

OHIO AIR FORCE GOLDEN GOOSE THUNDERBIRD WANDERING DUCHESS CURLY'S KIDS
 SKY GODDESS WAR HORSE PICCADILLY QUEEN BLUE CHAMPAGNE MARY ELLEN
 SALLY B ROUNDTRIP TICKET YANK GELDING WINNIE THE POOH
 HONKY TONK SAL "HAYBAG" ANNIE MISS AMERICA STARS AND STRIPES
 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 LONESOME POLECAT HARES BREATH
 SKY CHIEF MARY PAT
 MR. LUCKY MR. SMITH
 MADAME SHOO SHOO SLO JO TARGET FOR TONIGHT SHACK N LADY
 PAT PENDING GIZMO SACK TIME JUNIOR OL' DOODLE BUG
 ROUNDTRIP JACK POSSIBLE STRAIGHT MICKY ROGER THE DODGER IMPATIENT VIRGIN SWEET CHARIOT
 SHACK BUNNY HOMESICK ANGEL LATEST RUMOR MAIDEN AMERICA RUBY'S RAIDERS SWINGING DOOR
 SPIRIT OF CHICAGO MY GAL SAL HALF AND HALF SLEEPYTIME GAL RAGGED BUT RIGHT MISSISSIPPI MISS
 SOUTHERN BELLE BIG STINKY VIBRANT VIRGIN MISSION BELLE LULU BELLE SLICK CHICK
 MARY ELLEN III VAT 69 RAGGEDY ANNE MAC'S HACK OL' RUM DUM FOOLISH VIRGIN BELLE OF THE BLUE
 HELLS BELLS HOT CHOCOLATE LIL-LU YANK LADY ANN CRASH WAGON III RAGGED BUT RIGHT
 PRINCESS VAL IN LIKE FLYNN STORK CLUB FICKLE FINGER OF ? THE JOKER AIN'T MISBEHAVIN' MARY ELLEN II

HARD LIFE



HERALD



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. XIX, NO. 2
 Editor: Ed Stern
 Printed by Interstate Printing
 Fargo, North Dakota

SUPPORT UNITS

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

APRIL 1992

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 Laurel, LA 34272-0117

CHAPLAIN
 Rev. James H. Vance
 15929 SE 46 Way
 Bellevue, WA 98006-3240

PREZ SEZ:

Hi Gang:

Lee and I have just returned from our yearly visit to Florida and get-to-gether with the John Pettengers and Ruel Weikerts. A fourth couple, Bob and Nancy Valliere, also joined our mini-mini reunion. Glad to report everyone is fine.

Thought for the future—We're all getting older. Maybe it is time to start thinking about the future of the 385th BGMA. As our membership decreases through attrition, what should we do to perpetuate the BGMA? Possibly talk about it at our next meeting? Think it over and see if you can come up with some ideas? Here are some thoughts to get you going, with no consideration of pros and cons.

1. Let nature run its course, with the eventual demise of the 385th BGMA. What happens to our treasury? Should we start a last man's club?
2. Combine with other bomb groups, such as the 94th from the same wing?
3. Develop more active participation by our sons and daughters through increased regular membership and eventual assumption of leadership?

Think it over. We'll talk at the next reunion. See you at Gt. Ashfield in May.

Sid

ASSOCIATION OFFICERS

EDITOR, HARDLIFE HERALD
 Ed Stern
 P.O. Box 2187
 Fargo, ND 58108

8TH AF HISTORICAL UNIT CONTACT

Gerry Donnelly
 10770 SW 46th
 Miami, FL 33165

HONORARY MEMBERS

Ronald C. Nolan
 M/Sgt John McKay Jr. USAF

PAST PRESIDENTS

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 Paul Schulz
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 William A. Nicholls
 Earl L. Cole
 Sam Lyke

**50th Anniversary Reunion—Spokane, WA
 August 25-29 1993**

□ □ □ □ LIFE MEMBERS □ □ □ □

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Harry W. Loring
Alfred G. Braca
James J. Manion
Thomas A. Wallner

NEW MEMBERS

James Leary
James Davis
James L. Watson
Alfred G. Braca

Jule Kindred
New Crabs Farm, Parham,
Nr. Woodbridge, SUFFOLK
England

Dear Julie:

I read in the "Hardlife Herald" of the 385th Bomb Group that you were looking for stories of we of the USAAF in England during WW II.

I am putting together my story of that time and I enclose a draft for you.

It is still in the editing stage and this draft contains some strange things, like the paging doesn't properly align. The text is still readable, however. Some of the incidents may not have happened on the specific mission I have related them. They all DID happen, yet memory has dimmed details, like, if it was on No. 16 or No. 17. I am doing some research in the War Archives and straightening out many such details, but this takes time, and I thought such accuracy wouldn't be important to your purpose, so I'm sending it on, as is, now.

Sincerely,

Bill Varnedoe, Jr.

PS. The George Crow in your list was my pilot. He is deceased. I still exchange cards with his widow, Norma.

Ed,

I'm not yet sending you a copy of the story, since I think the above mentioned accuracy SHOULD be correct before you print it. The National Archives is as slow as molasses. It takes months to complete a round of correspondence, to say nothing of getting copies of documents. By this time next year, I ought to have it pretty well in hand. Glad to see you're going to England! See you then.

Bill Varnedoe, Jr.
5000 Ketove Way
Huntsville, AL 35803

Dear Ed,

The December 1991 newsletter arrived yesterday. I wish to thank you most sincerely for furnishing the 385th news over the past years, and indeed, its always very much appreciated.

It's good to learn that plans are well on the way for the 50th anniversary return of the veterans and their families. This should be a special occasion, especially with the dedication of the memorial window. I know that group are going to feel 'right at home' staying at the Swan Hotel in Lavenham. There is much history to be found in that old town, much relating to the 8th Air Force.

All being well, my wife and I hope to join with the group sometime during the visit in May.

Again, so many thanks for your kindness over the years.

All good wishes, hope the new year is already kind to you and yours.

As Ever,

John Archer
29 Station Road
Earsham, Bungay
Suffolk. NR 35 2TS
England

Dear John:

Please find enclosed my dues for the 1992 period. I do not have 10 dollars at hand so please accept 20 dollars. Please use the surplus to add to the 385th funds as you think fit.

I have enclosed my new address for your records. I am looking forward to 1992. With the hopes of seeing more friends from the 385th in the UK. I also sincerely hope to meet my good friend Larry Russell, if he is well enough to make the trip.

May I take the opportunity to thank you John, for your endeavors on behalf of the 385th.

I know that at times it must be a thankless task. But believe me, it is very worthwhile for members like me in the UK. To receive the magazine, and hear the news.

I wish you well for 1992 and thanks again.

Sincerely,

Fred Dunn
8 Brantwood Avenue
Erith Kent
DA81 EH
England

CHAPLAIN JIM SEZ:

I received your card of Dec. 29,1991 today. I thought I was one ahead of you for Chaplain Jim Sez. I think you should have an article from me for the Chaplain Jim Sez dated November 3,1991. It was in regard to keeping fit and seeing each other in 1993. Oh, well if you can't find it use this one in its place.

We're off to a new year of more experiences. Some old and some new. But let's not forget to count our blessings. Maybe we can't count them all but let 'me' recount some for you.

We live in a country that gives us freedom of religion, speech, living where we choose, voting for our leaders and belonging to the 385th with friends.

There are some things I haven't liked about our United States of America but I sure wouldn't want to live any place else. This is a blessing we fought for and I pray we never lose it.

But let's, in 1992, continue to remember and help those that are not enjoying all the blessings we are. Continue to seek God's guidance in our lives and how we can make life better for others.

Sincerely,

Jim Vance



C.L. Gunn	Feb. 1984
Felton Watkins	Feb. 1992
Gordon E. "Jack" Akley	Jan. 1992
Ray H. Trone	Jan. 1992
Russell Bollinger	
Joseph Sparks	Aug. 1991
Raymond Robinson	1981
Totton J Anderson	Feb. 1992
Joe Kalasinski	Jan. 1992
Samuel J. Fogel	Jan. 1992

Gordon 'Jack' Akley

Gordon "Jack" Akley, 71 Nokomis, died Jan. 24,1992.

He was born July 4,1920, in Lyndonville, VT., and came to this area seven years ago from Barre, Vt., when he owned Trow and Holden Manufacturing Co. and was secretary and director of Granite Mutual Insurance Co. He was a Mason, was past president of the Barre Rotary Club, a Paul Harris Fellow of Rotary International, a member of the Mountain View Club, American Legion Veterans of Foreign Wars and Elks Lodge 1954. He was an Army Air Corps veteran of World War II and was awarded the Silver Star and the Distinguished Flying Cross and the Air Medal.

Dear Ed,

Enclosed is an obituary of one of the 8th who had much to do with our lives and events much later. It's interesting to reminisce on how I got to know of then Lt. Col. LeBailly, I was assigned "officer of the day" from the 550th probably in March or April '45. While on duty information for the next day's mission was called into us at 385th Hdqtrs. by a Lt. Col. LeBailly and I forwarded that to the CO. End of 1st incident.

After the war ended in Europe, I went back to the U.S. and headed for home in Washington State. While going cross country on a train, some place in the middle of the country, I had occasion to talk with an older lady who noticed by my shoulder patch that I had been in the 8th A.F. She asked if by chance I knew her son who was also in the 8th. I told her I hardly thought so, that it was a pretty big outfit. However, I asked his name and she said her son was a Lt. Col. and that his name was I LeBailly. I told her that I never met him but that I had talked with him on the phone in England. End of 2nd incident.

Sometime in 1988, I had occasion to go to a Rotary meeting in the La Conner WA area. I was a little late getting there so I didn't know anything of the individual who was to give that talk for the evening. After the meal the speech began that took me back to England towards the end of the war. It had to do with food drops to the Dutch, the return of liberated French POW's from Linz, Austria to Creil, France and the low level sight-seer trips over the continent for group personnel. He was telling my story. I asked the person who sat next to me who the speaker was. He said he was a retired Lt. General and his name was LeBailly. I finally met (Lt. Col.) Lt. Gen., LeBailly. End of 3rd and last incident.

Roy Batey
298 Nisqually Pl.
La Conner, WA 98257

Eugene 'Ben' LeBailly

Lt. Gen. Eugene Bernard "Ben" LeBailly of Oak Harbor died of a heart attack on Monday, Feb. 17,1992. He was 77.

He was born on Jan. 29,1915, in Shoshone, Idaho, the son of Thomas and Jean Wilson LeBailly. He graduated from high school in Pocatello, Idaho, in 1932. In 1939 he graduated from the University of California at Berkley. That same year, he went to the U.S. Army Air Corps flight training school in Texas and earned his pilot's wings and commission as a second lieutenant in March 1940.

In May 1940, he and Margaret Blair were married in Pocatello.

Gen. LeBailly was stationed in New York, Panama and Trinidad, where he was on duty with the 1st Bombardment Group when World War II began. He was then transferred to Ecuador and Peru where he flew heavy bombers on missions to protect the Panama Canal.

During the war, he served in California and England. He participated in five of the major air campaigns against German during the war.

After the war, he commanded bases in Boise, Idaho, Walla Walla and Nebraska.

In August 1952 he went to Korea where he flew 50 combat missions in B-26 Night Intruder Bombers. He moved to Far East Air Force Headquarters in Japan in 1953 and was in charge of the American-Japanese Planning Group when the Japan Air Self-Defense Force was formed in 1954.

From 1961 to 1964, he served in the Azores, followed by a tour as Director of Information for the U.S. Air Force. He held that position until 1967 when he was chosen as commander of the 16th Air Force in Spain, which involved commanding all Air Force units in Spain, Italy, Greece, Turkey and Libya.

Gen. LeBailly retired from the Air Force in 1973 after more than 34 years of service. He retired to Whidbey Island.

Among the many medals he was awarded during his military career are the Distinguished Service Medal with two Oak Leaf Clusters; the Silver Star; the Legion of Merit; The Distinguished Flying Cross with two Oak Leaf Clusters; the Air Medal with six Oak Leaf Clusters; the Joint Services Commendation medal; The European-African-Middle Eastern Campaign with six service stars; the World War 11 Victory Medal; and the National Defense Service Medal with one service star.

Surviving are his wife, Margret, at home in Oak Harbor; two sons, Stephan B. LeBailly of Seattle and John B. LeBailly of Oak Harbor; one sister, Nita McMonigle of Pocatello, Idaho; and three grandchildren.

Dear Ed,

The enclosed obituary notice is of a friend who served with the 385th Bomb Group, 551st Squadron and was shot own two days after our (Forrest Poores) crew. We went down on 11 December 1943 - they on the 13th of December 1943.

I would imagine that had replacements not come in for Poore, Ward, Stuckenbrach, and Nichalls, it must have been a shade "Spooky" when the poor officers of Fowlers crew didn't return on the night of the 13th. Eight empty cots!!

I learned that Sam had been captured when we were in separate cells in the interrogation center at Obervrsel near Frankfurt. A German guard was escorting me to the latrine and I began singing a "ditty" which I sang when we were in the barracks. Sam heard me and yelled through his cell door "Is that you Nick?" We met on the train to the permanent camp just before New Years.

Best regards

Bill Nicholls

Samuel J. Fogel, 72

Samuel J. Fogel, 72, of Voorhees, a champion gymnast and World War II hero who built winning gymnastic teams as a high school coach, died Tuesday of congestive heart failure at Rancocas Valley Hospital, Willingboro.

Mr. Fogel was a collegiate all-around gymnastics champion in 1941 at Temple University and was looking forward to the next Olympics when World War II intervened and he went off to war.

On his 37th mission as a bombardier/navigator, his B-17 was shot down over the town of Kiel in Northern Germany, near Denmark, and Mr. Fogel bailed out at 19,000 feet. He barely survived - his parachute didn't open until he was 2,000 feet from the ground - and he was captured after a 12 day race for the border.

Because of his sports background, he became the athletic director of the prisoner-of-war camp where he spent the war's final 18 months, said his daughter, Robin A Fogel, a former Inquirer artist.

And his gymnastics ability nearly got him out - twice.

"The commandant knew he was a gymnast and liked to watch him work out," she said. Mr Fogel had his captors put up a high bar for him near the fence. Once, during a practice session when he thought no one was looking, he dismounted over the fence and ran.

The the guards fired over his head, he stopped. "They brought him back, put him in solitary and took down the high bar," she said.

"A few months later," Mr. Fogel told a reporter after the war, "A gang was tossing me in a blanket while I did some somersaults and tumbling tricks. They gradually worked over toward the fence and then threw me over. I got away for two days that time before I returned for 30 more days in solitary."

When the war ended, Mr. Fogel was freed by the Russian Army.

Dear Ed:

Felton Watkins, passed away 5 February, 1992 at Ozark, Alabama. He was the ball turret gunner on Howard Richardson's crew, 548th Bomb Sq., Aircraft B-17, "Mississippi Miss". Completed his 35 missions in August 1944. Cause of death was a stroke. He leaves his widow Maxine & three sons. One a Lt. Colonel (Jim), stationed in the Pentagon, Felton, a Major in the National Guard at Meridian, MS, and one, an NCO (Bob), stationed in Frankfurt, Germany.

Felton had remained in the Air Force for 24 years and worked with the Army in helicopters after he retired as a Master Sergeant.

Howard Richardson
4624 Kelton Drive
Jackson, Mississippi 39211

LAST CHANCE FOR THE REUNION

9 Day

Herbert & Mary Macy
Robert & Elizabeth Hach
Robert & Marietta Long
Charles & Peggy Smith
Michael & Marian Gallagher
Robert & Coralie Wilson
Francis & Olive Fuller
Leon & Barbara Lamoureux
Willard & Vivian Richards
Chuck & Beth Smith
Charles & Eunice Flynn
John & Joanne Pickett
William & Kate Wray
Daniel Riva
William Et Louise Varnedoe
George & Marie Menkoff
John & Ruth Pettenger
Edward & Beverly McElroy
Robert & Jennie Vandiver
Ed & Rick Stern & Susan Fineman

15 Day

Charles & Blanche Brackett
Henry Er Martha Jones
Drue Er Pam Gillis
Roy Er Margaret Courtney
Clifford St Shirley Lybeck
Thomas Er Darla Newton
Wesley Et Mary Brown
Sidney St Lena Colthorpe
Charles Ef Mary Price
Richard Et Mary Jane Molzhan
Rolland St Arlene Vencill
Thomas Et Norma Hair
Joseph Et Phyllis Zwick
Bartlett Et Ruth Dickey
Juan Et Mary Lou Provencio
Clarence Fauber
Steve Zaputil
Barney Et Ila Coble
Robert F. Jones

TOUR TO ENGLAND NOTES

1. If anyone is going "on your own", please let John Pettenger know so that you can be included in 385th affairs.
2. When you know your airline plus date and time of arrival, let John know.
3. Send balance due to John. Totals are \$1698 for complete trip, \$1198 for 9 days, plus \$48 extra per night if single occupancy.
4. If you need an 8th AF patch for your blazer or sport coat, call Ed Stern by April 20.



EDITOR'S NOTE:

Here's all the pertinent information on the 385th Visit to England-May 12 to May 26, 1992. If you have any other questions, you might find the answer in the September of December Hardlife Herald-or call John Pettenger.

Questions Answered

Tour Ref: 92002

TOUR PRICE *

The Reunion Tour price of \$1698 per person is inclusive of all the following:

- * Accommodation for 13 nights at 1st Class Hotels based on sharing a twin-bedded room.
- * A full buffet-style or English breakfast each day.
- * De-luxe coach transportation throughout including all excursions as per itinerary.
- * A Welcome Reception on Day 2.
- * Guided sightseeing tours of London and York.
- * Admission to the Fighter Meet Airshow at North Weald, the Imperial War Museum at Duxford, Sandringham House and Bodnant Gardens.
- * Lunches on Days 6 and 7.
- * Dinners on Days 4,5,6 and 14.
- * Government taxes (VAT).
- * A souvenir travel bag.
- * The services of an experienced Travel Courier who will accompany the tour throughout.

NOT INCLUDED

Hights between the USA and London, drinks, meals (other than those specified), travel insurance, any optional excursions eg a theatre visit, and any personal expenses such as laundry, phone calls etc.

FLIGHTS

It is hoped that the 385th Bombardment Group Memorial Association may be able to negotiate special discounted fares to and from Europe. All members signing up for this tour will be kept advised of any such fares. Alternatively, you may wish to contact your local Travel Agent.

Should you wish to extend your stay in London or require independent hotel/travel reservations in Europe, then please state clearly on the Reservation Form if any such arrangements are to be quoted for.

SHORTER DURATION OPTION

If you are unable to take the full tour you would be welcome to join us for the first nine days. The itinerary would be as detailed from Day 1 to Day 8 but returning to London in the morning of Day 9.

Tour Cost \$1198 per person.

ACCOMODATION

The tour price is based on using first class hotels throughout and on utilising twin bedded rooms all with private bathroom-, colour TV, phone etc. A few. single rooms are available at a supplementary charge of \$624 (\$48 per night).

TRAVEL INSURANCE

It is strongly recommended that you take out travel insurance to cover you against cancellation from the tour through illness, loss or damage to baggage, loss of money or personal effects (ie jewellery, camera etc not necessarily covered as 'baggage') and medical expenses. This cover will be available at any Travel Agent or from your Insurance Broker.

PASSPORT/VISA/HEALTH

A US Passport is essential for entering the UK although no Visas are required for US citizens. No inoculations or vaccinations are required by US residents visiting the UK.

THE TOUR PRICE AND CURRENCY EXCHANGE RATES

The Tour price quoted above is based on the currency exchange rate of £1 Sterling being equal to US \$1.78 current at 15th May 1991. As all the hotels, coaching etc will be contracted in pounds sterling any alterations in the exchange rate could alter the tour price.

David Wade Ltd (Arena Travel) have agreed that regardless of the amount of any change in exchange rates they will guarantee that the price will not increase by more than 8% of the price quoted, unless such charges are brought about by Government action ie the increasing of taxes.

TOUR ARRANGEMENTS

The arrangements for this tour are being made by David Wade Ltd (Arena Travel) of Hamilton House, Cambridge Road, Felixstowe, Suffolk, England. Telephone: (0394) 273262, Telex: 98425, Telefax: (0394) 271043.

David Wade Ltd is fully bonded and licensed as a tour operator by the British Governments Civil Aviation Authority and is one of the most successful Specialist Tour Operators in the UK. They have built up an international reputation for 'tailor-made' group tours and they were selected by the 385th B.G.R.A. for three previous Reunion visits.

Approximately one month prior to the tour dates you will be sent a Travel Wallet containing a final, detailed tour itinerary, information on the places to be visited, your baggage tags and lots of other travel advice.

To reserve your place on this, tour - just complete the Booking Form enclosed and return it with a \$200 deposit to:

John Pettenger
Box 117
Laurel
Florida - 34272

385th BOMBARDMENT GROUP REUNION ASSOCIATION VISIT TO ENGLAND . 12TH TO 20TH AND 12TH TO 20TH MAY 1992

Mr/J Mrs/Miss	First Name	Surname	Mark "X" if smoker

ADDRESS OF LEAD NAME TO WHICH ALL CORRESPONDENCE WILL BE SENT

	Telephone No:
	Home:
	Office:

Mark "X" for Room Requirements

Twin-Bedded with Private Bathroom	
Single-Bedded with Private Bathroom	

Delete as applicable

Please book me/us on your
 15 Day Tour/9 Day Tour

If you wish our Tour Operators to quote for additional services i.e. longer stay etc, please provide full details here and a written quotation will be sent to you.

Reservation Form

Complete this form and send it together with your deposits to:-

JOHN PETTINGER
BOX 117
LAUREL
FLORIDA - 34272

I enclose remittance of:

_____ Deposits @ \$200 per person totalling \$_____

and I agree on behalf of all the above named persons to accept the Conditions of Booking overleaf.

Signature _____

Date _____

Letters to the Editor:

Aloha Ed,

I had a wonderful experience last week, and would like to share it with my fellow 385th members.

After 47 years, I had a day with my long lost tail gunner. Bill Hosford. Along with our crew, we completed 25 missions with the 548th BS in 1944. Bill then went on to the 15th AAF in Italy and completed another tour of duty as a gunner on a B-17. Bill is retired now and he and his wife Phyllis live in Sun Valley, Nevada. They have 4 children and several grandchildren. He likes to fish and he and his wife like to camp out.

We spend 10 hours together catching up on each other, besides fighting the war over and telling lies to each other. Boy was it great. Of course we also solved the world problems without much trouble.

We flew on Charles E. "Chuck" Wells crew, A/C Ser #4231778 named "Wells Cargo" as Wells was our pilot, and we were his crew.

Last summer I found Chuck living in Indianapolis, Indiana with his wife Gerry. They have 2 children and five grandchildren. Chuck did return to the 385th BG after his original 25 missions, pulled 3 more missions, then transferred to the 25th BG flying mosquitos on recon missions. Spent his working life as an Internal Revenue Agent, retired and now plays golf, travels and enjoys life, I hope.

Chuck and Bill are now members of our 385th BH (H) organization and we are all going to try very hard to meet at the grand 50th reunion in Spokane, Washington in 1993.

We hope to find some of the remaining crew between now and Spokane. We are still missing: Charles H. Kuhns, Nav. last known in California, Robert A. Belanger, radio, last known, Colorado, Cecil R. "Pop" Houston, Waist, last known, Kentucky. So if you guys are out there or anyone knows your where abouts, please let us know.

By the way, I do have 5 children and 7 grandchildren and one great granddaughter myself. I also make the best home brew you ever tasted, and that no brag, just fact. If anyone ever comes to Carson City, just stop in for a cool one, and you will know this is a fact.

Take care, stay as healthy as you can, but aboveall —

HAVE SOME FUN

Jerry Ramaker

EDITOR'S NOTE: Here's the happy ending to Bob Burch's search for his Uncle's grave. Maybe we'll have more details in a later Hardlife Herald.

Dear Ed,

I received news about my uncle's grave last July. I literally dropped everything and was on a plane two days later to southern France. I stayed much longer than necessary but it was the absolute pinnacle of my life. It was also very difficult to pull away from the wonderful people there. I wasn't allowed to leave until I had spent a few days with each family.

Sincerely,

Bob Burch
PO Box13632
Los Angeles, CA 90013-0632

TREASURERS REPORT

	12/31/99	12/31/91
Balance Sheet		
ASSETS		
CD'S	8000.00	8000.00
Checking Account	8060.64	12868.70
Total Assets	16060.AL	206^6.70
Profit and Loss. Statement		
INCOME		
Dues & Donations	5111.00	6373.43
Life Members	1500.00	4613.48
Interest	1109.50	929.39
Video Sales	3. CO	**
Other Sales	168.00	"43*.66
Reunion Surplus	*****	8222.61
Church Window	*****	4170.09
Total Income	7791.60	24362.00
EXPENSES		
Newsletter	9383.97	9523.63
Secretary	*****	93.74
Treasurer	142*16	143.00
Great Ashfield Trust	1576.76	4613.48
Sally *B'	*****	1000.00
Church Window	*****	4170.09
Total Expenses	11101.83	19543.94
Net Gain or Loss	(3310.33)	4808.06
Note		
Expense Includes		
WJKB0 Reunion Pins	215.00	
1990 Reunion Trophies	270.00	
1992 Advance	600.00	
Total Other Expenses	1145.00	

Respectfully submitdd

Bob Burch
Treasurer

Dear Ed:

With the able assistance of Bob Hach, I have finally located two more crew members of the "Latest Rumor": Jim Leary, Asst Engineer/Ball Turret Gunner, and Jim Davis, Tail Gunner. Joe Balcerzak, Engineer/Top Turret Gunner, is the only crew member unaccounted for.

Would you kindly make note of their addresses and send a copy of the Hard Life Herald along with a membership application blank:

James Leary
New Haley Street
Watertown, N.Y. 13601

James W. Davis
P.O. Box 374
Brookport, IL 62910

Both of these former members of the 549th BS, would appreciate hearing about their old group and fellow members. Jim Davis is in ill health and would especially enjoy hearing about the good old days.

Jennie and I are planning to make the UK reunion, hopefully with the other members of the old combat crew.

Looking forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Col. Robert S. Vandiver, USAF (Ret)
144 Deer Lake Circle
Ormond Beach, FL 32174

Dear Ed,

In the Newsletter of December 1991, on Page 12, I can identify the two persons with Lt. Irving H. Franklin picture #1. They are Lt. Q. B. Westerman our bombardier, and A. A. Oldfather, our tailgunner. Crew 38 of the bomber "Raunchy Wolf" of which I was Co-Pilot.

This was my first newsletter and I was so pleased to mail in my subscription or dues once.

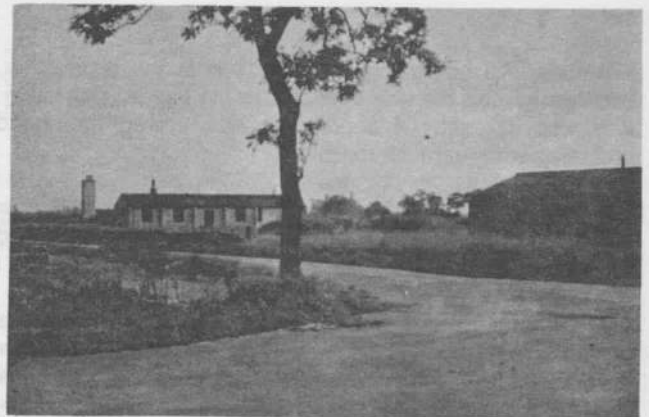
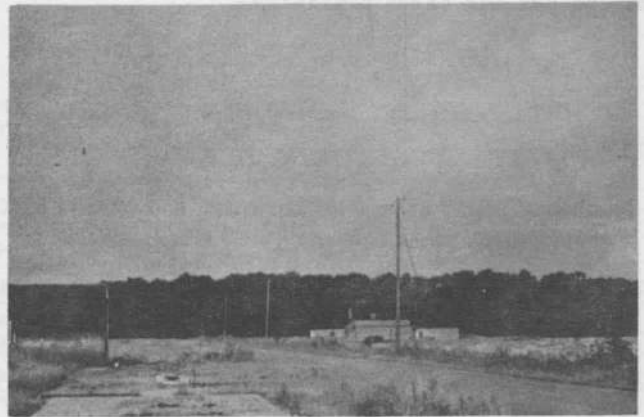
James L. Watson
1 Speno Court
Brauteboro, VT 05301

Dear Ed,

I found these pictures in my collection. I took them when I was stationed in England in 1958, and one Sunday made a visit to the old field site.

Enjoy the newsletter. You are doing great.

Regards John Dunlop



Dear Sir,

Enclosed is a picture of my late husband Russell Bernard Bollinger. He's the one on the end.

Thank you very much. I thought you might want to put it in your newsletter. If he were here I'm sure we'd be going to England. He was there in '44. Thanks again,

Ruth Bollinger



Cpl. Sam Lee, PFC Weisler, Cpl Dofoyo, Cpl Dalton, Cpl Russell Bollinger

Letters to the Editor, Con't

Dear Ed;

Enclosed are a few pictures taken at the Eighth Air Force 50th Anniversary, Savannah, Jan. 29 - Feb. 1. Some might be interesting for the next Hardlife Herald.

Members of the 385th registered at the Savannah Anniversary were: James S. Albright, Robert E. Andrews, George M. Bartell, Charles Caldenwood, Willard Richards, Robert Weixler, Sr., Joe F. Jones, Jr., and Harold (Hal) Heidbreder.

I'm enclosing a tearsheet from the Blissfield Advance with a brief story about the Anniversary and the 8th.

A neat feature of the Anniversary was the appearance of YOUNG men (21 to 23) in Army dress uniforms or with flying jackets. It was an eerie feeling for some of us, now in our sixties or seventies, to see these young men looking as we did almost fifty years ago! I'm enclosing a copy of a business card from the "Memphis Belle Display Crew". You may want to get in touch with them to attend the Spokane-reunion.

I have some pictures of guys from the 549th and when I get reproductions of some I'll send them on. Does anyone from the 549th remember Pappy Holmes and Jack Popp?

I flew with a number of crews, mostly as a toggler and was pleased to see an article in the September, 1991, newsletter about Fauber's crew. I flew 8 or 9 missions with them in 1945.

You do a great job as editor... and I speak as former publisher of a small-town weekly publisher.

Regards,

Hal Heidbreder
211 Cherry
Blissfield, MI 49228

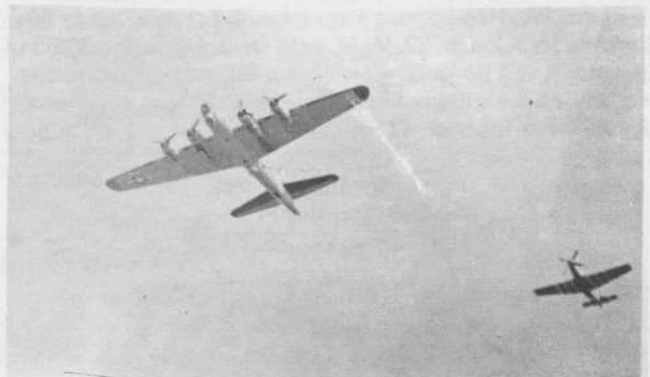


Swapping stories at the 8th AF 50th Anniversary, Savannah, GA., Jan. 28 - Feb. 2nd

L To R: Robert Weixler, Dr., Joe F. Jones, Jr., and Harold (Hal) Heidbreder, all of the 385th BG. Weixler was an armorer with the 548th; Jones, a tailgunner, 549th, Heidbreder a sparegunner (toggler,) with 549th.



Members of the "Memphis Belle Display Crew" at the Savannah Anniversary.



"Fly by" of 17 and "little friend" at Savannah 8th AF Anniversary, 2/1/92.



B-17 at Savannah 8th AF 50th Anniversary.

Dear Ed,

How about blue for the color of the bag.

In last issue, Ian McLachlan wanted to know what "Kentucky Winner" was doing in Belgium in 1944. I wrote him it was Lehman's crew, blew #2 engine, landed in Ghent, Belgium, could not feather the prop.

As ever,
Dan Geyer
Lehman's Engineer
17151 Tulsa St
Granada Hills, CA. 91344

Dear Ed,

Enclosed are a couple of pictures that might be of some interest to the historians and others. The four stallwartwere the officers in early '45 of "Gypsy Princess" which incidentally SHOULD be noted on the cover of "Hardlife". Someplace in an earlier edition of "Hardlife", there was a story of the "Gypsy" having crash landed in France, repaired and returned to the 550th. She flew at least from March '45 through the end of the war. I certainly would like to know of some of the history of that plane. Back to the pictures, the four are L. To R. Tom Walner, Pilot; Jim Manion, Navigator; Roy Batey, Co-Pilot and Ed Denning, Bombardier. The crew member beneath "Gypsy" was our radio operator, Fritz Meier. I don't know anything of these crew members, John Portz, Engineer; —Davidson, Ball Turret; Richard Smith, Waist Gunner, John Kelly, Tail Gunner. Only crew I know of is Tom Walner in Sacramento, CA.

Talked with Kim Crowl several weeks ago by phone in Elysburg, PA. Hope to see hem when he comes out to the Spokane Reunion in '93. Wife and I are going to the 50th in England, it will be good to see you, Ed, and Bill Varnedoe and any of the others whose names and faces somewhat slip the mind. It's been 47 years!

Roy Batey
298 Nisqually Pl.
La Conner, WA 98257



Radio Operator Fritz Meier, beneath "Gypsy Princess" of 550th in early '45



L to R: Tom Walner, Pilot, Jim Manion, Navigator, Roy Batey, Co-Pilot, Ed Denning, Bombardier.
550th in early '45

Dear Ed:

It has been some time since I last wrote to you, however, I have been delegated to write about our 548th Engineering Section Annual Mini-Reunion.

This year we got together in Indianapolis, Indiana. This get-together was hosted by Wayne and Carol Detwiler. We took a bus trip and made stops at the Indianapolis Speedway, Union Station and a museum. A good time was had by all and, naturally, we had the usual-bull sessions. All in all, the Detwilers did a terrific job in planning the entire affair.

I am enclosing a picture of the men who attended and listed below are their names, with an asterisk denoting a first time attendee at the 548th Reunion.

John Alcock
David Beam
Jerry Bielle
Moe Bridges
Marty Girson
Buck Huber
Dale Leggett
Anthony Ragone
Herman Siederer
Forbes Tenbrook
C.J. Thomas
Wayne Detwiler
Robert Jewell*
Al Detert*
Henry Dworshak*
Charles Wells*
Ruel Weikert*

Bridges, Dworshak and Weikert are not in the picture.

Tentative plans are for our next reunion to be in Nashville, Tennessee in September of 1992. Anyone interested in attending should contact Marty Girson.

Sincerely Anthony Ragone

P.S. Incidentally, you too are doing a terrific job as our editor Keep up the good work. Also, it is

Dear Ed,

I recently became an associate member of the 8th AFHS and am now joining the "385th BGMA". Jerry Donnelly wrote me that you might send me a copy of the May 1991 Newsletter.

My brother, T/Sgt. Dawson E. Wilson was in the 385th BG 551st Squadron, ROP/G. Dawson and his crew were lost over North Sea February 3, 1944.

Thanks very much for any help you can give me in learning more of the disappearance of my brother and crew.

Sincerely,

Jerry W. Wilson
7513 Patomic Dr.
Nashville, Tennessee 37221

Dear Ed:

Will you allow me to use a bit of space in the Hardlife Herald to write this love letter to my dear departed wife, Statia?

I'll be as brief as possible. | Statia) passed away on Jan. 25, 1992 after an approximate seven year bout with Alzheimers. If any members attended the Colorado Springs reunion of 1983 you would remember her. She was the pert little gal who had repaired Colonel Jumpers camera during the reunion. . .and at the banquet was called up to the head table and awarded the symbol of her Air Force craftsman-ship, a large camera imprinted on a towel.

And, she received a standing ovation no less! On January 30, 1992 Statia was buried with military honors as a life member of the Disabled American Veterans. The ritual rifle squad fired the three volleys, and at the exact time the service commenced. . .by design or otherwise. . .four jet fighters in a diamond formation flew overhead.

Statia and I met at Lowry Field. She was stationed at Lowry One and I at Lowry Two. No time to get married as within weeks I was off to Salt Lake City.. .they Pyote, etc., etc. and the armorer waist gunner on Lt. Kaplans fine crew.

I did not fly the Oct. 6, 1944 mission and was the only one left in the quonset hut after that fateful day for awhile.

Then one day upon returning to the hut.. .there propped up against my top bunk pillow was a letter from Statia. After months and months her first letter finally arrived. From Great Ashfield I transferred to the 12th Air Force and flew sixty one more combat missions out of Corsica and Italy.

Statia and I were married forty six years, and I bless the Air Force for bringing us together for years of happiness. Her Certificate of Appreciation from Hap Arnold, Commanding General Army Air Forces reads in part:

"The ties that bound us under stress of combat must not be broken in peacetime. Together we share the responsibility for guarding our country in the air. We who stay will never forget the part you have played while in uniform. . . .As our ways part let me wish you God speed and the best of luck on your road in life. Our gratitude and respect go with you.. ."

And so dear Statia this is my love letter to you. On January 25th, you took off on a mission into .the great unknown. . .but, you left behind a legacy of caring and sharing. . .I love you.

Your devoted husband,

Ed Conrow
13541 Whitewood Drive
Sun City West, AZ 85375

Dear Ed;

How very nice of you to give us a call, and stop by to see Elaine and me in Sun City on your way to Tuscon.

Of the 3 missions made to the French "Maquis", all of our original crew made them.

Robert Pokorny-Pilot, Donald Caplinger-Bombardier, Paul Gelman-Navigator, Raymond Ruck-Engineer, George Hunter-Ball Turret, Gene Ruhno-Waist Guns, Donald Burgess-Tail Guns. Our Co-Pilots were always fill in, as our original pilot, Casper Peterson was grounded after our 3rd or 4th mission, with a heart problem.

I was radio operator, and missed the 2nd mission on July 14-44 because of a frost bitten right hand I had sustained on July 12-44 on a mission to Munich, Germany. After the bomb drop, one of our turbo superchargers went haywire, and we lost speed and altitude. The Amplifier for that engine was in the camera well in the radio room. To install the new Amplifier tube, I had to remove the leather sheepskin, and the rayon heated gloves from my right hand for several minutes, at 30 to 40 below zero, allowing a good frostbite. But we regained our speed, altitude and formation.

The medics grounded me for the next 3 days, with a "Half" a bale of cotton around my right hand, up to my elbow, and carried in a sling. So I missed the July 14th mission to "Maquis". Those 3 days were horrible, eating and taking care of body necessities, left handed. Hell, I couldn't even pick my nose.

In the July-91 edition of the 385th Newsletter, I read with great interest the article on page 18 by Col. Jim McDonald, and the results of the bombing mission to Le Bourget Field on June 28-44. I never knew that the 385th B.G., was the only group to make it.

His award of the "Croix de Guerre" by the French, was the least of what was due him. Le Bourget was a huge supply, and aircraft depot, for the German Air Force. It was loaded with highly trained technicians and specialists.

I remember the air was blue, and hot in the debriefing room after we landed. The R.A.F. had strike photos back to Great Ashfield long before we returned. There were 2 or 3 very top brass, giving hell to all of our pilots, and bombardiers. In my recall, only 25% or less of the bombs hit the designated areas.

Three days later, our crew didn't fly, so the 5 of us (N.C.O.'s) made a visit to our 385th Intelligence Library that morning. We were amazed at the records kept. In looking at one display, showing the 20-30 previous missions, Le Bourget was the last entered.

The Sergeant in charge asked us if we had made that mission? We replied yes, and he showed us a report just received from the French underground. The other 75% of our bombs had eliminated 6,000 key German personal at Le Bourget Field. I am inclined to believe the figure as the Germans had to grab any, and all Frenchmen to clean up the devastation the 385th inflicted.

My best to all of the 385th B.G.

Gene Silbergorg
550th B.S.

Letters to Ian

To: Ian McLachlan:

In reference to a picture of a B-17 called "Kentucky Winner" 42102481, sat down in Ghent, Belgium in Sept, 27, 1944, due to #2 engine blew a cylinder, the cylinder blew off the cowling. We lost all the oil & could not feather the prop. We were on our way to Ludwigshaffen, Germany, at 21,000 ft. and climbing. When it blew we had 12 500 lb bombs aboard. Could not keep up, so we aborted. Did not want to fly back to England with a windmilling prop. It would fly off and could kill someone, so we landed at the nearest field we seen. It happened to be an advanced R.C.A.F. Base. The town we billeted in was Ghent, Belgium. We stayed at Cour Hotel St. George in town. We all got back to England the best we could. There were nine of us, we left by twos in whatever was leaving the Base.

"Kentucky Winner was not our assigned ship. Ours was "Hay Bag Annie", 297280. Our mission was #190 for the Group. The crew that was flying in "Kentucky Winner" that day was Lehman's crew of the 550th Sqdn. It was the top turret gunner and Engineer. What I have written is why the B-17 was in Belgium AT THAT time.

Now, what WE HEARD back at the Base (385th) was they sent a crew over there and fixed #2 engine and flew it back to 385th and it flew more missions.

Please forgive my handwriting as my wrist is in bad shape.

As ever,

Daniel F. Geyer
17151 Tulsa St.
Granada Hills, CA 91344

Small world - after all these years, someone wanted to know what the ship was doing there and it was us who left it.

Dear Daniel,

I was delighted to receive your letter of 13th January and appreciate your taking the trouble to write.

It is a strange world and seems puzzling why someone should want to know the history behind a picture such as that of "Kentucky Winner" but, believe me, it's very frustrating to be an historian confronted with a picture about which you know nothing. You've eased that irritation - many thanks. By the way, do you have any pictures of "Hay Bag Annie" I could borrow and copy?

Hope to hear from you again.

Yours sincerely,

Ian McLachlan

Dear Ian,

My second oldest brother flew on a B-17 and served as a radio operator/gunner. His B-17 reportedly went out of control over the North Sea, February 3, 1944 and none of his crew was ever heard from.

I have borrowed from the library two books authored by Roger Freeman, "Mighty Eighth" and "The Mighty Eighth War Diary", very good books on the Eighth Air Force.

My Brother, Dawson E. Wilson was a T/Sgt. on his B-17. His diary was returned with his personal belongings and the 4 raids he entered in the diary match the same raids outlined in the "Mighty Eighth War Diary". I believe Dawson might have flown from Great Ashfield Station, since the book indicated the 385th BG was stationed there.

I've never been to England but I would like to visit London and some of the bases from where the B-17's flew within the next 2-3 years. That is the reason I would like to identify exactly (if possible) where my brother was stationed and establish other facts and be organized when I do visit the area.

From the "Mighty Eighth War Diary" describes the following action on February 3, 1944, the day Dawson's plane was lost: . . . "385th BG- 2 MIA 385BG A/C collided going out 20 M E. of Great Yarmouth". It is very probably that the B-17 my brother was on and his crew was one of the 2 that collided and was lost.

I wonder if it would be possible to track the crews which were lost on this particular collision and loss of the two fi-n's.

I would be very grateful to you for any help and direction that would lead me to more information.

Sincerely,

Jerry W. Wilson
7513 Patomic Dr.
Nashville, Tennessee 37221

Dear Jerry,

Thanks for your letter of 10th October and my apologies for the delay answering but I've been busy with the appearance of my latest book, "Eighth Air Force Bomber Stories." For information, I've enclosed a flyer which tells you about it and where it can be obtained in America.

Yes, your brother was based at Great Ashfield and I can help with information.

Letters to Ian Con't.

On 2nd February 1944, the 385th were flying their 58th mission - the subsequent Intelligence Report reads, "At 1215 hours approximately 5330-0414, *a/e* 952 from this group nosed up then dove steeply thru the low squadron colliding with *a/e* 938 and knocking 938's stabilizer. A/c 952 last seen in steep dive. A/c 952 last reported a "G" fix 4.90-40.56 under control at 1239 hours.

The Missing Air Crew Reports provide more details:

NARRATIVE OF AIRCRAFT ACCIDENT

On the return route from an operational bombing mission to Wilhelmshaven, Germany, on 3rd February 1944, two aircraft, A/C No. 42-39952 and 42-39938 of this group collided at 53° 40' N and 04° 18' E. As the circumstances and conditions contributing to the loss of these two aircraft and crews are similar, it is believed that by combining both in this narrative a clearer resume of what actually happened can be given.

Shortly after departing enemy coast on the route back, A/C 42-39952, lead aircraft in the high squadron of this group's formation, pulled up suddenly, then nosed over in a dive. Just before diving through the rear element of the lead squadron, an unidentified object was seen to fall off or from this aircraft. Apparently out of control A/C 42-39952 hit the tail assembly of A/C No. 42-39938 which was flying No 6 position in the lead squadron. A/C No. 42-39952 continued in its dive for approximately 5,000 feet when it appeared that the pilot had regained control of this aircraft. It was seen to pull up and level off. Flying level at this point it was last seen entering the undercast about one half hour off the enemy coast over the North Sea.

The Stabilizer and tail guns were knocked out of A/V 42-39938 as a result of the aforementioned collision forcing it to fall out of the formation. However, this aircraft continued to follow the group on the same route, gradually losing altitude and dropping further behind. When last seen this aircraft was about 50 miles ENE of Cromer, England. At that time it was still apparently under control at an altitude of approximately 2,000 feet over the North English Channel. No chutes were seen to leave this plane and the assumption is that it was forced to ditch in the water.

An intense search was made by both the British and American Air Sea Rescue Forces to no avail. The search covered all areas in the vicinity of where these aircraft were last seen.



Crews:

42-399521(551 Squadron)

Pilot - Morse, Robert W., Jr. 1 st Lt.
Co-Pilot - Watson, Van Ed, 2nd Lt.
Navigator - Demar, Bruce E., 1 st Lt.
Bomb - Kite, Paul W., 1 st Lt.
TTG - Bretschneider Robert H., T/Sgt
ROP/G - Wilson, Dawson E., T/Sgt
BTG - Britt Thelton, S/Sgt
TG - Morrell, Jesse W., S/Sgt
RWG - Smart, Robert C., S/Sgt
LWG - Disabato, Vito W., Sgt.

42-399398 (548 Squadron)

Pilot - Heuser, Herbert A., 1st Lt.
Co-Pilot - Madden, Henry K., 2nd Lt.
Navigator - Bridle, Eugene R., F/O
Bomb - Roth, Richard J., 1 st Lt.
TTG - Blansit, Roy H., T/Sgt
ROP/G - Lucey, John R., Sgt
BTG - Mareinko, John, T/Sgt
TG - Simonick, Joseph S., Pvtr
RWG - Ward, Lynn D., S/Sgt
LWG - Klutcharch, Charles J., Pvt.

Weather conditions were 10/10 undercast - persistent contrails - visibility unlimited. One crew believed the weather contributed to the accident. Bombing had been by PFF with results unknown and unobserved. Flak was described as meagre and inaccurate with no enemy fighters encountered.

Let's keep fingers crossed and hope veterans of the 385th can tell us a bit more this tragedy. I hope I've been of some help in your quest and look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,

Ian McLachlan

Dear Ed;

I'm writing in response to Ian McLaughlin's letter in the December issue of the Hard Life Herald. In the last paragraph of the letter Ian enquires about plane No. 42-102481 "Kentucky Winner". The picture of plane that was with the letter was taken at Airfield B55, Wevelghem, Belgium.

It is quite possible our crew set the plane down there. Lt. Ron Lehman's crew flew plane No. 42-102481 on Sept. 27, 1944 on a mission to Ludvigshoffen, Germany according to

Letters To Ian Con't.

records kept by navigator Lt. Gerald Thacker, (now deceased) At that time we had not yet been assigned "Haybag Annie" as our regular plane. As treccall from the tail gunners position, we developed bad engine trouble and were unable to hold position or altitude. The decision was made to jettison escape doors, all excess weight (ammo, etc.) and be ready to bail out. Being a top notch pilot Lt. Lehman with assistance of Co-pilot Branch was able to set her down on an airfield just a few miles into allied territory near Ghent, Belgium. I do not know the No. of airfield or if there was a smaller town named Wevelghem near. The crew, with the exception of guard detail for plane, stayed in Hotel St. George's in Ghent, Belgium. As I recall I stayed with plane some of time but also spent some time at hotel. I understand hotel is still there and operating and Lt. Lehman has been welcomed to come and stay again.

Most of crew returned to Great Ashfield, Sept. 30th on a C-47 but as plane was overloaded several of crew had to stay and find way back later. This may not be how picture came to be taken of "Kentucky Winner" at Airfield B55, but it would be quite a coincidence if it was left in same area by another crew in a period of several months.

As I still actively farm, I was unable to make the reunion at Tulsa. Having a late, wet spring, I was still planting crops. We are looking forward to the reunion in Spokane in '93. The August date should make it a lot easier for me to attend.

Sincerely,

Donald Klosterman
RR1, Box 82
Sibley, Iowa

Dear Ed,

Just received the Decemoer riardlife Herald and have some up-dates.

I can add to Gene Silberberg's letter about the most famous 385th B-17, "Rum Dum". She didn't end her days in Northern France but much nearer home at Honington, Suffolk. In the June '89 Hardlife Herald you published a photo I sent in showing the old girl on her belly on 30th May 1945. I hoped this might have drawn a response from someone on board that day but I've not heard - so, if there's an Hardlife Herald reader who flew on "Rum Dum's" last journey, his story would be very welcome. It would also add tribute to the magnificent work of Forrest Keen and the other ground crews who did such splendid work. While on this theme, I'd

dearly love to hear recollections from any ground personnel about their experiences at Great Ashfield. My role as your UK'contact is to gather as much as 1 can to preserve the history of the 385th so please help by sending recollections and photographs. Pictures can be copied and returned.

Noting the letter from Larry Cortright about the loss of John Hutchison and crew, I can add information going beyond

that given in my book, "Final Flights". Since the book appeared, we've been back to the site and finished excavations which started in 1964. Enclosed is a photograph showing Jeff Corless, David Wade and Paul Thrower working at the crash scene. Jeff has a bundle of chaff in his hand - there was plenty of this mixed in the mud.

The most significant discovery that day was the radio call plate with the serial 231370. Does anyone have a photograph of this ship? Another find was a tin of 'K' ration Chopped Ham and Eggs - the contents were recognisable but somewhat smelly!

It was my research into the loss of Hutch and his crew that began my association with the 385th and I'm as proud of it now as I was in 1964.

Best Wishes,

Ian McLachlan



K-ration can found at Hutchinson crash site.



Jeff Corless, David Wade and Paul Thrower at site of Hutchinson crash

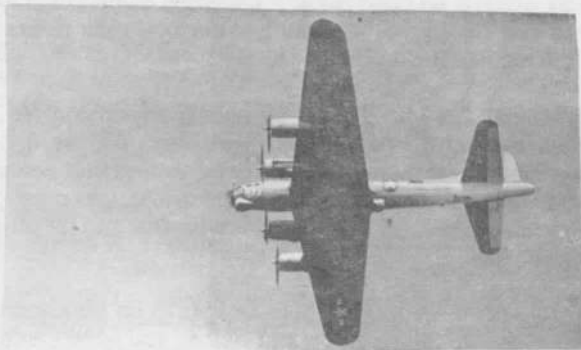
Wearing a Navy blazer with 8th Air Force patch with grey slacks has caught on with a number of the 50th anniversary travelers. If you want in on it, send your coat size, waist and inseam size. A \$250 outfit for less than \$150, courtesy of your friendly clothier and editor. Send your info right away.

EDITOR'S TRAVELOGUE

We won't bore you with any details on our two weeks of driving on the way to Tucson in January - except to report a nice visit with the McWilliams and Gauls in St. Joe, MO, the Verne Philips and Auda Porterfield (Jim Kincannon's widow) in Austin, TX, and the Arch Benners in El Paso.

Best news on the trip - a nice telephone visit with Bill Bunting in Kansas City. He was Group Surgeon when we went over seas, had a stroke 18 years ago, hadn't seen him since one of the reunions 10 or so years ago. Any of you going through Kansas City ought to call him - Williston Bunting in the phone book.

In Sun City, we had a good visit with Curt Osborn, our Special Services Officer all during the war. And in Tucson, another visit with the Art Schaefer's.



EDITOR'S NOTE: This letter was submitted by one of our members - Harry Bayer (Associate) from Glens Falls. He came upon this letter in the Chapman Museum in Glens Falls. It seems as though this letter was found in an inner pocket of an A-2 jacket donated to the Museum. Further research revealed that the donor of these items is a Mr. Howard Grout who now resides near Sushan, NY (Northeast of Cambridge), and who was a Navigator in the 390th BG-35 missions. The letter was written by Robert (Bob) Clark, also a Nav. in the 390th who happened to be Howard's good friend and wingman on this mission. Bob Clark, now deceased, returned to his native Detroit area after the war, however, he suffered recurring problems with his injured leg, and was killed in an ironic twist.. .after surviving this incredible experience, he was struck by a car while crossing a street near his home. Fackelman was the pilot; Schway, the co-pilot; Berger, the bombardier and Gaston, Burd, and "Red" were enlisted crewmates. I will continue to research this crew and their story with help from Howard and his 390thBG unit history.



LETTER TO A SERVICE BUDDY

Feb 2, 1946

Dear Howard-

I will admit I am ashamed for not writing but so much has been going on since I last wrote.

And now the story of the good ship "Gremlin", on the eve of Christmas. Yes, it was the night (day) before Christmas and not a cloud in the sky, but oh the flack!

Anyway, just as we passed Aachen on our left, I noticed flack coming up in front of us. The groups before us were hit hard. We tried to go around it but to no avail. I was hit in the leg and didn't tell the rest of the crew because I thought that possible we could bomb the target and return to base without any more flack. (Which we were informed that we would encounter no flack). Anyway, we did encounter more flack, and this time WE were in the center of it all. Honest, Howard, You could just can't imagine the feeling of knowing that THIS time you know your number is up. I know you know how it feels to see flack and be near it, but when it hits the plane and all over the sky in reaching distance and you can see it actually explode.. .then I say you have witnessed and gone through HELL. Anyway, the plane "Gremlin" gave a good account of itself. It reeled and jerked up and down and to one side and then the other. The wings flapped as though it were a bird, but they stayed on. Yes, I was proud of the old ship even though I knew she was fighting a losing battle. I was hit again in the same leg, and several places on my left shoulder. Blood was pouring out all over me. The plane finally went into a dive and spin. I noticed the #1 engine was completely blown off of the left wing. The ground was going round and round and getting closer and closer. I tried to get out but to no avail. This was it and I knew it. So I said three prayers and closed my eyes, waiting for the next world. Then I heard a big bang! When I woke up, I was in a tree dangling in my chute with German soldiers taking pot shots at me. I managed to drop to the ground, and seeing I was hurt, the Germans stopped shooting and carried me to their headquarters. Here I met Red. He was hit in the arm (He is now out of the army and in good shape). After 6 nights and 5 days on a train, we parted in Lubeck, Germany. At this point my condition was very poor, and they had to take me off. I was in a coma for one month. I almost died and almost lost my leg but the Lord was with me, and both my life and leg were saved. I was sent to Wismar, Germany and was liberated May 5th by the English - my lucky and happy day.

Well, Howard there it is. What I left out, I will relate to you when I see you or better yet, any questions you have, just write them to me and I will return answer them to the best of my ability.

FaCkelman, Schwab, Berger, Gustav, and Burd are the heros who died for the betterment of guys like you and me. I'll remember them always, and tears will flow, but never will I be ashamed, but proud.

Oh, yes, I will be a pop in Julyl-ego.

I am still in the hospital, but my condition is getting better. I still use a cane and limp slightly.

So with this letter I hope I am forgiven for not writing sooner. God bless you and yours.

Your Loving Friends
Kay and Bob

SO YOU THOUGHT YOU SPOKE ENGLISH

By Louis E. Schueler

(Reprinted from 7th PRG Journal via 25th BG (Ren) Assn. Bulletin Board with permission from Dottie and Frank Halm-94thBG's NOSTALGIC NOTES).. .whew!-Ed

Undoubtedly the vast majority of Americans who went to England during the war were under the delusion that they spoke English. Nothing could be farther from the truth and you would soon be disabused of this strange idea.

You probably didn't even know the alphabet. Remember the advertising sign which said "Hats for the YZ"? Didn't make sense did it? That's because Z is pronounced Zed in English-"Hats for the Wise Head." Took a little time to get onto that one, didn't it?

Of course we picked up a lot of words like petrol, tram, wireless, torch, and spanner pretty fast, but to be knowledgeable, or understandable, there was still a long way to go.

If you travelled by train, you went to the station, never a depot. You put your bags in a **luggage van** and took a **compartment** in a **carriage**. The **guard** collected your ticket and as you were **shunted** through the **marshalling yard**, the **engine driver** would be on the alert for passing **good trains**.

On arriving, you probably went to a **block of flats** rather than an apartment house or a **mansion** furnished with **Chesterfields** (sofas, not cigarettes). Maybe you had to take a **lift** to get up to the first floor.

If you brought any canned goods to help out with the meals, they turned out to be **tinned** goods. And those put up in the home were **bottled** not canned. That does make more sense doesn't it?

The water in which **Swedes** (Rutabagas) were cleaned came out of a **tap**. **The Joint** was roasted and the steak grilled rather than broiled. If you were served biscuits instead of bread, they were really **scones**, because a **biscuit** is really a cookie.

If something such as pancakes were served, you would have gotten **treacle** to put on them rather than syrup, and if you had a yen for a bottle of soda pop, you would have to ask for a **mineral**.

The jams and jellies were all mixed up. Their jelly is what we usually refer to as jello and their jam is our jelly. And their dessert means only fruit, while what we call dessert is a **sweet**.

You would **motor** on the **main road** and not the highway, (going through **cross roads** but never an intersection, numerous **roundabouts** and perhaps an occasional circus. You might have the choice of driving up in a **saloon** or a **sports car**, and if a sports car you might ride in the **dickey** or rumble seat.

A breakdown could be terrifying. The **big end**, or rear axle, might break, in which case it would be necessary to get your bags out of the **boot** and hike along the **verge** until you reached the **pavement**, or sidewalk, and **down to the bottom** to the **high street** where you might find a garage. Enging trouble would require lifting the **bonnet** (the hood is the top of the car) and checking the **rotor** or distributor.

Unable to get the car going you could hail one of the passing vehicles which might be a **lorry**, an open truck, or a **van** which is an open truck. If the worst came to the worst, you might secure a ride on one of the local **milk floats** for a slow trip into town.

Shopping at a store would be equally mystifying. To start with, a **pound note** is never a pound bill, as a bill is something you owe; and you spend your pound notes in a **shop** and not a store. If you buy hardware, you must go to an **ironmonger**, for dry goods to a **draper** and for drugs to a **chemist**.

If the conversation ever gets around to an education you were almost certain to be lost before you even started. In the first place it takes an educator, and a particularly brilliant one at that, to understand the complicated British educational system at all. With the public schools being private schools, and the **county council schools** being schools for which you have to pay, the whole thing is a delightful maze of mixed-up words.

No Englishman has been to school at Oxford or Cambridge. He has been to **varsity**. At the beginning of the term he **goes up** and at the end of the term he **goes down**. However, if he is **sent down** he has been expelled. You would not go up or down in the lower schools as these terms apply only to universities.

In order to qualify for a university you do not get a high school diploma but rather you sit for your **matric** and then at the conclusion of your college career you dress up in a gown and white tie and take your **greats** rather than a final examination.

A little horseplay, which is present in universities the world over, if serious enough, will result in your being **rusticated**, or suspended, and the penalty would most likely be imposed by a **don**, or full instructor. A lesser light on the teaching staff would be merely a **tutor**.

-The athletically inclined go out for their **blues**, or letter, while the more academic colleagues **sport the oak**. or keep their doors closed as warning to others to keep out. Of course the **gyps** or **scouts**, the cleaning people, can **spring the oak**, at will.

To go up to the varsity naturally involves traveling, and traveling can be as confusing as anything else in England. Unless, you pass through a town called London, Liverpool or Oxford, that is, a town with a straight forward and well known name, you will never know where you are. For some unfathomable reason, Worcester is **Wooster**, Cirencester is **Sisister**, Derby is **Darby**, Norwich is **Norch**, Gloucester is **Gloster**, and so on.

And besides all that, you go **bathing**, not swimming; wheat is **com** and corn is **maize**; zero is **naught** You play **death duties** instead of an inheritance tax; and at the end of this sentence I am going to put a **full stop** rather than a period.

And if you don't think I know what I'm talking about, I just happened to marry an English girl after spending three years over there.

EDITOR'S NOTE: Reprinted from 8th A.F. Newsletter, sent to us from Ed Grabowski.

Captain Shankle's Christmas Gift?

By Robert R. Lopiano — 385BG, 548BS

Dec. 5, 1943 — Bordeaux, France. We returned from a long and tedious flight of 9 hours or more. We were still elated, because our navigator Lt. Bill Baird was the first from our squadron to complete 25 missions.

Dec. 11, 1943 — Munster, Germany. This was my 24th, surely one of our crews' toughest raids to date, again returning safely. Four more of our crew members have finished their tour of duty. Since that day it seemed like every other day our squadron was alerted for missions to Kiel, Bremen, and Munster; but my name was not called to participate. I finally asked our Squadron Operations Officer, Capt. Shankle, when I was going to get in my last mission. I was on pins and needles sweating out each day. His remark was, "Take it easy kid, I've got to find an opening in another crew for you."

Dec. 24, 1943 — No Ball, France.

The quiet footsteps seemed a bit later this morning. I could see the light coming nearer, filtering through the blackout curtain. Finally, I heard my name, "Lopiano, you're on today as crew waist gunner." So my 25th and last mission was completed on Christmas Eve day 1943, and it was a "milk-run." Was this Capt. Shankle's Christmas gift to me, or was it just coincidence? I like to think that it was a gift from Him. In the 40 or more Christmases that have passed since then. I've never received a better gift.



All the caption said was "Damaged Helmet"



Our "Wheels" waiting for the parade to start.



Chaplain Jim going over some good news with ??

Major Relives Underground Hiding In N. French Village

by 2d Lt. JOHN ALQUIST

Maj. Richard N. Miller's World War II experiences with the French underground were verbally relived when Madame Ducatell of Frevent, France, recently visited *Jie Millers at Toul.

Major Miller, now commander of the 19th Tac Recon Sq, was then a 2d Lt. and a co-pilot of a B-17 with the 385th Bomb Wing flying out of Great Ashfield, England. Miller was on his third combat mission to Ludwigshaven, Germany, on Dec. 30, 1943, when one engine of his B-17 lost its power. While it was limping back toward the Channel, it was attacked by ME-109 fighters and severely crippled.

Ten of its crew members hit the silk, but Miller and his navigator chanced staying with the airplane and finally bellied it in near the village of St. Pol, in the Pas de Calais region of north-west France. They were immediately met by a party of French farmers who quickly hustled them into hiding.

Miller and his navigator were shuffled from village to village until they reached Frevent on New Year's Day, 1944, in the hands of the French underground. The village, a population of about 4,000, was the center of German activity! where launching sites for V-1 bombs were being constructed.

Madame Ducatel, a sympathetic widow who lost her French soldier husband in 1940, was employed as a bank teller in Frevent. She was in a position to assist the underground with their activities and hide downed fliers in her house.

She supplied blank French identification cards to the underground for aiding the escape of Allied airmen. Villagers brought food and farm products to her at the bank to feed her secluded guests. Some of it came from German-run farms.

Miller and his compatriots were nearly discovered one Sunday afternoon while dining with Madame Ducatel and her sister. A German boarder, living in a requisitioned room of Madame Ducatel's home, passed through the kitchen when an RAF flyer, one of Miller's compatriots, dropped a piece of silverware. The German picked it up and handed it back to the Englishman. In perfect French the Englishman said, "Merci," and the German went on to his room.

The only time that Miller and the other flyers could chance going out was at night. "It still amazes me why we were never discovered," Miller recalled, especially considering the difference in stature between myself and Madame Ducatel when we would take a walk through the town in the evening."

One time some of the flyers I went as far away as Lille to see a movie, but Madame Ducatel cautioned Miller not to sit in the front row where his height might be noticed.

Final arrangements were eventually made by the heat of the underground at Frevert, where they lived across the street from: Madame Ducatel, for Major Miller's departure. Upon leaving the Ducatel home on Mar. 18, she wished him a safe journey and hoped he would return some day. "Please don't return to bomb my village," she joked.

Aided by the underground, Miller and several others made their way to Paris. He and his navigator had to separate and Miller boarded a south-bound train.

Miller was captured by the Germans on May 13 as he was getting off a train just 18 kilometers from the Spanish border. He was a POW for the remainder of the war and was moved from Toulouse to Fresnes Prison in Paris where he was joined again by his navigator who had been captured at the Swiss border. Front there they went to Wiesbaden's Alberstrasse I jail and finally to Stalag Luft I in October, 1944, to remain until V-E Day.

Ironically, right after D-Day, the Ducatel house was completely destroyed by heavy Allied bombing attacks on the V-1 sites at Frevent. After the war, Madame Ducatel built another house on the same spot.

Madame Ducatel was decorated by both the French and American governments for her devotion to the French resistance movement.

Although some of the fliers that Madame Ducatel had hidden during the war still write her, Miller is the only one that has returned. He saw her in 1945 just before returning to the states and again ten years later during a tour in England with the 19th Tac Recon Sq, 66th Tac Wing. He has also visited other Frevent villagers who aided him in 1944.



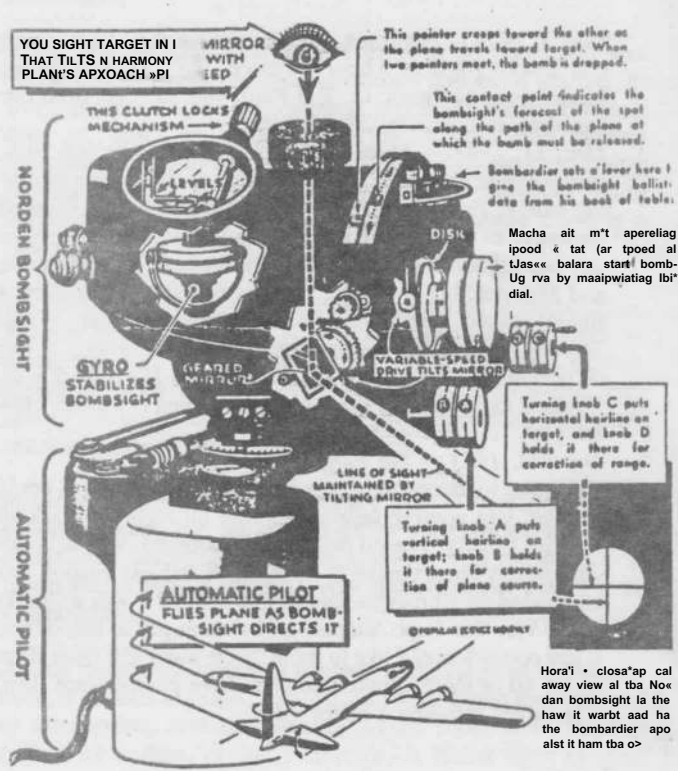
Photo by A3C Allan Tinker

MAPPING MEMORIES. — Madame Louise Ducatel points out the village of Frevent, France, to Maj. Richard M. Miller as the two recall memories of Miller's first visit to Frevent in 1944 as a downed bomber co-pilot. Miller was hidden from the Germans in Madame Ducatel's home for two and one-half months before making an unsuccessful escape attempt with the aid of the French resistance.

Norden Bomb Sight

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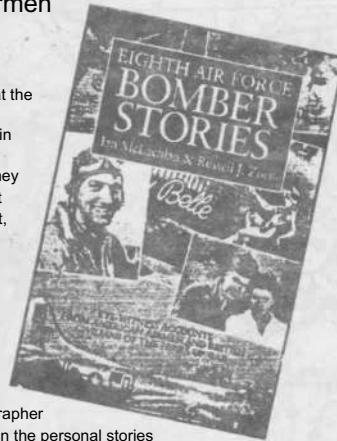
EIGHTH AIR FORCE BOMBER STORIES

Eye-witness accounts from American airmen and British civilians of the perils of war

Ian McLachlan

Previously unpublished photographs rescued from destruction at the end of the Second World War provide the basis for this gripping collection of stories about the American Eighth Air Force based in East Anglia.

Although the events in the book happened half a century ago, they are described with such detail and urgency that the reader is left feeling curiously affected. There are graphic accounts of combat, collisions, battles against the elements, and human error. The author, with his eye for human interest, puts over not only what the airmen did but how they felt too. Readers are trapped, struggling inside the spinning bomber. They share the agony of watching a broken fuselage spilling a crew into space, those without parachutes clutching the air with terrible futility. But there were fun times too - happy recollections, deftly described. This moving book, a joint venture between an expert East Anglian author and Russ Zorn, an American photographer based in England during the war, will enthral anyone interested in the personal stories behind the aviation history of the Second World War, especially those generations who remember with gratitude how many young 'Yanks' sacrificed their lives for the Allied cause.



CONTENTS

- Anticipating the 50th anniversary next year of the USAAF's arrival in England, this book is a potent mix of survivor and eye-witness accounts of the war, supported by original research.
- Historic, sometimes harrowing, photographs never before published.
- Appendix detailing further information on aircraft and incidents.



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(J) _____
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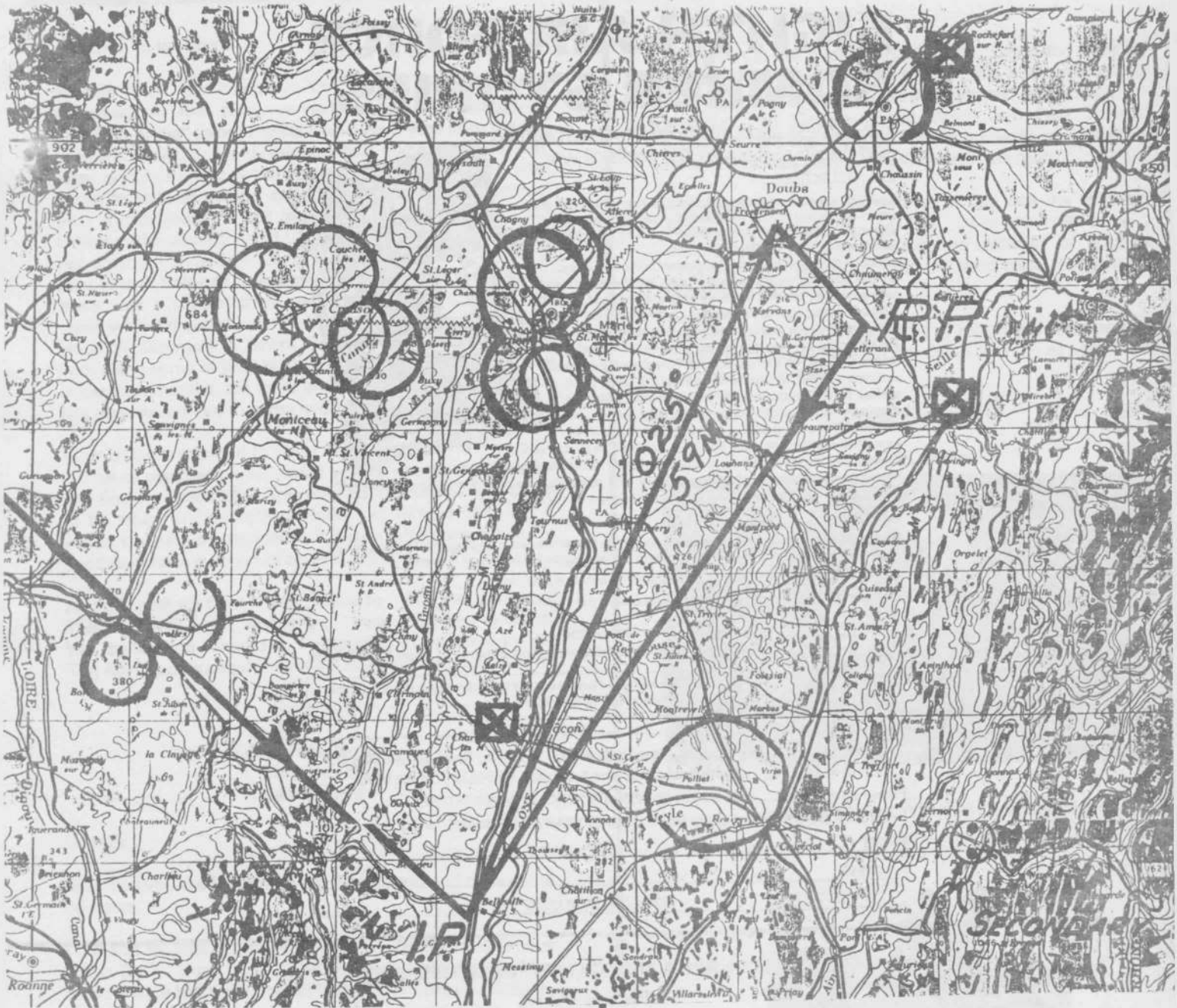
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Squadron or Support Unit _____

The annual dues are Ten Dollars (\$10.00)
Life-time memberships are one payment of \$100.00 Date
Make Check out to "385th BGMA" and mail to:
John F. Pettenger, Treas.
Box 117
Laurel, FL 34272-0117

POW Capture Data
Place
Stalag Unit

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



**PRIMARY TARGET
OPEN FIELD
IN FRANCE**

**SECONDARY TARGET
EITHER OF 2 OPEN
FIELDS IN FRANCE**

OTHER TARGET



EDITOR'S NOTE: As a "paddlefoot", your editor isn't going to try to explain the following-you who were involved will understand. Thanks to Jerry Ramaker & Bob Valliere for sending it. Incidental!, the Croix de Guerre efforts have evidently hit a dead end.

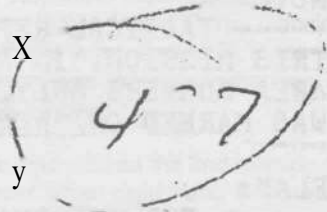
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ALL TARGETS

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THE FRENCH MAQUIS (PARTISANS) IN SOUTHERN FRANCE HAVE BEEN RENDERIN' FAR MORE ASSISTANCE TO THE ALLIED INVASION THAN WAS EVER THOUGH POSSIBLE. NOT ONLY DID THEIR ACTIVITIES DELAY FOR SEVERAL DAYS THE MOVEMENT OF THE 2ND SS PANZER DIVISION FROM TOULOUSE TO NORMANDY, BUT IT NOW APPEARS LIKELY THAT BOTH THE 9TH AND THE 11TH PANZER DIVISIONS WILL BE PINNED DOWN IN SOUTH FRANCE IN AN ATTEMPT TO RESTORE THE SITUATION FOR THE GERMANS. IN ADDITION TO THIS ENEMY ARMOR, THE MAQUIS ARE ALSO TYING UP SUBSTANTIAL NUMBERS OF GERMAN INFANTRY TROOPS

TO COPE WITH THE SITUATION THE GERMANS HAVE RECENTLY LAUNCHED A \ LARGE SCALE OFFENSIVE AGAINST THE MAQUIS. SVXXX SEVERAL OF THE AREAS x CONTROLLED BY THE FRENCH HAVE ALREADY BEEN LOST' TO THE ENEMY, NECESSITATING SEVERAL CHANGES IN PLANS FOR THIS OPERATION. ON J1DNE 20TH THIS MESSAGE WAS RECEIVED: "WE ARE BEING ATTACKED BY TWO DIVISIONS COMING ON ALL ROADS.... WE ASK URGENTLY FOR ASSISTANCE...." UNLESS WEAPONS AND AMMUNITION REACH THEM SOON, THOUSANDS OF THESE ALLIES OF OURS WIOL BE SLAUGHTERED AND THIS DIVERSION OF GERMAN STRENGTH WILL BE ENDED.

CREWS WILL BE BRIEFED THAT ALL DETAILS CONCERNING THIS MISSION WILL BE TREATED WITH THE UTMOST SECRECY. THE PURPOSE OF THE MISSION, / THE TYEE-JBQMB-LI2AIIg CARRIED.«. ROUTE«.. TAR££I-AREAS. ANILALL. SIMILAR, / CmLS WILL REMAIN SECRET AFTER THE MISSION HAS BEEN COMPLETED. AND / CREWSJ7ILL...NOT DISCUSS THE MIJST^FTEVEN ON THEIR OWN BASE.SA 2U.BLIC / RELAU9JIS...0Elim£3m^ BE INSTRUCTED THAT THIS MISSION IS TO BE / GIVEN NO PUBLICITY WHATSOEVER.

KTATP.

----- IT IS DESIRED THAT ALL CONTAINERS HIT WITHIN 1000 YARDS OF AIMING POINT. HOWEVER, CONTAINERS DROPPED ANYWHERE WITHIN THE AREA OUTLINED ON THE RESPECTIVE MAPS WILL BE RECOVERED. ANY CONTAINERS THAT DROP OUTSIDE OF THIS CONTROLLED AREA VERY PROBABLY \$iLL*FALL. INTO.,,ENm..HANDS'

LOCKSMITH (AREA NO. 11)

NO DEFINITE CONFIRMATION HAS YET BEEN RECEIVED FROM THIS SITE AND IT'S NOT KNOWN WHETHER IT WILL BE READY TO RECEIVE THE SUPPLIES. CONSEQUENTLY, CREWS WILL BE ESPECIALLY CAREFUL NOT TO DROP HERE UNLESS THE SITE SIGNIFIES ITS READINESS BY LIGHTED BONFIRES OR BY HAVING MEN ON THE FIELD WAVING FLAGS.

MARKSMAN (AREA NO. 1) —

IT WILL/BE NOTED THAT THIS AREA IS COMPRISED OF TWO SITES: MARKSMAN ALVIS AND MARKSMAN AUSTIN, WHICH ARE LOCATED ONLY A SHORT DISTANCE FROM ONE ANOTHER. THE CONTAINERS ARE TO BE DROPPED AT WHICHEVER FIELD GIVES THE PROPER SIGNALS.

NOTE: X

----- TACTICAL REPORTING SYSTEM AND TIME LIMITS WILL APPLY FOR THIS MISSION. IN ALL REPORTS, TARGETS WILL BE REFERRED TO BY AREA NUMBERS ONLY. GROUPS WILL REp^^A_M_v^^- 'AV!NG FLAGS? ETKXXX WAS MARKUPJ?SefWr&tJPP&l&S fiERE OBSERVED TO HAVE BEEN RECOVERED.

FLAK J

— FOR INFORMATION O.F LIGHT FLAK DEFENSES WHEN APPROACHING TARGET AREAS, SUGGEST GROUPS REFER TO MI 15, 1:500,000, FLAK MAPS. PERTINENT SHEETS ARE NANTES, DIJON, LYON, AND BORDEAUX. THESE SHEETS ALSO GIVE SOME LOCATIONS OF POSSIBLE HEAVY DEFENSES. LIGH

FLAK DEFENSES SHOULD BE CONSIDERED BELOW ALTITUDES OF 3,000 METERS HAVING AN INADDITION TO NOW TOTOTIDE DEFENSES THERE ARE ENEMY TROOP CONCENTRATIONS IN VICINITY OF TARGETS. THESE SHOULD ALSO BE AVOIDED AS SMALL ARMS FIRE CAN BE EFFECTIVE AT ALTITUDES INVOLVED. TROOP CONCENTRATIONS IN THE VICINITY OF SALESMAN ARE AT LA COURTINE (4542N/0217E) AND AT TULLE (4517N/0147E). IN THE VICINITY OF TRAINER THERE IS A DIVISION OF GROUND TROOPS LOCATED IN THE AREA NORTHEAST OF THE TARGET, ROUGHLY INCLUDING GRENOBLE, BERY AND CHAMBARAND A/D, AND THERE IS ANOTHER CONCENTRATION AT VIENNE (4532N/0455E). CHAM-

IN THE VICINITY OF DIRECTOR "A" AND MARKSMAN THERE ARE TROOP CONCENTRATIONS AT M^^ (4618N-0450E), AT LONS LE S. (4641N-0533E), AND AT DOLE (4705 -).

THE AREA, FREE OF KNOWN FLAK AND TROOPS, THAT IS SUGGESTED FOR POSSIBLE CIRCLING OR SECOND RUNS IN THE VICINITY OF SALESMAN IS SOUTH AND "SOUTHEAST OF THE TARGET: (FOR DIRECTOR A, EASTO? - (P) TARGET) (FOR MARKSMAN p^n^ OF ... r^ FOR " TRAINER XA (URAYUN), SOUTH ND "SUUTHEffSTv TARGET? 385 Sec.

DIRECTOR "A" — THERE ARE HEAVY GUN DEFENSES NEARBY AT CHALON SUR S, DIJON AND TAVAU AZEL. > z

Z" MARKSMAN — THERE C^OTEAVY^fTERY NEARBY AT BOURG AND LI^nT} _ 3<y (GUNS TO THE SOUTHWEST AT AMBER IEU. S-

TRAINER (CRAYON) — THERE IS A HEAVY BATTERY TO THE WEST AT VALENCE (PA A/D) AND POSSIBLE BATTERY AT GRENOBLE TO THE NORTHEAST. LYON SHOULD BE AVOIDED ENROUTE.

SALESMAN — THERE ARE NO KNOWN HEAVY GUNS IN AREA. SEE MI 15 MAP FOR SEVERAL LOCATIONS OF LIGHT GUNS NEAR TARGET. BALLOONS MAY BE PRESENT AT THE LIGHT GUN POSITIONS AT LA COURTINE AND ST JULIEN

-- -PARTRIDGE- --

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LWG	WHEDER^—	MARLE^—	BERGERO N/--	McBRIDE ←	DYER ←
BWG	FEUZ—	NUTERZ—>	SCHMAELINGA ←	DIMMCK ←	CARMEN ←

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P.	SOWERS ←	MCDONALD ✓	HXSMXSS	TURNER**	PETERSON^	
CP.	DOANE ***	RIAN 4-----	BOBBINS/-*	RAYMONDZZ—	POKORNIZ—	
B.	HIGGINS ←	HENRI *-----	DIXON Z—•	ALLEB ←	GELMAN^	
B.	VANCE, J.C.^	CHRISMAN <—	WTCTB GfiOVb^*	REEVES K—	WEISSGERBER^	CAPLIN GER ✓
JIG	DE^N^—	BROWN, G.EJ>	HOEUERZ—	DISBROW ←	KIM RUCK ←	
RO	BEINETTZ-----	HALE ←	GEE'LER ←	PAWLOZAK ←	SILBERBERG ←	
BIG	HEA4_	HEFFERMANZ.	MAI ←	ARBOGAST ←	W.L. HUNTER ←	DR. D
TG	HIDE-c_	BEOSHZ—	LEOIABD**	DASSOW ←	BURGESS ←	
LWG	HIKEZ, R.A^—	LINTON A-	VUGICHEVICH^	HANSON, A. ←	CAULFORD ✓	
RWG	TALOR £_	ATIEH A—	COLE ←	BROOKS ←	RUHNO ←	

P. **SMITH, W.R.**
 CP. SMITH, W.R.A—**
 B. JOBES A-*
 B. DREESSEN**'^
 TTG. JAAROZ—
 RO. WES TERJIELD ✓
 BTG. KALE ←
 MS
 TG. TOB)REAU^—
 LWG. ROBINSON ✓
 BWG. TORIES ZB

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Thompson 598 30-V

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RETURNED EARLY
SMAG

VICTOR peters on 66a |L2-..

RIENDLY AIRCRAFT BL DISTRESS:

Identity of A/C _____ . Time last seen . < _____ Location _____
 No. of Chutes What happened to L/C _____

Identity of A/C _____ . Time last seen _____ Location _____
 No. of Chutes What happened to-A/C- _____

Identity of A/C _____ Time last seen _____ Location _____
 No. of chute8 What happened to L/C _____ ; _____

OBSERVATIONS OF ENEMY ACTIVT j

(Specifically - Large enemy concentrations or movements, with detail of size, direction, and specific roads or railroads used. Location of Enemy A/C on the ground with type and number if possible. Any Enemy Naval Activity.)

Saw a FW 190 lying crashed + partially burned in field 6°54 5 20 E.

WEATHER: Did it affect this mission? ----- How? _____

BATTLE DAMAGE: Minor " _____ Major Salvage _____

MISCELLANEOUS INFORMATION AND COMMENTS;

Liked to do it again. make it Sunday as its a nice Sunday ride

Name of Navigator or Crewman reporting Edwin Johnson
R.

Hello Ed,

The other day my wife was looking through some old papers I had sent home from England and found this story on one of the missions in the August 23, 1944 "Stars and Stripes". The paper has turned yellow with age and is quite fragile. I had some copies made that turned out readable.

Sincerely,

George J. Hunter

HE STARS AND STRIPES

Wednesday, Aug. 23, 1944

Maquis Get 'Manna From Heaven'

Tons of Ammunition And Guns 'Chuted Into France

By Major E. J. (Bud) Iluber

For most of the sunny day 2/Lt. Clark H. Bennington, 20-year-old pilot from Findlay, Ohio, had pushed his Flying Fortress across nearly all of France. It was a long grind, but neither he nor his co-pilot, 2 Lt. Mack L. Dodson, 24, of Kimberly, Idaho, seemed to mind.

"The Maquis can sure make good use of that stuff," he said, pointing to large containers in the bomb bay. In them were guns, ammunition, supplies.

In the nose, where three of us tried to lie comfortable squatting on unyielding flak suits, the navigator, 2/Lt. Norman E. Whitchurch, 20, of Collinsville, 111., and the bombardier, 2/Lt. Russell S. Jones, 21, of Chicago, were now very much on the alert.

The huge formation of Fortresses from the 3rd Bombardment Division of the Eighth Air Force had started the slow descent from 14,000-foot-high altitude.

Almost Scrape Ledges

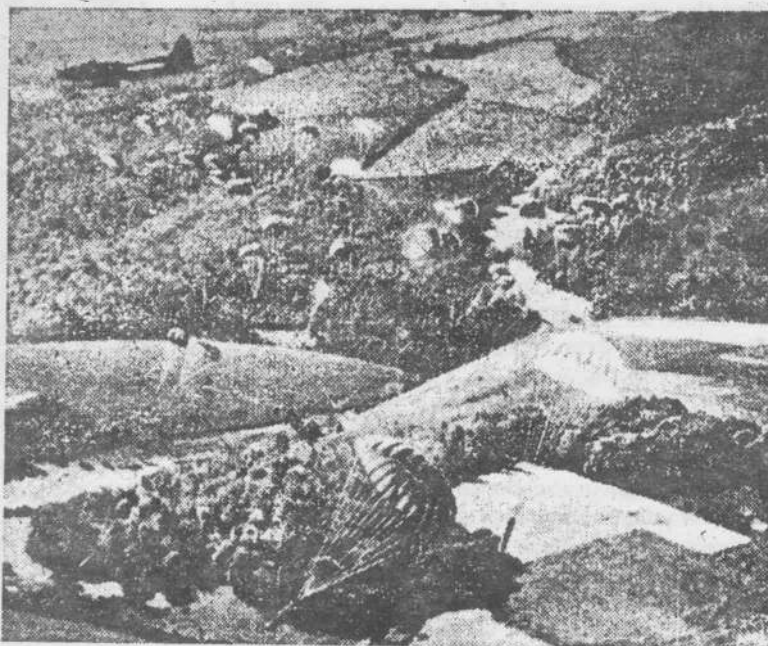
Soon mountains fringed the formation and at times the wing tips of the big planes seemed almost to scrape the jagged ledges. In perfect formation, roaring down the valleys and over the red-roofed French villages, the planes swept on.

Jones and Whitchurch pointed up ahead. There was the place, clear and unmistakable. The Maquis were waiting.

With the rendezvous spotted, the formation leader swung around, flew down another valley, zoomed up several times to avoid big hills. After a wide arc down a twisting avenue of interlocked valleys, the formation reapproached the designated plateau and the bomb bay doors opened ponderously.

Thousands of red, yellow and white parachutes billowed out over the fields. And as the supplies floated down hundreds of Maquis ran from hidden trucks. They waved happily, scooped up chutes and containers and made bee-lines back to the trucks.

Here was one of the Eighth Air Force's



U.S. Army Air Force Photo

Supplies for the Maquis parachute down to French countryside from Eighth Air Force bomber.

secrets in operation. Several times Fortresses of the 3rd Bombardment Division have gone out in daylight, in tight-flying formation, deep into Maquis territory to deliver tons of much needed supplies from the air. In addition, Liberators of the Eighth Air Force Composite Command have flown countless missions of the same type.

On this particular mission, in crystal-clear weather, not a single German fighter was seen.

Citizens AU Lined Up

Once as the formation swept low over a neat little village nestled in a valley, all the inhabitants were lined up on the main street. In the late afternoon the frantic waving of their arms was reflected by the animated extended shadows. Beyond the village men bicyclists dismounted and stood in the middle of the narrow road to make big V signs with their arms.

Back at base the combat crewmen talked about the mission.

"Did you mention that mission?"

out to pick up that stuff?" asked the ball turret gunner, S/Sgt. Elmer D. Smith, 19, of Weir, Kans., who had a grandstand seat from his underslung plexi-glass globe.

Thought 'flew Blocked

"Sure did," agreed a waist gunner, S/Sgt. Paul J. H. O'Brien, 19, of Spokane, Wash. "But I thought Smjthy would claim that the trees blocked his view."

The 19-year-old tail gunner, S/Sgt. Robert H. Myers, of Newark, N.J., who had a longer time to watch the activities on the ground, added, "So help me, those Frenchmen were picking up that stuff almost as fast as it came down."

All the tired men—including the rest of the crew with T/Sgt. Albert G. McVicker, 24, of Toledo, Ohio, at the top turret; T/Sgt. Richard A. Higgins, 22, of Niagara, Wis., at the radio; and S/Sgt. Bernard A. Rooney, 29, of Rochester, N.Y., combat cameraman and gunner—agreed that the mission to help the Maquis gave them more satisfaction than any other trip they had made.

Meet man who fell 13,500 feet!

Tail gunner lives to tell about it

by Hal Heidbreder

Most Americans know that last December 7 was the 50th Anniversary of the attack on Pearl Harbor.

Only a few know that January 28 through February 1 was a week dedicated to the 50th Anniversary of the Eighth Air Force.

The "Mighty Eighth" was activated January 28, 1942, less than two months after America's entry into WW II. During the war, through 1945, there were 350,000 members of the Eighth Air Force and of that total 26,000 were killed, most in action in the ETO or Pacific. (From 1945 to present, another 650,000 have served as members of the Eighth).

The Anniversary celebration at Savannah Georgia where the Eighth was activated was hosted by the Georgia Chapter of the Eighth Air Force Historical Society. A plaque marking the birthplace of the Eighth notes that "Under the leadership of Generals Carl A Spaatz, Ira C. Eaker, and James H. Doolittle, it (The Mighty 8th) flew over 600,000 sorties delivering over 700,000 tons of bombs and destroying over 15,000 German aircraft. On one single mission, December 24, 1944, it was able to send 2,000 B-17 Flying Fortresses and B-24 Liberators and nearly 1,000 fighters in the Battle of Germany."

That mission, December 24, 1944, was to support American troops in the Battle of the Bulge after three consecutive days of fog kept air support on the ground. The Forts and Liberators hit railroad marshalling yards, German supply lines, and fighter-based air fields.

I was on that 1,000-plane mission and on 28 more, earning a "Lucky Bastard" certificate which was awarded to anyone with 25 or more missions.

In Savannah I found only a few members of the 385th Bomb Group, but one...Joe Jones...achieved permanent fame. As the story goes, tail-gunner Jones lived a miracle. On a mission to Ulm, Germany, March 1, 1945, his bomber collided with another B-17 and was broken in half. Jones rode the tail section 13,500 feet to the ground and lived to recall the horror. He landed near a Belgian village, where he was pulled from the wreckage and rushed to a British hospital. Joe survived without even a broken bone, though the other nine members of his crew died in the front section of the B-17.

The name of the B-17? Appropriate for Joe, if not for the rest of the crew, it was called "Mr Lucky."

You may remember a more detailed version of the



VETERANS OF THE "MIGHTY EIGHTH" swapping stories at the 50th Anniversary of the 8th Air Force included these three from the 385th Bomb Group. At left, Bob Weixler, armorer with the 548th Squadron; center, Joe F. Jones, Jr., tailgunner with 549th Squadron; and right, Hal Heidbreder, togglier with the 549th. See story for Jones's "Believe It Or Not" mission.

above story from newspapers at the time...or from a Ripley's "Believe It Or Not" column.

Others at the 50th Anniversary included Steve Miller, son of band leader Glenn Miller who was killed in a flight across the English Channel, and retired Colonel Francis "Gabby" Gabreski, member of the 56th Fighter Group. Gabreski, guest speaker at the closing dinner Saturday night, shot down 28 German airplanes, highest total of any 8th AF pilot in Europe. On his last flight, Gabreski crashed in Germany, and after a daring run to stay free, was captured and confined to a POW camp for the duration of the war.

A "fly-over" with a restored B-17, a B-24, and three P-51 escorts highlighted the Saturday noon activities as crowds of veterans and their families watched the vintage planes zoom over the Savannah river.

Another story from Bert Varady's book on our years in England - '43 to '45.

Major Bert Varady turned over to us a book containing most of the history of our group, from its beginning at Spokane in February 1943.

We'll be printing excerpts in *Hardlife* *Heralds* that we're sure will make interesting and nostalgic reading.

The following from a December 1943 report is typical of what you'll be reading - "every day life" reports.

When we run short of those, we'll start with stories of individual heroics.

INTRODUCTION

With the passage of time, the memories of the glory and sorrow once experienced by young men years ago in a distant land are gradually becoming less and less clear. These memories are rare, for no one will ever be able to experience or recreate a time that no longer exists.

The pages of this book have been retyped from the original documents on file at the Albert F. Simpson Historical Center, Maxwell Air Force Base, exactly as they were once typed by men of the 385th Heavy Bombardment Group only days after the events described actually occurred.

This book chronologically surveys the 385th's operations on a monthly basis from 1943 till its deactivation in 1945. I regret that I could not include more from the original material, but as you can see this work is extensive. Hopefully there is something contained in this book for everyone.

I would like to take this time to once again thank Mrs. Rudy Cunat, who spend many of her free hours in typing and editing this material. Without her assistance the timely completion of this of this book would not have been possible.

I would like to emphasize to all who read this book, that the Air Force I belong to today is only a continuation of the greatness achieved by the men of the 385th Heavy Bombardment Group.

Bert J. Varady
1 LT USAF

EDITOR'S NOTE: Public Relations Earl Mazol indicated "improving British American Relations" in December 1943. They thought we were brash and rude, we wondered about them.

STATION LIFE

Anglo-American Relations

A Christmas party was given by the men of this base for the inmates of the Stowmarket Orphanage. The men saved their candy rations for two or three weeks, made toys, improvised entertainments and on Christmas Day held an old fashioned Christmas jamboree for the children. A good time was had by all.

By way of returning the favor, the children provided an entertainment and concert for the soldiers at the orphanage the following week. One little girl became so attached to one of the soldiers during the party, that when he failed to show up at the Orphanage the following week, broke into tears and was only consoled when a friend of hers promised that he would not only visit her the following week, but would write too. She was then able to continue in a more happy frame of mind.

This is but an external phase of Anglo-American relations; actually the subject as a complex problem, and questioning on both sides of the fence has revealed the following:

There is a common desire on the part of informed and thinking British and Americans to achieve closer and more understanding relations between the civilians of this country, and the American soldier stationed here. This type of individual, who looks to the future realizes an allied Britain and America can do much to prevent a repetition of this war and more, help maintain the political and economic equilibrium of the post-war world. These people are also of the opinion that due to the unnatural situation which obtains here, namely the stationing of such large numbers of soldiers in the center of a civilian population makes for a host of problems which, lacking a systematic and planned solution are going unresolved.

Both the American soldier and the British civilian feel that there should be a more solid meeting grounds of the two factions than in the local pubs. Some English people have said, "We'd like to have American soldiers into our homes for dinner and talks, or just social evenings, but rationing makes this impossible." Another one suggested, "If the men could bring their own rations, or better still if there were some agency to arrange appointments and bring the rations before the soldier arrives, so that the whole matter doesn't appear staged, a great stride in cementing relations would be made."

Some American soldiers feel that if they could meet local Britishers at round tables, or at informal lectures, where the British and the Americans would talk informally about themselves and their country's customs, some of the differences which exist would be easily understood, respected or wiped out.

Social Activities

Dances are held on the base for both officers and enlisted men. The Officers a weekly dance at their club, and the enlisted men a bi-monthly affair at theirs.

Entertainment

Movie shows are held from four to five times each week, depending on the number of films available.

EDITOR'S NOTE: After 5 missions into Germany in July '43, read what "Our Generals" said about the "Battle of Germany". Would that they'd have known what they were talking about.

August 1

Captain Benner has been named commander of the 549th Squadron.

August 2

We have time, now to think of what has happened during the past few days. There is no doubt to it, our Group has participated in an action that, soon, will be history. We have lost friends, but the generals are sending us commendations and they say we have won the "Battle of Germany". We believe them, but we feel strongly that there is much more of Germany to be wiped out before this war is won, and we know that much of the "wiping" will be done by "Van's Valiants", the 385th.

We have time, too, to reflect on the heroism of our buddies. Last week Lt. Lacasse was simply another good B-17 pilot. Today he is the guy who left the comparative safety of his formation for almost certain death to prevent possible injuring the others of this Group. It happened after one of his gas tanks was punctured by a 20 mm shell. Lt. Lacasse, feeling certain that his ship would explode, left the formation and went over the target, alone; He hit, hit, and came home.

There are others, too, who will rank high on the list of "Greats" of this Bomber Command, if justice is done on that list: Lt. Yoder, who brought his crew and his ship safely back under almost impossible circumstances; Lt. Jacques, and others.

August 8

The weather for over a week, now, has been murky. Results: no missions. There has been the old routine of ground school for the combat crewman, and the ground units have had time to catch up on their repair of aircraft and general station improvements.

August 10

We were alerted last night, and this morning our formation went out again to bomb Germany, but was called back by wing. Bad weather.

August 11

Colonel L. S. Stranathan, commander of the gunner school at Tyndall Field, Florida has been with us for a week, now, to observe our gunnery program. A small, quiet, red-headed officer, the Colonel has been going about the field on a bicycle.

Major Riva, 551st Squadron Commander, has been reassigned as Assistant Group Operations Officer, with duties as Group Training Officer.

Captain Hamilton of the 549th has been appointed the 551 st Squadron Commander.

A Flying Evaluation Board for this station was set up today.

October 9

Today we carried out one of the longest raids we have been on yet. Our target was the huge Focke Wulf assembly plant at Marienburg, in East Prussia. Captain Masters, flying with Colonel Wilson of the 3rd Bomb Div. led the entire Division. Lt. Schulz, the lead navigator, brought them right over their target, and then Lt. Dentoni, the lead bombardier did the most perfect job of bombing that has been done in the ETO. The factory was destroyed completely. This was the perfect raid.

The only dark spot in today's picture is the fact that Lt. Bell and his crew are missing. Their ship was seen to abort, and there is a good chance that they landed in Sweden or in German occupied territory. T/Sgt Browning was flying with Lt. Bell on this mission as aerial photographer.

October 10

Captain Hamilton and Captain Klohe led our Group to Munster in Germany today. It was as tough a mission as we've ever been on - heavy flak and fierce fighter attacks by all types of German planes for over two hours. Our boys are claiming a large number of enemy planes destroyed, and from the condition of their planes and the ammunition expended, their claims seem justified. One crew, Lt. Richey's is claiming 12 fighters destroyed in a running battle while they were along with the Nazis. They know they got more than 12, but they were too busy to make a record of their other "kills".

Lts. Pettenger and Lt. Whitlow failed to return ,but ten 'chutes were seen to open from each ship.

October 11

The formal opening of the Aero Club was held tonight. Colonel Vandevanter officially opened the club with a speech that revealed his enthusiasm and interest in its welfare. Mr. Skarren, the Red Cross director gave a message of thanks to the Colonel and his staff. There was dancing to the music of a new base band, with girls brought in by Special Services from Stowmarket and Bury. Refreshments aplenty were served.

October 12

The mission that we had scheduled for today was scrubbed.

This afternoon we again had presentation of awards. Brigadier General LeMay was here to present the Distinguished Flying Cross to T/Sgt Matthew Leo, top turret gunner on Lt. Horr's "Mission Belle".

Colonel Vandevanter and Colonel Piper presented Air Medals and Oak Leaf Clusters to the Air Medal.

Lt. Walter Camp III assigned to the 551st Bomb Squadron with duties as assistant Operations Officer. Lt. Thomas Morgan has taken over. Captain Masters is now in Group Operation.

October 13

The mission scheduled today was again scrubbed.

October 14

1030 they are taking off now on what is the most important mission ever run by Fortresses over Germany. Colonel Vandevanter, in leading our Group, leads the Combat Wing. Every available bomber - B-17's - in England will head for this target today. Success with this mission, will shorten the war by several months, General LeMay has said. The importance of this indicates its toughness. Ours will be the last Combat Wing over the target; by then it is thought every available German fighter plane will be up in the sky. Our ships have just taken off, and we are sweating them out like we have never before.

1800 well, we're sweating the ships out now, and they should be coming over the horizon at any moment now.

2000 Well, the all important mission is over and all of our ships returned - one ship, Lt. Vandive's, landing at another field, badly shot up and the navigator 2nd Lt. Phillip J. Vockerath was killed. The target was the ball bearing works at Schweinfurt. We did a good job of bombing despite heavy fighter opposition.

October 15

Today our crews got a well earned rest after 8 straight days of alerts. Ground school was the order of the day.

October 16

We had a practice mission today. Major Riva led the Group formation.

EDITOR'S NOTE: Our Group Engineering Officers report to Col Van in December 1943.

TECHINCAL PROBLEMS

December was the best month in the entire experience of Engineering functions, according to Captain Arnold H. Levine, group engineering officer. More planes were operation, and less difficulty, than every before. Yet, the month was not without its problems. Following is a list of the stumbling blocks encountered and overcome:

The inefficiency of spark plugs was overcome, by replacing the front row of plugs after each high altitude flight.

#A filler plug for the oxygen system was devised as an emergency feed in the event the regular feed system became damaged.

There was some trouble with the cracking of super-charger and carburetor ducts. Investigation showed Pilots were taxiing with "boost". Solution was to discontinue taxiing with "boost".

Pilots reported excessive drop in manifold pressure and condition was laid to faulty magnetos. Real trouble was discovered as checking magnetos at too high an RPM, which burst magneto points. Correction was effected by checking magnetos at 1700 RPM.

Navigators claimed they could not read their Gees. Difficulty was to be light from sides of instrument. Eye shields were devised to shut out light.

There are several criticisms and recommendations of general nature:

(1) Biggest maintenance difficulty in the damp weather. Rust and freezing of damp parts at high altitudes, causing jamming of leading gears, and bomb bays are two instances.

(2) It is recommended that electrical and manual systems for lowering landing gear be separated. For often if the electrical system fails, the manual system becomes inoperative as well.

(3) When landing gear fails and plane has to come in on belly landing great saving in man hours for repairs would be effected by providing tools in the plane as standard equipment for dropping of the ball turret. A crescent wrench and ball-peen hammer would be sufficient for the purpose.

(4) Tactical outfits are but too sparsely supplied with catalogs listing the parts on new type planes. When parts go out it is difficult to obtain the nomenclature for ordering replacements. Delay would be overcome in this matter if catalogs were freely furnished.

(5) Electric Super-charger found to be more efficient than old type.

(6) Pilots were trained in states to fly on throttle control rather than super control. It is important that this procedure be reversed and planes be flown on super-charger control. Instruction of Pilots to this end has brought excellent results. This difficulty is an outcome of improper instruction in the States.

(7) It has been found that there was not enough high altitude flying during training in the states as preparation for operational missions at high altitudes under combat conditions. In short, things had to be learned about high altitude flying in combat that might have been learned during training.

Dear Ed,

Last September we had a visit by our friends Alan & Lilian Goring of Wales. During their visit Bob & Shirley Cooperman came up from Long Island and we spend the day going over the time spend in Holland and England in the past few years.

Bob Cooperman is the Chairman of the International Manna/Chowhound Brotherhood in the USA, a former 388th Bomb Group flyer, and Alan Goring was the founding Treasurer/Secretary of the Manna Group in England and a former flyer in 115 Squadron, RAF.

Bob Valliere



Bob Cooperman - 388th BG
Bob Valliere - 385th BG
Alan Goring - 115th Sqdn RAF

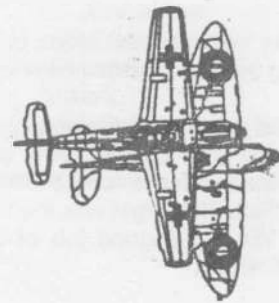
Ruell Howe, in his book "Man's Needs and God's Action" wrote these words.

"One of the things fundamentally wrong with our society is that its underlying assumption is that people are less important than the job they do."

I do not feel I am capable of expanding on Dr. Howe's statement but I will make this observation. We had a wonderful time at Tulsa in 1991 and those that made the arrangements did a tremendous job. But I think you will agree that meeting each other was the most memorable.

Anything that is MADE by man (or woman) can have something go wrong. But it can never be wrong to love a person regardless of the job he or she does. Love truly makes the world go 'round. I love you. See you in Spokane.

Love, Jim



385TH BGM A

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