

OHIO AIR FORCE GOLDEN GOOSE THUNDERBIRD WANDERING DUCHESS CURLY'S KIDS
 SKY GODDESS OL' WAR HORSE PICCADILLY QUEEN BLUE CHAMPAGNE MARY ELLEN
 SALLY B ROUNDTRIP TICKET RAUNCHY WOLF CHOWHOUND YANK GELDING WINNIE THE POOH
 HONKY TONK SAL "HAYBAG" ANNIE MISS AMERICA STARS AND STRIPES DRAGON LADY
 HESITATIN' HUSSY LIBERTY BELLE HUSTLIN' HUSSY PREGNANT PORTIA DORSAL QUEEN WAR WEARY
 BIG GAS BIRD ANGELS SISTER LI'L AUDREY LEADING LADY ALEXANDER'S RAGTIME BAND
 STAR DUST **HARD LIFE**  **HERALD** HARES BREADTH
 SKY CHIEF MR. LUCKY PERRY'S PIRATES SLO JO SACK TIME LONESOME POLECAT MARY PAT
 MR. LUCKY PERRY'S PIRATES SLO JO SACK TIME LONESOME POLECAT MARY PAT
 MADAME SHOO SHOO GIZMO ROGER THE DODGER TARGET FOR TONIGHT SHACK N LADY
 PAT PENDING POSSIBLE STRAIGHT MICKY IMPATIENT VIRGIN JUNIOR OL' DOODLE BUG
 ROUNDTRIP JACK HOMESICK ANGEL LATEST RUMOR SLEEPYTIME GAL RAGGED BUT RIGHT SWEET CHARIOT
 SHACK BUNNY MY GAL SAL BIG STINKY VIBRANT VIRGIN MAIDEN AMERICA RUBY'S RAIDERS SWINGING DOOR
 SPIRIT OF CHICAGO MISSISSIPPI MISS
 SOUTHERN BELLE RAGGEDY ANNE MISSION BELLE LULU BELLE SLICK CHICK
 OL' RUM DUM FOOLISH VIRGIN



NEWSLETTER OF THE

385th BOMBARDMENT GROUP MEMORIAL ASSOCIATION



COMBAT UNITS

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

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Prez Sez:

Tulsa in 1991 - OK

Sure was good to have Ed and Jane Stern stop and see us on their way to Arizona - I really feel sorry for people that get to loaf all winter!!

Plans being completed on 1991 Reunion - looking great. Everyone needs to get us a new 385th member. Put a Reunion notice in your local papers. They will usually run it as a news item. Give my address if you wish and I will gladly answer all letters.

Sam Lyke

P.S. Frank Walls and Bob Valliere (and maybe others) will represent the 385th in Holland for the 45th anniversary of the food-drop missions. You can call one of them for more information. The date - May 5.

Editors Note:

Jane and I spent a nice 2 months vacationing in Tucson, during which time we tried to keep up with 385th business. If any of you ordered Reunion Books, pictures, or suit covers that didn't come, let us know—we think we kept up with everything.

13TH REUNION - 48TH ANNIVERSARY
TULSA, OK — JUNE 5-9, 1991

50TH ANNIVERSARY REUNION — SPOKANE, WA - 1993

Correction on List of Attendees at the Reunion

Jack & Lucy Henshaw
Willard & Lois Hagman

Both were there — our list had their names garbled. Dick Ryan was also left off.

Reunion Items Still Available

1. Bound copies of all Hardlife Heralds for last 2 years \$5.
2. Oxford nylon zipper garment bags with 385th Group Insignia, Red, Blue, or Green — \$8.00.
3. Squadron Reunion pictures in full color — \$6.00.

Send orders to Ed Stern, Box 2187, Fargo, ND 58108

New Generation Members

There's interest being expressed in perpetuating the 385th Bomb Group Memorial Association. We've had lots of suggestions — from members, from Past officers, and from your present Officers.

Let's have a few letters to The Hardlife Herald offering your help in getting something started at the Tulsa Reunion. The Executive Committee would like to plan an organizational meeting. They need volunteers to get the ball rolling.

Sons and daughters — step forward and take charge.

Meet Your Reunion Hosts

Dr. George Menkoff has had many hobbies, including photography, private flying, and barbershop and church choir singing. He flew for several years and had his multi-engine and instrument tickets, but a hobby that started in Jr. High School, was rekindled at Great Ashfield, and lasted until almost now, was wrestling.

Toward the end of hostilities in Europe, George went to the Red Cross Club on base and started wrestling. Every few days a new boy would arrive and soon he had a full wrestling team.

The Great Ashfield wrestling team had several matches with other Airbases, winning them all, and George himself was sent on two occasions to London on TAD to Wrestle for the Servicement at Rainbow Corner. The activities of Station 155 wrestling team was written up in the publication, "THE DAILY DIPPER" (thinking back, that Rainbow Corner duty must have been some duty!). The 385th BG Wrestling team later won the 3rd Air Division Wrestling tournament held in Ipswich.

After the end of WWII, George continued his education at Kansas City U. School of Dentistry, where he found time to form a Wrestling team at the Kansas City YMCA. Later that season he won the Missouri Valley AAU Wrestling Tournament at 145 POUNDS.

Upon graduation, George went into the US Navy as a Dental Officer during the Korean War, and while at Norfolk Naval Base Receiving Station formed his second Service team. His Naval Base team won most of their military matches and ranked high in the All-Navy Tournament.

Then in Tulsa, while engaged in private practice. Dr. Menkoff coached the Henthorne Trojans wrestling club, Jr.

385th BGMA APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP

Please Print

LAST NAME, First, MI.

Spouse's Name

Street or P.O. Box #

()
Telephone Number

City, State, & Zip Code

Squadron or Support Unit

The annual dues are Eight Dollars (\$8.00)
Life-time memberships are one payment of \$100.00
Make out check to "385th BGMA" and mail to:
John F. Pettenger, Treas.
Box 117
Laurel, FL 33545

POW Capture Data
Date
Place
Stalag Unit

Life-time memberships are used to perpetuate the memorial at All Saints Church in Great Ashfield, Suffolk County, England.

High Team, for 14 years, training and scrimmaging the athletes every evening from about 5 to 8:30 pm, and holding Dual matches on Saturdays, and of course later, the Tournaments. His program was very successful and many of his wrestlers went on to Oklahoma State U., Okla. U., Auburn, Tenn., New Mexico, and one, Mike Fanning, wrestled and played Football for Notre Dame. Later he played Football for the Los Angeles Rams and was one of their tough defensive linemen. Some of you in Calif, may remember him.

George is still in private practice of Dentistry but hasn't been doing any wrestling lately. He is enjoying being a spectator.

We hope to show you a good time and expose you to a lot of Oklahoma hospitality in Tulsa. Complete information will soon be forthcoming concerning the reunion, if not in this issue of the HARDLIFE HERALD, in the next. I can tell you that the hotel will be the Doubletree, Downtown, and the Dates June 5-9, 1991. Also that the Hotel has stated the Room Rate will be a base rate of 45.00 in 1990, with no more than a 5% raise in '91.



Left: Frank Mafera Jr. - Brooklyn, NY; Center: George Menkoff - Tulsa, OK; Right: Samuel Graham, Jr. - Far Rockaway, NY. Anyone know where they are now?

94th Bomb Group Return to Rougham England, Sept. 12-21.

We've had several inquiries about the possibilities of another trip to England, and whether anyone will pick up the ball now that Al Chealander is gone. We're not aware of any plans, but here's an opportunity to join with our ex-neighbors. Write to Tamarac Travel, Tamarac, FL 33319. Or phone them 1-800-228-9690 for information. The brochure lists cost at \$825 per person plus air fare from your home town. Sounds like a well-planned trip.



To Ed Stern and members of the 385th BGMA:

Thank you so much for the wonderful gift received at Christmastime.

It is truly a pleasure to do business with persons such as you. I consider you friends instead of customers. I appreciate your past association and look forward to working with you in the future.

Editors Note: After more than 4 years of help in developing our Hardlife Herald, our publishers deserved a token of appreciation.

Burniel Wigen
Interstate Printing

Dear Ed,

Thought this would be of interest to the 385th BG newsletters next issue.

The letter is well done, you are doing an excellent job. I look forward to receiving it.

Could you cover a little more of the non-flying personnel that put in almost 24-36 months with the group.

Yours truly,
Leonard P. Bodsing

Chicago Tribune Thursday

Richard L. Williams; coined term Flying Fortress

ST. PETERSBURG, Fla. (AP)—Richard L. Williams, a writer and editor credited with inventing the term Flying Fortress for the famed B-17 bomber of World War II, has died at age 78.

Mr. Williams died of pneumonia Nov. 5* at Bayfront Medical Center. - [f]

Mr. Williams* was born in Seattle, home of Boeing Co. which developed the B-17. He earned a journalism degree from the University of Washington and joined the Seattle Times in 1933.

He was assigned to write a caption on a picture of the B-29, a B-17 prototype, on July 17, 1935", according to the Boeing News, a company publication.

He later said he was impressed by the apparent power of the plane and wrote: "Declared to be the largest land plane ever built in America, this 15-ton flying fortress, built by the Boeing Aircraft Co.

under Army specifications, today was ready to test its wings."

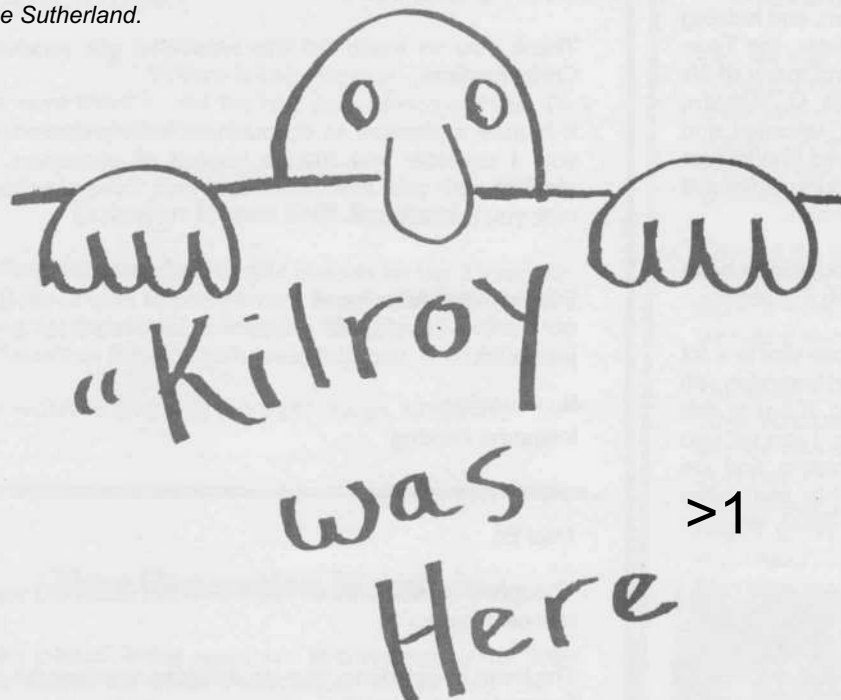
The name stuck. Mr. Williams also worked for Boeing Aircraft before becoming an editor at Dell Publishing Co. about 1948. Later, he went to Time Inc. as an editor for Time-Life Books.

Mr. Williams moved to Florida's Gulf Coast in 1985 from Unadilla, N.Y.) after his retirement from the board of editors of the Smithsonian magazine.

□ □ □ □ LIFE MEMBERS □ □ □ □

Mrs. James T. Williams — #217

Remember Kilroy? Here's interesting info sent in by George Sutherland.



by Richard W. O'Donnell

You remember Kilroy—the guy with the long nose peeking over a fence? During World War II, American servicemen drew him on walls, floors, ceilings, and just about anywhere else he would fit. And beneath the drawing they would scrawl the immortal phrase, “Kilroy was here.” You remember the caricature, but did you know there really was a Kilroy?

James J. Kilroy served on the Boston City Council and in the Massachusetts Legislature, representing the Roxbury District during the 1930s. After World War II he moved to Halifax, Massachusetts, and lived there until his death in 1962.

So how come this guy's face was plastered all over creation?

During the war, Kilroy worked as a checker at the Fore River Shipyard in Quincy, Massachusetts. His job was to go around and check on the number of rivets completed on ship hulls. Riveters were on piece-work, and got paid by the rivet. Kilroy would count a block of rivets and make a check mark in chalk, so the rivets wouldn't be counted twice. When he went off duty, dishonest riveters would erase the mark. Later on, another checker would come through and count the rivets a second time, resulting in double pay for the riveters.

One day Kilroy's boss called him into his office. The foreman was upset about

all the wages being paid to riveters, and asked Kilroy to investigate. It was then that he found out what had been going on.

The tight spaces he had to crawl in to check the rivets didn't lend themselves to lugging around a paint can and brush, so Kilroy decided to stick with the chalk. He continued to put his check mark on each job he inspected, but he added “Kilroy was here” in king-size letters next to the check. Once he did that, the riveters stopped wiping away his marks.

Ordinarily, both rivets and chalk marks would have been covered up with



James J. (the original) Kilroy

paint. With the war on, however, ships were leaving the Quincy yard so fast that there wasn't time to paint them. As a result, Kilroy's inspection “trademark” was seen by thousands of servicemen who boarded the troopships the yard produced. His message apparently rang a bell with those GIs, because they picked it up and spread it all over Europe and the South Pacific. Before the war's end, “Kilroy” had been here, there, and everywhere on the long haul to Berlin and Tokyo. Along the way, someone added the sketch of the chap with the long nose peering over the fence, and that became part of the Kilroy message.

The slogan was used by American servicemen as a sort of code in foreign lands. If two friends were to meet at a certain location, the first to arrive would scrawl the Kilroy message on a wall in case he was called away. There was even a Kilroy murder case in London during the war. A woman was found strangled, and the words “Kilroy was here” were written on her apartment wall. Scotland Yard was inclined to suspect an American. As it turned out, her next door neighbor was a mental patient named Kilroy, who confessed to the murder and was perplexed as to why it had taken so long to arrest him.

After the war, there were a number of pretenders who claimed to be the original Kilroy—so many, in fact, that the Transit Company of America held a contest, offering a prize to the person who could prove himself to be the real Kilroy.

Naturally, when Massachusetts' own Jim Kilroy heard about the contest, he entered, his contention that he had inspired all those messages was thoroughly investigated. Fore River Shipyard officials supported his claim, and even some of the riveters who were queried backed him up.

In all more than 40 “Kilroys” vied to be recognized as the genuine article. Transit Company judges carefully investigated every claim. One by one each entrant fell by the wayside until there was only one Kilroy left—James J. Kilroy of Halifax. And his prize? A trolley car, which proved to be the perfect playhouse for his nine children.

No word on whether the Kilroy message ever found its way onto the trolley. ■

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Milligan's Crew

These are my memories and impressions from the pilot's side of the cockpit. The original intent was to have a crew report from each position on the plane in much the same way I had them check in after a bomb run on a mission, but I guess I should have started it years ago.

Age and Father Time are beginning to take their toll and we are now down to six remaining of the flight crew and my ace Crew Chief still joins us at the reunions.

Another feedback would be the recollections of some of the Command Pilots who flew with us when we were Lead.

Remembered from the Cockpit....

Pilot - R. Milligan
 Co-Pilot - R. Noiseau, L. Cooper
 Bombadier- F. Sutter
 Navigator - H. Rembert
 Top Turret - E. Curtis-Also Engineer
 Radio - S. Pettit
 Vail Turret - E. Traudt
 Waist Gun - T. Panfile - Also Assistant Engineer
 Waist Gun - V. Durrant
 Tail Gun - C. Abrahamson

E.E. Martin - Crew Chief #1 HARDSTAND

After a year at Dalhart, Texas as an R.T.U. Instructor Pilot, I took over a crew which for various reasons, needed a pilot, navigator, bombardier, and a radio man.

When we got it all together, I had an instructor bombardier, the top grade in a graduating class of navigators, and a new radio man. Thus we went through the R.T.U. program with only once incident of interest. During a practice formation flight on a simulated bomb run, I lost both engines on my left side. There was a severe dust storm over the field and, as it was near the end of the flight period, the instructions were to proceed to Amarillo until the storm blew over. I maxed out the two right engines but could not maintain altitude. A quick check by my navigator confirmed that we would be approximately ten miles short of Amarillo on ground contact. The Dalhart Tower gave me permission for a right hand pattern and a landing at Dalhart.

Vertical visibility was fairly good but once down in the dust it got nasty with a 45 MPS, 15 to 20 degree crosswind, but accomplished with no further damage - Except to my ego when I saw all the fire trucks and ambulances lined up to come to my rescue.

Completing Dalhart training, the unit transferred to Kearny, Nebraska to pick up new B-17 G's to ferry to England via Bangor, Goose Bay, Iceland and Prescott. The trip over was uneventful until we left Iceland. I told the crew to check their guns as we would be entering the combat zone. My top turret gunner reached over to charge his weapon when the sleeve of his flight suit triggered the elevation toggle switch of the guns and brought the gun butt up under his chin and

wedged his head against the dome, lifting his feet off the foot rest. Our attempts to free him were unsuccessful so I returned to Iceland where ground mechanics dismantled the dome to free him. The following day we continued on to England, leaving my gunner (Curtis) in the hospital.

Somewhere over the North Atlantic I spotted a break in the clouds and decided to drop down and see what I could see. I found myself descending on top of a convoy, which already was taking evasive action with their destroyer escorts coming full bore to protect them. We fired the colors of the day and climbed the hell back out of there. To my surprise, the North Atlantic is an ugly, dirty green under cloudy skies. We landed with no further incidents in Scotland, took a ferryboat ride to England, and proceeded on to the 385th Bomb Group and the 549th Bomb Squadron as a replacement crew. This was to be my home for the next eight months.

Procedures demanded each new crew fly 1 or 2 missions with an experienced crew for their indoctrination period. During my 1st mission, prior to going to our plane, after the briefing, and while getting our flight gear together, a plane was heard overhead. A veteran gunner said, "That sounds like a JU88" and about that time the bombs he had toggled out started to go off. A stick of seven 500# bombs, one of which went into a partially open hanger-door. My impression at the time was that everyone was trying to get under the storage lockers which had a 4" clearance. I had no misgivings about bombing Germany after that - it was personal.

We finally flew as a crew with only minor incidents, like the time a chunk of flak dented the skin above the co-pilot's window enough to crack the tube of sileca gel, which sprayed all over the cockpit. I glanced at my co-pilot and he had both hands over his eyes and in the classic routine, he started to raise one finger at a time to see if he still could. It was funny, even then.

My most vivid memory while flying on the wing was being vertical on my left wing, turning and diving left while the rest of the formation was going right. It came about this way: we were flying deputy lead, which meant we had a bombsight on board in case the lead plane got disabled and we would have to take over.

Don't remember the target but it was heavily defended and on the bomb run with doors open the lead ship started to drop. Of course everyone dropped on lead, except us. My bombardier hollers "Not yet, they're dropping short" over the intercom, so I held course while the rest of the group turned right toward the rendezvous point. When we dropped, the plane, as usual, relieved of the load, jumped up and my left wing caught the prop wash of an upper-echelon plane, flipped me on end, turning and diving to the left with strings of bombs dropping all around us. Recovering, I started a right turn to get back to the formation when I noticed a 6 gun anti-aircraft artillery piece was trying to zero in on me. The black puffs were getting closer and closer and I realized I was being tracked; I had to start evasive action. This complicated the hand cranking of the bomb bay doors which

had been damaged by flak, but my engineer, Pantile, got it done even while I was climbing, diving and turning left and right, working out of the zone.

I remember a feeling of satisfaction and relief after working my way out of the target area, that what I had told pilots as an Instructor Pilot at Dalhart really worked: namely that the anti-aircraft gunners tracked for 15 sec. and the shell took 15 sec. to reach our altitude, so that every time I saw the shell bursts, I knew I had 15 sec. to change course, speed or altitude to avoid a hit and had I not done so, the bursts were right where I would have been.

My navigator gave me the heading to the R.P. and I called the group lead for an "s" turn from them so I could catch up. Unbeknownst to me, the waist gunner who filled in for Curtis, was on his 25th and final mission. When he got out of the plane, he fell to his knees and kissed the ground. I then got out and I thought he was going to kiss me, but he put out his hand and said, with tears in his eyes, "I'll fly with you anytime".

We had only one abort, and that was in a sick plane from another squadron that couldn't keep up at altitude. The higher we got, the slower it got. Kept dropping back until I ran out of groups and cover. Returned to base to be called a coward. Offered to return if he would be the co-pilot and leave the crew at the base but I wasn't accepted.

So after 10 missions on the wing and after watching Jerry fighters coming down our line after the I.P. - diving on #1 squadron, under #2, up thru #3, etc., and me sitting well back wondering if we were odd or even, the crew was removed from combat status for 10 days for training to become a group lead crew. Also took part in an interesting radio beam bomb drop to check for accuracy and then back to war. As a lead crew flying every fourth mission and a three day pass every 10 days - hard on the pocket-book.

The evening after the 1st mission on which we did not fly, two of my crew, Curtis, who had finally caught up with us, and Panfile came to me and complained that because they weren't on the mission they were given work details around the base. The next day I went to OPS and told them if that is what being lead crew meant, put us back on the wing that my guys were not flying thru no choice of their own. When asked what they should do with them, I suggested that they spend the time on the hardstand with the ground crew and plane. We hadn't had our new plane too long and I was sure there was more needed to be done than a daily check flight. Other non-combat flights included weather check flights early in the morning, practice bomb drops in the wash and ferrying visiting dignitaries around. The awe inspiring and beautiful sight of 1500 heavy bombers in a long parade line, leaving England and out over the channel, and just as we reached the English coast, our fighter escorts were just taking off puffed me up with pride until the W.C.T.C. Gen. I had along for a look at the operation, started chewing out some of the formation that he thought were too loose- He had never been on a mission and never had to fly formation for 8 to 10 hours, only over there to collect his E.T.O. ribbon.

On one of our lead missions, I was 1 st plane off, in fog and clouds; it was supposed to clear at our assigned altitude, it

wasn't. Instructions were to continue the climb until we broke out into the clear. I was near 30,000 ft and still in the soup when the mission was scrubbed. All planes were instructed to level off and, at a given signal, to start our prescribed descent, -- the exact reverse of our climbing circular ascent. This made 1,500 heavy bombers, fully loaded, circling over England, As I recall, we only lost two planes which collided in the soup. My flight time was about 4 hours for the exercise.

Had to ferry a crew to an R.A.F. base to pick up a stray BI 7. Their runways were mats, which are similar to chain link fencing stretched out on the ground. On the take off I discovered the reason for the slight hill at the end of the runway, it was to sling me off the ground and over the cottage right off the end of the runway.

Another incident that sticks in my mind was the time the bombsight burnt out during our assembly at the buncher beacon. We had taken off in heavy ground fog, but it was a beautiful morning upstairs. I called base and told them that we were coming back for a replacement. The fog was approximately 50' thick with the ground completely invisible, but my navigator did a super job in lining me up with the runway and just as the numbers went under the wheels he said, "You're at the end of the runway". I taxied to the other end to the waiting jeep swapped sights, did a 180 degrees and took off. I rejoined my group as lead just as we were leaving the coast on our way out.

Another incident which demonstrates the efficiency of my navigator was on a mission flying lead in the high group, Rembert told me to correct our heading 4 or 5 degrees to the right. The Command Pilot had a questioning look in his eyes but said nothing. A minute or so later a flak barrage downed two aircraft in the lead group to our left, questions were answered and we corrected back to the left and rejoined the wing in our proper spacing.

More Memories - my C.O. flying as deputy wing lead on my right wing-being hit by flak and forced to land at the Normandy Beach Head and the reception he got when he returned to base.

A ground crew corporal asked if he could fly on the mission with us. I told him I didn't want to see him but that he better be damn sure he had a maewest and a chute. It was a comparative low altitude milk run over to the coast. On returning to my hardstand it was ringed with enlisted ground personnel. My command pilot wanted to know what was goin on, had to laugh and tell him. The result was a directive stating no more unauthorized personnel on combat missions.

I recall pushing plaster off my bed in a London hotel as the result of a near miss by a buzz bomb. My heart going out to the civilian population spending nights on the subway station platforms under ground for safety.

Because of being group lead and flying every 4th mission, 8 months in the same quarters allowed me to see several crews come thru, finish missions, and head back home. I got to be called the "old man", but it did give me a chance to evaluate the new crews as they came into our squadron. After a day or two I could sense distrust and dissension in a

crew and knew they wouldn't make it. Don't remember names and tried not to be too familiar with any of them, made it easier when they didn't return.

My own crew was my chief concern, if they didn't make it, I wouldn't either. They had all been exposed to and checked out in each others positions. They could all land the plane without crashing it and my navigator could bomb - my bombardier could navigate. I had a salvo knob if it came down to me to dump the load.

As a result of my crew spending non-mission days with the ground crew at the hardstand, my plane had several unique features, features which resulted when each man fixed his position to suit himself. One in particular was the radio man having 2 pieces of %" armor plate in the radio room, and over the target would put them end to end and lay on them as flak protection. On one mission to big "B", he put them on top of each other and sat all hunched over in a corner. Prayers were answered because a chunk of flak came thru the first piece but only badly dented the 2nd piece giving him a big bruise on his butt, but no blood-no purple heart.

One evening about 10 o'clock and still light we were outside playing volley ball, we noticed a new crew coming down the road and about the same time heard a buzz bomb coming. All activity stopped to locate and observe - we never knew which way they would fall when their motors cut off. When it did hit the ground and exploded about a half a mile away, we started to resume the game when we noticed the new crew crawling out of the drainage ditch along side the road. A funny sight and one of the lighter moments.

We participated in a supply drop to the free French in the mountains in eastern France. Ran into some German cadets who were as surprised to see us as we were to see them. It was a long mission and almost dark on our return. We single filed from the coast on back to base and ran into radio silence. It seems there were Jerries in the area and the best we could hear was "Go west young man, go west". By that time I was too close to the channel and the Limeys started playing their search lights on us and shooting. About the same time thru a break in the clouds, sillouetted in the moonlight, was a JU88 which answered our question, but also in the moonlight, was the outline of our base. I made a blackout landing and we were the only crew to sleep in our own beds that night.

I think it is noteworthy that after briefing, getting our gear, checking the plane and waiting for the signal from the Tower, to start engines, I always seemed to be alone in the plane. It took me a little time to realize that while I was in the cockpit talking to my Lord, my crew was in their own various ways and places doing the same thing; a comforting thought.

And so it was - after 6 months I was down to my 30th and last mission. As a crew we had done 10 missions flying formation on a wing and twenty missions leading the formation. We were awakened three mornings in a row for briefing-only to have the mission scratched. Although pathfinder radar was available, I still was a visual crew. Finally got it in, returned to base and the barracks and slept for 24

hours. When I awoke my orders were cut to stateside for R&R, which I did. I said good-bye to my crews, both flight and ground (who gave me a handfull of flak taken from the plane) said 'no' to the oak leaf cluster for a return engagement, and was home in less than 48 hours - before some of my last letters got there. Broke my wife's wrist chasing her up the stairs and took R&R in Miami Beach with her arm in a sling.

I would be remiss if I didn't try to put into words the feelings I have developed for my crew, especially since 1977 at the reunion in Las Vegas. As I told John Ford when I thanked him for the beautiful obit to T. Panfile - my guys line up immediately behind my own sons in my affections. I don't believe you can go thru 25 to 30 life threatening situations without forging unbreakable bonds. It also spills over to my ground crew chief - the man who made sure when my plane left the ground it was ready to fly - all of my lead missions started with him. A line about a man and his plane -1 cried the day that crew didn't bring my "Homesick Angel" back to me.

As a lead crew, when on a mission, my co-pilot, Lowell Cooper, became my tail gunner and formation control officer, keeping me informed of any stragglers or other conditions in the group. His seat was occupied by the Command pilot for that mission. When made aware of my desire for a crew anthology with in-put from surviving crew members, his only comment, in a phone conversation before he died, was "Man, it was cooo-ld back there." I imagine Abrahamson my regular T.G. would concur.

Similarly, while talking to Ernie Traudt, my B.T. gunner, he furnished me with a bit of information for the first time, shortly before his sudden death. On a return to England after a bombing, he would come out of the ball when we were letting down over land. On one occasion he found T. Panfile, a waist gunner, asleep on the floor. His oxygen mask had slipped off and he had turned blue. Ernie returned the mask and in a few seconds Tom was awake and O.K.

Robert S. Milligan
5327 Muskopf Rd., Fairfield, Ohio

Dear Ed,

Another Milligan? How lucky could the group get? I thought I'd hit the jackpot at Bonanzaville when I came upon Prof. Milligan's Indian section (my brother, the family historian is working on that) and now in the latest newsletter is an A.R. Milligan of the "Latest Rumor" crew who piqued my curiosity.

He isn't listed in our latest roster and I'm wondering if any of the others pictured would have his address or know if he is even still alive?

Incidentally Ed, that dissertation on my crew that I gave you in Fargo is just the result of that trip down memory lane that I mentioned in a previous letter.

We had a wonderful time at the Fargo reunion and Tulsa is going to have to set their sights pretty high to top it.

Beating the odds,

Bob Milligan
5327 Muskopf Rd., Fairfield, OH 45074

Editors note:

An interesting item sent in by Bob Cripps. We Americans had to be a little more flamboyant than the British with our insignia!

The World War IIVIII Bomber Command/ 8th Air Force Patch

After General Eaker was promised that the VIII Bomber Command/8th Air Force would be stationed in England, he was told to go ahead with his plan to have the VIII Bomber Command/8th Air Force ready when the men started arriving from the States. One might assume this meant a place to eat, sleep, obtain patches, etc.

General Eaker had his staff sketch some patches and, after one was picked, hustle around England to try to find a party that would do that kind of work. A person was found, and soon we had patches. That was along about June of 1942.

In April of 1943 the Institute of Heraldry, the government agency whose authority was to approve or reject all army and air force emblems, sent out a cable notifying all units of a review. The VIII Bomber Command/8th Air Force sent its English-made patch along for approval. The Institute of Heraldry somehow changed the wing design and approved the patch for issue. This was May 27, 1943.

As the result, there are two patches in our VIII Bomber Command/8th Air Force history. One is British manufacture, and other is of American authorization by the Office of Quarter Master General.



BRITISH-MADE PATCH



AUTHORIZED PATCH

Here's a letter sent to the parents of a B-17 pilot from North Dakota. It gives a heart-rending picture from the standpoint of the remembrance of the tragedy.

Dear Sir and Dear Madame:

Several days ago I received your letter telling me that you were the parents of one of the heroes who met death on the 26th of March, 1944, in our splendid skies of France.

I don't know English, therefore I'm sending my letter to you in French.

It is Sunday, March 26, 1944. About 2:30 while we were finishing our noon meal several of American fortress airplanes appeared in the sky to try to destroy the V-1 emplacements and other fortifications that the Germans were busy getting ready about 3 kilometers from Bouquemaizon. (1 kilometer = .6 mile). Then one of the planes under the command of E. Rumsey Folsom was hit several kilometers above us by a burst of German aircraft. Thus the catastrophe occurred, the plane exploded immediately with the 10 soldiers making up the crew. Two came to earth by parachute and were made prisoners by the Germans. They were unhurt, but unfortunately eight were killed including, unfortunately, your son.

The bodies of the eight unfortunate ones were strewn along the ground for a distance of 1000 yards. The bodies were damaged, of course, but all in one piece; certainly they had been killed at the moment of explosion and hurled in several directions. None of the parachutes were open. Consequently they obviously died before coming to earth. The explosion had been terrible. The plane had been scattered over several kilometers; a fuel tank and a wing burned while falling to earth. A lone engine fell less than 10 feet from six people who were watching the crash. What a sad thing war is!

I was requisitioned to take a wagon and two horses and to bear the dead soldiers to the cemetery of our village the afternoon of March 27. They were buried side by side in their uniforms and wrapped each one in a sack. It was the Germans who ordered us to do this work.

I hope this information will be of help to you.

As for me I am 48 years old. I am married and we have a daughter Paulette who is 19 and a son Georges who is 15. My entire family expresses to you, at this time, our sincere condolences. Please accept, dear sir and dear madame, our respectful best wishes.

J. Yaeguemelle

P.S. The bodies of the eight airmen were exhumed by American forces on June 10, 1945 to be buried in a military cemetery.

Nothing like a fortress to stir up some excitement.

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Metropolitan News

/Sunday, August 21, 1988

B-17s Right on Target as Hit of Air Show

By MICHAEL LEVY
News Staff Reporter

GENESEO — They came in low, but the thunder of the massive engines was surprisingly muted for planes once heralded as "Flying Fortresses" — quiet enough to hear "Amazing Grace" playing from loudspeakers.

Five B-17 bombers — the planes that broke the back of the Axis powers in World War II — were the absolute stars here Saturday.

The show will be repeated today, hopefully adding a sixth "Fort" along with a small wing of Japanese attack fighter-bombers, a German "Stuka" dive bomber, a passel of observation planes and trainers, individual and team aerobatics and some of the most modern military aircraft flying today as the National Warplane Museum runs its 10th annual "Wings of Eagles" air show.

Even with one of the six B-17s "down" after flying in late Saturday from Fort Worth, the five bombers that flew — more than half of all B-17s that remain in the world — made Saturday's fly-bys the largest squadron of these historic planes to fly since World War II.

They took off one by one from the dusty grass strip, landing gear seeming to just clear the cornstalks, and lumbered into the sky in climbing turns as a flight of four P-51 fighters and a lone P-40 in "Flying Tiger" war paint flew mock fighter cover over the waving cornfields.

Three times they circled, flying "on the deck" as the loudspeakers played tapes of simulated combat and mock bomb bursts spewed smoke and dust into the air.

If you squinted a little bit as each plane passed through the curling dust clouds you could imagine the flak bursts at 24,000 feet and see in your mind the spiraling curls of black smoke from combat-crippled engines.

"They're amazing," said 14-year-old Matt Higgins of Amherst. "They seem so big."

Matt said he learned "a little about World War II in history." He was attending the show with his grandparents, Mr. and Mrs. Glen Bell of Amherst and his uncle, Lt. Col. Glen Bell Jr., a B-52 pilot now stationed in Rome, N.Y.

"I was at the air show up at my uncle's base," Matt said. "I guess I like the B-52s up there the best."

One B-52 will make a pass at today's show, along with Phantom jets from Niagara Falls, A-10s from Griffiss Air Force Base and even a couple of Marine

Corps Harrier jets that can roar by at 450 mph or hover with an ear-splitting roar above the flying field.

But it is the "war birds" from the 1940s that grabbed the eye, ear and soul.

"I work as crew for my friends, who fly Stearman biplanes," said Jim Kippen of Simsbury, Conn., who visits six to eight major air shows a year. "I drive the car with the luggage and tools and oil for my friends' World War II training planes."

Kippen said the Geneseo show may be the biggest "war bird" show in the Northeast.

"I don't know what my pals have in their planes, but I do know that when you get a guy with a P-51, you're looking at a real high roller — a half-million bucks worth of plane," he said.

The P-51 "Mustang" was the ultimate propeller-driven fighter plane. There are five of them at Geneseo flying formations, climbing, diving and carving the sky with demonstrations of brute power.

The last flying Hawker Hurricane fighter in the world is here to make graceful, sweeping wing tip turns that evoke memories of its role in the Battle of Britain when, with the famed Spitfire, it fought off the German Luftwaffe.

Three replica Japanese planes, a Zero, a "Vai" and a "Kate" torpedo bomber, took turns showing their prowess along with a Navy Corsair and TBM torpedo bomber.

There were smaller and older craft as well, like the Fairchild PT-23 owned by Paul Everly of Lock Haven, Pa.

"I worked for Piper until the company moved to Florida," Everly said. "Picked up this trainer and spent two years getting it right and have been on the air show circuit for the last 10 years."

His plane is cheap, as "war birds" go. A good example might be worth \$35,000, and it drinks just 14 gallons of \$2 aviation gas for every hour it flies. For coming here, Everly and the other pilots get rooms at Geneseo State College, meals at the airfield and all the gasoline they need to keep their tanks topped up.

His low-winged monoplane whose wooden wing was built by the Baldwin Piano Co., has a certain vintage charm that drew the attention of many of the estimated 30,000 people who walked the flight lines for close-up looks of the planes.

"I met a guy from Gowanda here today who wanted to know where this plane was based," Everly said. "I told him Mississippi, and his jaw dropped. He believes he took his basic training in this

very plane."

When they are not flying, the B-17s can be boarded for a nominal fee.

Inside the surprisingly narrow belly of "Aluminum Overcast," a portly, gray-haired man was telling a couple of very small children where everything was.

"That's where the pilot sat, and here's where the navigator looked out."

"Oh7 Tm'nbT^pafUof this plane's crew," said James R. Lanahan, 63, of Ballston Spa, "but I flew in these in 1943 — 35 missions with the 385th Bomber Group in Great Ashfield, England.

"I know I look too big for it," he added, "but I was a tail gunner. I wanted to be a gunner all along, but they told me I wouldn't make it. Then we had some losses, and suddenly I fit that tail turret real good."

Mr. Ed,

Just a note to pass the little map I made up of the 385th base on to you. Do you think anybody would want one? You could either make the map into a "centerfold" for the middle of the HARDLIFE HERALD, or you could make it a "PX" item. If that doesn't work, tell anyone wanting a map to send me a self-addressed stamped envelope and receive one by return mail. That is all it would cost.

What are the changes you would make? I'm sure that you would have one or two that you would like added also.

Robert C. & Mary J. Cribb
104 Granger Road,
Spartanburg, SC 29301

Where is "Tent City" that was the 31 st's first home?

Where was the 31st before it moved to Site #1?

Where was the CO's house?

I didn't know we had WAAF's.

What were the ROF SHOPS?"



GREAT ASHFIELD, SUFFOLK

ALL SAINT'S CHURCH
&
385th BG PLAQUE

GREAT ASHFIELD AERODROME

GREAT ASHFIELD

BOMB STORES
(on the opposite
side of roadway)

PETROL SITE #2

STATION DEFENSE HQ

TECHNICAL SITE #2

PETROL SITE #1

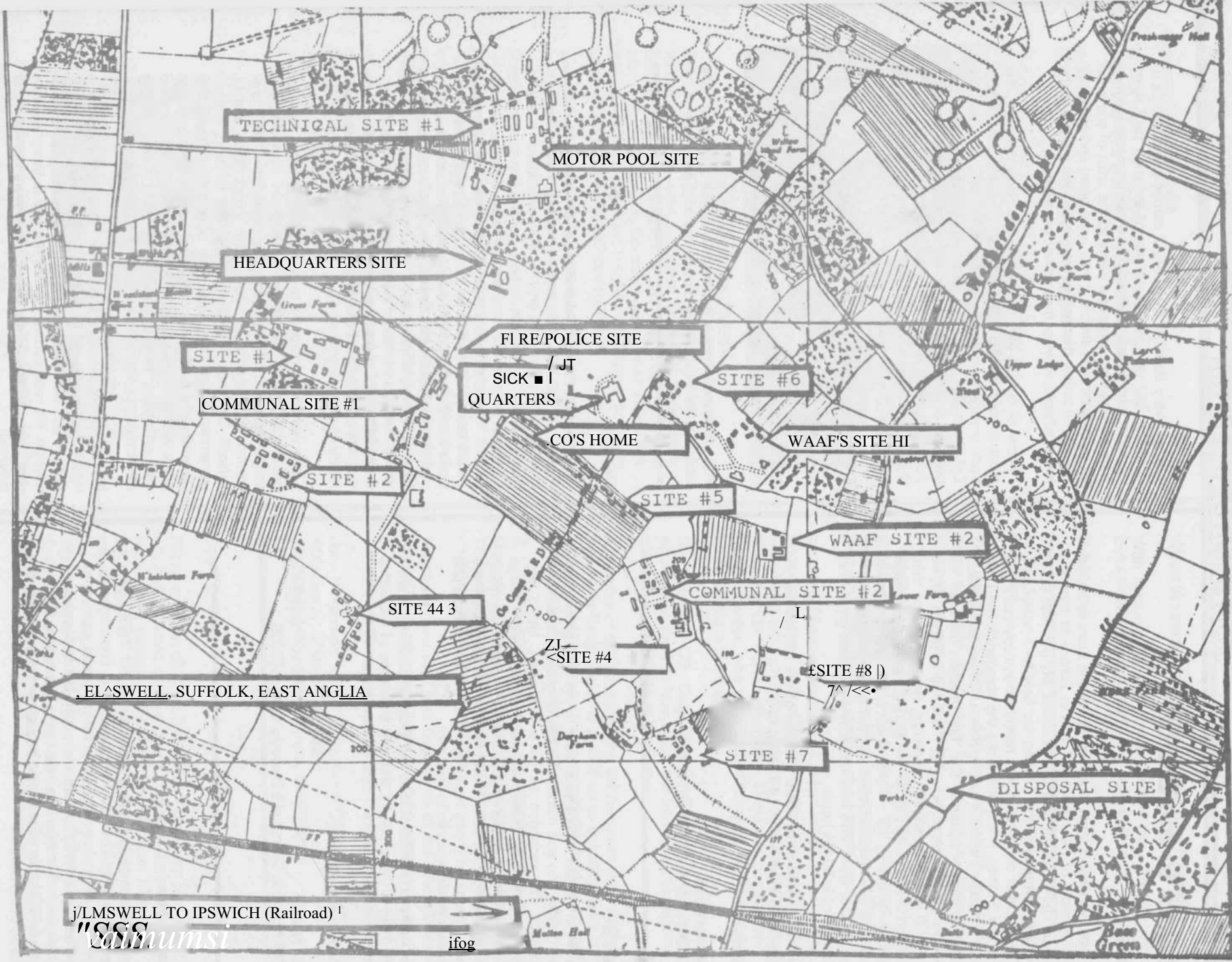
THE THREE TREES

ROF SHOPS

FLIGHT LINE

AIRFIELD

W.
**



TECHNICAL SITE #1

MOTOR POOL SITE

HEADQUARTERS SITE

FIRE/POLICE SITE

SITE #1

SICK / JT
QUARTERS

SITE #6

COMMUNAL SITE #1

CO'S HOME

WAAF'S SITE HI

SITE #2

SITE #5

WAAF SITE #2

SITE #3

COMMUNAL SITE #2

ZI
SITE #4

SITE #8

EL^SWELL, SUFFOLK, EAST ANGLIA

SITE #7

DISPOSAL SITE

LMSWELL TO IPSWICH (Railroad)

"SSS" *sumsi*

ifog

Letters to the Editor

Dear Ed,

Since I've always been a packrat I have the Stars & Stripes during most of the time that I was in Europe at least the period I flew combat with Don Williams. My plan was to cut out each writeup of the mission we flew for a scrapbook. The day after our mission was nearly always covered in the Stars & Stripes. I may still make the scrapbook but I can FAX the papers without cutting them up. They are probably good reference material. Our first mission was in "Lil Audrey" last week of Nov. 44. I finished in March 31, 45 with 35 missions (slightly ahead of our crew). Our third mission to Mersburg put "Lil Audrey" out of business for at least a month to six weeks since it had completed 96 missions it was decided to rebuild her and get her another 4 missions at least. This was done by a different crew. (We counted over 80 flak holes.

I believe I read somewhere that one of the fellows was interested in more info on Lil Audrey.

Sincerely,

Warren Larson
17524 North Road, Bothell, WA 98012

Dear Ed,

While in Fargo I visited your store in the Mall across from the Holiday inn and made a couple of great purchases on trousers. The reduction on price was great. Using your marketing plan, Ed, there are thirty-three videos of "Wings From the Past" that were made up for the reunion and that I would sell now for \$25. . . and when these are gone there will be no more! If you would mention this in the Hard Life Herald I would again be in your debt.

Perhaps you might decide to visit Oregon this summer and I can make it up to you by showing you some of the sights that are unique and worth writing home about.

Thanks and take care,

Ron Nolan
6288 Nokomis Court, Lake Oswego, Oregon 97035

Dear Mr. Stern,

I need assistance in locating members of the 385BG who might have been involved in, or have some knowledge of, those men who were responsible for the actual painting of nose arts on aircraft. I would very much like to correspond with any veterans who can help me in this matter and am particularly interested in seeing any photos of nose arts or nose art being painted.

Almost every book on the ASAAF carries some photos of nose arts but very little is known of the men (and some women!) who actually painted them. I am interested to hear from anyone who can put a name to the artist of any nose art (no matter how simple it may have been) and of course any of the artists themselves who could tell me about the hows, wheres, whys of their artistic experiences.

I know of course that Anne Heywood was, perhaps, the most famous 385BG artist of all and I would love to hear from anyone who knew her. Other names that I have are Cpl. Ploss, Cpl. Lavin, Sgt. Ostrow. I am also interested to learn the origins of any of the names used on the aircraft — these frequently lead into the fascinating world of America during the war: the movies, songs, stars, radio shows, cartoon strips, personalities, etc.

Thanking you in anticipation of your assistance.

Sincerely,

Ray Bowden
50 Argyle Road, Ealing, London W13 8AA, England

P.S. If anyone knows the address of the outfit that sells back copies of Yank Magazine, please send it to Ray.

Dear Ed,

Just received the December issue of the Hard Life Herald. As ever, it was well done and interesting! Thanks for your devotion and effort - not only for the newsletters - but for a grand reunion in Fargo in August. For the first time in over 44 years, three of our crew and three wives got together - Ginther, Coustney and myself. Ginther and I were married before we went overseas so of the six - five of us had been close friends before. We've located two other members of our crew - Myers and Love - the others are deceased (Corona, Byrne, Whaley, and Lewis). I've enclosed a photo with names on the back. Please note that we had a dog - Buster! One of the crews asked me to look after him when they left to go home. Perhaps someone will remember him! He was a great dog!

I also wanted to respond to an interesting letter that you published in the December issue from Ron McInnis, tailgunner on Lt. Steil's crew. Our crew flew "762" until sometime in March when we were stood down and Lt. Driscoll flew her. Returning from the mission, I don't remember which one, they flew over either Dunkirk or Ostende, whichever was occupied by the Germans. The plane was badly damaged by flak, landed at a nearby allied field and never flew again. I believe that it was on that mission that Lt. Driscoll's navigator, Ed Gildea, was killed.

Ron also mentioned the March 2nd mission to Dresden in which 4 of the 12 B-17s from the 549th were shot down. Roily Myers flew as co-pilot and I flew as navigator on that mission. My recollection is that all but four or five of us were shot down, so apparently 3 or 4 crews were captured and survived!

Letters to the Editor cont'

Thanks again for all you hard work. Hope to see you in Tulsa! With best wishes for the Holiday Season!

Dick Knight
1631 Gulf Blvd 22, Clearwater, FL 35630



Ship: Hot Chocolate (338361)

Front Row (l. to r.) 1st Lt. Roy E Courtney - co-pilot; 1st Lt. Richard A. Knight - navigator; Capt. Roland W. Myers, pilot; Buster - dog! Rear Row (l to r) S/SGT. Ben T. Love - tail gunner; !S/Sgt. Lawrence A. Corona - waist gunner; T/Sgt. H.R. Wahley - chin turret gunner; T/Sgt John D. Byrne - engineer; S/Sgt. Roscoe C. Lewis - ball turret gunner.

Dear Ed,

I thought this photo might be of interest. It was taken at Linz Austria when in May 45 we went to pick up those Frenchmen who had been prisoners of the Germans for years, and flew them back to France. To my surprise when we landed there at Linz Airport, there was an old buddy of mine from my neighborhood, Larry Mafatone. He was a Lt., wounded at Linz and had told me how the Germans were defending that airport using BB guns, 1 of which I am holding, along with the Leica camera he gave me. Notice the checkered tail we had at the time.



French prisoners back to France - Linz, Austria. Lt. Bob Valliere - left; Lt. Lawrence Mafatone - right.

Would like the photo returned, when you are finished.

With best regards and sincere wishes for a healthy and joyful New Year to you and Jane - from both of us.

Bob Valliere

Dear Ron,

Your letter in the 385th BGMA December 1989, newsletter about the 548th B-17 which went down in Yellowstone National Park was of great interest.

I was the ROG on Crew 7 of the 548th and our ball turret gunner, Eddie Sykes of Ft. Benton MT and tailgunner, Bob Lopiano, Rochester, ny, and I were on a radio hook-up with a station in Lewistown last summer about the downed plane.

It was the first time the three of us had talked to each other since December, 1943, at Great Ashfield. We recalled the plane being lost coming back from an overwater flight out of Marysville CA, but not much else. There was one survivor, the bombardier, who bailed out of the nose hatch when he heard the alarm bell ring.

Our squadron CO, Capt. Septime Richard, had accompanied that crew to Marysville, but transferred to another plane for the flight back to Lewistown.

A member of the lost crew who did not go on that mission was Eddie Cavanaugh. He wound up as a waist gunner on our squadron's lead crew (Lt. Jacques) in England, and as far as I know finished his 25 missions.

A U.S. Forest Service specialist named Bowen here in Olympia, WA, was a fire control information officer on the Yellowstone fire and is writing a book on it. He is devoting a chapter to the finding of the B-17.

I hope that you may hear from some of the others in the original 548th who have details about the lost plane.

Sincerely yours,

John Richardson
ROG Crew 7, 548th Bomb. Sqd.
1517 Capitol Way #605, Olympia, WA 98501

Dear Ed,

RE: recently run clip from San Mateo Times from Ron McInnis, it did, indeed touch a chord. The squadron ran into a fearful front returning to Lewistown, MT from Marysville, CA; I don't think a single plane completed the flight as scheduled.

We learned of Roy Thompson's (crew 8) crash in a couple of days, and heard a rumor that the badly injured bombardier (presumably 2nd Lt. William T. McDonald, 0734389) had

Letters to the Editor co n't.

been recovered. If true, and he can be located alive through somebody's strings with VA or DAV, I'll be pleased to spring for a life membership for him (or whoever the survivor proves to be) in the Group's Assn.

A/C number is probably correct; my crew's plane was in the same sequence (42-30171).

Best wishes,

Ty C. Winton
420 Beach Dr., Destin, FL 32541

Dear Ed,

The Sunday Brunch & Meeting at Fargo re:
The B-17 being rebuilt to mint condition in the Miami area. I want to apologize to every last man there for the suggestion I made to name the plane.

The next day driving back to South Bend it hit me. I never thought of all the others whose B-17's meant just as much to them, if not more, than our plane to me.

I would like to see on the rebuilt B-17 in Miami the insignia (logo) of the 385th Bm Group, the logo's and numerals of the A Squadrons and of our Ground Support units, as well as the 8th A.F. 3rd Bomb Div., and our Wing.

Glad we live South of Fargo this winter where its warm here in South Bend, IN. Temp's only -5 to 10 degrees below zero, and wind chills only to a maximum of -40 below.

Again many thanks for your Fargo reunion, and my very best to all of the 385th Bm. Group and the people of Great Ashfield for the best in this New Year.

Sincerely,

Gene Silberberg (550th)
51778 Trowbridge LA, South Bend, IN 46637

Dear Ed,

For years I have had a question and wonder if anyone would provide an answer at this late date.

I went overseas with Lt. Tony Klasinski's crew in the early spring of 1944. We were assigned to the 301st B.G. in Foggia, Italy and after spending several months there our crew was reassigned to the "Big 8th" on a high priority basis, going to the 548th Sq. of the 385th Bomb Group, where I eventually completed my tour. Rumors said this move was for the purpose of being "Pathfinders" on shuttle

missions but nothing ever came of it, and I would still like to know the real reason for the move.

I find it difficult to identify former Sq. members because I knew too many men only by nicknames and not complete names — Am I the only one with this problem?

Thanks,

Charles K. Price
8701 -217 Belleville Road, Belleville, Michigan 48111

Dear John,

Re - my phone call to you a few days ago and my donation to "All Saints Church" at Great Ashfield in memory of those 1,400 men of the 385th who were lost.

Enclosed is my check, as promised. I was going to do this in my will, but doing it now, while still here, gives me a "living" satisfaction that is very meaningful to me.

I regret not having met, or known any person of Great Ashfield, especially now at this point in time. Our crew flew one week after D-Day, and I was home in Los Angeles for Thanksgiving. I guess time was just too short for us.

How can one thank the people of Great Ashfield for perpetuating the memory of 1,400 total strangers? I am at a total loss.

John, thank you so much for passing my check on to All Saints Church.

Hope you and yours have a Merry Christmas and all the very best for the New Year.

Most sincerely,

Gene Silberberg (550th)

Dear Ed;

I regretted not been at the convention in Fargo - so close - but just couldn't make it!

I would like to have the address of Gene Silberberg, T/Sgt. on Rum Dum with the 550th.

Since I was the last pilot to fly Rum Dum in combat and left it in a small grass field in Germany, I thought he might want the story. I still have the receipt for the aircraft from the British after landing it with two engines out - one on fire and extensive flak damage.

I would also like to contact other members of the crew on that last mission -1 don't know who they were - since it was

Letters to the Editor con't.

a pick-up crew made up of survivors of other crews. I was the pilot (left over from the Mr. Lucky disaster when I had been grounded the night before) on that raid on Berlin but I don't remember the other crew members.

Many Thanks,

Howard Muchow
Box 481, Deadwood, SD 57732

Where Did All Those Years Go?

Dear Ed,

Just retired and getting settled in Tryon, NC. Post 1945 I went back to Bucknell University - graduated in 1949.

Spent 35 years in International Business. Spent the last five running International Trade Shows. Married June Evans in 1948. Two Kids.

About five years ago had a mini-reunion with Charlie Byers and Bob Oechale (from our crew) and their wives. Had a great time rewinning "The Big One".

Looking forward to more time for golf and Ham Radio.

Norman Franks (Pilot 551 st)
2017 Hogback Mountain Road, Tryon, NC 28782

Editors Note: Send us a note like this telling what happened to your last 40 years!

Dear Ed,

Check enclosed for copy of reunion book. Sure would have liked to been there but our timing of the buying trip to Washington interfered.

Are there any plans for a trip to England this year? With Allan no longer among us, has anyone offered to take over as tour guide?

While on the '88 tour, we were accompanied by a young fellow (Mike Tabori) who video taped parts of the tour. I have attempted to contact him several times but haven't had any luck. He indicated in conversation the tape would be for sale at a later time. Have you any knowledge of this?

Regards,

Don Noe

Dear Ed;

New member

Frank G. Wasmer
220 Lafayette Blvd., Williamsville, NY 14221

Latest Life Member

Mrs. James T. Williams - Number 217
James is already a Life Member. He sent along another \$100.00 so we will show Mr. & Mrs. James T. Williams LM.

We have a new address. We lived in Venice 9 years ago and then moved out in the wilderness (in the county 1 % acres) too much work, so we came in out of the cold. I use the term loosely, and moved back into civilization. New address is
1321 Pinebrook Way Ct., Venice FL 34292. But I still get my mail at the old address - Box Number at Laurel. Will get it at the new address but it is a long address to write.

Ruel Weikert just returned to their home today. We enjoyed seeing them. These past months also the Colthropes stopped by on day.

You folks have a good year, I will not spoil it by mentioning the temperature.

Sincerely,

John Pettenger



Joseph E. Swartwood — March 1990

Dear Ed,

While attending the Fargo Reunion, I met Kelly Melillo who I had not seen or heard from in forty-five years.

Kelly was housed in the same quonset hut that my crew (Lt. Foster Falkenstine crew) was assigned on our arrival at the 385 Bomb Group, 551 Bomb Sqdn. in April 1944.

We became friends, but I was transferred to a top secret project named "Aphrodite" and was later transferred to the Radar (Pathfinder Sqdn. at Bury St. Edmonds to Capt. Jack Batty's crew, so I lost track of Kelly until we met in Fargo.

Kelly's original pilot, Ed Herron, was flying as command pilot with our crew on the tragic Berlin mission on October 6, 1944 when we lost the entire high sqdn or eleven A/C to German fighters. Both Capt. Batty and Ed Herron were killed along with five other crew members. Lt. Joseph Jones, Casper Fields (Sgt) and I were the only survivors.

Letters to the Editor con't.

Kelly has requested that I send you an account of my recollections for the Berlin mission, so I did some research and found two very fine articles by John Ford in the July 1984 newsletter, page 7 and Bruce Ey's story of October 6, 1944 mission, also, in the July 1984 newsletter, page 8. These two articles filled me in on some things I did not know as the fighter attack was so swift that those of us who survived were in our chutes in a matter of minutes.

So for what it is worth, attached is my recollection of the Berlin Mission of October 6, 1944.

**Berlin-Tegel Mission October 6, 1944
385th Bomb Group, 549th Bomb Squadron, Lost Entire
High Squadron of 11 Aircraft.**

I was lead bombardier on Capt. Jack Batty's crew 385BG, 551 BS on Tdy to Pathfinder Group at Bury St. Edmonds.

Our crew had been on stand-down for about a week due to our pilot being ill with a cold and we were anxious to return to flying status as we needed three missions to complete our tour of 30.

On October 6, 1944 we were awakened around 2 am and flew from Bury St. Edmonds to Great Ashfield for briefing and to pick up Capt. Ed Herron our command pilot. The weather was bad, fog and rain.

At the briefing, we were told our target would be Berlin-Tegel, a metallurgical factory, and due to the weather report the target would most likely be obscured by clouds. We would bomb in group formation. Also, we would have six groups of P-51 fighter escort over the target.

We took off and assembled over England and headed for Germany. Our crew was flying high sqdn lead for the 549th BS and had 13 A/C when assembled, but two A/C aborted over the channel due to engine malfunction. This left our sqdn with 11 A/C and our group was the last formation of the 500 A/C attacking this target.

Shortly after entering Germany, we received radio messages from groups over the target area that they were encountering heavy enemy fighter attacks.

Our group leader notified Capt. Herron that the lead and low sqdn would bomb the target first and our high sqdn would bomb last. This is why we were alone when attacked by the enemy A/C, and not because we were lagging behind as reported by the 8th Army Air Force Hdq. (See John Ford's letter in newsletter July 1984, page 7).

After we turned at the I.P., Lt. Joe Jones, our navigator, and I picked up the target and we began the bomb run. At this

time, German A/C were sighted off to our right approximately 5 miles away. Our escort went after the German A/C and this was when our formation was attacked by approximately 35 German A/C which came out of the cloud cover above and behind our 11 A/C. These were FW 190 and ME 109's.

Our A/C was damaged and began to dive and spin. I looked up from the bombsight to see a FW 190 off our left wing and a ME 109 directly in front of us as if in formation with us. The FW190 was checking us for damage and casualties, or so it seemed.

I engaged my turret sight and tried to swing on the ME 109 but the turret had taken a direct hit and would not fire, meanwhile Lt. Jones was on the left single fifty caliber gun lining up on the FW 190. But before he could fire our A/C did another dive. The A/C righted itself and I salvoed the bombs as the A/C had filled with smoke which I assumed was from the two marker bombs (smoke).

Lt. Jones and I prepared to bail-out, but when we reached the hatch, our engineer-top turret gunner was laying across the hatch and we could not move him. Since we were flying at 31,000 ft. we both passed out from lack of oxygen as we had removed on oxygen mask in preparing to bail out.

The plane evidently exploded because when I revived, I was falling free outside the A/C. I opened my chute and on taking inventory, found I had taken shrapnel in my left thigh.

When I landed, I was immediately picked up by the Germans.

The following day I was reunited with Lt. Jones and Sgt. Casper Fields the only other survivors of our crew.

I was taken to a hospital in Berlin and the shrapnel removed. From there I was sent to Frankfurt for interrogation and a brief hospital stay, then on to Stalag Luft 3 as a P.O.W. which is another story.

Robert McGhee
4404 Del Mabry Drive, Knoxville, Tenn. 27914

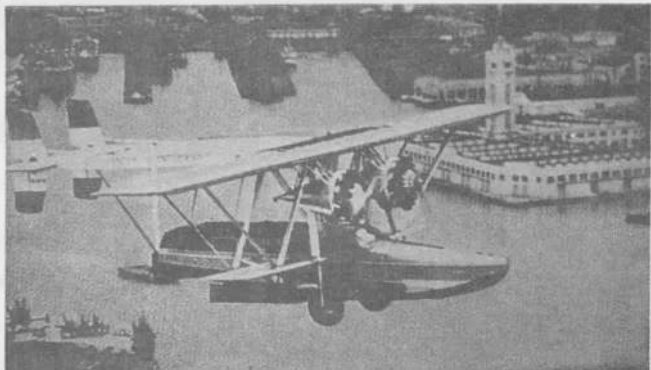
Dear Ed;

The 548th BS held a mini reunion on December 14 & 15 at the home of Jerry Ramaker in Kailua Kona, Hawaii. Those attending were Fain H. Pool & Jerry H. Ramaker. Although attendance was low, a good time was had by those attending. The agenda consisted of a big lunch, dinner (BBQ on the lanai, 80 degree F.) and a champagne breakfast the next morning, along with great quantities of home made beer and homemade wine. A seminar was held on the subjects of WAR STORIES and BS, more time spent on the latter as this

Letters to the Editor:



subject has no end. There was a fly by of a B-17, as you can see in the picture. Mr. Pool was quite a long time getting to Hawaii as the Sikorsky S-43 had to stop several times for fuel. It is pictured here flying from Honolulu to Kona on its last leg, and that's just about what happened. Fain said he had to take his turn flying as the pilot got sleepy. I promise the next mini 548th BS reunion held in Hawaii will get more notice so more may attend.



2-22-45 'BA CK FROM ZWICKA U'

'Gibby' Gibson celebrates 35 missions in E. T.O. Lt. Ben-sings crew-hose gunner. 'Gibby' had also flown 47 low level missions in the South Pacific before coming to England. Left to Right: Joe Kolasinsky - Radio; Unkown; Jerry Mangin - Engineer; Bill Poorbaugh - Tail; 'Gibby'; Sgt. Carney - 548th 1st Sgt; Monk? - Ground Crew - Bal unkown.

Mahalo nui loa from Hawaii nei,

Jerry H. Ramaker

Ed — I saw this letter in the newsletter and it aroused my curiosity so I sent this reply. My wife, Terry, and I enjoyed the Fargo reunion very much. At least two of our original crew members (Fred Ihlenburg and Bob Andrews) were there.

Dear Steve Knauff
18372 Elm Street, Peebles, Ohio 45660

I'm responding to your letter in the 385th BGMA Newsletter, the "Hard Life Herald", in the February 1990 issue. You asked for information on the crew that went down on May 8, 1944, but you did not say what your particular interest was regarding the crew.

I was the Navigator on this flight. We had been brought together as a lead crew for this mission and I did not know any of the crew members before the flight except for Bob Hudson. His crew and ours had trained together and arrived at the 548th Bomb Squadron at the same time.

About ten years ago, I did receive a letter from the Right Waist Gunner, Russel Boyko, and he sent me a list of crew members and their 1944 addresses, as follows:

Pilot - 1st Lt. Andrew Drobysh, Lake Kiamesha, NY; Co-Pilot - 2nd Lt. Harry M. Gousha, Jr., Chisholm, MN; Navigator - 2nd Lt. Clement I Irons - Linesville, PA (see current address); Bombardier - 2nd Lt. Robert L. Hudson, Augusta, KY; Bombardier - T/Sgt Joseph V. O'Donnell, Jr., Dorchester Mass; Bomb. - T/Sgt Cullen R. Cottum, Memphis, TENN; Bomb. S/Sgt Edward M. Waters, Washington, DC; Bomb. - S/Sgt Charles E. Moore, Winchester, Ohio; L. Waist - S/Sgt Arthur F. Carter, 533 Highland Dr., Mount Airy, NC 27030 (1979); R. Waist S/Sgt Russell J. Boyko, 6427 Grays Ave., Philadelphia, PA 19142 (1979).

About the time we dropped our bombs (Berlin), the number three engine ran away, and we had to drop out of formation to try to go home alone. The prop broke off from vibration, chopped a couple of cylinders off number four, then came through the right side of the fuselage, cutting electrical system to the nose. A P-51 stayed with us a little while, but said it was quiet today and he was low on fuel. About five minutes after he left, 4 FW-190's hit us in a classic attack (12 o'clock high out of the sun) near Bremen, Germany. Although wounded in the hand, Andy Drobysh put the plane into a spiral and held it until we all got out safely. I had some flash burns and bits of flak in my face and hands. As far as I know, there were no other wounds. I bailed out at 12:00 o'clock noon, landed 17 minutes later and was captured within a few minutes. The entire crew was rounded up and taken into Bremen that night. The officers were imprisoned in Stalag Luft III (Sagan). If you want any additional information, please let me know. Russell Boyko would be a better contact with regard to crew members.

Sincerely,

Clement I Irons, Colnel USAF (Ret)
6220 Stonehut Place, Clifton, Virginia 22024

Letters to the Editor con't.

Dear Ed,

It's been some time since I last wrote to you so here I am back again to report on the 548th Engineering Section Mini Reunion.

This year we had our meeting in Gatlinburg, Tennessee on Sept. 21st and we departed on the 24th. Our activities were curtailed a bit because of a heavy rainfall and some flooding thanks to Hurricane Hugo. However, we did have a great get-together. Also, we did pick up a new member whom we had not seen for 44 years (Joe Harvey, and he should be joining the 385th BGMA shortly).

This year 14 of us were able to make the trip. I am enclosing a picture which you may include in a future newsletter along with this report. Following are the names of those pictured.

Left to right: 1st Row - Gentile, Girson; 2nd Row (seated) - Harvey, Granger, Bridges, Huber, Ragone; 3rd Row (standing) - Detwiler, Thomas, Beam, Alcock, Leggett, Siederer; No. 14 not pictured - Bielle.

We also had along as guests the Huber's in-laws from England as well as their niece and nephew and their son.

I was glad to hear that the 385th reunion was a big success as we had a first hand report from Detwiler, Huber and Girson who made it to Fargo.

I want to commend you and the rest of the people who take care of all the work involved in running the 385th BGMA (a job well done!).

Sincerely,

Anthony Ragone
6 Wood Lane, Valley Stream, NY 11581

Mr. Ed Stern,

Sorry H haven't written for a while but I've been up to my ears working on the 'Eighth Air Force Bomber Stories' book being co-authored with Russ Zorn.

Sadly, Russ died in October so I'm finishing the book not only as a tribute to Eighth bomber crews and those who supported them, but also now in memory of a fine friend. Russ had put many hours of dedicated work into the research and it's such a shame he won't be around to see the result. Shortly before his death, I could at least give him the good news that the book had been accepted for publication so he knew his efforts weren't wasted. The basis of the book will be crash photographs taken by Russ backed up with the stories behind them.

Amongst 385th stories being used in the book is 'Liberty Belle' 42-30096 and I'm keen to get a picture showing the full ship if anyone can help.

Other 385th candidates include the crash-landing of 'Stardust' 42-39901, at Detling and possibly the explosion of 42-97818 on 15.6.44. Don Noe's adventures bringing 42-37528 home on 6th August will be included but, again, I'd like to have a picture of this ship before it crashed. 'Half n Half' crashed at Kentford on 13th September, 1944, and I hope to include her story. No one's yet come up with a good picture of this bird either (42-97940) so start ferreting in those albums - I'll copy and return any originals sent on loan.

The serial listing from Paul and I produced a lot of interest and I'll be contacting some of those who've written to HH to give information and see if I can borrow pics.

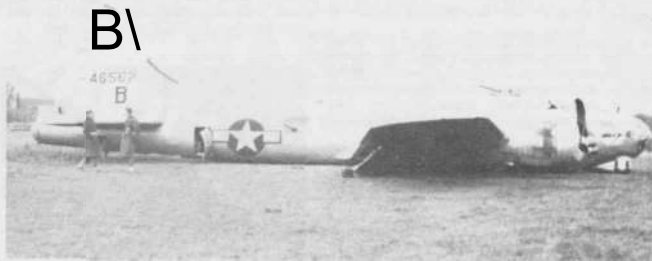
So this isn't a one-sided letter asking for pictures, I've enclosed a few which you can run in HH as and when.



These show the nose-art for Satan's Mate and a handshake involving this ship.



B-17G landing accident.



One of these you published before but here's another shot of Lt. Quick's landing accident on 30th October 1944, I'd love to hear from any of the crew to tell us what happened - it looks like a very neat belly landing.



This picture corrects a mistake in the serial listing because careful scrutiny shows the name 'Swinging Door' on the nose of this bird. It crash-landed near Maldon, Essex, on 2 Feb, 1944, so the 'Swinging Door' in the serial listing is wrong. I hope someone will come forward with the story of why she crashed. Again, looks like a neat job - obviously good pilots in the 385th.



Just to show my interest is not just aircraft, I've included this one - let's ask the guys where it was taken. The airmen nearest the camera wears a superb A2 with 'Roundtrip Ticket' on the back and upwards of 20 mission symbols.

Who are these guys, when and why was this taken?



Can anyone remember Lt. Arthur C. Naylor. He died on 11th November, 1944 when 42-31764 caught fire after take off. Nine bailed out but comparing the roster with the crew list, the only survivor I found was Francis Abdella. I wrote to him some weeks ago but haven't heard anything as yet.

There are other pictures I can send if you need them. Jack Silverman and I spent an excellent day together in November on Jack's first return to Great Ashfield since 1944. We had a super lunch with the Barker family and I'm sure Jack went home pleased that the risks he took are still appreciated over here. I copied some of Jack's pictures and am sure he won't mind if I send some prints to you for a future HH.

Hopefully my 385th friends will forgive me if I'm a little less active, but I've a deadline to meet for the new book. However, I'll always squeeze time from somewhere for Great Ashfield veterans.

Kindest regards,

Ian McLachlan
1 Joy Avenue, Newton Flotman,
Norwich, Norfolk NR15 1 RD

Dear Ron McInnis

At the close of your June 30th letter you said, "If ever I can be of any assistance please let me know". Well my friend, you already have. Sitting in my album for some time now has been a picture of the nose art for B-17 43-38118 but there's no name visible. You've solved that puzzle for me and your letter and diary also put some history to that photograph. Would you like me to copy it for you? I'd like a picture of your crew to accompany it if you have one.

I've copied your letter to Ed - it shows how little bits of information help form a bigger picture.

Hoping to hear from you again.

Best wishes,

Ian McLachlan

Yanks in the ETO

Note> from a UK Fort BOM

ENGLAND—Back in 1942 when William Plot* of Trafford, Pa., was dragged away from high school and into the Army at S21 a month one of the things that irritated him most was the frustrating refrain: "You'll never get rich you son of a bitch. You're in the Army now."
 " Since then Ploss, now a corporal in the 385th Bomb Group, has made the writer of that old Army ditty swallow his lyrics. For in his off-time hours Ploss is getting rich (tainting flattering life-sized color portraits of soldiers' wives and sweethearts. He copies them from the snapshots the men carry around in their wallets.



Ploss has had no difficulty getting customers. "There isn't a guy in the Army," he says, "who doesn't want to show you his wife's picture. When they approach me, I just give them a good sales talk."

Like Velasquez, Ploss relics on flattery. "A guy doesn't mind his wife being glamorized a bit," he says. "If her nose is too long, I can shorten it. If she has buck teeth, I can push them back."

When Ploss started painting at Chanute Field, Ill., he charged only 75 cents for a portrait. But his price has risen since then. In England a Ploss portrait costs two quid. Ploss reasons that they are worth more over here.

"A man misses his wife more than he did back in the States and the photographs he carries around are often so weather-beaten and tom that they're hardly worth looking at."

With some of the extra money he has made in England, Ploss sent home for an air-brush, which has speeded up his production considerably. He uses four or five colors and can now turn out three portraits a night if he feels in the mood. Before he starts, he gets the soldier to tell him what color to paint the eyes, hair and complexion.

About a month ago a crew in the 385th Bomb Group called on Ploss to paint a portrait of Cpl. Ruby Newell on its Flying Fortress. Ruby, you may recall, was recently judged by *Stars and Stripes* to be the most beautiful Wac in the UK.

FLYING Forts aren't built for aerobatics, but sometimes one of them is called upon to do a fancy trick or two, just the same.

Take *Satan's Mate*, a Fort of the 385th Bomb Group, for example. Returning from Germany after dropping its bombload, the plane did a complete back somersault without damaging herself or the crew.

It happened on the way back from Rheine. The Fort was flying on instruments, and had just started to make a 23-degree climb to get out of the soup. Suddenly the plane became caught in the slip-

stream of the Fort ahead *Satea's Mate* shot up at 90 degrees, flopped over on her back and then went down in a wreathing dive. Her air speed was recorded at 380.'

The pilot and co-pilot, Lts. James L. Fleisher of Peoria, Ill., and Paul H. Cowling of Wichita Falls, Tex., were jammed up against the cockpit. They still held the stick and together managed to pull out of the dive.

The centrifugal force of the dive kept the waist gunner, Sgt. Robert R. Cory of Farror, Iowa, and the radio operator, Sgt. Trevor J. Kevan of Lake Forest, Ill., stuck against the roof. It wasn't until after they pulled out and began climbing into formation again that they fell back into their normal positions.

Except for bruised heads and hits from flying K-ration boxes, the crew was unhurt. A hole was knocked out of the plexi-glass radio hatch. If it had been a little larger, the radio operator would have fallen through.

When the plane landed in England the crew got out to look at the damage. They were amazed to find that there was none, except for 74 rivets that had pulled out of the stabilizer.

So far as the crew know, they are the first to loop backwards in a Fort and live to tell the story. If it has happened to others they would like to hear about it.

ALot of people can share the credit for the fact that, as of last week, *Li'l Audrey*, a Flying Fortress of the 385th Bomb Group, had chalked up 111 missions, but no one is any prouder of that accomplishment than M/Sgt. John R. De Berg of Henry, S.D. As the plane's crew chief, he has had her under his care since her first mission and has kept her up in the air for 1020 hours.

There are probably only three or four Forts in the 8th Air Force that can rival *Li'l Audrey's* record. Those that reach the 100-mark do so as a result of luck, expert maintenance and good pilots who have the knack of bringing a plane back on two engines if they have to.

Li'l Audrey's first mission was way back on March 6, 1944, the date on which the 8th Air Force flew its first daylight raid over Berlin. She had been placed in De Berg's care the day before.

Since then she has missed only two Berlin raids and, not counting practice missions, has averaged a mission every third day for the past 11 months. She has had two turn-backs, for mechanical reasons, 1 Kith after she had completed 73 missions. She has had 18 engines, her plexiglass nose and wings are studded with flak holes, she has come back three times with only two engines, yet not one of her crew has ever been killed or wounded.



De Berg and his ground crew are naturally pretty pleased by all this. In two years De Berg has never lost a ship. *Mary Pat*, his ship before *Li'l Audrey*, was declared war-weary.

Two pilots have completed their missions on *Li'l Audrey*. The third and present pilot is 1st Lt. John H. Peterson of Chester, Pa. He has 19 more missions to go. De Berg thinks that the way *Li'l Audrey* can take it, she'll probably just about last, him out.

-fly Cpl. EDMUND ANTROBUS
 February 1945 7 YANK Staff Correspondent

385 BGM A

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