO)
DET. 155, 18th AWS

"The Mighty Eighth Reunion Group"

385th BOMBARDMENT GROUP MEMORIAL ASSOCIATION

GREAT ASHFIELD - SUFFOLK, ENGLAND
STATION 155

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NEWSLETTER

VOL. XI NO.2 APRIL 1984 EDITOR, VERNE PHILIPS

PREZ 5EZ

I am so pleased to see that Allen Chealander has our 85 Reunion hotel arrangements firmed up, and he has been able to hold the costs down and still get many extras. They sure will help make our L.A. Reunion the best yet.

Robert I. Lojinger and his committee have been working very hard on the Air Force Museum 385th Memorial. The Air Force Museum has accepted our plaque and Robert is working on making arrangements for the dedication to be held this August. We hope that we can have a nice get together there for this event. More on this subject will be forthcoming as soon as plans are firmed up.

*Sincerely
Forrest.*

RECOGNIZE THIS AIR FORCE UNIT EMBLEM??



It is for a unit with a familiar number. Look within to identify
the wolf that became an archer.

SEE PAGE 11 FOR LATEST WORD ON
SEPTEMBER TOUR TO GREAT ASHFIELD!!

APPALLING 6 OCTOBER 1944 ATTACK CONCENTRATED AGAINST 549th SQUADRON



Berlin - 6 October 1944 - a heavy 8th Air Force attack was launched on industrial targets in northern Germany. Over 1200 heavy bombers were dispatched. Over 400 of them from the 3rd Bombardment Division were sent against targets in the Berlin area.

The attack of nearly 75 German fighters was concentrated on the 4th Combat Wing

of the 3rd Bombardment Division and more specifically, against the high squadron of the 385th knocking down all 11 of that squadron. It was the worst day of the war for the 385th and the 549th Bomb Squadron. Some airmen were killed outright, many came down within the city itself as Berlin is, and was, a city spread over an unusually great area for its population.

Some of the 385th airmen fell into the hands of German civilians within minutes of the bombing and were exposed to the bitterness and passions of those who had felt the weight of Allied bombing for months, and whose feelings were heightened by the heavy assault just concluded.

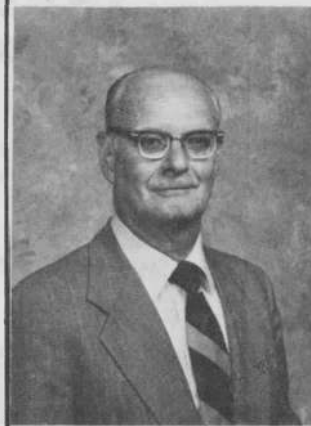
One of the tail gunners of the 549th Bomb Squadron that day was Staff Sergeant Ned H. Mertz. He was reported missing in action and six months later confirmed as killed in action. He left five children, the oldest, a daughter, Barbara. After the death of their mother, these children grew up in an orphanage in Illinois (under sponsorship of the Order of Moose).

In the February issue of Air Force Magazine there appeared a letter from that daughter, now Barbara Varga, living with her own family at 2402 Welsch Drive, New Braunfels, Texas 78130. Many of the 385th saw the letter and responded with calls and letters to Mrs. Varga. While 40 years is a very long time, the memory of a number of those with the 549th in 1944 has been stimulated and searched. But still there must be more information and photographs which can be brought to light and conveyed to a daughter so heavily affected by that afternoon of 6 October 1944. Please send what you have to Mrs. Varga and share it with 385th BGMA Newsletter.

Joseph Gorchak, of San Bernardino, California, who went on that 6 October 1944 mission and who told us at Colorado Springs something of his experiences on that day, has sent a copy of a January, 1980 letter from John Ford relating information he had gathered about the mission. In his note transmitting John Ford's letter he observed that it was six months before his family learned that he was prisoner of war, the same length of time before Sergeant Mertz was confirmed as killed in action.

Gerald Van Loenen of Phillipsburg, Kansas, was a tailgunner who joined the 549th about 10 days after the 6 October raid on Berlin. He has said that he was probably the largest man in the 549th to fly in that cozy, compact compartment Boeing built for the tail gunner. He is communicating with Mrs. Varga to give her a first hand impression of what it was like to fly in the position where her father flew. He also put us in touch with Arthur "Whitey" Wallace of Cadiz, Kentucky, another tailgunner of the 549th. Whitey was injured at Koblenz on 19 September 1944 and did not fly to Berlin on 6 October. He has written a letter (set out below) telling of his recollection of Sergeant Mertz and that era.

One of the first to contact Mrs. Varga in response to her letter in Air Force Magazine was Rayburn G. Pyle, Jr., 385th weather officer. He sent a copy of his letter to us and we have included his message below. Please note his statement of his confidence that she will be in touch with her father's fellow crew members that survived and soon. Surely, everyone from that larger crew, the 549th Bomb Squadron, who knew Sergeant Mertz will want to be in touch with his daughter.



R. G. PYLE, JR.

Ft. G. Pyle's Letter:

Dear Ms. Varga,

Your inquiry in Air Mail as presented in the Air Force Assn. Magazine really touched me! I was Staff Weather Officer with the 385th Bombardment Group (H), joined the group at Great Falls, MT, in April 1943, continued working with the crews and went to Great Ashfield in East Anglia with the group in July, 1943. It was my pleasure and my duty to provide weather briefings for the bombing operations over the continent—till I moved to Third Bomb Division in November, 1943, to help make the forecasts that the groups were to use in the missions. However, I kept in touch with and visited the 385th during the rest of my time in England—still regularly write and talk with three of the officers I lived with in the quonset hut at Great Ashfield, as well as some of my weather buddies in England too. These contacts and visits are still a good part of my life -- all the way from Torrance, CA. to Long Island City, NY, and Miami Springs, FL.

I thought I might help get you in touch with former members of the 385th, and more specially the 549th. So I have talked with the former editor of the quarterly newsletter in Billings, MT. (he has a copy of the Hi story of the 385th Bomb Group, hard copy, that he will send to you when he reads the article in his AFA magazine -- I told him any cost was to be mine). Then I talked with Mr. Archie V. Benner, 1710 Brandenburg, San Antonio, Texas 78232 (home phone 512-494-6980) -- he read his magazine which he too received today, and thought he should ask the former Squadron Adjutant, Frank Marano, 63 Club Road, Upper Montclair, NJ 07043, if he can help identify former crew members your father served with. Mr. Benner, then a Captain, left the Squadron in November, 1944; so Mr. Marano (a Lt. when I knew him) likely can get some closer names and addresses for you.

You might write to the Newsletter Editor, Mr. Verne D. J. Philips, P.O. Box 5970, Austin, TX 78763 — tell him just what you told AFA Magazine. In order to have access to the Newsletter which they issue quarterly, you may wish to join as an Associate Member, I believe the annual cost is \$5.00. If so, you would want to write to Mr. John F. Pettenger, Treasurer, 385th Bomb Group Reunion Assn., P.O. Box 117, Laurel, FL 33545. I also talked with him tonight to learn if there were copies of the hard back history available. (He is the official name for always getting in touch with the Assn.)

I am sending copies of this to Mr. Paul Schulz in Billings who has the copy of the history to send you, and to Mr. Benner, and Mr. Pettenger. We all hope you the very best results in your search for any, anything, you can learn of your father. We wish we could tell you more — but I believe you will be in touch with his fellow crew members that survived — and I surely hope, soon!!!

Rayburn G. Pyle, Jr.

continued . . . 10

THE 385th AS AN ATLAS MISSILE UNIT

The Wolf Became An Archer

The wolf that became the archer was the 551st Bombardment Squadron. On 28 August 1945 the 385th Bombardment Group (H) was inactivated, but that was not the end. The policy of the Air Force "has been to use units with prior records of service, and particularly those with the longest and best wartime records," according to Maurer Maurer, editor, Combat Squadrons of the Air Force, World War II, a 1969 publication of the USAF Historical Division. The 385th was reborn in 1962 as the 385th Strategic Aerospace Wing according to information from John T. Bohn, Strategic Air Command Historian.

The new 385th inherited the lineage and honors of the bomb group in which we served in World War II. "The 385 SAW was active at Offutt from 1 January 1963 to 15 December 1964. Its tactical squadrons were the 34th Air Refueling Squadron, which flew KC-135 Airborne Command Post aircraft, and the 549th Strategic Missile Squadron, an Atlas D ICBM unit." The 548th, 550th, and 551st Bomb Squadrons of World War II were reborn also, but in other wings.

All four squadrons had emblems which reflected their functions in the 1960's rather than those emblems which we recall from World War II days. The 551st people will think that we used the emblem of that squadron on the front page of this newsletter because they are superior folks or because Forrest Poore, our president, served in that unit. It is also barely possible that the emblem of the later 551st reproduced much better in black and white for our newsletter than the rather complicated, multi-color emblems of the other three squadrons.

In addition to having more complicated squadron emblems, the later squadrons had more complicated weaponry. According to John Bohn's letter the four World War II squadrons of the 385th fared as follows:

- 548 SMS - Atlas Es - activated at Forbes - 1 Jul 60 - assigned 21 SAD; 1 Jan 64 - reassigned to 40 Bomb Wing (which became a Strat Aerospace Wing on 1 Feb 64); 1 Sep 64 - reassigned to 55th Strat Recon Wing; 25 Mar 65 - inactivated.
- 549 SMS - Atlas E - activated at F. E. Warren - 1 Oct 60 - assigned 706 SMW; 1 Jul 61 - 549th designator transferred to an Atlas D Squadron at Offutt under the 4321st Strat Wg; 1 Jan 63 - reassigned to 385 SAW; 15 Dec 64 - inactivated.
- 550 SMS - Atlas F - activated at Schilling - 1 Apr 61 - assigned to 310 SAW; 25 Jun 65 - inactivated.
- 551 SMS - Atlas F - activated at Lincoln - 1 Apr 61 - assigned to 818 SAD; 1 Jan 64 - reassigned to 98 BW (which became 98 SAW on 1 Feb 64); 25 Jun 65 - inactivated.

John Bohn also furnished us with a copy of the summary of the history of the 385th for 1964, the last year of its later period. It is set out below to show a bit more detail about its functions.

The twofold mission of the 385th Strategic Aerospace Wing continued to remain unchanged throughout 1964 with primary emphasis being directed towards providing air refueling support for Second Air Force, and other Strategic Air Command units as well as maintaining a constant state of alertness and readiness in the Post Attack Command and Control (PACCS) system and surface-to-surface ballistic missile operations. The 34th Air Refueling Squadron, which on numerous

occasions has proven its superior combat readiness, successfully carried out and participated in many vital operational missions requiring the use of refueling tanker support to bombers and fighters anywhere in the world. Through constant training and improvement of operational techniques, the maintenance of an instantaneous ground alert posture, and implementation of other mission requirements, the unit progressed steadily, but surely, in carrying out the assigned tasks and commitments it had to perform.

The 549th Strategic Missile Squadron, with its assigned Atlas "D" missiles, progressed throughout the year successfully with a missile alert posture of instantaneous response to any emergency situation which might necessitate the employment of the surface-to-surface ballistic missile concept. Through constant training, test launches, and practice exercises for missile operational reliability and effectiveness, the unit continued to provide the command with the most effective weapon system possible.

However, as of 15 December 1964, the 385th officially folded up, thereby giving up its mission requirements due to its subsequent deactivation. During this deactivation program the 549th was entirely dissolved as the Atlas "D" missiles assigned to it were dismantled and sent to the San Bernardino Air Material Area (SBAMA) in accordance with the overall Atlas "D" missile phaseout throughout the Strategic Air Command. On the other hand, the 34th was to continue in its initial mission of refueling and airborne command post operations at Offutt under its designated reassignment posture in the 818th Strategic Air Division at Lincoln Air Force Base, Nebraska.

Looking back over the year 1964 the 385th Strategic Aerospace Wing could very well say with pride and dignity that it had completed its assigned tasks, commitments, and responsibilities with much progress and prosperity. Conclusively, this progress and prosperity could readily be applied to the 385th overall for the services rendered as a tenant unit during its more than four years of continuous operations at Offutt.

Squadron Emblems of the 1960s

These emblems and the description of them are reproduced from a 1969 publication of the Dept. of the Air Force, edited by MAURER MAURER and entitled, "Combat Squadrons of the Air Force, World War II."



549th

EMBLEM. On a rectangular area arched in chief and base, per pale dark blue spattered with white stars and Air Force blue, the top of a silver-gray globe issuing from base, grid lines dark blue; all surmounted by a white missile palewise pointing upward shaded silver-gray, emitting an Air Force golden yellow blast-off vapor cloud to base, edged white, surmounting the vapor cloud an armored hand, dark blue, high-lighted white and shaded silver-gray, grasping -three white lightning streaks edged red; encircling the missile a white stylized olive wreath. *Motto:* On a white scroll edged red, GUARDIAN OF PEACE, inscribed dark blue. (Approved 2 Mar 1962.)



548th

EMBLEM. On an Air Force blue disc edged Air Force golden yellow, within a wide white border, a green olive branch originating in dexter base arched to sinister surmounted by a stylized white missile in bendwise upward flight, its nose invading the border, emitting three red lightning flashes radiant, from its tail into the border; all between in chief a planet and a crescent moon and in dexter an Air Force golden yellow sun. (Approved 16 Apr 1962.)

EMDEN — 11 DECEMBER 1943

Another Chapter

In our last issue we presented information about the mission of 11 December 1943 to Emden. Bill Nicholls told us of his contacts with Klaas Niemeijer of the Netherlands and information received through him. Ed Pollock, * pilot of a 548th crew shot down on the same mission, wrote giving additional information including a letter, a map and a photograph from the same Klaas Niemeijer.

In Ed's letter to Niemeijer of September 26, 1977 Ed speculated that the F-51's did not go out on 11 December as our people had been briefed to expect. Roger Freeman, in his Mighty Eighth War Diary in his account of that day's activities, shows that 44 P-51 aircraft were dispatched, along with 31 P-38 and 313 P-47 aircraft. One P-51 and three P-47 aircraft were lost. The number of P-51's was a relatively small part of force therefore and probably were not readily observed by 385th crews.

We have reproduced these letters, the photograph of Sgt. Husband's gravestone, and Klaas Niemeijer's map of the area. Leens is northwest of Groningen, very near the location of the crash of 42-30816. This additional information tells still more about the drama of 11 December 1943.

— Ed.

* Edwin F. Pollock
1 Wheat Lane
Darien, Connecticut 06820

(Edwin Pollock's letter to Klaas Niemeijer)

September 26, 1977

Thank you for your letter of September 20 concerning the December 11, 1943 mission to Emden. It brought back many memories and gave me some information I never knew.

I believe the easiest way to reply is to go through your letter from start to finish. As for crew positions, there are some corrections:

Navigator - M. G. Alexander
Bombardier - Max Weinstein
Radio Operation - M. Schwartz
Co-Pilot - M. A. Raim

(Incidentally, M. Schwartz was not the original radio operator of my crew, and was flying with me for the first time. My operator had been a man named Schaatz, who was the best with radios. He was so good, he was immediately assigned to a lead crew and was lost on the Bremen raid of November 26. As you might guess, he was of German descent and was grounded by the Military Intelligence for several weeks while we were training in Texas. He falsified his age so he could get to combat, and left a large family.)

Ball Turret Gunner - W. M. Husband
Left Waist Gunner - F. M. Harwell
Tail Gunner - J. LaVia
Top Turret - H. M. Baber
R. Waist - H. G. Hall

I believe you have the correct number for our aircraft, and on December 11, 1943, we were flying number 6 in the low squadron - also known as "Purple Heart Corner." The only ones not hit or killed were the co-pilot, bombardier and myself. I had a piece of flak or shrapnel go through my sleeve.

Over the target we took a solid hit from anti-aircraft just as we dropped our bombs. The leading edge of the right wing curled up, acting as a dive brake. We immediately went from about 160 indicated to 130. The number 4 and 3 engines were knocked out and one of them was on fire. Number 1 and 2 still functioned. We were forced to try to make cloud cover, what little there was, but a flight of six or so ME 109's lined up on our left and started coming in. The top turret got two and the left waist gunner got one. We must have had some come at us from the top rear as well, because I remember tracers or incendiaries going through the wing, leaving quite a trail of flame. If we had been at lower altitude, I believe we would have blown up. About this time the controls were

shot out, a fire had started in the radio compartment, and we were in a moderate dive. Since we could no longer control the ship we had to get out. I made a free fall until close to the ground, and was taken in by the underground. I was taken to a school to spend the time until dark (it was a Saturday - no classes), then I was taken by bicycle to a farm. My co-pilot had to hide in a canal under a bridge until dark - he just missed a church steeple coming down. The bombardier was also taken in by the Resistance. The other men, who were wounded, ended up in hospitals, I understand.

Milo Raim (co-pilot) and I were reunited and spent most of our time in Drachten. Tiny Mulder of that town took care of us and other allied fliers. We stayed mostly at her house. We thought we would be back in England by Christmas, but the route through Belgium was not working. After several months, things got hot around Drachten and we were forced to go South to Workum (?) where we stayed with a young Dutch family. Toward the end of May in 1944, we were given the chance to try the escape route, but were captured in Antwerp. We were unlucky enough to be on a tram when the Police were inspecting work papers (again a Saturday afternoon) and our papers were for a plant that had been destroyed. In any event we learned later these Belgians were turning the flyers in. We stayed in civilian prison in Antwerp until after D-Day - June 6 - when the Gestapo turned us over to the Luftwaffe. Altogether there were several hundred. We finally ended at Stalag Luft III in Sagan, going from there to Mooseberg (above Munich) on the so-called "death march" in late January, 1945. We were liberated April 28 or 29 by the 14th Armored Division.

Now to go back to the Emden mission. We had been told that F-51's would be on this to provide cover, but we never saw any. We were late over the target, and they could have left or not gone out: I believe we could have made it with fighter cover. I have a photo of my crew, but only one. If possible, I will try to have it copied.

My father was with Cooper-Bessemer Corporation and was in charge of all their foreign business. As soon as the war was over, he went to Europe. He visited Tiny Mulder in Drachten, saw some of the places I stayed, and gave Tiny's mother a jeep ride. (He had been driven up from Brussels by the American military who knew all about Tiny.) I can't say too much for the bravery of the Dutch resistance. It was tragic that so many were killed. Incidentally, Tiny came over here in 1947, and we entertained her in Pennsylvania, where I originally lived, and in New York.

I do not have a Missing Air Crew Report from my ship. This plane, incidentally, was not mine. I was a relatively new crew, Emden being my third mission, and I had not yet gotten a permanent ship. I went on active duty in the USAAF in August 1942 and got my pilot's wings in March, 1943. I then went to the Second Air Force and trained in B-17's in California and Texas, flying overseas in October, 1943.

The 385th Bomb Group had a great record. Mr. John C. Ford, 7204 Easy Street, Camp Springs, Maryland, is active in the Group's history and records. You might wish to write him.

Again, I wish to thank you for your letter. Please let me know if I can be of any further help.

P.S. You will be interested in the fact that planes from the 385th were the last American aircraft to be damaged by enemy action in the European theatre. Several were shot up by ground fire while dropping food and supplies to civilians in The Netherlands just prior to the war's end.

Tiny Mulder is now Mrs. Jildert Sudema, Noardbuieren 21, 9026 BN Jellum, Netherlands.

Edwin F. Pollock

Continued.....

Continued

(Klaas Niemeijer's letter to Edwin Pollock)

December 5, 1977

On November 12, 1977, I visited the U. S. Military cemetery at Margraten, County of Limburg, South-eastern region of the Netherlands. Among the many graves of U.S. personnel, who were killed during WWII, there was the grave of Wilfred M. Husband, who belonged to your crew. Although it was a very dark and raining weather, I was able to take a photograph of his grave, which I send you. I understood that the body of Sgt. H. G. Hall after the war was returned to the United States. It was a very long journey to Margraten, about 4 1/2 hours by train. It is located roughly 200 miles from my living place.

Also with this letter goes a drawing which depicts the place, where your bomber came down, the place where you landed and places where German fighters came down. There is a great possibility that two ME 109's were shot down by fire from your ship. One ME 109 pilot was killed, the other could bail out. A ME 110 made a belly-landing in the same area. The engines of that aircraft were hit by bursts. I hope you are interested in the photograph and the map. On the map there are further other places drawn where aircraft came down on December 11, 1943.

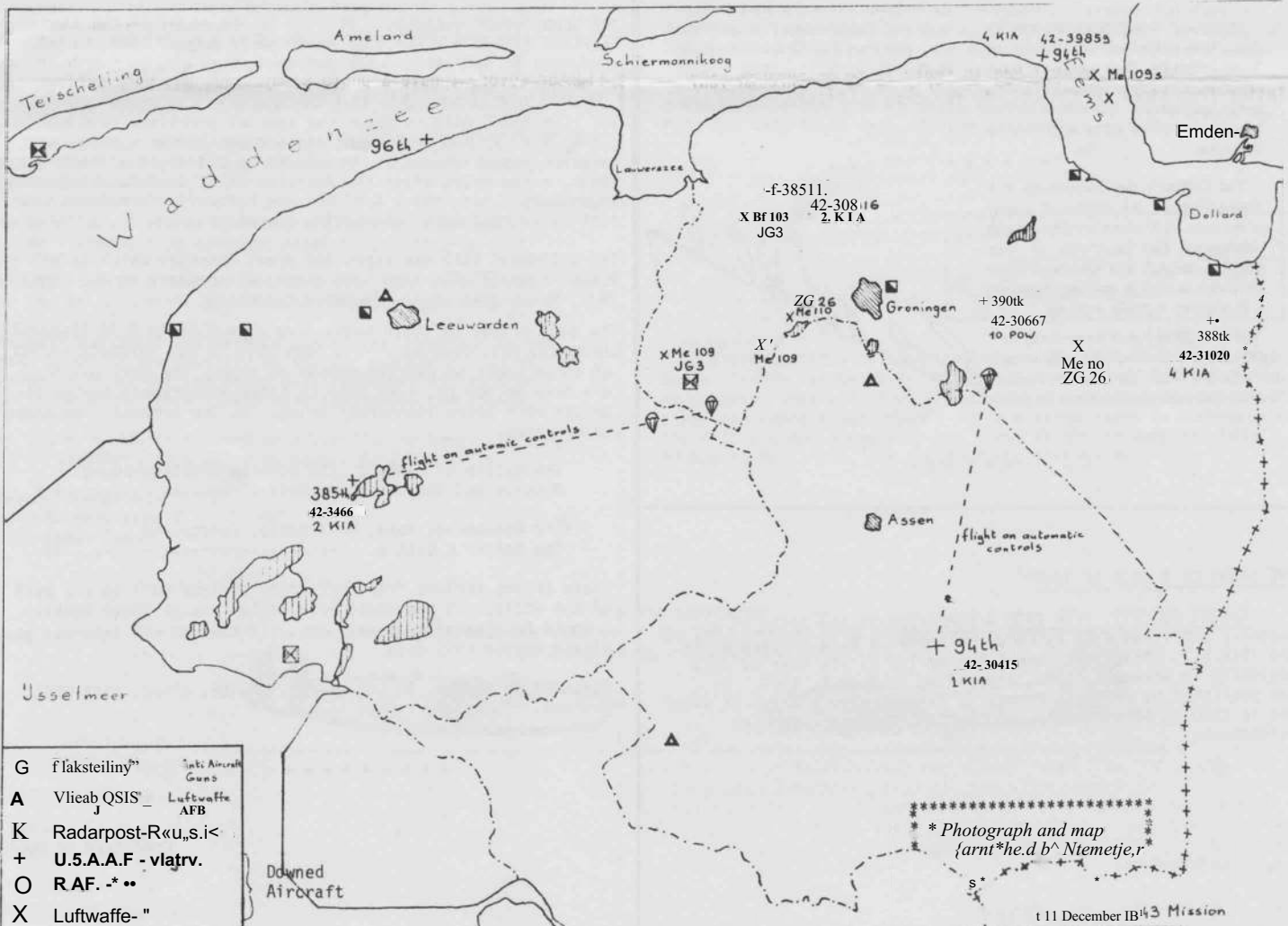
Did you receive my letter of October 20, 1977. Again, I do not hope that the letter of that date caused some frustration But I was angry after I had read that article in a newspaper.

Hoping to hear from you in the future and to make a copy of the crew picture or to receive the original in loan, I remain



Gnavuto M. Sgt. Wilfred M. Husband,
U.S. Military Cemetery at Margraten.

K. Niemeijer



t 11 December IB43 Mission

k FEW WORDS ABOUT MANY WORDS AND PICTURES

Thousands of people flew in combat in World War II, hundreds and thousands prepared and supported such flights, and millions of people were affected by these flights, not to mention that multitude coming along in later years who have become fascinated by those days and events. Not everyone of those enumerated has written a book on the subject, but the number seems to be constantly growing, furnishing many interesting hours of reading.

FRED IHLENBURG'S THE LETTER. The 385th BGMA PX makes available a novel, The Letter, written by Fred Ihlenburg, who flew with the 385th. It is the story of a B-17 crew based at Great Ashfield, how they lived and fought. And Fred threw in just enough gir 1 chasing to make the story believable. At \$5.95 the price i s right.

THE LETTER

by

Frederick H. Ihlenburg

In the early 1940s a new concept of warfare was tested in Europe. The Luftwaffe was being defeated in the skies. Now began a siege of strategic bombing, precision daylight bombing, of the powerfully defended industrial might of Germany.

In a setting of unparalleled heroism and savagery THE LETTER blasts out its blazing story.

Millions of words, both fact and fiction, have celebrated the flyboys of World War II. Their lives, to many novelists, were gay adventures of battle, bottle, and boudoir. The author of THE LETTER has added a new dimension to the scene.

Ted Collins is the Commander of a Flying Fortress; the skipper of a crew of ten men, all of whom are devoted and courageous. His knowledge of their physical, mental, and emotional characteristics is vital in molding them into a frictionless fighting machine.

Ted is no starry-eyed come-lately to flying. He is a married man who loves his wife and child. He loves his country. He thoroughly understands his job.

Yet he is human and vulnerable. Under the all-but-impossible strains and tensions of the seemingly endless missions he, too, must have some relaxation if he is not to crack up. The intimate revelation of his personal nature, and his close association with his crew, is the engrossing story told here.

Again and again, Frederick Ihlenburg proves himself a master in making the holocaust of aerial combat convincingly real. *Published by Vantage Press, Inc., 120 West 31st Street, New York, N. Y. 10001*



THE STORY OF A 15TH AF TOUR

TARGET PLOESTI, VIEW FROM A BOMBSIGHT is the title of a recently published book by Leroy W. Newby, a B-24 bombardier in the 15th A.F. His story covers the period of his tour of duty beginning in November, 1943, and ending in August, 1944. It was published by Presidio Press, 31 Pamaron Way, Novato CA 94947 and is said to be available from B. Dalton, Bookseller and Waldenbooks.

PRESTON PIPER ON MARTIN MIDDLEBROOK. Preston Piper has written from Pebble Beach, CA to report in and tell us about books written by Martin Middlebrook concerning the air battles in Europe in World War II. He also sent along information from Middlebrook describing the books and telling how to order them.

From Preston's letter:

"I have enclosed a copy of the information I received from Martin Middlebrook when I received my copy of his new book THE SCHWEINFURT REGENSBURG MISSION last week. I believe there are other members of the 385th that would like a copy of this book if they participated in the mission. They would, I believe, enjoy reading it even if they did not participate! It may be that many of them are not or were not aware of the fact that Martin had written a book about this mission and my thought was that a note in the 385th BGMA News about the book and how to obtain a copy would be in order.

I have read about half the book and find it very, very interesting, as well as informative. Since the narrative includes so much from the German side as well as our own it makes for a much more interesting account of what happened. I know that when Martin stayed here with me and showed me all the maps he had with all of the other research material that he had obtained I was certain that the end result would be outstanding."

ENCLOSURE FROM MARTIN MIDDLEBROOK.

AVIATION. THE BATTLE OF HAMBURG describes the series of air raids carried out by R.A.F. Bomber Command and by the U.S.A.A.F. against Hamburg in July-August, 1943. The book describes such events as the introduction of Window and the Firestorm and also provides an interesting comparison between the tactical methods used by the two Air Forces.

THE SCHWEINFURT-REGENSBURG MISSION is the story of the famous American Eighth Air Force attempt, on 17 August 1943, to push formation of B-17 Flying Fortresses through the German defenses. 60 B-17's were lost.

THE PEENEMUNDE RAID is about the special precision raid carried out by R.A. F. Bomber Command against the German rocket research establishment at Peenemunde on the night of 17/18 August 1943 - a few hours after the American raids to Schweinfurt and Regensburg. Both the R.A.F. and the Luftwaffe introduced new tactics in this most interesting operation.

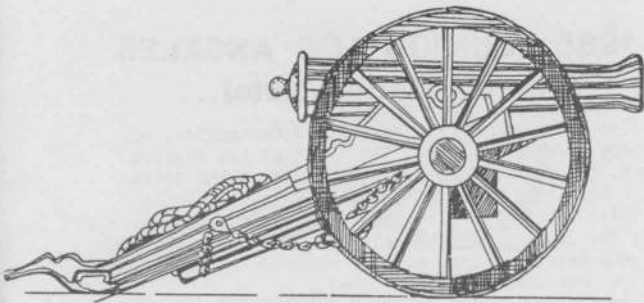
THE NUREMBERG RAID describes the great disaster which befell R.A.F. Bomber Command when they lost ninety-six bombers on the night of 30/31 March 1944 while attacking Nuremberg.

The shop prices of these books vary from 7.50 to 9.95 (English currency) but, because I have been able to buy hardback copies of these books at special prices to supply the many people who have helped me, I am able to offer autographed copies at prices well below the normal price. At the present time these prices are:

The Battle of Hamburg, The Schweinfurt-Regensburg Mission and The Nuremberg Raid	\$13.
The Peenemunde Raid, Battleship, Convoy and The Kaiser's Battle	\$9.

These prices include free postage by surface mail to any part of the world. If you would like to buy any of these books, I would be pleased to supply you. If they do not interest you, please excuse this note.

Martin Middlebrook, 48 Linden Way, BOSTON, Lincs, PE21 9DS, England.



That X- rated Tail

1517 Capitol Way #605
Olympia WA 98501
February 26, 1984

To The Editor:

Look Out Square-G'ers, something is gaining on us!

It's '01 Doodle Bug, A/C338625, a B-17-G Silversides with an X-rated tail.

O.D.B. was pictured in Roger Freeman's "The Mighty Eighth," where all 1st and 3rd Division insignia were described -- square tail markings for the 3rd Division groups, and triangle background markings for the 1st Division, of course.

All except the listing for the 385th Bomb. Group. There was O.D.B. with a red checkerboard tail with the small x near the top of the horizontal stabilizer. The only group marking that wasn't a square or a triangle, the B-24's of the 2nd Division having a circle.

The 8th AFHS, in announcing its symposium on B-17's and B-24's last fall, showed the two heavy bombers nose-to-nose. You guessed it, '01 Doodle Bug was the B-17. (See below.)

Wandered through a five-and-ten cent store last fall. There on the shelf was a 1/72 scale model of a B-17-G. Again, your guess was right, O.D.B.

The model was produced by Minicraft Models of Torrance, CA "under lincense from Hasegawa Model Co., Yaizu, Japan."

There's a switch! Wonder who is getting the license fees for the use of '01 Doodle Bug: The 8th AFHS., Roger Freeman?

Perhaps, the 385th was singled out for new markings to get ready to go to the Pacific, as the air war was ending in Europe. If so, the checkered tail certainly has been well publicized. In fact, it may have supplanted the Square-G.

The O.D.B. model is sitting on a shelf in my home. If I ever put it together, it's going to have a Square-G on it.

John A. Richardson
Radio Gunner, Crew 7
548th Bomb. Sqdn.

Short Bursts

548th GROUND CREW MINI-REUNION

Anthony Ragone, 6 Wood Lane, Valley Stream, N.Y. 11581 asked that we tell you "of a mini-reunion of the 548th Maintenance Section which will be held in Nashville, Tennessee the weekend of the 21st of September, 1984. Those of the 548th Ground.Crew wishing to attend can contact MARTY GIBSON, 151 Gilmore Drive, Pittsburgh, PA 15235."

B-77 COMBAT CREWMEN AND WINGMEN

The B-17 Combat Crewmen and Wingmen was organized "to preserve and perpetuate the memory of the B-17 Flying Fortress high altitude bomber and the heroic men who flew, serviced, or contributed in some manner to the epic role the Flying Fortress played in bringing World War II to a final conclusion." It is recommended to us by one of our members, Clarence Abrahamson, 6431 Menlo Street, Santa Susana, California 93063. He tells us the dues are \$10.00 a year. A newsletter is published eleven times a year. Frequent meetings are held in the South Gate, California area. For more information please writeGTarence Abrahamson at his address given above or direct to^B-UCC & W, P.O. Box 482, South Gate, California 90280.

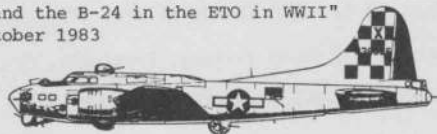
B-17 BIRTHDAY PARTY



Clarence has also sent word about the 50th Birthday Party being planned for the B-17 in Seattle 26-28 July 1985. Further, he suggests that all of us write our U.S. Senators and Representatives and express our support for a postage stamp to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of the first flight on July 28, 1935 of Boeing Model 299, the first of the Fortresses.

AIR-WAR SYMPOSIUM

"Characteristics and Limitations of the B-17 and the B-24 in the ETO in WWII"
Houston, Texas -- 15 October 1983



385th BGMA PX

ADDRESS ALL ORDERS TO: 385th BGMA PX
2049 Phoebe Dr.
Billings, MT 59105

Make all checks payable to 385th BGMA-PX. Allow 4-6 weeks for delivery. Prices include postage and handling.

THE LETTER, author Frederick H. Ihlenburg. Hard cover, novel. A story of a B-17 crew based at Great Ashfield, how they lived and fought..... \$5.95

PENNSYLVANIA DUTCH GOURMET COOKBOOK. Paper cover. Authors Laverne and Shirley Rohrbaugh. Contains 333 recipes of the Pennsylvania Dutch (German) origin. \$5.00

SQUADRON TEE SHIRTS

Men's.....	S-M-L-XL	\$6.75
Women's	S-M-L-XL	7.75
Squadron Sweat Shirts	S-M-L-XL	7.75
Childrens' T-Shirts	S-M-L-XL	5.25
Golf Shirts.....	S-M-L-XL	9.00

(Please state size and squadron desired on shirts)

BELT BUCKLES. 8th Air Force insignia with 385th Bomb. Group (H) identification. Hand crafted, hand cast, hand polished, solid golden bronze..... \$21.00

40TH ANNIVERSARY, 9TH REUNION SOUVENIR PACKAGE. A 40th anniversary lapel pin and 9th reunion paper cover book - a complete reprint of newsletters from July, 1981 through April, 1983. Includes brief summary of the 385th history and a brief account of the career achievements of Colonel Vandevanter and Colonel Jumper, plus a copy of the 385th BGMA memorial plaque which was dedicated at the USAF Academy on June 4, 1983, plus two 385th BGMA decals.....\$5.50/ea
40th Anniversary pin 3.75/ea
385th BGMA decals..... 75/ea
9th Reunion book, soft cover 2.00/ea

B-17 Lapel/Hat/Tie Tacks, 1 3/4 inch jewelers pewter. 3 dimensional.....	\$6.95
Pilot, Senior Pilot, Command Pilot Wings, jewelers pewter, 1 1/2 inchs long.....	6.95
Navigator Wings, jewelers pewter, 1 1/2 inches long. .	6.95
Bombardier Wings, jewelers pewter, 1 1/2 inches. . . .	6.95
Gunners Wings, jewelers pewter, 1 1/2 inches	6.95
Aircrew wings. Senior aircrew. Master aircrew 1 1/2 inches long.....	6.95



ANDERSON, Wendall, P.O. Box 341, Northwood, N.H. 03261

CRANDELL, Lewis, Box 74, North Norwich, NY 13814

HAMILTON, Herbert O., 3801 Castle Circle, Lincoln, NE 68524

PEACOCK, Ralph, 1534 Texas Parkway, Crestview, FL 32548

VANCE, Thomas, 7513 Radnor Rd., Bethesda, MD 20817

WINGFIELD, Ben, 2706 Eton Rd. .Charlottesville, VA 22903

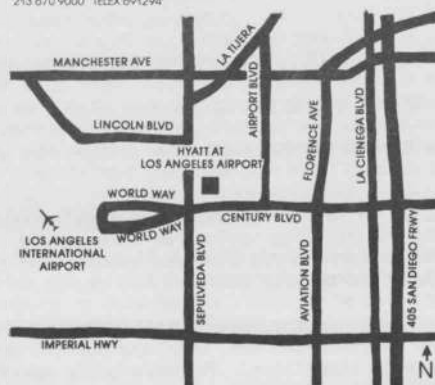
1985 REUNION-LOS ANGELES

A word about the hotel...

Allan Chealander, our West Coast Connection, has sent some information about the Hyatt at Los Angeles Airport, the site of the next gathering of the 385th from 11 September through 14 September next year in 1985. His first report on the 1985 Reunion plans was set out in the January, 1984 Newsletter. As more detailed plans are developed they will be reported to you. Shown below is some word about the hotel.

HYATTQAT LOS ANGELES AIRPORT

6225 WEST CENTURY BOULEVARD
LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA 90045 USA
213 670 9000 TELEX 691294



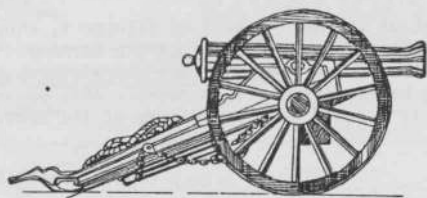
Hyatt at Los Angeles Airport is located right next to the Los Angeles International Airport. Four 12-passenger courtesy cars are on call: courtesy phone at terminal. Just 30 minutes (25 miles) from Union Railroad Station, and 20 minutes from business district. Hollywood, Disneyland, Knotts Berry Farm and other attractions are within easy driving distance.

Upon your arrival at Los Angeles International Airport, a Hyatt courtesy car whisks you into a world apart. Towering palms line the drive, greenery fills the lobby, and throughout is an air of a truly international hotel. In a modern 14-story structure, the Hyatt at Los Angeles Airport's 601 rooms and 19 suites welcome the traveler. Relax in beautifully furnished soundproof rooms with individual comfort controls. Everywhere you find that special "Touch of Hyatt" - living plants, fragrant soaps, an AM/FM clock radio, and a mint on your pillow at bedtime. And for a special touch of luxury ask for a room equipped with a wet bar.

A staff fluent in French, German, Spanish, and Italian, and a concierge to answer your every need, from dinner reservations to travel scheduling, serve travelers from all over the globe

Soak up the California sunshine in the sparkling pool or just relax with a drink on the deck. A brisk workout at the Vita Course Track on the hotel premises awakens an appetite for a snack or a full-course meal at Mrs. Candy's Coffee Garden. For succulent roast duck, prime rib, and seafood specialties, head for T.J. Peppercorn's where you'll also find fine spirits and nightly entertainment. At the Park at the Top enjoy cocktails and entertainment, and watch the world go by.

For business, the facilities at Hyatt at Los Angeles Airport are equally suited for small seminars, large corporate meetings and major conventions. In the Hyatt tradition, a professional staff of meeting specialists assures you of a smooth, efficiently run function.



A PLEA FOR 1944 INFORMATION FROM OUR "BRAVE AND TRUSTY" FRIEND
IAN MCLACHLAN



"Tasdale"
1 Joy Avenue,
Newton Flotman,
Norwich
Norfolk NR15 1RD

9 February 1984

Editor -

One last point you may be able to help me with. I'm still working on a book which features a chapter describing the loss of Captain Hutchison and Lt. Pease on 21st February, 1944. Despite the fact that I've researched this incident for 20 years, I still don't have photographs of either of their ships, nor do I know their tail letters. The serials were 42-31370 and 42-37963. If anyone has pictures of these planes or their crews, they'd make a very patient researcher very, very happy. I'll keep my fingers crossed.

All the best,
Ian McLachlan

LOOKING FOR FORTRESS PHOTOS

Dear Sir,

I am fortunate enough to receive a copy of your newsletter from a Mr. Reg Parnell, who is a member of your society and as I am also addicted to the cause I wonder if you know where I could obtain photographs of any B-17's or films.

We have a good aviation photo club at our airport.* As you know, Stansted was a B-26 base during the war and I have memories of the missions which flew from Stansted, not forgetting the B-17 bases in this part of the world. We are all dedicated to the cause of keeping the spirit alive.

If you get this, which I sincerely hope you do, I would be very honoured if you could help.

*Stansted Airport,
London - Essex

P. Pallett
58 Stortford Hall Park
Bishops Stortford
Herts England
CM 235 AN

Squadron Emblems continued

550th



EMBLEM. On an irregular octagon, Air Force golden yellow, an Air Force blue isosceles triangle, one point up, spattered with twelve white stars and charged with a white cloud formation, details Air Force blue; issuing from the cloud and flying respectively to the three angles of the triangle, three white missiles, exhaust red and white; all surmounted by three electrons in orbit, red and white; on the Air Force golden yellow area, a green olive branch in dexter and a red lightning bolt in sinister. (Approved 12 Sep 1962.)

continued—

A COUPLE OF RESPONSES TO HOMER GROENING

TO THE EDITOR:

Your newsletter. Vol. X, #5, January, 1984, arrived last week and contained a short "blurp" from Homer Groening, titled "Short Bursts" -

It is coincidental that my first issue has an article by my pilot from WWII. I was his radioman and have some information on most of our missions, if not all the missions.

My name then was T/Sgt. Edmund Fred Slomowicz. Since the war ended I changed my name, for convenience, to Fred E. Sloane.

I would like to have Homer Groening's address so that I could contact him and pass on the information.

You can inform Homer that we had other missions at 11,000 and 12,000 feet, other than the supply run to the free French people that he mentioned.

Frederick E. Sloane
760 Cayuga Creek Road
Buffalo, N.Y. 14227

TO THE EDITOR:

In the January 'Short Bursts'... Homer Groening asks for someone that was on the Paris Mission which he dates 2 Aug. 44. I flew with the 548th.

I was on a mission to Paris on 22 June 44....perhaps that is the same one. I flew with Serafin's crew as a Bombardier and remember that mission well because I got hit over the eye by some powdered glass caused by a near burst. I was more scared than hurt. I landed over backwards in Pritchard's (Navigator) lap in a daze and the first thing I saw was his big startled green eyes peering anxiously at me through his goggles; his oxygen mask and trailing tube made him look like some creature from another planet. The flak that day seemed to be extremely close and vicious. We hit a refinery at the tip of an island in the Seine.

Maybe this was the same mission you referred to.

While I'm at it, does anyone recall a Bombardier named Bill Johnson, who flew with Jimmy Stewart's outfit? Heard he was the group Bombardier and that he went down on the Gotha raid. Would like to get some info about him. We were in class 43-2 Midland.

recall a Bombardier named Stewart's outfit? Heard he he went down on the Gotha about him. We were in

Dorn Jordan
Box 496
Ft. Myers, Fla. 33905

551st



EMBLEM. On a sky blue disc edged Air Force blue, bendwise throughout a mailed hand issuing from sinister base, dark gray, shaded black, highlights white, grasping a drawn bow red, with arrow white, shaded black, the taut string black. *Motto:* On a white scroll edged and inscribed Air Force blue, STRENGTH MAINTAINS SECURITY. (Approved 20 Jun 1962.)

John C. Ford's Letter:-

TO: Joseph Gorchak
Warren G. Story 18 January 1980

Dear Joe and Warren:

For more than a year I have been researching the story of the mission on which you both went down. My primary work has been in the area of fatalities, for although 57 men were known to have died that day out of 101 airmen, I have been getting signals that many more were declared dead after being missing in action for more than seven years.

9 of the 11 pilots perished that day, but I have not been able to contact Bill Leverett or Raymond Noiseau, who were the surviving pilots. Did either of you meet them on the POW trail?

Why am I writing you at this particular time is because today I received a letter from Robert M. McGhee, bombardier on Jack Batty's lead aircraft. He was one of only three survivors on that B-17. Ed Herron, who was the lead pilot of your squadron, also perished on that plane. I have sent Robert all the poop on our Association and asked him if he could provide his version of that mission, and by this letter, I am asking each of you to provide me with your remembrance of that mission and its aftermath. I am positive that Roger Freeman will use the story in one of his next two books - both of which I am assisting Roger on by researching information at the Archives and the 1361st USAF Audio-Visual Photo Laboratory. His next book will be entitled "Mighty Eighth War Diary," and the follow-on book is entitled "The Mighty Eighth Miscellany." This latter volume will have all the units insignia that can be found, portrayed in full colors.

Would certainly appreciate hearing from you as soon as possible, so that I can outline the story for all your approvals. Meanwhile, Joe, during our trip to England in August, I can arrange a meeting for you with Roger and Martin Bowman, another fine author from Norfolk. Martin's latest book is "Fields of Little America," in which details of the Liberator Groups stationed around Norfolk were highlighted. He is now working on a more complete history of all the units in East Anglia.

Pardon the carbon copy, Warren, but I wanted to make the early mail. I will provide both of you with the full details of the aircraft crews and what happened to them in the story I send you for your approval.

Meanwhile, you might like to write to Robert M. McGhee at 4404 Del Mabry Drive, Knoxville, TN 37914. He was a bombardier.

John C. Ford

Whitey Wallace's Letter:

Editor:

I am happy to try to furnish you what information I can about Sgt. Mertz. You well know it has been 40 years and that I knew him for only a short period of time.

I was the tailgunner on a B-17. I arrived at Great Ashfield July 1944 and was assigned to the 549th. Sgt. Mertz, another tail gunner, was also assigned to this squadron. Sgt. Mertz was a very likeable fellow and I valued him as a close friend. He was well liked by the other members of the 549th Squadron. No doubt we were on some of the same missions (on different planes) throughout France, Belgium and Germany during this time.

This was a period of time when German buzz bombs were rampant. The fogs of the Fall of 1944 were almost impossible. Many of our missions were delayed or scrubbed. I did not see Sgt. Mertz after September 19, 1944 when I was wounded by shrapnel at Coblenz. I was transferred then from the 549th to the 65th General Hospital where I recuperated for sometime.

The incident that happened on October 6, 1944, will long be remembered by thousands of men from the 8th Air Force as one of the darkest days that happened during World War II. Many of our young men, along with Sgt. Mertz, were killed on that day. There are, however, many people living who could give first hand

information about the Berlin Raid of October 6, since they survived and were prisoners of war of the Germans. I have searched my records and I cannot find any pictures of Sgt. Mertz or any of the names of his crew members. This would have been most helpful if I could have found some of the names of his crew members.

Arthur ("Whitey") Wallace
Rt. 1, Cadiz, KY 42211

A FEW WORDS....continued



by Ian Hawkins

Munster COURAGE

Nick Nicholls has sent us information about Ian Hawkins, who has written a book about the raid on Munster that occurred on 10 October 1943. It has been published in German and will be published in English near the end of June. It will contain over 400 pages and many photographs. If ordered before June 15, the regular edition will sell for \$17.00 and the deluxe edition signed by the author for \$35.00. Nick denies it, but he is pushing the book because the rear cover features a photograph of him in an upright and awake condition, rare for some bombardiers we know.

The publisher to whom
8th Air Force navigator:

orders may be sent is a former

Suffolk author tells raid epic

William Robinson
Robinson Typographies
1614 South Clementine Street
Anaheim, California 92802

¥ * ¥ ¥ ¥ ¥

It is about the American 8th Airforce which was in this country during the 1939/45 War and their part in the battle over the German city of Munster.

The book, "The Munster Raid Before and After", is already selling well there and is to be published next year in America and in this country.

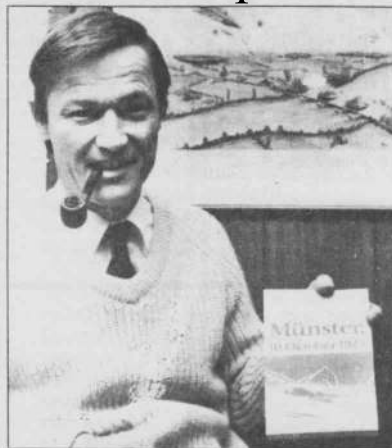
The author, Mr. Ian Hawkins, 44, of Birch Avenue, Bacton, has been interested in the RAF and the USAF since seeing waves of aircraft in formation leaving Suffolk to carry out wartime raids over Germany, when he was a boy.

He was badly injured in December, 1976, in an attack five days after arriving in Jeddah to work as a site engineer on an underpass and by-pass development.

Mr. Hawkins was flown back to Addenbrooke's Hospital, Cambridge, where he praises the staff for saving his life.

He is now confined to a wheelchair and had to be taught to write left handed because he could no longer use his right.

He helped with the research work for the book "Goodbye Mickey Mouse" by Len Deighton,



Ian Hawkins, of Bacton, with a copy of his book published in German.

A FORMER civil engineer from Bacton near Stowmarket who turned to writing after being badly hurt when he was attacked in Saudi Arabia has had his first book published.

EAST ANGLIA

DAILY TIMES

War Department
AAF Form No. 11A
Approved Sept. 15, 1943

NAVIGATOR'S LOG

PLANE No. TWA	TYPE _____	DATE 12 SEPT 84
PLACE OF DEPARTURE U.S.A.		
DESTINATION U.K. (Great Ashfield)		

(the date tentatively scheduled earlier did not hold)

MISSION - ORDERS

Establish once and for all how the war was won from Great Ashfield by the 385th

WEATHER (General Forecast)

Mrs. Thatcher has ordered maximum weather cooperation for the enjoyment of all. Nevertheless, this is not to be construed as good reason for leaving raincoats at home.

THE OPTIONS BRIEFLY STATED

Both itineraries include visits to Ipswich, Lavenham, Bury St. Edmunds, Stowmarket, Framlingham, Woodbridge, Great Ashfield and Cambridge. On the sixth day those on the excursion to Continent go to Felixstowe and on to The Netherlands, Belgium, Paris, Calais and back to London for a couple of days before returning to the United States.

Those on the British Excursion on the sixth day set out for Bath and Bristol. They visit York, the Lake District, Edinburgh, Stirling and back to London for a couple of days before returning to the United States.



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(404) 353-8747
(404) 548-324

JUDY MASTERS

CLARKE COUNTY AIRPORT
ATHENS, GEORGIA, USA 30605

In honor of the 40th Anniversary of D Day

The 385th Bombardment Group Memorial Association will be returning to Great Ashfield, Ipswich and to memories too long un-lived with heroes too long neglected. The English people remember you, praise you and are awaiting your return. Join us in a fitting tribute to the brave airmen who were unable to come home in '45.

The Friends of the Eighth Airforce are anxiously preparing for your visit, and are polishing the WWII jeeps in readiness for your inspection. They will be available at the Great Ashfield Airbase for driving the old air strips and searching out abandoned Quonset huts. The villagers are preparing a reception, and will join you for a special memorial service at Great Ashfield All Saints Church on Sunday. There will be many memory stirring special events and surprises. . . and we will not fail to pay highest homage to your beautiful comrades who left their blood in England. The American Cemetery at Madingley will grip us all with the overwhelming significance of its symbolic presence.

And then on to sightseeing, with two fun-packed itineraries from which to choose: one remaining in Great Britain, the other ferrying to the Continent. We will reunite in London for two last days and a gala evening together for one final round of stories. Be there to uphold your version!

* * *

- Two Weeks Memorial & Great Britain Excursion \$775.00
- Two Weeks Memorial & Continent Excursion \$799.00

Prices are based on double occupancy with a minimum of 40 passengers per tour. Single rates quoted upon request.

A deposit of \$100.00 per person is due to secure your reservation. Please make payable to deRevere Travel Service, Inc., and forward to:

The 385th Bombardment Group Memorial Association Return
c/o Judy Masters, Ph.D., Masters Touch Tours
deRevere Travel Service, Inc., Clarke County Airport
Athens, Georgia 30605 USA

The 385th Bombardment Group Memorial Association Return is open to all members and friends of the memory of the brave airmen who fought and died in England.

Persons interested in airfare may also secure tickets for space blocked with the group from several cities, or arrange independent departures. With deposit please indicate if airfare is desired.



Group air space is blocked with Trans World Airlines, Inc. departing the United States Wednesday, September 12 and returning Thursday, September 27: roundtrip per person

Los Angeles	\$819.00
New York	\$614.00
Chicago	\$739.00

Through fares from sample cities may also be applied:

Atlanta	\$779.00
Miami	\$779.00
St. Louis	\$722.00
Phoenix	\$810.00

All prices are subject to change. Airfare may be secured with a 25% airfare deposit. Please direct to Masters Touch Tours.

Yes! I don't want to miss The 385th Bombardment Group Memorial Association Return

name(s) _____

address _____

phone (area code) home _____ office _____

Please indicate which Excursion: Great Britain _____ Continent _____

rooming requests _____

Flight desired? City _____ Group space _____ or Independent _____

Dates desired if not using group space _____

Deposit amount enclosed \$ _____ Balance due July 15, 1984.

CHANGES OF ADDRESS

BASTIAN, Richard L.
109 S. Wausau Road
Middleburg, PA 17842-1117

BIERNACKI, David M.
2037 Mt. Vernon Street, Apt. 3F
Philadelphia, PA 19130

BINKS, Gerald
Box 681
Thayne, WY 83127

DUROKOV, John S.
1385 Hampshire
San Francisco, CA 94100-4210

RETURNED, NO NEW ADDRESS

STARK, Paul

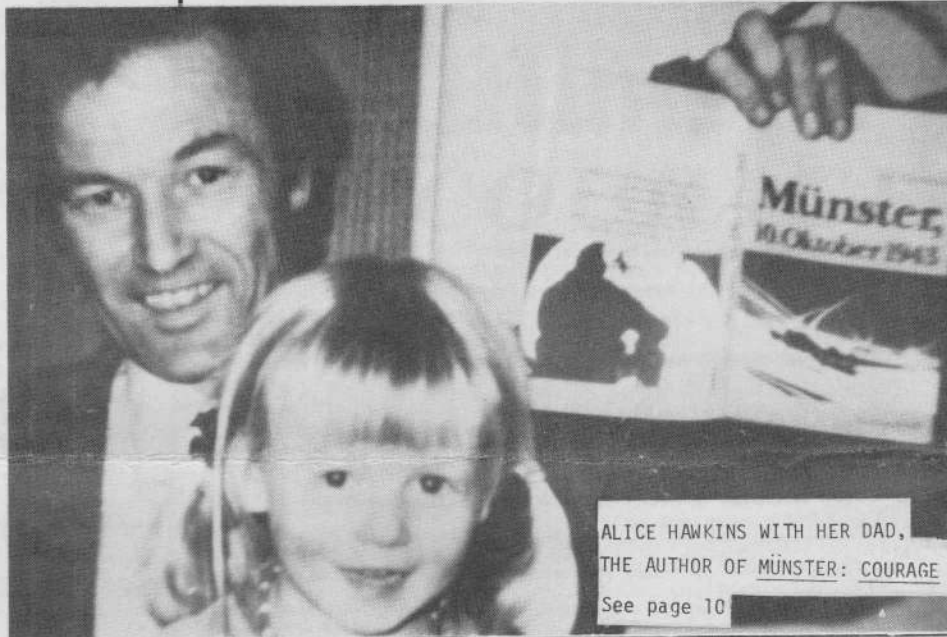
BARRETT, Clyde H. Jr.

EYDMAN, Tom



ABOUT THOSE NUMBERS

For those of us who are mildly concerned about such things, let me say that the January, 1984 issue of the Newsletter was put out as Vol. X, No. 5, although it should have been Vol. XI, No. 1. Therefore, we are calling this issue Vol. XI, No. 2 to get back on track.



ALICE HAWKINS WITH HER DAD,
THE AUTHOR OF MÜNSTER: COURAGE
See page 10

385TH BGMA
VERNE PHILIPS, Editor
P.O. Drawer 5970
Austin, Texas 78763

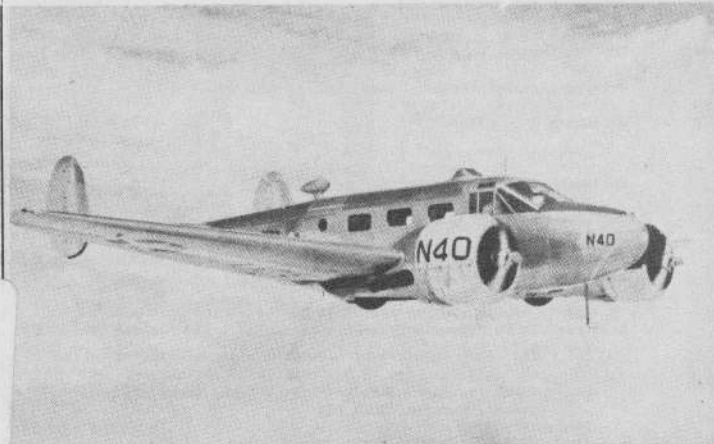
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Beloit, WI 53511

WOULD YOU BELIEVE— TITAN OF THE AIR?

During WWII the prose frequently became quite effusive. One particularly glowing bit came on this 1943 picture post card from the Navigation School at Hondo, Texas. Read on--



The Titan of the air, twin-motored and proud, is one of many AT-7 training planes used at the Army Air Forces Navigation School, Hondo, Texas, to train future navigators. After 15 weeks of intensive instruction, cadets are thoroughly qualified to direct American bombers to the enemy.