

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

**Vol. XVIII, No. II**  
**Editor: Ed Stern**  
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**SUPPORT UNITS**

424th AIR SVS. GP.  
 877th CHEM. CO. (AO)  
 DET. 155, 18th AWS  
 31st STATION COMPLEMENT SQ.

**APRIL 1991**

**Prez Sez:**

**ASSOCIATION OFFICERS**

**PRESIDENT**

Sam Lyke  
 4992 SE Princeton Dr.  
 Bartlesville, OK 74006

**1ST VICE PRESIDENT**

Sid Colthorpe  
 316 Woodside Dr.  
 Hampton, VA 23669

**2ND VICE PRESIDENTS**

Charles Smith  
 1025 Oakhaven Dr.  
 Rosewell, GA 30075

Mary Lyke  
 4992 SE Princeton Dr.  
 Bartlesville, OK 74006

**SECRETARY**

George S. Hruska  
 7442 Ontario St.  
 Omaha, NE 68124

**TREASURER**

John F. Pattenger  
 Box 117  
 Laurel, FL 34272-0117

**EDITOR, BGMA NEWSLETTER**

Ed Stern  
 P.O. Box 2187  
 Fargo, ND 58108

**8th AF HISTORICAL UNIT CONTACT**

Gerry Donnelly  
 10770 SW 46th  
 Miami, FL 33165

**HONORARY MEMBERS**

Gen. James Doolittle  
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 Gen. E.P. Partridge  
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 Earl L. Cole

Spring has arrived in Oklahoma. Flowers are so beautiful, trees in full bloom. You must come to the reunion in June to see our "Green Country".

Registrations are picking up and George and Marie Menkoff are encouraged by the registrations.

My favorite project, the finding of lost members of our great 385th is paying off. Mary and I have entered reunion notices in 32 different publications, other members have notified me they entered in their newspapers, and we now have ten new names to add to our roster.

We are looking forward to a great reunion. We are proud to host the members of the 385th to the Sooner State. We hope you might prolong your trip here to see the other attractions our state has to offer.

I hope each of you will find some lost member and encourage them to attend the reunion. See you in Tulsa in June.

Sincerely,

Sam Lyke, President

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

**50TH ANNIVERSARY REUNION — SPOKANE, WA - 1993**

**EDITOR'S NOTE:**

Bill Flagler sent the following poem, written July 22, 1943 by Warren Cerrone, who gave us the OK to print it. Nice sentiments that still sound good after all those years.

You may speak of brave men dy'in  
In the crates that they must fly-in  
But you'll never say a word for those that live.

When the Red alert they're callin'  
All the combat crews come crawlin'  
from their sacks, to get a briefing for a raid.

Then they rush out to their aircraft  
Test the engines, guns, and life raft,  
And fly up in a dawning air at four or five.

Over Germany, quite fairly  
They'll all hit the target squarely  
For there's not a man in 385 afraid.

There are those that will return in.  
Just a wing and one prop churnin'  
While the others need a ripened Spanish olive.

We may never lose a HEIR from  
All the crews that leave our airdrom'  
But you'll never find us shirking from a raid.

Lt. Warren E. Cerrone A.C.

**Half and Half  
Summer "C" Charlie**

There may have been more than one aircraft names "Half and Half", but I had one by that name and I would like to tell you the story about it as best I remember. I am sorry that I don't remember the names of the crews involved or the aircraft serial numbers, but I think I remember my call sign "Summer "C" Charlie". "Summer" I think referred to the 548th Sqn. in code name, and "C" Charlie referred to the letter on the tail of my aircraft.

The first aircraft assigned to me was painted OD and I think it was an "F" model. When I was on pass one day another crew flew it and was shot down. I was assigned a new aircraft which was all silver and a "G" model with chin turret. When I was on pass again some time in Sept, or Oct. another crew flew it and had flak damage which prevented extension of the tail wheel, so the aft half of the plane was damaged. Another plane that day could not extend the main gear and bellied in damaging the front half of the plane. Engineering and Maintenance took the front half of my plane and the rear half of the other and put them together, so we named it "Half and Half", or "Arf and Arf" in British brogue. I believe that another crew later on had to bail out of "Half and Half" near the base due to battle damage.

Is there anyone who can supply more accurate information on these facts?

I completed my 35th mission and combat tour on Nov. 16, 1944 and flew training missions with new crews until Dec.

10th when I went to Stone, England, for return home - arriving at Ft. Dix on Jan. 5, 1945.

The 1989 reunion in Fargo W&s so much fun I can hardly wait to see all of you again in Tulsa next June.

Yours respectfully,  
Fain H. Pool  
Lt. Col. (Ret) USAF

5601-117th St. SW  
Tacoma, WA 98499  
206-588-7146

*Ole and Lars had locked themselves out of their car.*

*Ole: "Let's use a coat hanger to pull up the lock."*

*Lars: "No, someone might see us and think we are breaking in."*

*Ole: "Use my pocketknife to cut away rubber around window, stick fingers in and pull up lock."*

*Lars: "No, people will think we're too stupid to use a coat hanger."*

*Ole: "Well, let's do something fast. The tops down and it's starting to rain."*

**Editor's Note:**

They tell Norwegian jokes in North Dakota.

**UPDATED ROSTER OF MEMBERS  
TO BE PRINTED IN JUNE**

We planned to have the new roster in this issue, but we are delaying it so that it can include a good number of new members, plus a complete list of all of our 385th members who are buried in U.S. Military Cemeteries in the ETO. MIA's are also on the list, along with date of death, location of grave, and decorations received. This list was sent to us by Bob Burch. See his letter on page 17 of this Hardlife.

**Nominating committee recommendations**

Nominating committee recommendations to be presented at Tulsa Reunion. Further nominations may be made from the floor.

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1st V.P.  
2nd V.P.  
Ladies V.P.  
Secretary  
Treasurer  
Editor  
8th AF Unit Cont.

Sid Colthorpe  
Charles Smith  
Robert C. Smith  
Mrs. Lee Colthorpe  
George Hruska  
John Pettenger  
Ed Stern  
Gerry Donnelly



Grier F. Johnson

March 1991

## 385th Return to England Trip Being Planned

Treasurer John Pettenger has picked up the ball in planning for a 385th Trip to England as part of the 50th Anniversary Celebration of the 8th Air Force. May of 1992 is the target date.

Big plans are in the works in England, and John has made contact with Arena Travel of Felixstowe. A 16 Day Itinerary

is proposed. A minimum of 36 will be needed. Price, based on present price level will be \$1898 per person, not including Air Fare to England.

Let John know of your interest as soon as possible. A tentative itinerary follows: It is hoped that complete information will be presented at the Tulsa Reunion. But let John know of your interest!

# ARENA

• T - R - A - V - E - L -

HAMILTON HOUSE, CAMBRIDGE ROAD, FELIXSTOWE, SUFFOLK, IP11 7EU, ENGLAND  
TELEPHONE: (0394) 273262. TELEX: 98425 WADE GP, FAX: (0394) 271043  
Registered in England No. 1127663

Air Mail Letter

DJW/CW/AT

Thursday 31st January, 1991.

John Pettinger Esq. ,  
Box 117,  
Laurel,  
Florida 34272,  
U. S. A.

Dear John,

I finally got back to thinking about the 385th itinerary - not laziness but pure pressure of work.

Enclosed is the result of my deliberations and these are my thoughts that go with them. . . .

1) I've chosen the Russell Hotel because of its closeness to the route of the direct bus service from Heathrow and Gatwick into central London. Should the group size make it impractical to run our 'shuttle-service' from/to the airports then at least we can provide coach tickets for the folks to take advantage of this new service. The hotel is on Russell Square in the heart of London.

2) I'll choose a surprise venue for the Welcome Reception and it'll be a change from the Cabinet War Rooms as used before.

3) As many folks may have travelled to the U. K. before not everyone may want the sightseeing tour.

4) The villagers at Great Ashfield have stressed that they'd prefer all activities there to be on a Saturday and Sunday. The Reunion Dinner and F. O. T. E. slide show could be on either night.

5) If you want to coincide with the Mildenhall Air Show (provisionally set for 23rd/24th May) then you'll need to elongate the tour by leaving the U. S. one day earlier, have the first visit to Great Ashfield on the Friday (the villagers and military vehicles society will moan but probably approve), visit Mildenhall on the Saturday and then keep the Sunday as per the itinerary. It just wouldn't be possible to combine Mildenhall into the existing itinerary owing to the vast crowds that visit. It can take 2 hours to cover the last 10 miles and to park the coach. Getting out is worse!

6) On the way north from Cambridge to York I thought of routing through more of the East Anglian countryside and travelling via Sandringham near Kings Lynn in Norfolk. If open then the folks could have a tour of the Queens country house. English Lavender fields and mill nearby too.

7) I chose York because it's very impressive both scenically and historically. It also makes the folks feel that they've seen more of England.

8) Similarly with Chester, one of our fine old towns and the gateway to Wales. This gives us the opportunity to have a lovely day seeing the rugged scenery of North Wales plus visit a superb castle and one of the U. K.'s finest gardens.

9) The last night dinner will probably be in the more formal yet absolutely delightful atmosphere of Simpsons in the Strand - one of London's finest and most traditional restaurants.

10) The price is calculated on 1991 rates plus a 'guestimated' allowance for 1992. I'll confirm prices just as soon as I can but I doubt if I'm far out.

That's about it on this - can you come back to me with your thoughts so that I can change or firm-up on the arrangements and start preparing the brochure copy. As before I've allowed for printing a brochure for you to distribute to all members and I'd like to have it available for the reunion in June. I'm actually hoping to combine that with a business trip to the States so I'll be able to hand them out myself!

### 385TH BOMBARDMENT GROUP REUNION ASSOCIATION

#### Return to England - 1992

#### Proposed Itinerary

#### B-day 1 - Tuesday

Depart from the U.S.A. for the overnight flight to London.

#### Day 2 - Wednesday

Morning arrival into London's Heathrow and Gatwick Airports. Coach transfer to the Hotel Russell in central London. Afternoon at leisure. Evening Welcome Reception.

#### Day 3 - Thursday

Full day at leisure in London. Sightseeing tour available (at no extra charge) for those wishing it.



Day 4 - Friday

Drive via the old wool town in Lavenham in Suffolk for lunch at the famous Swan Hotel. Time to sightsee and to visit the pretty nearby village of Kersey before continuing on to Felixstowe and the Orwell Moat House Hotel. Evening free.

Day 5 - Saturday

Morning visit to the airfield at Great Ashfield. Buffet lunch at the airfield and early afternoon free. Evening Reunion Dinner at the hotel (with dance band if numbers allow). Possible visit to air museum at Parham on return drive.

Day 6 - Sunday

Morning Service at Great Ashfield Church followed by traditional Sunday lunch in the houses of the residents of Great Ashfield and surrounding villages. Early evening barbecue and slide show by the F.O.T.E.

Day 7 - Monday

Morning drive to Bury St. Edmunds for a short visit before having a pub lunch at the Flying Fortress pub at Rougham. Onward then to Cambridge and to the Post House Hotel. Remainder of the afternoon free at Cambridge. Evening 'pub crawl' around the pubs of Cambridge.

Day 8 - Tuesday

Morning visit to the American Cemetery at Madingley followed by an afternoon visit to the Imperial War Museum Duxford. Evening free.

Day 9 - Wednesday

Morning free in Cambridge before the afternoon drive north to York. Visit to a grand country house on route, arriving at the Post House Hotel in York in the early evening.

Day 10 - Thursday

Morning short walking tour of York including a visit to Yorkminster. Remainder of the day to explore and sightsee at leisure.

Day 11 - Friday

Late morning drive to Chester, one of Englands prettiest towns. Arriving at the Queens Hotel in the early afternoon. Remainder of the day at leisure.

Day 12 - Saturday

Full days tour of the rugged North Wales countryside and coastline visiting Caenarthon Castle, the beautiful Bodnant Gardens and the Snowdonia National Park.

Day 13 - Sunday

Morning free in Chester. Afternoon return drive to London.

Day 14 - Monday

Full day at leisure in London. Special 'Last night' dinner included.

Day 15 - Tuesday

Transfer by coach to Heathrow and Gatwick Airports to connect with return flights to the U.S.A.

**The tour price of £978.00**

**(\$1898.00 as at 18.1.91) is inclusive**

**of: -**

- \* 13 nights 1st Class hotel accommodation inclusive of breakfasts, service and taxes. full
- \* All coaching as per the itinerary.

- \* Lunches on days 4, 5, 6 and 7.
- \* The Reunion Dinner on Day 5.
- \* The last-night Dinner on Day<sup>^</sup> 14.
- \* Barbecue Dinner on Day 6.
- \* Welcome Reception on Day 2.
- \* All admission charges.
- \* Guided sightseeing tours of London and York.
- \* The service of an experienced Tour Courier who will accompany the tour throughout.

Not Included:

Flights, any meals not specified as being included plus personal items e. g. phone calls, laundry etc.

- \* Based on minimum of 36 participants.

## Letters to the Editor:

### Editor's Note:

A first clue to who may have been in on the bombing of Boise City as mentioned in the December Hardlife. Anyone else remember?

Happy New Year Ed,

I hope the holidays were as kind to you and yours as they were to us.

Had quite a start when I read the Boise City article in the December Newsletter. I was part of the cadre that activated Dalhart as an R.T.U. Base in early 1943 and spent the whole year there as an instructor pilot.

Needless to say I hastened to dig out my old form V to check dates in July of '43 and was happy to note that on that date, I had been on the morning flight.

I do have a faint recollection of the flap that occurred over the incident and believe that results were the same as those of Boise City, no one would admit to the mistake. Of the several crews that had dropped bombs that nite, they all thought they had done a really good job.

Looking forward to Tulsa.  
As Ever

Bob Milligan

Dear Ed:

Does someone whose brain cells haven't yet deteriorated remember where the 549th bunked? And where was the officers Club? And the messhall? And operations?

I remember the three trees just fine. I remember checking out Bill Leverett, who wasn't happy being a co-pilot. He was from Texas, and he said that Texans don't grow up to fly the right seat. We blew a tire landing on 18. We wobbled off to the side and parked in the grass, wrote "flat tire" in the Form One, and left her near the trees, and then we went to Operations to tell someone what had happened. No one cared. Back then no one cared a whole lot about flat tires.

I ran into a bombardier a while back who had been with the 100th. He said that he flew when it was really rough, having been shot down on his third mission in the winter of 1943. He told me that those of us who flew after D-day had it easy. Everyone has to remember that war his own way. What I remember is that when Bill Leverett got his own crew and went to Berlin late in September, everybody in the 549th, everyone on all eleven airplanes that the 549th put up, bought the farm, and those who didn't buy it rented it for the duration.

One thing more. Did anyone know what happened to Harry M. Gousha? He was in Class 43-1 at Santa Ana and Douglas, Arizona, and I heard that he arrived at the 385th before me, and he and the crew he was on ended up in Sweden.

Homer Groening  
2705 SW Patton Ct.  
Portland, OR 97201

### Editor's Note:

Homer sent a small copy of a map-much smaller than in our April 1990 Hardlife. We tried to locate the sites he asked about.

## My Experiences in the 549th Bomb Squadron and the 385th Bomb Group During World War II

By Charles Cassius Smith

In late January, 1943, I joined the 385th Bomb Group at Geiger Field near Spokane, Washington and was assigned to the 549th Bomb Squadron as the supply and transportation officer for the six weeks I was there. Basically, three of us--Sgt. John Mullen, Pvt. Bill Hunter, and I were given the task of outfitting the men of our squadron with WINTER socks, shoes, clothing, overcoats, hats, guns and ammunition.

I remember the problem about supplies of furniture for the Group Medical Department. Civilian supply workers at the base depot would not give us supplies that were authorized without complicated procedures. I went to the depot armed with a requisition form and determination and told the civilian supply that I was there with a waiting truck to pick up the requisitioned equipment. We got the furniture with no questions asked.

When we left Geiger Field for reassignment at Glasgow, Montana. I flew with Maj. Berkeley Springfield, pilot, after closing out my job at Geiger. I looked out of the plane windows while in flight, and we were flying at times about 50 feet from some of the mountain tops. The co-pilot asked permission to fly at a higher altitude, but Maj. Springfield refused the request.

At Glasgow, pilots and crews learned about flight formations while ground personnel polished up their skills and requirements. A Lt. Lemon became our mess officer and was given a money allowance to purchase supplies locally. This was the best Air Force food I ate in my 414 years of active duty. We were advised to supply troops with SUMMER (khaki) uniforms and turn in winter supplies. This we did, along with equipping, as well as possible, for overseas assignment in a warm climate.

In June, 1943, ground troops were ordered to depart for Ft. Dix, New Jersey before going to an embarkation port on the east coast. The train station advised that our departure would be at 1300 hours three days in advance. Since I was supply officer I was automatically the train-loading officer. We were loaded and checked for departure at 1255 hours when I reported to the train engineer that we were ready to roll. He did not believe we could be ready and told me that he had never before had a troop train that was ready and on schedule. I think we lost two men at some of the stops, but somehow they got back on our train by the time we got to Camp Kilmer, NJ.

The first day at Camp Kilmer, New Jersey at about 1600 hours at a supply officers' meeting we were advised to equip all personnel in three days with WINTER wool uniforms and to turn in all khaki clothing plus some equipment for tropical use which we had with us. I asked the colonel giving the instructions if Supply would be open 24 hours daily, beginning that night, and he said, "No," since the supply depot was operated by civilians. I told him that in no way could our squadron or any other squadron be ready in three days unless Supply was kept open continuously. The colonel could not authorize the civilian workers in Sup-

ply to keep the Supply Department open, and he would not call the C.O. of Fort Dix to get permission. By this time it was 1900 hours; so, I called the C.O. (A Brig. Gen.) and explained that there was no way we could be ready in three days unless the Supply Division was kept open around the clock. He agreed. In three days we were supplied again with the WINTER uniforms, four-buckle overshoes, winter coats, etc. as to be expected, we were in this Fort about two weeks before we actually began to load on the Queen Mary.



385th Bomb Group  
Bomb Loading Truck  
Great Ashfield, England  
1943 thru 1945

Lt. Ralph Dentinger and I were the advance loading officers. I asked the dock workers to lift and set our loaded crates down instead of pulling them off of the high truck beds and letting them drop to the concrete dock. After discussing the problem with three or four other dock workers, I simply cocked my "45" and quickly settled the matter (at least while I stayed top-side before going on into the Queen Mary). We departed about July 3, 1943. Without gun boat escort we took continuous evasive action for four days and nights until we arrived in Glasgow, Scotland in the late afternoon. We loaded into a British train, not knowing yet where we were going. Train stops were made every hour or so at stations, and when we asked how far it was to London, the answer came, "about six hours", or "About 4'A Hours". The British either did not use distance in miles or kilometers or did not know the distance. We arrived at our base, Great Ashfield, in southeastern England (East Anglia) at about 0330 hours with the base still being controlled by the British Royal Air Force. Prior to our arrival this base had been built for the Eighth Air Force by the British. About 0530 hours we went to the British mess hall for a breakfast of sheep stew, brussel sprouts, and, I think, something like a Canadian turnip. (Not bad for one meal, but this was all we had for each meal for the first five days!) Fortunately, we had packed K-rations in all the open areas of our 549th Bomb Squadron crates; so, we did have at least something beside the sheep stew for meals.

After being in Great Ashfield about seven days. Col. Elliot VanDevanter called me to ask if I would like to take over Group Transportation which would include overseeing all vehicles of the four squadrons, an engineering squadron attached to us, and Group vehicles. Thinking Squadron Supply would be less of a problem and having been in service long enough to know to never volunteer, I told him I did not think I would like it. Col. VanDevanter cleared his throat (as usual when he wanted to make his point) and said, "Report to the Motor Pool at 0800 tomorrow, and when you are

ready to take over, let me know, and I will relieve the present officer." At the end of the first day I told Col. Van that if I was going to run the Motor Pool, please relieve the other officer so I could get started.

At my first attendance at a group staff meeting, Col VanDevanter asked me if we could do something he was thinking about, and I immediately answered, "hell no!" (He paused and was very quiet until I remembered protocol.) "Sir!" All of the other officers roared laughing, including Col. VanDevanter, but you can bet that I never made that mistake again.

The Motor Pool had one Tech. Sgt. with about 20 year service who was my ranking non-com, and several Staff Sergeants, buck Sergeants, one or two Corporals, and many Privates. At our first meeting I advised the men that I would never ask them to do anything I had never done or would not do, that I would keep them informed of everything of interest that I was allowed to, and that I would promote them as fast as I could. I also told them that I expected them to be on duty when they were supposed to be, to obey all rules, and that if they screwed up, I would bust them just as fast as I promoted them.

Controlling transportation for an Air Force base of 3500 people was a challenging but an interesting job. Every vehicle leaving our Great Ashfield Base had to have an approved trip ticket signed by one of our dispatchers on duty 24 hours a day. We Americans quickly had to learn to drive on the left side of the road, and this became a great challenge, at first. The British roads were narrow, and too many British drivers came around curves in the middle of the roads. Our natural tendency was to pull over to the right. The United States paid for several accidents shortly after we arrived at Great Ashfield Base.

Each squadron C.O., deputy commander, training officer, intelligence officer, engineering officer and armament officer had a Jeep assigned to him on a 24 hour continuous basis. All Jeeps had to come to the Motor Pool daily to have oil and water levels checked and once a week to have tire pressures checked. All other vehicles (command cars, motorcycles, armament trucks, tow trucks, tankers, and wreckers) except ambulances were driven by Motor Pool personnel. Since the four Squadrons were quite scattered over the large base area, it soon became apparent that we needed a scheduled bus system to transport the men from barracks to work areas, the Post Exchange, and other places on the Base. We did this with the British "Larry"(lorry) which was a British truck.

The British Liason Officer on the Base came to me about six weeks after our arrival and said, "Here is a list of British lorries, snow plows, road sweepers, etc. that go with the Base; sign here." I asked him to hop into a Jeep, and we would check each vehicle or piece of equipment to be sure it was in working order. He would not agree to that and left. He came back in a couple of months and finally agreed, then, to an actual check which indicated only about 85% of the listed equipment was actually on Base. We grounded four lorries which were without fuel filters, and would you believe! We never got the fuel filters for the 2'A years we were in England! Before signing the manifest, Sgt. Espendez, chief of the mechanics in the Motor Pool, and I checked to be sure we could bypass the fuel filters to operate vehicles without filters, which is what we did do.



Lt. Charles C. Smith  
Fall 1943  
385th Bomb Group  
Great Ashfield, England

Our 549th C.O., Maj. Berkeley Springfield, was leading the Group (and possibly Wing) on his third or fourth mission within one month after the ground troops arrived in England, when his plane was shot down on an important raid. This saddened all of us and made us vividly aware that was a horrible thing, and we were very much a part of that horror. Capt. Archie Benner was made our C.O., and he was an excellent replacement.

It became apparent that the best method to assure transportation for the plane crews was to assign volunteer truck drivers to be available at any time, day or night. Only a telephone call to the Motor Pool was necessary when crew members needed to be present for the slow-timing of a plane engine after repair as well as for transportation to normal crew practice, or to the orientation room for new crews and flying personnel. The Motor Pool furnished transportation to briefings at the intelligence room, to the mess hall, and for the gunners who needed to go to the armament shop to pick up artillery for the planes. We also drove those courageous plane crew members to their planes before take-off on missions. As I recall, we had two barracks, each with ten men quartering the 20 volunteers for transportation duty. We never had a complaint from the volunteers or from the crews.

One 549th administrative officer in a chance visit to one of the barracks complained to me that men were shooting craps while he was there. I reminded him that I shot craps at the Officers' Club, and he played poker there; they were not doing anything we did not do. He continued to grumble, but I told him he had no authority over the men assigned to the Motor Pool.



In general, the Motor Pool operated smoothly, but there were some interesting things which happened periodically-one being when the first crew to finish their 25 missions shot up all their flares when arriving back over the air field. One of the flares set a thatched roof on fire which our Fire Department put out. In a few days I was sent a form from Group Headquarters. I was asked to sign a complaint form which stated that one of my trucks had backfired and caused the fire. Since our vehicles did not get within 1/4 mile of the house, I refused to sign the statement, and to this day I do not know if Col. Van signed my name or not.

A major from 3rd Air Division was dating an English girl who lived three or four miles from our base. He would call in at Midnight or later and ask for transportation back to 3rd Air Division, about 20-25 miles from our Base. This became a regular request, and Sgt. Thompson asked me if I knew about it. I asked to have the next call relayed to me in order that I could settle the matter. That night the major called for transportation about 0300 hours. The call came to the telephone in our barracks. I listened to his story about his need to get back for a briefing, but I told him that was his problem, not mine, and he should call his own base. Although he assured me that I would hear further from 3rd Air Division and him, I never did hear.

Another event was when a new 2nd Lt. came on the Base and demanded a Jeep to go to Stowmarket. Our dispatcher advised to catch a regular run to Stowmarket at 1000 hours or 1600 hours. The officer became quite angry and wanted to talk to me. He came back to my desk located in a temporary trailer and started raising Cain. I explained to him that no one got a special Jeep to go into Stowmarket to pick up laundry or dry cleaning. He told me that if I did not have that 1st Lt. bar on "he would whip my ass". I took off my bar and invited him outside so we would not disturb the office and disrupt operations. He would not go outside. I found out that evening at mess that the 2nd Lt. was a professional boxer back in the States. (Probably saved me from his giving me a good licking!)

One thing did irritate me greatly, and that was the large number of Air Force inspectors from headquarters who

were regularly coming around and wanting to stop vehicles in motion and to check them over. I finally just told my drivers not to stop on runs for any inspector, and I told the inspectors that they would not stop our moving vehicles. The inspectors argued that they could stop vehicles, but I won out on our Base. Inspectors would write on their reports that we should send so many tires to the retread shop-which we did at first-and the retread shop would send the tires back with instructions to run the tires some more. The inspectors generally did not have a good knowledge of vehicles, and I thought they wasted their time and our time. I insisted that all inspectors must bring their reports in to me, and we would go over them before they left. About half of them were willing to do this; the other half grumbled that they did not have to see me; they could just leave the report. One inspector sent his report in by his driver, and I requested the driver to ask the inspector to come in to see me. The driver came back with the statement that inspectors did not have to discuss their reports with an officer in charge of what they had inspected. The inspector, however, did come in, (I may have outranked him.) and at least half of his report was wrong.



Tanker Truck - 385th B.G. England  
1943 thru Aug. 1945

Another installment of this report will be printed in the next Hardlife Herald.

**385th BGMA APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP**

Please Print

\_\_\_\_\_  
LAST NAME, First, MI.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Spouse's Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Street or P.O. Box #

(J) \_\_\_\_\_  
Telephone Number

\_\_\_\_\_  
City, State, S 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 34272-0117

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.

Dear Ed,

I have been corresponding with Anne (Haywood) Gordon who did the Nose Art on many of the 385th planes.

In one of her recent letters she sent me the enclosed article which I thought would prove interesting to many of the remaining 385th members.

I talked with Anne, on the phone, Christmas Day and she sounded great. She is well and was having her daughter and

**Oxford artist Annie Gordon 'nose' what the American pilot's liked during the Second World War as DON CHAPMAN discovered**



LEFT: Airmen at Prayer drawing by Annie Gordon.



HIGHT: Annie Gordon in her studio.

## Annie's pin-ups rode the planes to war

IN THE United States they call 71-year-old Anne Gordon of Nettlebed "the nose artist". But I'm afraid you won't find The Vibrant Virgin, The Dragon Lady or the Golden Goose on display at her summer exhibition at De (Albuquerque Antiques, Wallingford.

Those early masterpieces that weren't shot down in flames by German tighter planes are now museum pieces. You see, "Annie" painted her statuesque nudes, cartoon characters and fantasy figures on the nose-cones of American bombers during the Second World War.

### Anxious to make acquaintance

Hardly a year goes by without some veteran American aviator wanting to renew contact with the young lady who decorated the walls, aeroplanes and firing Jackets of the USAF 385th Bomb Group while they were stationed at Great Ashfield in Suffolk.

Not so long ago she even heard from a Luftwaffe pilot with artistic leanings, who had first admired her paintings while engaged in aerial combat over Ger-

many, and was anxious to make her acquaintance.

But Annie is not keen to relive the past. She finds the landscapes of rural Spain and the other subjects that attract her paintbrush today more engaging.

She began painting at the age of two. "sitting on a footstool under the stairs and in no time at all. It seems now, the Second World War was raging about us, my father died, my brothers went off to fight, my sister ended up in Burma and I joined the American Red Cross.

"There were three of us. None of us had any experience of nursing. It was our job to listen to the airmen's woes, make them cups of coffee and sandwiches.

"One day one of them saw me painting and said: 'Gee, would you paint something on my Jacket?' Other requests followed and in the end the Colonel got hold of me and asked me to become their official artist.

"I don't think the other Red Cross ladies were very pleased. But I told them: 'You're lucky. You're inside in the warm. I'm outside freezing.' I was too!

some guests at her home for Christmas dinner.

Olive and I are looking forward to the reunion in Tulsa in June, where we hope to meet our former comrades and friends. Hope this reunion will prove to be as much fun as Fargo was.

Best regards to all,

F.R. Reggie Fuller

"They gave me two military policemen, a Jeep and a flying suit, and there I was: up a ladder trying to paint a juicy pin-up on the nose cone of a great American bomber... a bitterly cold wind howling across the airfield... In a perpetual state of panic in case they started the engines and a propeller chopped me to bits!"

After the war, she applied for a place at the Ruskin School of Art. On the strength of a sheaf of drawings, which included a pencil study of American airmen at prayer in a Nissen hut at Great Ashfield, and an interview, which must have been a formality if she was then the same vibrant personality she is now, they awarded her a scholarship.

### Scholarship to Rome school

Although the Ruskin was then still camping out at the Ashmolean Museum, looking back she says she couldn't have timed her arrival better.

Kenneth Clark, later to become a household name as the presenter of the BBC's Civilization TV series, was giving what were to become his world-famous lectures on the history of art at the Examination Schools.

On the completion of her course at Oxford Annie won a scholarship to the British School at Rome, but by then she had met and married a Royal Navy hydrographer at a hush-hush ceremony in Gibraltar. In those days students weren't supposed to have spouses!

Though she continued to paint, her art played second fiddle to her marriage until her husband died at the end of the 1950s.

### Keep the roof on

In 1965 Lady Munnings, widow of the famous racehorse painter. Sir Alfred Munnings, persuaded her to hold an exhibition of her work in Chelsea, but since then she hasn't held a one-woman show until now.

"I decided I was really going to put myself together and see if I could produce enough work. Besides, I need the money. I have to paint now to keep the roof on. It blew off this winter. You should have seen me in bed with the umbrella up..."

• Anne Gordon's exhibition is on display at De Albuquerque Antiques, High Street, Wallingford. Monday to Saturday 10am to 5pm until Saturday July 28.

Hello Ed,

Read your letter in the "Fire Ball Outfit" about the Colliers story on internees in Sweden. I believe I'm the one who sent the info to the 457th B.G.

If you haven't received a copy from the Fire Ball Outfit, I'll be happy to make copies of the Colliers Mag. dated 8-2644. I'll also include a newsletter dated 8-2744 which the American Legation used to send us interns monthly. Since the Association of American Interned in Sweden had a reunion in Sweden May & June, I also have additional pics, from Falun, Sweden.

If you care to receive this info please enclose \$2.50 the cost to me to have copies made and postage would be appreciated. One second thought, send me a list of the fellows from your B.G. interned in Sweden, and we will call it even.

Joseph Exnowski  
"Mr. X" or "Joe X"

I'm from the 401 st B.G. - 615 Sqd.

### Editor's Note:

Any 385th members who were interned in Switzerland might want to follow up on this letter.

Dear Ed,

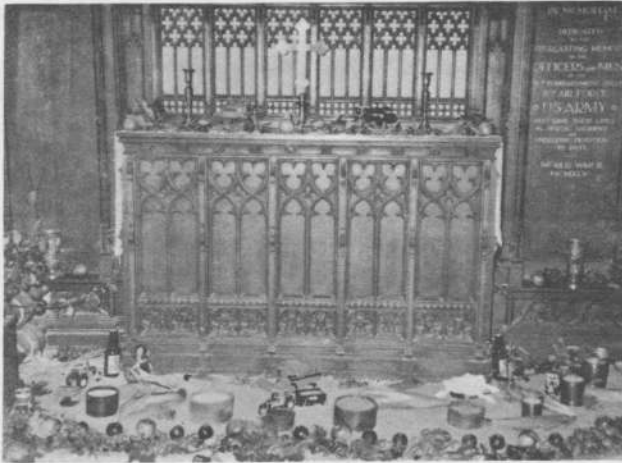
Just to say thanks, once again for sending me the 385th Newsletter. I do appreciate your kindness.

I am enclosing this photo, which I took of the Memorial Chapel, at the Harvest Thanksgiving Service, at All Saints Church, Great Ashfield, Last September. They really do decorate the church so well, the folks at Great Ashfield. I only wish I could get to more of their services.

I am hoping to meet up with some of my friends again, in 1992, when I think, you are having your next reunion, at Great Ashfield. I would love to come to Oklahoma this year, but due to family illness, it's impossible. Still my thoughts will be with you all.

Best wishes,

Kay Sapey (was Carter)'



Editor:

I would like to locate anybody that served in the 8th Air Force, 385 Bomb Group, 549th Squadron, stationed at Great Ashfield, England, from November, 1943 to May, 1944, that may have known my father, 1st Lt. Charles Robert Johnston. His B-17 was shot down on April 29, 1944, on his 29th mission (385th Bomb Group's #100) over Magdenburg, Germany, and he did not return.

The following men made up his crew that day.

Pilot - 1st Lt. Charles R. Johnston  
 Co-pilot - Lt. Owen D. Walton (died 1985 or 1986)  
 Nav. - Lt. Richard W. Glaser  
 Bomb. - Lt. James A. Parker  
 (I think he was killed on 4/29/1944 also)  
 First Eng. - Tech Sgt. Paul Humen  
 Asst. Eng. - Sgt. William F. Domer (located)  
 Radio - Sgt. James O. McLelland  
 Asst. - Sgt. Vincel Owens  
 Armorer - Sgt. Harvey F. Watts  
 Asst. - Sgt. Jessie P. Collinson  
 Lt. Gabriel Silva was the bombardier on earlier missions.

I would appreciate hearing from any of these men, their families, or anyone else who can provide any information about my father.

I will be happy to accept collect phone calls from anyone with information that would help me in my search. Evenings or weekends are the best time for me.

Charles R. Johnston Jr.  
 1801 Valley Forge  
 Fort Collins, CO 80526  
 (303) 484-1236

Dear Ed,

I was a member of the 549th, but was assigned to the group's Engineering Office. This gave me benefit of getting photo copies of all aircraft accidents on the base.

For years I've looked high and low for those photos to no avail, then today my wife, Marge, (of 48 years) found them.

Photos I have are as follows.

1. A/C 97819 - Destroyed by German bombs outside hangar. It in turn caused extensive damage to Hangar.
2. A/C ? Tail hit by prop of another B-17 while on cooks tour of Germany. 1 killed.
3. Gen. LeMay reviewing the 385 Memorial Day 1944.
4. A/C 42110041 (B24) Landing Accident
5. A/C 237966 - Landing Accident
6. A/C 4239912 - Landing Accident
7. A/C 297643 - Landing Accident
8. A/C 238031 - Landing Accident
9. A/C 30197 - Landing Accident
10. A/C 4231171 - Landing Accident
11. A/C 297790 - Landing Accident
12. A/C 2102551 - Taxi accident into tent & small truck.

I do not have negatives, so if anyone wants pictures. I'll get them made. Please advise.

Members of 549th ground crew may recall March 22, 1943, many went by bus to Coeur d'Alene, Idaho for Marge and my wedding.

Jim and Helen Child stood up for us, and two weeks later we stood for them.

I'm very saddened of Jim's passing.

All I have Ed - use whatever you wish or none.

Regard Lou Meyer  
 P.O. Box 209  
 Otteville, PA 18942

**Editor's Note:**

Write to Lou if you'd like a copy of any of these pictures.

Dear Mr. Varnedoe:

In the December issue of the American Legion magazine I noticed a reference to the 385th reunion, and the name and address of Mr. George S. Hruska to contact. I wrote him for more information, and he promptly wrote back to me, and also sent me an August issue of the Hard Life Herald.

Your recital, in your letter on page 16, of the mission to Dresden on 2 March, 1945 really rang a bell.

I participated in that mission, as an engineer and top turret gunner. My pilot was Robert Platt, and we flew on the Barbara B. On that particular day our regular navigator flew with another crew-as lead navigator, I believe-and we had another navigator fly with us. I have no recollection as to his name. In any event, we were in the 550th Squadron, and flew in the low element of the low squadron on that date. We never did get a bandit alert and suddenly were hit with fighters. Your description of what happened to the other three planes in that low element is precisely what occurred. I do not recall anything about whether the bomb load was salvoed or not. We were too busy shooting the attacking fighters, and fortunate to be able to return to our base.

What a coincidence it was that I happened to note the three or four lines in the American Legion magazine, and the further coincidence that the August issue was the one Mr. Hruska sent me!

I have lost tract of my crew members, and wonder if you have received any other responses to your letter.

Please let me hear from you.

With best wishes, I am

Yours very truly,

John S. Pickett, Jr.  
Retired-I retired last month,  
after serving over 32 years as  
an elected official. 1814 of these  
years were as a District Judge.

John S. Pickett, Jr.  
P.O. Box 717  
Many, LA 71449

Dear John,

Thanks very much for your letter. You have answered several questions I had about that mission.

I went down to Maxwell AFB where the archives are kept and got copies of the official mission report for that raid. It gave the aircraft assignments, but not the crew names. However, the missing crew reports gave positions of the crews shot down. By elimination, we (you and I, for I was your navigator that day) were right wing, low element, low squadron.

Only the last three digits of the planes were given, but I have a list of many of the 385th's serial numbers and Fort names. I had thought -280 belonged to 42-97280 which was "Haybag Annie." The number for "Barbara-B" is missing and as a result I thought I was in Haybag, but your letter sets that straight! (and gives the last three digits of Barbara-B.)

I lent my scrapbook to Maxwell AFB to copy for the archives and they haven't returned it yet, but if I'm not mistaken, I have a picture of the nose art of Barbara-B in it.

Do you remember any of the other crew members names?

That was my 3rd mission, but I went on to fly 26 before the war ended. Navigators were in short supply, and although I mostly flew with George Crow, my pilot, I also flew several with other crews.

I am enclosing my recollection of that mission in a write-up I am preparing of my war experiences, after corrections from your letter.

I am a retired electrical engineer. (GA Tech BEE '47.) I am filling up most of my time now as Chief of a volunteer fire department. I'm married, 3 sons, 1 daughter, 6 grandkids.

Our crew kept in touch and met for reunions every 5 years, circulating among us. Boy, are we widespread too! AL, CA, TX, PA and WI. But, sadly, we're down to only 3 of us left now.

I really want to thank you for writing. I hope we can meet at one of the 385th reunions of maybe even on a trip back to Great Ashfield in 1992, the big English reunion year.

Sincerely,

W. W. Varnedoe, Jr.

Dear Ed:

As I started to read the Hard Life, the first thing I noticed was on the bottom of the first page was 13th reunion. It reminded me of my 13th mission. It was on Friday the 13th and take off time was at 13:00 to the rocket coast and Col. Van was leading the group. After getting out of briefing and got out to the hard stand, also no 13, on the clover leaf, along came Lt. Eaton and had a black cat and chased it in front of our plane, the Pin Up Girl. Then three guys lit up three cigarettes on a match and smashed a small mirror and then counted 13 guns on the ship. Jerry Shoeman came along with two parachutes. He was our Navigator and was a nervous guy. One a back pack and a chest chute. I'll tell you Ed, I never see so many guys laugh so hard I almost wet my pants. We took off with our bomb bays open over the water and just when we were over the target, all hell let loose and you could walk on the flak. Col. Van took a hit and lost No. 1 engine and gave orders to hold the bombs and make a circle around and make a second run and we hit the target 100%. After we turned and headed for home Eaton said over the intercom, Hey Jerry, You can come from under the table now and we all had one more laugh going home.

I got a card from my co-pilot Lt. Col. Harvey Downs, Ret. that my Co-pilot Fred O. Coulter from Dallas, Tex. passed away two years ago and Ray Koenec from Madison, WI, also passed away the same time. I hope they are flying on the same crew up there. Well Ed, take care and with God's care, we will see you in Tulsa. God Bless.

Always

Jean & Paul Ryan





This is not the proper Military Uniform of the Day, but it is the proper civilian clothing for a crew spending a week in Lisbon, Portugal.

Left to right: Bradfords shoulder, Akley, Williams, Martin, Johnson, McMillen, Flagler, Armstrong, Keurske, and Stetson. Interviewed by Earl Mazo in front of the dining hall.

Dear Ed:

This story is either being told 47 years late, or 7 years after Novo Martin and Ed McMillen suggested at the Colorado Reunion that I tell the story as I had it written in my Daily Diary back in 1943.

Dec. 5, 1943: Target, Bordeaux, France.

Mary (Novo Martin) and I both had premonitions of things to come, but shrugged them off when we saw the ribboned map that looked like a "milk run". We took off at 0700 an hour before daylight, and assembled quickly. We were in "Suzanne" in M, lead Squadron. As we crossed the French coast, our oil pressure dropped on #3 engine, but not to excess. As we approached the target, the weather continued to deteriorate. We kept on our way to the IP over the Bay of Biscay and our #1 prop ran away, screaming like crazy. With only two engines at max power, the formation left us as though we had put on brakes. Just as the fighters hit the formation, we pointed the ship straight down to avoid the fighters and possible engine fire. We broke through the overcast as 500 feet and was able to feather the prop, lighten our load of Bombs, guns and ammunition and prepared to ditch if necessary. Under control we decided to get closer to Spain for a shorter swim or hike. When we saw the Pyrenees, we were happy that we weren't walking. Following the Spanish coast at 500 feet and a mile off shore our intention was to make Gibraltar. But both the weather and an extremely low gas supply made Lisbon our destination. Having been previously briefed that we were to destroy the airplane if we were ever forced down, our decision was to ditch right there in Lisbon Bay about 3 miles out from where sunbathers were enjoying the Sunday afternoon. The ocean was only slightly rough and Mary set her down like a feather, although it, felt as though we were hitting a brick wall. Mary and I were out the cockpit windows before the crew in the waist rubbed the salt water out of their eyes. And then the Dingys wouldn't inflate. Thankfully the plane stayed afloat for about 20 minutes, and we did get the rafts into the water. Rowing those 5 man rafts were impossible. Watched Suzanne very hesitatingly die and sink headfirst into her watery grave. Parachute flares were fired and a fishing boat picked us up an hour later. The Boat crew

were extremely friendly and even shared their meal of French Bread and Vino with us on the way back to their village of Czembra. We anchored off shore while the crew rowed their smaller boat to shore, and rang the church bells until the entire town of 300 souls gathered on the Beach. What a welcome we received. The British counsel arrived from Lisbon about mid night and transported us back to Lisbon where we were turned over to the American Attache and taken to the Hotel De San Antonio, our home for the next 7 days.

The next day we were issued passports made from those ridiculous photos we carried in our escape kits. We were fitted with civilian clothing except for our GI boots. We were given a supply of per-diem Escudos and advised not to leave the City limits of Lisbon.

Our first stop was the well furnished Hotel Bal to toast our good fortune. In the week that followed, we lived out a fantasy by having a drink out of EVERY bottle in the Bar.

That week was fantastic. We enjoyed the sights of Lisbon and their hospitality. Ate the finest food including Fresh Milk and Eggs, and every choice of libation, from Scotch, to Bourbon to Cognac and back again.

Unfortunately all good things do come to an end. About midnight the next Sunday night, the Military attache directed us down the back stairs of the Hotel to waiting cars and a quick trip to the docks. We were taken by motor launch to a waiting Clipper Ship, 3 miles off shore, for our flight back to Ireland and then to London for a debriefing.

And the GOOD news. We were told that we would proceed to Ipswich and Stowmarket, to Great Ashfield and the 550th Squadron to complete our tours. Somebody had decided we weren't Evadees, or Internees-we were, "Shipwrecked Mariners" from international waters.

Jan. 5, 1944: One month later our crew was briefed for another Milk-Run to Bordeaux. Col Van announced at the briefing that if Martin even looked like he was heading back to Lisbon-he would join us and fly in Formation.

We had 5 of the crew and families at the Colorado Reunion and hope we'll all be at the Tulsa Bash.

Respectfully,

Bill Flagler

I just have to get a word processor. Either I'm thinking faster than I type, or this Japanese Typewriter just can't spell.

You DO know that Maryonovich "Changed" HIS NAME TO Martin??

This is the third time I've typed it--And-I'm not going to try it again.

Dear Ed,

Attendance at USMA graduation in June (the 8th in our family since 1939!) will preclude attendance in Tulsa, but give us more on the UK trip in '92!

**War Story:** Everyone remembers the -65° operating temps, but who else got shot out of formation by their own bombardier? He cleverly held steaming canteen cup of fresh urine to flare port and retracted port cover, allowing slipstream to vacuum cup dry. Of course, resultant opacity of ice on pilots' windshields made holding formation difficult.

Blindly  
TV

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

Dear Ed:

I was pleased to see the photo of John and Lucy Ellis in the December, 1990 issue of the Hardlife Herald. As my wife, Catherine, and I drove about Britain last October in a repeat of our 1984 trip, we were pleased to enjoy their hospitality for a few short hours as we sat to lunch with them in their home in Monmouth, Wales. They were most diligent in the 40 or so post-war years they lived at Fox Farm on the southern edge of our Station 155, in providing welcome and organization for the various return groups and individuals to the old air base area, and in providing news of the seasons in Suffolk and the status of affairs relating to All Saints Church at Great Ashfield. They appear to be very well, as they live comfortably in their home overlooking the beautiful Wye Valley. The 385th BGMA has benefitted greatly from their interest in the organization.

We spent two days in the Woolpit-Elmswell area reminiscing on the old days and enjoying various kindnesses and contacts with the Dyball, Parker, and Miles families. We were able to attend services at the church on Oct. 21, and while there saw the color sketches for the memorial window, as shown by Linda Alford. In passing, I would hope the exterior of that window and others might be protected by a plastic cover as is done in some of our churches nowadays.

I was the bombardier on Ed McCarthy's 548th crew in our time there from May '44 to Feb. '45. The good work on the Hardlife Herald is appreciated and hope to see you in Tulsa in June.

Sincerely,

Marion E. Raper

Dear Mr. Stern:

After reading your comments in the December issue of the Hard Life Herald regarding the movie, "Memphis Belle," I thought you would be interested to know that the B-17 still holds the interest of those too young to remember a time when they flew over the skies of England. My son, Timothy,

is sixteen and the grandson of a former president and editor of the 385th, John Ford. One of the legacies my father left behind was his collection of books and his great love for the B-17. He passed on both to Tim.

Tim was only 10 years old when my father died. But Dad, who was a compelling storyteller, left a vivid impression of the war years upon Tim. Tim has immersed himself in the history of the B-17 and so the moment the advertisement for the movie, "Memphis Belle" appeared on TV, I knew we would be at the theatre on opening day. As it happened, all my children, ranging in age from 7 to 16 saw the movie. While we had a great deal of knowledge about the aircraft already (and like Sam Lyke wondered about all that exposed flesh at those altitudes and temperatures), we were riveted to our seats during the scenes in the air. Yes, we knew they would make their mission, but I, for one, kept seeing all of you (members of the group) in my mind's eye. I have met some of you. I worked on the newsletter with Dad back in the seventies, researched in the archives to find out what happened to certain planes and have followed the group's history over the past 15 years. So for me, and for my son whose interest was sparked by Dad so many years ago, "Memphis Belle," the movie, reminded us of the sacrifices you made and tremendous fears which you must have felt during those years. We didn't leave the theatre until all the credits were played out.

We still miss our "Pappy" something fierce, but we remember him with great pride, not only for his service during the war years, but for his distinguished career in the Air Force.

"Memphis Belle" reminds the future generations of those of you who served with the 8th Air Force during WWII. The movie may one day be forgotten, but you won't. It's not too late to thank you for the service you gave to your country. So, thank you.

Sincerely,

Mary Ford Randleman

Dear Ed:

I was a member of the 385th B.G. 551st Sq. at Great Ashfield from July 1944 to Feb. 1945. When I finished my missions I was a Ball Turret Gunner on Harold Lamberts crew. You may know Andy Silverke, he was our tail gunner. He has attended a number of reunions. He went to the Great Ashfield reunion in 1988.

I just recently found out that there was a 385th organization. I haven't as yet received my first subscription to the newsletter. I thank you very much for the back copies you sent me. I enjoyed reading them very much. It sure brought back a lot of memories.

I'm looking forward to the reunion in Tulsa this year. I know you will be pretty busy, but maybe we can spend a little time together and get acquainted.

Sincerely,

Jerry Neidzielski

Letters to the Editor cont.

Dear Ed, I'm writing about the picture of Bobulsky and Hutton on page 18 of the Dec. 1990 Newsletter.

The caption is almost correct. Pete Bobulsky was a waist gunner on my original crew. Both he and Mike Corgnati, also of my crew, were flying with John Hutchinson on February 21, 1944, on a mission to Diepsalz. As I recall it. Hutch and my two gunners were on their 25th mission. On the return flight, over England, Lt. Pease somehow lost control of his A/c and collided with Hutch's a/c. Both planes crashed. I believe all hands were lost.

Bud Hutton was a staff writer for the Stars and Stripes. Both he and Andy Rooney flew missions with the 385th. Hutton flew two missions with my crew. Two features appeared in Stars and Stripes. The first was "Sweating". The second "Average." The first was about Hutton's mission with my crew. The second concerned Jim Reed, my ball turret gunner.

Both of the features appeared as chapters in the book "Air Gunner" published by Hutton and Rooney in 1944.

Best wishes to you for the New Year. Julie and I look forward to seeing you in Tulsa.

As ever,

Warren

#### Editor's Note:

See the Oct. 1986 to Jan. 1987 issues of Hardlife for reprint of those 2 chapters of "Aerial Gunner". Should we print it again?

Dear Ed:

I read about the coming reunion of the 385th BGMA in the DAV Magazine and contacted Sam Lyke. He sent me an old Newsletter (April, '90) with an application for membership. I have sent that in to the Treasurer.

In reading all of the letters in the publication, I was taken back some forty years. Ron McInnis reported on the March 2nd mission to Dresden where 4 of the 12 B-17's were shot down from Sq. 549. The tail gunner, Sgt. Raymond A. Dahl, in our plane saw those four go down. He was later lost on our March 18th, 1945 mission to Berlin. Our whole crew jumped on that one.

I was also interested in Warren Larson's letter on Li'l Audrey.

First Lt. Hubert I. Bloom's crew flew Li'l Audrey on it's 104th mission. Sadly to say, it was only our 4th mission. It really brings back memories.

Sincerely,

Wesley R. Brown

Dear Ed:

Thank you for your letter of December 27th.

I certainly will appreciate you sending me a copy of the last Reunion Book, and whatever back copies of the Newsletter that you can.

Check is enclosed.

You have evidently heard from Bob Platt since I have. I did not know he had had a stroke. I will appreciate your most recent address on him. He was a fine pilot, and is a fine man. It was a privilege to fly with him.

I thought you might be interested in the names of our entire crew, especially in view of the letter from W. W. Varnedoe, Jr. Here they are:

Lt. Robert A. Platt, Pilot, Chicago  
 Lt. Ellis J. Pollard, Co-Pilot, Chicago  
 Lt. Francis L. Aires, Navigator, N.Y. (Upstate)  
 Lt. William J. Amis, Bombardier, Abilene, Texas  
 T/Sgt. John S. Pickett, Jr., Engineer-Top Turret Gunner, Many, La.  
 T/Sgt. James J. Fitzpatrick, Radio Oper-Gunner, Chicago (Van Nuys, Cal.)  
 S/Sgt. Johnnie P. Bevilacqua, Waist Gunner, Reno, NV.  
 S/Sgt. Thomas C. Johnston, Ball Turret Gunner, Chula Vista, CAL.  
 S/Sgt. Roland A. Picard, Waist Gunner, Oregon or Washington, and  
 S/Sgt. Marvin L. Joseph, Tail Gunner, Xenia, Ohio.

On the March 2, 1945 mission to Dresden, mentioned by Mr. Varnedoe, our regular navigator was flying in another plane. I believe Mr. Varnedoe was our navigator on that occasion. Our regular navigator, Lt. Aires, was shot four times that day, and managed to navigate back to the base. He was awarded the Silver Star for this.

Since the war I have only seen two of my former crew members. Tommy C. Johnston, and James J. Fitzpatrick. They came to Many, at different times, for a visit.

Johnnie Bevilacqua died about twelve years ago. I had occasion to visit with his family, including his grandmother, about ten years or so ago. They are splendid people, and treated me royally.

The thing that sparked my communication with you, of course, was a letter from Wm. W. Varnedoe, Jr., of Huntsville, Alabama, that I saw in the August issue of the Newsletter. As I noted above, our regular navigator, Lt. Francis L. Aires, flew with another crew on our March 2, 1945, mission to Dresden. We had a substitute navigator, whose name I had completely forgotten, and it turns out that he was Bill Varnedoe.

I am looking forward to visiting with him.

In the event you should print this letter, or any part of it, is there anyone out there who can tell me about any of my former crew members?

With best wishes, I am

Yours very truly, John S. Pickett, Jr.

Hi Ed,

Enclosed is a clipping from the Oregonian, 1-21-91, Re: Death of John C. Morgan, B-17 pilot and Medal of Honor recipient that might be of interest in a future issue of "Hardlife Herald".

Best Regards,

George L. Sutherland  
P.O. Box 531

oe.Er-oM/±AL

1-21-91

## Heroic World War II pilot dies

**PAPILLION, Neb. - John C. Morgan, whose actions as a World War I pilot on a 1943 bombing mission over Germany earned a Medal of Honor and helped inspire "Twelve O'Clock High" has died.**

Morgan, 76, died Thursday of an apparent heart attack at Midlands Hospital, said his son. Air Force Master Sgt. Sam Morgan of Bellevue, south of Omaha.

Morgan's actions in the raid that won him the Medal of Honor, and the actions of others in the raid, were the inspiration for Sy Bartlett to write "Twelve O'Clock High," the younger Morgan said Sunday.

John Morgan and Bartlett were very good friends, the son said.

A passage in the book and a scene in the movie depict his father's actions in the raid, Sam Morgan said. Bartlett had told Sam Morgan that his father was the inspiration for the scenes.

The senior Morgan, an Army Air

Corps second lieutenant, was a co-pilot on a B-17 when the plane was hit by fire from enemy fighters en route to a bombing raid o i Germany July 28, 1943.

The pilot and top turret gunner were wounded and the waist, tail and radio gunners lost consciousness when their oxygen supplies were cut off, according to a history of Medal of Honor winners.

For two hours, Morgan had to fight off the pilot, who continued to try to fly the airplane despite being crazed by a bullet that had split his skull open. The plane's communication system was knocked out, and it was two hours before the navigator entered the cockpit to help Morgan.

Morgan completed the raid and returned to base, saving both the crew and airplane.

After leaving the Air Corps, Morgan worked 45 years for Texaco in California, selling aviation fuel.

He is also survived by his wife, Gladys; a brother; two sisters; and four grandchildren.

Dear Ed:

I did not expect the rapid fire response from John. Pettenger regarding Life Membership and was doubly, and pleasantly surprised to receive your cordial note.

After reading the December issue of Hardlife, I went through my files in search of any info I might have had regarding Joe Jones' "float-down" and found in my log that the incident occurred on March 1st, 1945 on a mission to Ulm. Colonel Witherspoon was flying lead and to the best of my recollection, Armbrusters' crew with Joe Jones as Tail Gunner was left wing and slightly above and to the rear of the lead ship. One of the ships in the High Element of the lead Squadron appeared to drop from its position as we passed through some light scud clouds just as we crossed the Coast of France on our way into the target. I was flying lead for our Squadron slightly below and to the right of the Group Leader. We saw Armbrusters' plane crumble and perhaps two parachutes fall. It was a bad day from there on in and back. Several weeks later, we were all shocked and happily surprised to see "Unbelievable" Joe Jones come walking into the compound and utterly amazed at the story he had to tell.

Incidentally, on March 1, 1945, I was still a Flight Officer, (according to the Army, a Technician but not a leader of men) flying Squadron Lead, and having done so for nearly a month. Squadron Commander Major Thrift recommended promotions, which after a meeting with and review by the 3rd Division Headquarters on March 20, 1945 was approved.

By April 1, 1945 I had been promoted to 2nd Lieutenant and approximately two weeks later I became a 1st Lieutenant. Not a big deal as far as things go in general, but to me it represented a reversal of an injustice perpetrated during my days in Pilot Training when for some reason I unwittingly "crossed swords" with a "Superior"?

Anyway I've enclosed a photo of my crew taken shortly after flying a practice mission. Missing for some unknown reason is my Co-Pilot Larry Coggiola and my former Tail Gunner Arlie Watts who had, by then, been reassigned.

I'm going to try for Tulsa and look forward to seeing you once again.

Cordially,

Ralph Mignone



Back Row: Left to Right: Joe "Bubs" Moran, Radio; Gerard Asmus, Navigator; Ralph Mignone, Pilot; Joe Uzmann, Bombardier;  
Front Row, Left to Right: Ken Yost, Ball Gunner; Paul Lovegren, Engineer.

Missing at time of photo:

Harold Klein - Armor Gunner  
Larry Coggiola - CoPilot  
Arlie Watts - Tail Gunner



Dear Ed,

Attached is a special computer "sort". It's a list of all 385th men that are buried in U.S. Military cemeteries in the ETO. MIA's are also on this list. Their official grave is The Wall of the Missing (WOTM) at Cambridge. I've identified their names from a separate list of MIA's that I previously received.

The citations that were awarded to each man are shown (abbreviated) at the far left and below the man's name.

By writing to the address below, you can obtain additional info on each cemetery, including the mailing address and name of the Superintendent. You can also request a packet of free color photos of a cemetery and of a particular grave, by including the man's name, S/N, Plot, Row, Grave and cemetery.

American Battle Monuments Commission  
Operations Division  
Room 5127, Pulaski Building  
20 Massachusetts Avenue NW  
Washington, D.C. 20314

It would be more expedient if someone consolidated one list of requested information. Sent it to the attention of Col. William E. Ryan, Director. You will be very pleased with the spirit of enthusiasm displayed by Col. Ryan and the Superintendents.

Sincerely,

Bob Burch  
8702 Olney Street  
Rosemead, CA 91770

#### Editor's Note:

The list referred to will be printed in the next Hardlife Herald.

Dear Ed:

I am writing in response to Roy Buck's letter printed in the February 1991 Newsletter in which he describes his final mission in the Heavenly Body. This was in response to my letter to you, Ed, in which I wondered if there ever was a 17 at Great Ashfield named the Seven Angels. Roy Buck explains that since that mission was his crews' tour finale, there would be no Seven Angels. And what a way to end their tour with the ditching, the Air-sea rescue, and losing pilot Lament and co-pilot Gutierrez. Thanks, Roy Buck, for your clearing up the Seven Angels story and so graphically.

Ed, I have listed below the crew of the Heavenly Body and have enclosed a copy of the autographed photograph of Hedy Lamarr that was used for the nose art on our 17. John

Ostlund has the original and I got the copy when I visited him last year in his home town, Webster City, Iowa. This, incidentally, was our first meeting since our departure from Great Ashfield in December 1944, and we had a great time reminiscing. Anyway, the photocopy may be of some interest. Hopefully, the passing years were kinder to Hedy than they were to her picture.

With very best regards to you, Ed.

Fred H. Nestler

"Heavenly Body" Crew:

Edwin B. Perry - 1st Pilot  
Nick J. Stabile - Co-pilot  
John W. Ostlund - Bombardier  
Fred H. Nestler - Navigator  
George M. Shelly - Flight Engineer  
Robert S. Howell - Radio Operator  
Robert T. Glakler - Ball Turret  
Robert Brow - Waist Gunner  
John W. Ranges - Waist Gunner  
Russell W. Jacobson - Tail Gunner

#### Editor's Note:

Sorry, the photo copy of Hedy Lamarr can't be copied for the Hardlife.

Dear Ed:

The second printing is expected to be done soon in England (if the response warrants it) of the soft-cover book "Operation Manna / Chowhound". This is the same book that I had shown at the Dayton reunion a few years back. It is now ready for a second printing but before doing so, the printer in England wants to\* be assured that there will be a sufficient quantity to run in English.

This is an 8" x 10", 156 page, with many photos of planes, crews, Dutch scenes taken in April/May 1945 during the food drop missions in which the 385th participated.

It also goes into detail giving the events leading to the temporary so-called "truce" with the Germans, dates and records of groups and tonnage dropped, the starvation crisis, drop zones and much more. Written by Hans Onderwater, a Dutch schoolmaster and an aviation buff. It will cost \$20.00 plus shipping (from within the States). Promised about July/August. A very interesting book especially if you participated in the food drops.

Send no money now, but advise me if you want a copy so we will have an idea how many books we should get for the States since this information is being sent to all groups. There will be a limited printing.

Bob Valliere  
18 Whiting Farm Road  
Branford, CT 06405

## Home to Await Master, Held In Nazi Prison Camp



ROGER WITH HIS MASTER'S PHOTOGRAPH

MARION, OHIO, FEB. 7 — "Roger," a small black cocker spaniel, has arrived here to await the arrival from overseas of his master, Lt. Leslie Reichardt, who is now a prisoner of the Germans. Roger was acquired by Lt. Reichardt, pilot of a

BI7, and other members of the crew when they were in training at Ephrata, Wash. He was flown across the country and to Europe with the group. After Lt. Reichardt's ship was shot down over Germany and news came that he was a prisoner

T/Sgt. Egbert Rude of Washington, D. C., radio operator of the plane, who had been grounded, took charge of Roger and saw that he was returned to Lt. Reichardt's parents, Mr. and Mrs. Arliss Reichardt of Marion.

Ed:

Enclosed is a copy published by the local newspaper of the return of "Roger Wilco" to my parents in Marion, Ohio, Feb. 7, 1945. I ran across this picture and article when going through some of my mothers things.

Thought maybe some of the group that remained might remember "Roger".

See you in Tulsa.

Les Reichardt



Dear Ed:

This is a follow-up to the "Roger Wilco" story.

I arrived home, Marion, Ohio, from POW Camp on June 4, 1945 and was met at the train station by my parents, my wife, and Roger Wilco. There was no doubt that he remembered me. During my R&R, Roger was very protective, making sure that no one came near me when visiting unless I was seated and he was by my side.

My first assignment after my POW assignment was to Maxwell AFB, Ala. and while there our son was born. He and Roger became great buddies.

Roger died in 1948 in a kennel of a heart attack while I was in school in Tyndall Field, FL. Shortly thereafter we got another black cocker spaniel but he could not, nor did he, take the place of "Roger Wilco."

See you in Tulsa.

Les

**EDITOR'S NOTE:**

Marty Girson alerted us to the following story, and Leo LaCasse was a good enough sport to let us print the story. It wasn't funny when it happened, but it sure makes for a good laugh 48 years later.

Dear Ed,

If you remember all of the laughter coming out of the Sqdn meeting room when we were at Fargo, it was because of the funny stories being told of actual experiences.

Leo LaCasse was telling us that on one mission on the way to the target he had to go to the bathroom so bad, and the only thing he could find to go in was a paper sack. We he relieved himself and then he wanted to get rid of the paper sack. So he slid open the pilots window, but before he could get it out, the wind caught it and splattered it all over the cockpit. He said his co-pilot and T.T. gunner would not talk to him for 3 months.

Ed, if you ever watch the weather maps on T.V., you can see that after the weather leaves Fargo, it heads to Pittsburgh. Please use your influence to divert it back into Canada.

Enough for this time.  
Have a great time in Arizona.

Sincerely,

Marty Girson

Dear Ed:

The story Marty Girson told you is true. The mission had to be the summer of 43. I was in great pain with severe cramps and knew I had to relieve myself or pass out. I asked Tex Blansit, Top turret gunner and engineer if I could use his flak helmet and he vehemently refused to give it to me. Both he and Co-pilot Herb Heuser wanted me to hold off. I order Blansit to get me something appropriate and much to his consternation he handed me a paper bag. After I filled the bag, Tex refused to handle the bag and Herb was ready to throw up. I opened the side window on the Pilot's side and was about to toss it out when Tex piped in again that it would get all over the side of the A/C. At this point I decided to keep the bag in the palm of my hand and extend the arm out the window as far as I could and drop the bag.

As you might suspect, the moment my hand hit the slip stream, the bag burst and the crap went up my arm under my flite suit, out at the neck and all over Tex and Herb. The cockpit was a smelly mess and needless to say there were two unhappy people ready to throw me out right then and there. I know that Tex never spoke to me again and Herb would only casually say Hi when I spoke first. Herb took over the crew soon after and as you may well know, they were both killed on their last mission.

The memory is still very vivid and to this day I would crap in my pants before I would do it in a paper bag.

Leo

Dear Ed:

I thought you might like to publish the enclosed picture. This shows Nancy talking with Prince Bernhard of the Netherland when we visited the Soestdijk Palace during our Chowhound/1990 visit. This particular scene was shown on the Dutch newscast that night, as our Dutch friends related to us later that they had seen Nancy on the program. The Prince was involved with the signing of the temporary truce with the Germans which enabled the food missions to be carried out. Robert Van Liere



Dear Ed,

The letter from from Fred Nestler with the news clipping from the San Francisco Chronicle on page 16 of the February 1991 BGMA Newsletter was very interesting. On pages 220 and 221 of "Flying Fortress" by Edward Jablonski, there is picture of Lt. Colonel Bennett receiving the Croix de Guerre AVEC Palm for participation in the mission where supplies and ammunition was dropped to the Free French Forces in France. It further relates that all members of 94th and 100th Bomb Groups who participated in the mission received the award.

From the information I could get from the Description of the events, the mission for which the award of the Croix de Guerre Avec Palm was the mission of July 14, 1944. The 385th Bomb Group also participated in the mission of July 14, 1944 and the air crew that I was a member of was on the mission along with several other air crews from the 385th Bomb Group. The mission code names Cadillac and we dropped supplies to the Free French forces in southern France, this mission was one of the 35 bombing missions over Europe completed by our B-17 air crew. None of us ever received this honorable award. During this mission we actually saw the people on the ground to whom we were dropping the supplies. Further, it was one of the missions we were attacked by enemy fighters. Two ME-109's made a pass at our plane and our tail gunner (Jerome B. Harmon Jr.) put in a claim for enemy fighter downed, as he saw an ME-109 trailing smoke after he had fired several bursts. This was never confirmed.

I have sent letters to the Consulate General of France in New York, the 8th Air Force Historical Unit Contac, and the 8th Air Force Historian at Barksdale AFB. As of this date I have had no replies.

Perhaps there is some basis to the article in the San Francisco Chronicle by Herb Caen about the award of the Croix de Guerre to Alan Goldman. Further inquiries may provide the answers.

Best regards, Elmer Snow

Dear Ed,

In the Feb. '91 issue of the HardLife Herald, Page 13 is a picture of Lt. Col. Tom Kenny, CO of the 548th squadron. With him I think are members of his original crew. Enclosed are pictures from my album which are almost identical.

Also in the page 13 picture is myself with cigarette. My wife, kids and friends swear it is me.

Also enclosing picture of my lead crew.

Ifs a small world. Yesterday 3-5-91, Joe Matuna visited me in Florida.

Sincerely,

Ed McCarthy  
1709S.E. 10th St.  
Cape Coral, FL 33990



Standing Left to Right:

S/Sgt. J. W. Earl; S/Sgt H. Whittier; T/Sgt D. Loeb; S/Sgt T. Patterson; T/Sgt J. Kuehne; S/Sgt R. Zellers;

Kneeling Left to right:

Ed McCarthy (Pilot) A. F. Del Bianco (co-pilot); M.E. Papera (Bomb); Harry Lindberg (Navigator).

Lead Crew 548th Squadron



Lt. Col. Tom Kenny, Center.  
CO of the 548th Squadron

I believe Sgt. is part of Tom's original crew.

# 385<sup>TH</sup> B G M A

ED STERN, EDITOR  
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Fargo, ND 58108

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