

BACK TO THE SACK
OHIO AIR FORCE
SKY GODDESS
HESITATIN' HUSSY
GROUND HOG
BIG GAS BIRD
THOROUGHED

HIT PARADE JR
RAUNCHY WOLF
LIBERTY BELLE
STAR DUST
ANGELS SISTER
GREMLIN BUGGY II

THE BLACKJACKER
GOLDEN GOOSE
WAR HORSE
ROUNDTrip TICKET
"HAYBAG" ANNIE
LIL AUDREY
HUSTLIN' HUSSY

THUNDERBIRD
PROCADILLY QUEEN
CROWFOUND
MISS AMERICA
PREGNANT PORTIA
LEADING LADY
ALEXANDER'S RAGTIME BAND
LONESOME POLECAT

OFF SPRING
WANDERING DUCHESS
BLUE CHAMPAGNE
YANK
GELDING
STARS AND STRIPES
DORSAL QUEEN
HARRIS BREATH
SIX FOR
MR. SMITH
SUGAR JO

CURLY'S KIDS
MARY ELLEN
DRAGON LADY
WINNIE THE POOH
WAR WEARY
MARY PET

HARD LIFE



HERALD

SKY CHIEF
MR. LUCKY
BARBARA B
LACK BUNNY
SOUTHERN BELLE
HELLS BELLS
PRINCESS VAL

PERRY'S PIRATES
GIZMO
MADAME SHOO SHOO
PAT PENDING
POSSIBLE STRAIGHT
HOMESICK ANGEL
LATEST HUMOR
VIBRANT VIRGIN
RAGGEDY ANNE
STORK CLUB
LADY ANN
FICKLE FINGER OF ?

SLO JO
ROGER THE DODGER
MICKY
HALF AND HALF
MICKY II
SLEEPYTIME GAL
MAIDEN AMERICA
MISSION BELLE
OL' RUM DUM
MAC'S HACK
LULU BELLE
THE JOKER
AIN'T MISBEHAVIN'

OL' DOODLE BUG
SWEET CHARIOT
SWINGING DOOR
MISSISSIPPI MISS
SATAN'S MATE
SLICK CHECK
KITTY'S REVENGE
BELL OF THE BLUE
MARY ELLEN II



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. XXI, NO. 2

Editor: Ed Stern
Printed by Interstate Printing
Fargo, North Dakota

APRIL 1994

SUPPORT UNITS

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

ASSOCIATION OFFICERS

PRESIDENT

Robert C. Smith
N 12019 Anna J. Drive
Spokane, WA 99218
509-466-7824

1ST VICE PRESIDENT

Robert A. Valliere
18 Whitjng Farm Road
Branford, CT 06405-3223
203-488-1622

2ND VICE PRESIDENTS

Mrs. Jean Smith
N 12019 Anna J. Drive
Spokane, WA 99218
509-466-7824

Arch Benner
1760 Dale Douglas Dr.
El Paso, TX 79936-4605

SECRETARY

George Hruska
7442 Ontario St.
Omaha, NE 68124
402-397-1934

TREASURER

John Pettenger
Box 117
Laurel, FL 34272-0117

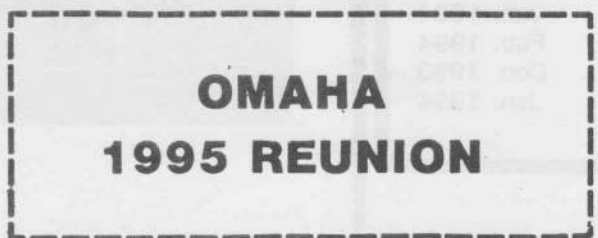
PREZ SEZ:

On 3 December 1942 Ruel Weikert graduated from Twin Engine Pilot Training at Stockton, California. He and his lovely wife, Mary, transferred to Hobbs, New Mexico for B-17 transition. There were 35 in the 1st class to be trained as B-17 Aircraft Commanders. Jimmy Stewart was in the class. I know this because I was in the class too. When we finished we were sent to Salt Lake City for assignment. Stewart was talked into going to B-24s. Ruel and others, including myself, were sent to Ephrata to pick up crews. We then joined the 385th at Geiger and the rest is history. Ruel - I salute you!

Sincerely,

Bob Smith

P.S. I await word from Geo. Hruska regarding Omaha. The color rough of the B-17 painting will possibly be ready in 60 days.



ASSOCIATION OFFICERS

CHAPLAIN

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

EDITOR, HARLIFE HERALD

Ed Stern
P.O. Box 2187
Fargo, ND 58108
701-237-9999

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

Ruel G. Weikert
Frank B. Walls
Vincent W. Masters
John C. Ford
James H. Emmons
Paul Schulz
Forrest V. Poore
William A. Nicholls
Earle L. Cole
Sam Lyke
Sid Colthorpe

CHAPLAIN JIM SEZ:

Hello again,

When you have to write something, sometimes, it seems all ideas are gone. So this time I am using an interesting item from a Baptist Church Newsletter. Here it is.

"If the earth's total population could be shrunk to 100 individuals with all the existing human ratios remaining the same, right now there would be:

- 57 Asians
- 21 Europeans
- 14 North & South Americans
- 8 Africans

*70 of the 100 would be non-white, non-christian; 30 would be white Christians.

*70 would be illiterate, 50 would suffer from malnutrition, 80 would live in substandard housing and only one would have a college education.

*50 percent of the world's wealth would be held by just 6 people, all U.S. citizens.

Sort of makes you realize why tolerance and understanding are so essential in today's world?"

Now isn't that something to think about. Even if the Baptist Newsletter is not totally correct it still has a good point. And am I ever glad that God loves us ALL!!!!

Another thing to remember about this year and taxes: We are supposed to file - not chisel.

The 1995 Reunion in Omaha seems a long way off - but 50 years ago in England seems like but yesterday. Sooooo make the best use of your time here. And may God continue to bless us ALL.

Fraternally yours,

Jim



Frank Cortese	July 1993
Ray C. Warne	Jan. 1994
Joe Jones	Jan. 1994
Lyle Fryer	Feb. 1994
Norman Goldman	Dec. 1993
Richard A Cowan	Jan. 1994

ZUMBRO FALLS — Th*
funeral for Lyle 7. Fryer will be 2 pm. Friday at Christ United Methodist Church in Rochester, with the Rev. Jonathan R. Leonard officiating. Burial will be in Grandview Memorial Gardens in Rochester.

Mr. Fryer

Mr. Fryer, 72, of rural Zumbro Falls, a former employee of Thein^Well Co., Postier & Eggers, Marigold Foods and Gopher Welding, died of complications of cancer Sunday (Feb. 6, 1994) at Maple Manor Nursing Home in Rochester.

He was bom Feb. 14, 1921, in Rochester and grew up here. In 1941, he joined the troyal Canadian air force and after the attack on Pearl Harbor transferred to the U.S. Army Air Corps. A B-17 pilot, he served overseas in England, and in

October 1943 ww Art dow a ove Gentucy and held as a prisoner of war for IH years. On Oct 06, 1945, he married Jane W. Waldron in Erimston, CL, and they lived ia the Rochester area all their married lives. Mr. Fryer had been a salesman and maw Sier for several businesses, 1 :■ eluding Gopher Welding, Marigold Foods for 24 year, am then at Postier & Eggers and Thein Well before his retirement in 1983. He was a life member of VFW Post 1215, an avid outdoorsman and snowmobiler, and a member of the American Ex-Pew's organization and its Hiawatha chapter.

Survivors include his wife; a daughter, Susan (Mrs. Russell) Hammel of Eyota; a son, Scott o Rochester, a grandson; and two brothers, Joseph of Poplar Bluff Mo., and Vincent of Mount Vernon, y/ash. A'



Joe F. Jones, Jr. (385BG and Chapter L/M) passed away Thursday, January 13, 1994 in Savannah after a long illness with cancer. As you may recall, his beloved wife Ruth died August 1, 1993 also from cancer. He was a retired Major for the U.S. Air Force and a retired federal agent with the OSI. A large number of Chapter members attended the services on Saturday, January 15th. Our sincere condolences to his mother Nelle C. Jones, sons Joe F. Jones III, Charles, Steven, his daughter Susan and all the family.



Comrades Honor Man Who Defied Gravity

by Brad Swope, *Staff Writer*

Many veterans tell good war stories but Joe Jones may be the only one famous for defying gravity.

As a young World War II aviator, Jones survived a mid-air collision and a fall of 13,500 feet—more than two miles—inside the broken-off tail section of a demolished B-17 bomber.

And when he watches today's Veterans Day parade in Savannah, the Wilmington Island resident looks forward to seeing the latest entry in years of tributes to his near-miraculous survival. His fellow veterans of the Eighth Air Force—"the Mighty Eighth"—will feature a mock-up of Jones' bomber on their parade float.

Jones, who turns 68 today, has been active as a fund-raiser and contributor to the Mighty Eighth Air Force Heritage Center, which is working to build a \$10 million museum in Pooler honoring the Eighth. The Eighth was founded in Savannah during the war.

Jones was a sergeant in its 385th bomber group at the time of his bone-jarring adventure on March 1, 1945.

Then 19, the Fairfax, S.C., native was a tail gunner in the B-17 nicknamed, ironically enough, "Mr. Lucky."

It was part of a B-17 squadron flying a combat mission when it collided with another bomber and broke apart over Belgium.

"When we were hit, I knew we were going down," Jones said in an interview this week at his home.

Jones, isolated in his tail gunner's perch, initially thought the plane was going down in one piece.

Only later would he learn that the plane's severed tail section, with him in it, was falling on its own—and that all his crewmates had been killed in the collision.

He struggled in vain to escape as his ears plugged up with the dropping altitude. He tried to kick the tail section's door open, then started to feed out his parachute, then changed his mind.

"I completely panicked. I don't deny it," he said.

Finally, he leaned back against an armor plate and, resigned to what appeared certain death, lit a cigarette.

That was the last thing he remembered until he woke up a few days later in a British field hospital, banged up but



JOHN CARRINGTON/Staff

SURVIVOR: Joe Jones lived after a fall of 13,500 feet.

feeling very lucky indeed.

Ripley's "Believe It Or Not" featured him in a 1945 cartoon panel, noting he didn't break any bones in the fall. He did break a tooth and bit his tongue, cutting it severely. It wasn't until years later that hairline fractures were discovered in his teeth.

Now terminally ill with cancer, Jones says he's "trying to get everything I can" from each day. He's determined to see today's parade, albeit from a wheelchair. He cherishes his wartime memories and is particularly proud of a plaque honoring him as the Eighth's "outstanding gunner."

Jones, a Savannah area resident since

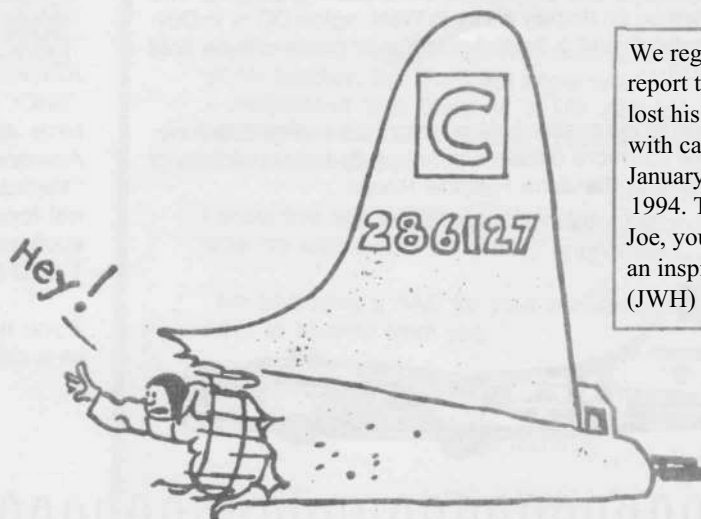
1967, keeps a rack of wartime mementos at his home, including two .50 caliber shells salvaged from his plane.

Since his oft-chronicled adventure—he keeps an album of newspaper and magazine articles about the incident—he has returned to Belgium to visit the villagers who rescued him from the wreckage and got him to the hospital.

The mystery of how he survived the fall, considered a unique feat in aviation history, still hasn't been solved—at least not to Jones' satisfaction.

One theory is that the falling tail section acted as a glider, swooping back and forth enough to reduce the impact.

"That's all speculation," Jones said.



We regret to report that Joe lost his battle with cancer on January 13, 1994. Thanks Joe, you were an inspiration. (JWH)

From Massachusetts Chapter Newsletter

BULLETIN BOARD

REUNION - FREEMAN FIELD, SEYMOUR, IN - OCTOBER 7, 8, 9, 1994. Members of cadet classes 43 -D to 44 - K. Contact Mayor's Office, 220 N. Chestnut St., Seymour, IN 47274 ATTN: Louis Osterman or call 317-888-8661.

FEAR, FAITH, AND COURAGE

A Love Story by Willard Richards

Long-time member Willard Richards who was a Combat Crew member of the 548th has put together a fascinating story of his WWII career, starting when he first became interested in flying as a youngster.

He and his new wife wrote each other every day, they kept their letters, and he's used them to put together a heart-warming, nostalgic, sometimes scary historical look-back on those years.

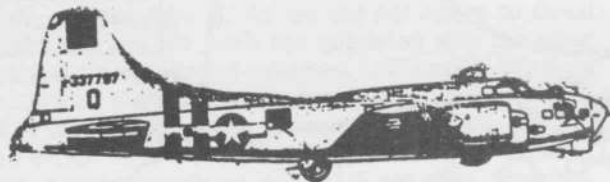
Complete with many illustrations, including reprints of Stars and Stripes pages, pictures, copies of orders, flight records - it will give you a picture of what he-and you-went through during those years. It's 205 pages of nostalgia.

Send \$20.00 to Willard R. Richards, 665 Esme Drive, Girard, OH 44420 for your copy.

U.S. HISTORICAL SOCIETY

The U.S. Historical Society has commissioned a well-known artist to do a painting of a B-17 participating in the October 14, 1943 Schweinfurt raid. President Bob Smith has been assured that it will sport a 385th Square G insignia. The original will be on display either in Washington DC or in Duxford, England, and a limited number of prints will be sold at \$50.00.

According to the present plans, they'll be available in June. We'll give you more details and hopefully have a picture of the painting in the June Hardlife Herald.



CONFEDERATE AIR FORCE, INC.



JUNE 6, 1994 -- Midland, Texas. Dedication of the Confederate Air Force Memorial Garden. Fly-over to commemorate the Normandy Invasion. D-Day veterans invited to attend. For information please call CAF Headquarters (915) 563-1000.

JULY 1, 1994 ■ Midland, Texas, the Confederate Air Force and the American Airpower Heritage Museum unveil the new "Dynamics of Flight" exhibit. The new exhibit will teach basic principals of flight with environmental and interactive exhibits. For more information please call CAF Headquarters (915) 563-1000.

SEPTEMBER 2, 1994 ■ Midland, Texas. Confederate Air Force dedication of the "Bush Mission" exhibit, CAF hangar. Exhibit will bring to life the mission in which former President George Bush was shot down. For more information please call CAF Headquarters (915) 563-1000.

OCTOBER 8-9, 1994 -■ The Confederate Air Force (CAF) will host AIRSHO 94 at Midland International Airport, between Midland and Odessa, Texas. AIRSHO 94 will feature the CAF World War II Airpower Demonstration, the "FINA" Pitts, Jim Franklin's Waco "MYSTERYSHIP," Kip Komidor in his Chipmunk and Les Shockley's "SHOCKWAVE," plus many, many more World War II warbirds and modern military aircraft on static display. The American Airpower Heritage Museum will unveil Phase IV, "Verticle Envelopment: Silent Wings and Airborne" which will focus on the unpowered troops during World War II, such as gliders and parachutists. For ticket information call 1-800-CAF-SHOW or (915) 563-1000.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to give us a call. Thank you for your assistance in this matter.


O
O
CZ>
<Z>
CZ>
CZX
O

CZ>

CZX
O
CZX

MJIBILILILIETIIN BOARD


SECOND SCHWEINFURT MEMORIAL ASSOCIATION

The Second Schweinfurt Memorial Association publishes an interesting Newsletter for any of you who participated in that memorable trip. Their address is 5728 Walla Ave, <CZ> Ft. Worth, TX 76133, Dues are \$10.00 for 2 years. Send  a it to Lou Brown, 20215 Village Green Dr., Lakewood, CA 90715.

NOTICE

Did you know a Wilford R. "Pappy" Thornock? He passed away in 1968 but his brother would like to hear from anyone who knew him. Contact George Thornock, 2702 S. 4300 W., Odgen, UT 84401 -9754. Pappy was a Bombardier and a little older than most, so the nickname.

AAHM ANNOUNCES CALL FOR PAPERS

 MIDLAND, TEXAS (February 17, 1994) - To commemorate the 50th anniversary of the end of World War II, the American Airpower Heritage Museum and Midland College announce a Call for Papers for the international symposium "Pilots and Poster Girls," to be held in Midland, Texas, March 2-4, 1995. The call for papers is being issued for topics which deal with World War II on both the battle front and the home front.

Suggested topics include, but are not limited to: World War II military aviation/airpower, financing and selling the war, wartime developments, innovations, correspondence, ethnic contributions, logistics, naval and Pacific operations, the Manhattan Project, and popular culture. Deadline for a one-page proposal is June 1, 1994.

Invited speakers include Margie "The Poster Girl" Stewart Johnson, of whom 94 million wartime posters were made; and American, British, German and Japanese pilots. For more information, please contact Dr. William G. Morris, chairman of Social and Behavioral Sciences, Midland College, 3600 North Garfield, Midland, Texas 79705, or call (915) 685-4641.

MEMORANDUM FOR D-DAY TOUR OPERATORS VETERAN SERVICE ORGANIZATIONS

D-Day functions to be hosted by senior officials of the British government In June 1994.

This office has been informed by the British government of its desire to invite a limited number of D-Day veterans from the Allied forces to attend several special functions in southern England in June 1994. To assist in identifying deserving veterans, we request your help. We have been asked to provide a much information as possible about the veteran to include name, address, and the rank of each veteran at the time of D-Day and at the time of retirement or separation from military service.

The British government is hosting three events in the area of Portsmouth, England, on JUNE 4, 1994. Invitations will be extended in the following manner:

Event A - 200 veterans (to include spouses, if applicable)
Time: 2:30 - 5:30 P.M.

Event B - 400 veterans (to include spouses, if applicable)
Time: 4:00 - 6:30 P.M.

Event C - 75 veterans (formal attire - NO spouses/guests)
Time: 7:30 - 11:30 P.M.

We sincerely appreciate your assistance in helping the British to honor our D-Day Veterans during their trip to Europe this coming June. The point of contact for the World War II Commemoration Committee is Lieutenant colonel George Kershaw. Please call him at (703) 692-2103 if you need additional information. Please FAX veteran information/nominations to (703) 692-2162/4.

John K. Sullivan
Colonel, USA
Director of Operations

NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC

The March issue of National Geographic has a great story commemorating the 50th Anniversary of the 8th AF - not about the 385th, but it will be of interest to all. Peggy Smith called it to our attention.

Bitburg Push in '44 Could Have Spared Later Pain

By VICTOR J. HILLERY

The furor over President Reagan's visit to the cemetery at Bitburg should remind us that only a few miles from that town an opportunity was lost to bring World War II in Europe to an end eight months before V-E Day. If the fighting had terminated that much earlier there would have been no Battle of the Bulge, which accounted for the deaths of so many Americans and almost all of the 1,887 German soldiers buried at Bitburg.

Germany capitulated on May 8, 1945. On Sept. 14, 1944, a task force, consisting of one-third of the U.S. Fifth Armored Division and an infantry battalion of the 28th Division, entered Wallendorf, Germany, by wading the 40 yard-wide Sauer River from Luxembourg: the bridge across the stream had been demolished by German troops. Three days earlier, at a point a few miles north of Wallendorf, a seven-man reconnaissance party from the Fifth Armored had been the first ground troops to cross the German border in World War II.

Wallendorf was a small border town sitting at the base of steep clifflike terrain. It was part of the Siegfried Line, Germany's famed fortified West Wall. Several of the buildings in the town were actually bunkers with six-foot-thick concrete walls. The engineers of the attacking force cleared these pillboxes with the help of flame throwers and dynamite charges on the ends of poles. The task force of tanks, infantry and artillery, which was known as the Fifth Armored's Combat Command R, then climbed the road that snaked up the rise behind Wallendorf.

Despite more pillboxes along its path, the advance reached the summit but was prevented from proceeding farther that day by a huge crater in the narrow road that led to the Nledersgegen Valley to the east of Wallendorf. An alternate route was located the next morning, and Combat Command R descended into the valley to

the Gay Creek crossing at Nledersgegen where it defeated an enemy force of tanks and infantry.

Continuing to push northeast, Combat Command R quickly seized four small villages and the high ground near Mittendorf. It had completely breached the Siegfried Line's fortifications and by evening of the second day of the attack was nearing the village of Bettingen on the west bank of the Pruem River, about six miles inside Germany. The 28th Division's Infantrymen also pushed forward to the river and seized the high around northeast of Wettlingen, only five miles from Bitburg, which was an important communications center.

It was late on the third day before the artillery could get into position to support the planned attack on Bitburg; the Germans were filtering back into some of the cleared pillboxes and were harassing the advancing supporting columns. Therefore, on the third afternoon Combat Command B, another of the Fifth Armored's three task forces, crossed the Sauer River to widen the base of the corridor and combat the enemy infiltration along the northern flank. Major support also was supplied by the P-47 Thunderbolts of the 365th Tactical Air Group, which among other things knocked out four big railroad artillery pieces.

The Fifth Armored was convinced it could swiftly cover the remaining 50 miles to the Rhine River because it was opposed by only makeshift enemy forces and only one small river lay in its path. Thus, the Fifth Armored's commander, Maj. Gen. Lunsford E. Oliver, was dismayed when on the evening of Sept. 16 he was ordered to cancel the planned attack on Bitburg. He was told by V Corps that the division's swift advance of more than 700 miles from Normandy to the German border in less than six weeks had stretched its supply lines to a critical point. More important, as the division later learned, almost all available supplies were being earmarked

for Operation Market-Garden, which began on Sept. 17. This undertaking, devised by British Field Marshall Bernard L. Montgomery, was an attempt to outflank the Siegfried Line by an end run through Holland. It consisted of three-and-a-half airborne divisions, one armored division, two Infantry divisions and supporting troops of two corps, and it sustained more than 13,300 casualties. But it failed to achieve its final objective—capture of the bridge at Arnhem, "the bridge too far."

The war didn't end in September and German factories continued to produce tanks, more than 2,000 during October and November alone. This was roughly the total number unleashed by the Germans in the December offensive—the Battle of the Bulge.

At the time the Fifth Armored and its supporting units were smashing through the Siegfried Line in September, the whole Allied Western Front was in a state of extreme flux. Therefore, it's doubtful that the opportunity that presented itself at the Wallendorf-Bitburg corridor was fully appreciated by Supreme Commander Dwight D. Eisenhower and 12th Army Group Commander Omar N. Bradley. Indeed, they may even have been unaware of it; neither mentioned it in his autobiography.

But if the Allied Command didn't know about the threat to the Reich at Wallendorf-Bitburg, the Germans certainly did. Referring to that thrust into Germany, Gen. Siegfried Westphal, chief of staff to Field Marshall Gerd von Rundstedt, commander of the German forces in the West, later wrote: "If the enemy had thrown in more forces he would not only have broken through the German line of defenses which were in process of being built up in the El-Val, but in the absence of any considerable (reserves on the German side he must have effected the collapse of the whole West Front within a short time."

EDITOR'S NOTE: Hindsight is wonderful! We all remember the Arnhem offensive and that Sunday in September when we saw hundreds of gliders going off for the attack—the failure of the project which inspired the movie referred to in this article.

Generals Bradley & Eisenhower evidently didn't realize what was happening.

AMERICAN NOTES

EDITOR'S NOTE: A sobering thought!

After the Bomb

“All we could see was a white blotch”

BY NATHAN I. NAGLER

When the cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Japan, were destroyed on August 6 and 9, 45 years ago, I was only several hundred miles away on Okinawa. I was an Army Air Force lieutenant, one of four 20-year-old soldiers of a C-46 cargo plane crew. We were stationed with the 211th Troop Carrier Squadron, Fifth Air Force. We had no idea at the time that two atomic bombs had been dropped so close to our base. In fact, we had no idea what an atomic bomb *was* or the devastation it caused. But we were soon to find out. The sight of those two pulverized cities is something I will never forget.

Japan surrendered so quickly after the bombing of Nagasaki that Gen. Douglas MacArthur didn't have the men or the equipment ready to accept the surrender. His first order of business was to get transportation equipment onto the Japanese mainland.

On September 3, 1945, the day after President Truman announced Japan's defeat, our squadron was ordered to fly jeeps into Tokyo. As navigator of the crew, I plotted the course. About an hour into the three-hour flight, I pushed the intercom button and shouted over the plane noise to the pilot, co-pilot and crew chief, “Hey, you guys, do you want to see Hiroshima? We are going to fly right by it.” Almost in unison they nodded yes.

We had never heard of radioactivity, much less, the risk of flying so close to an atomic target. We were four young officers euphoric that the war was over, that we were going to Tokyo, and that we would soon be going home. The side trip



Hiroshima, October 5, 1945.

to Hiroshima seemed like a lark.

We usually flew at 5,000 feet but when we got to Hiroshima we dropped down to 3,000 feet. None of us could quite believe our eyes, so the pilot suggested getting a closer look.

We made a low altitude, 500-foot circle over Hiroshima. The mood in our airplane changed very quickly. The city had been flattened to a white blotch. We couldn't see a single building, or identify a single street. The only things we could make out in the white expanse were a few chimneys still standing and some black, square boxes scattered around. The safes that had been stored in government offices and local businesses were the only structures that had survived the nuclear bombardment.

The four of us were not about to let an opportunity to see Tokyo go by. So, without any authorization, we managed to unload one of the jeeps from the plane, and drove off.

The neighborhoods on the way to the city were filled with mountains of burned-out buildings. Suburban Tokyo had been fire-bombed numerous times during the war, and the destruction was nearly total. Unbelievably, however, the roads had been cleared and most of

the streets were even swept clean.

When we got to downtown Tokyo, we saw that nothing had been damaged.

During our flight back to Okinawa, we “doglegged” to see Nagasaki. The devastation there was different. The port of Nagasaki is surrounded by mountains and although the view of the city was terrible, it was not as flat and white as Hiroshima. Still, there was not a single house or building standing — all we could see were chimneys.

That night, sitting around a table at the base, telling our friends what we had seen, we realized the frightening power of an atomic bomb. We compared it to what we saw in suburban Tokyo. The destruction of that area took many, many missions during which thousands and thousands of bombs were dropped. But Hiroshima and Nagasaki were each destroyed in one mission, by one airplane, by one bomb.

Reflecting now on the massive devastation I witnessed 45 years ago, I am thankful that the superpowers have reduced their tensions, that the possibility of a nuclear confrontation is a little more remote, and that the world in which my grandchildren is growing up, is, perhaps, a little bit safer.

Nathan I. Nagler is chairman of B'nai B'rith senior housing.

USAF COLLECTION NATIONAL AIR AND SPACE MUSEUM

AIRBORNE ANTIQUES



A B-17 'Flying Fortress' soars over Boca Raton on Sunday and going on display. Nearly \$700,000 was spent before landing at the Boca Raton Airport to restore the plane.

B-24, B-17 help memories take flight.

By D. AILEEN DODD
Staff Writer

The year was 1944. An American bomber flying over Germany was blown from the sky by a German fighter plane, and movie star Jimmy Stewart was the last voice the B-24 crew members heard before they bailed out.

This was not an old war movie. This was Boca Raton resident Abe Wilen's last flight in a B-24 during the war. Stewart was an operations officer with the Army Air Corps.

Wilen, then a 23-year-old Air Corps navigator, parachuted safely to the ground, but half the 10-man crew of his bomber died that day. Wilen spent the rest of the war in prisoner-of-war camps.

Irwin Stovroff, also of Boca Raton, shared a similar experience when he parachuted from his B-24 nearly 50 years ago. He still carries a picture of the barreling plane in his wallet, a photo he snapped during the jump.

On Sunday, Wilen and Stovroff climbed into the cramped fuselage of the *All American*, a World War II plane restored by an educational foundation, for a flight from West

Palm Beach to Boca Raton.

For the two veterans, it was a chance to complete missions they abandoned when they were forced to jump from their planes to survive.

"This is the first time that Abe and I have been back in a B-24 in nearly 50 years," Stovroff said. "To get back in and fly was an unbelievable experience. I couldn't believe how comfortable it was."

The flight made Wilen remember just how daring flying was.

"Right now it seems dangerous," Wilen said. "It didn't seem that way when I was flying combat."

More than 100 people gathered at the Boca Raton Airport to see the silver relic soar through the sky. It is the only flying B-24 in the world.

When the plane landed, aviation buffs snapped photos and got the chance to see the B-24 up close. A B-17 bomber named *Nine-O-Nine* also was on hand for the display, which will move to Fort Lauderdale from Tuesday through Thursday.

Both planes were restored from scrap metal. The Massachusetts-based Collings Foundation funded the project. The B-24 cost \$1.4 million and 100,000 work hours to complete. The B-17 cost nearly \$700,000

to restore, said Bob Collings, founder of the Collings Foundation.

"The Smithsonian said it couldn't be done," Collings said. "I thought it could be done."

The B-24, a plane flown by the 15th Air Force, is adorned with the names of pilots and bombers who completed successful missions including the famed Tuskegee Airmen, the all-black 322nd regiment of pilots who successfully escorted the plane on many of those adventures.

"Our objective is to create a living history and let people be a part of that history," Collings said.

That's what Justin Di Trolio liked about the display.

Di Trolio, 11, touched the plane and snapped photos for his school report.

"It's pretty big," he said. "They are a lot slower and don't have as much weapons" as some planes flown today.

For World War II veteran and former bomber Bill Eagleson, seeing the plane brought back memories.

"To be in the nose of that plane, it brings a lot of recall back," he said. "The Air Force was a challenge. The pay was good and the food was good and all of the girls loved us."

TREASURER'S REPORT 1993

Total Assets 12/31/92	18,169.10
CD'S	8,000.00
Checking Account	13,629.57
Outstanding Checks	<u>-1,000.00</u>
Total Assets 1/17/94	20,629.57

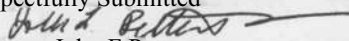
Income:	
Dues & Donations	8,206.00
Interest	454.90
Life Membbrphiffe) (1)	962.00
Reunion Surplus 7	<u>6,966.67</u>
Total Income	1^,589.57

Expenses:	
Newsletter & Mailing	1P,479.89
Secretary	15^,21
Treasurer	145.00
Reunion Advance 1 995	500.00
Life Memberships	962.00
Church Raffle	888.00
Sally B (2)	500.00
Ian McLachlan (2)	<u>500.00</u>
Total Expenses	14,1,29.10

Net Gain	2,460.47
----------	----------

Note- 1 Includes Donations
 Note 2 Checks OutSUvJL-^

Respectfully Submitted


 John F Pettenger
 treasurer

SPOKANE REUNION INCOME & EXPENSES

Beginning Balance	600.00
Deposits from registration	57,903.90
Deposit from bar	817.00
Deposit from raffle	888.00
Deposit from A. Huber raffle	276.15
Deposit from Tulsa pins	78.00
1992 interest payments	2J.98
1993 interest payments	486.68
error adjustment	<u>1.30</u>
Sub-total	61,073.01
Total Expenses paid out'	<u>54,110.58</u>
Balance in account	6,962.43

Dear Ed,

I will introduce myself-- I ran the 385 Radio School from June '43 to March '45.

I flew with the Country Club boys at Bassingbourn - Nov. 7, '42 to June 11, '43.

On completing my tour I was sent to 3rd Div. and on to Great Ashfield. Every time a new Group came over I was sent there for indoctrination. 95, 100, 95, 390, 486.

After reading your interesting newsletters I decided to write some articles. First of all, I wanted to make contact with old friends and to complete a log of the missions I flew. I only joined about 3 years ago.

It is easy for me to write, so here are some of my attempts at journalism.

Many celebrities came to the 91st because of good facilities, Bassingbourn was pre-war RAF base. Of course they were young men like Walter Cronkite, Andy Rooney, William Wyler, Robert P. Post. Mia. And the Memphis Belle became the most famous plane in the 8th AF. Capt. Morgan flew with us many times.

Yours truly,

Robert S. Lammers
9 Winding Creek Trail
Garland, TX 75043
1-214-270-5827

DIT DIT DIT DAH
Gen. LeMay, 1943

When I arrived at the 385th Group to run their radio school, the place was a new airfield and it was raining and a sea of mud. I made out a schedule for school and few showed up. Most were on some detail - like policing up the place. A couple radio operators suggested I go to Col. Van - that he was a good guy.

So I went to operations and asked to see Col. Van DeVanter. I went in as he had a number of officers around him. I saluted and told him "I was sent from Div. to run the radio school. I made out a schedule, but no one comes." He looked me straight at me and said, "Sgt, just who in the hell are you." I think he blew me backwards about 4 feet.

Recovering, I told him I finished a tour at Basung Farm with the 91st group. They sent me to 3rd Div. They sent me down for about 3 months, then I was to be sent home. He came back "you mean to tell me you completed 25 missions." "Yes Sir!" "My God, I was beginning to think no one could complete 25. I don't know of anyone, nor seen anyone." He got up and said, "Let me shake your hand, it is my pleasure." The group of officers stopped their snickering by then.

He said, "You give me that schedule and they will be there. You let me know if anyone is absent, if they are, you come to me. It is a pleasure to meet you."

The word was out - "You will be there." The next day the school was full! That week I sent to Div. 1900 hours of training. The next week was 2200. Down from Div. comes Div. Training boss. "Lammers, I held back your reports from Gen. LeMay, he is a nut on training and you better know what you are doing." Well take a look, the room is full and every day it is the same. Next week will be more if they don't fly. "Okay, tonight at supper, I'll tell the General.

Next morning General LeMay and his whole staff come through the radio school door. The class room was full. Boy oh boy. He knew my whole history and thanked me for doing a great job, was there anything I needed - any suggestions? "Well, General, I am only to be here a few weeks and he probably should have an officer for this job because we have so many officers to deal with." "Yes, I can see that!" I asked him if he wanted me to tell the Colonel he was here. "No, we came to see you, but we will stop in at his office."

Well, the next morning I got a call from Div. Training Office that Gen. LeMay wanted to give me a direct commission. I had to do three things, take a physical and go to 8th Air Force for an interview. An ambulance would pick me up at 10:00 AM today and a letter from Sq. Commander from 322 Sq.

Over to the Gen Hospital we go. The Sgt at the main desk asked what I wanted. I am here to see Col. So & So for a physical. Well, the Col. is out to lunch, but he never gives physicals on Wednesdays - sometimes on Mondays only. "I will wait."

Directly a Major came in asked if I was Lammers. "Yes, Sir!" The Col. will be in directly. I was introduced to him and he said he was waiting for me and to step into his office. I complained I couldn't take a physical - I lost a lot of weight, had a bad cold and the shakes. Those rockets are still chasing me around. Well, Sgt, let me see - you walked in to this building all by yourself. "Yes, Sir!" "No one helped you?" "No, Sir!" He just filled out the physical report. I think he did ask my height and the color of my eyes. That was it. That Sgt looked dumbfounded!

Thursday, I was scheduled to be at 8th AF headquarters. Apparently I had to be interviewed. I had heard this could be a little tough. But where was 8th AF Hqtrs, I had no idea. Actually my girl friend worked there and I did not know it.

I saw a sign that said Air Transport Command. Some kind Captain got on the phone and asked if they had a Col. So & So. He soon located him and got instructions how to get there. I arrived at the front gate, after MPs checked me out, they told me they were expecting me and put me in a jeep and drove to the building. Again I was checked out. Inside a M/Sgt at the main desk asked what I was there for - a commission." Sgt, see this pile of papers - they are all people trying to get one." A Major walked up and asked what was the problem. "You, Lammers?" "Yes, Sir!" You were

due here at 10:00 A.M. the Colonel is waiting for you!

The Colonel came out and the Major introduced me. Then he told the Major to get Col. and Col. and Col. So & Sos, himself, and another officer and we will have a meeting. I stood in the middle of the room. The Colonel asked if I got in a lot of shooting. "Yes, Sir, I got in a lot and I hit my share - but shooting back is tough." He looked around and said - "You don't have any questions - do you? Just sign this paper. Sgt, I really don't know much about all of this, but Gen. LeMay thinks highly about you." "Thank you."

I went back to base - the MPs asked my name - they were waiting for me and I was to go to Base Adjutant as soon as I arrived. They put me in a jeep and took me. The Major said he had a teletype order to swear you in today as a 2nd/Lt. and discharge me as of yesterday. I don't know about how to do this, but I'll try. He then gave me a three day pass and a slip to go to the Finance Officer to get \$300.00 to buy uniforms. He called a Lt. over and took his gold bar and pinned it on my G.I.s.

Off to London, the first MPs stopped me and asked about the gold bar. I showed my orders. "Lt, we did realize how much you guys were fighting. We have been hot and busy." They directed me to the Post Exchange. Again the MPs - this time they took me to the P.E. and took me inside, told them I had orders to buy officer uniforms. They took good care of me and said I was the first battle field commission they met.

So, I met Gen. LeMay on Tuesday and by Thursday evening I was a Lt.

Later the ambulance driver drove me to Bassing Farm to the 91st Group. I went to the Sq. orderly room. They all remembered me and it was nice to see them too. They said Major Fishburn was about to take off. 1 st/Sgt called the control tower, Sgt Dawson said he would call him that you wanted to see him. Major said he would be glad to. I crawled into the plane and the Major said "Hi, Bob, so nice to see you. I got your letter all done. Tell the 1 st/Sgt it is in the main drawer of my desk. It is the only pleasureable letter I've written for some time, and good luck! Gen. LeMay surely had nice things to say for you. Well, you did a good job for me too."

DIT DIT DIT DAH
Here and there* * * *

Finished my tour on June 11, 1943 and was sent to 3rd Div to run a radio school for the 385th Group at Great Ashfield.

Am trying to remember some radio stories.

Every once in a while it seems we come up with a maverick crew. I used to monitor several frequencies during a mission. I picked up a very weak signal from QDM (direction

to base) to our base. Real slow signals, I knew who it was right away. The station was not strong enough to reach them and was confused. Again QDM? The station called me and asked if I was listening. Yes, I hear him -- the station did not have the power to reach them. It appeared they were flying due south well inside of Germany. Advised I'll answer for them. I could reach Chicago and Dakar easily, so I run out my trailing wire and called him giving him a course of 270. In a couple of minutes back comes QDM. Guess the pilot did not believe it. Again comes QDM! We knew about where they had to be, but could not believe, but knowing the crew anything was possible. So I sent in the clear "Harry -- fly due West IMMI due West - Lammers". Seems I was sending something in the clear, which was a no-no I'd guess the Germans figured we deserved them. No one bothered them! We called Coastal Command that we had a lonesome one coming in. Some luck! They got back without seeing a fighter nor any flak. Strange things do happen, even in war!

We had two of our planes shot at on the South Coast. Every so often a R.O. would not have on his IFF radio, and you can believe Coastal Command on the South Coast were trigger happy and would shoot first -- and answer questions later!! The first one was at about 1000 feet and fired Veri pistol shots and were recognized after a few shots were fired at them.

But the second one was below 500 feet and that was a no-no. As soon as Radar spotted them, they opened up and scrambled Hurricanes. The B-17 started to fire Veri Flares, used the blinker light, were waving out the windows, and hollering and screaming. The R.A.F. pilots sit under the wing of their plane and are in the air in seconds, and are given instructions by radio. It would only take them about two minutes to intercept and call off the fire.

Another GOOF UP was a mission to St. Nazaire. Some of the Groups were to fly out to sea, instead of flying back over France. A WAAF (girl) radar operator was following them and reported they were not turning North, but continuing due west. They were constantly in contact with our people.

The Division sent a coded message that they were off course and to turn North. Back came challenges and repeated messages. I cut in "Send in clear - time is wasting - Lammers". The communications handed the message to Gen. LeMay* * "Do it" - and laughed "I don't think that Lt. knows the meaning of radio silence, that is about six times I know of he has done that. But he gets the job done". I remember I was at 1st Div. during a mission and here comes a long message in the clear. Sighted convoy-cruiser, two submarines, etc. The RAF liason officer said "EEE gads", half the Navy is looking for that cruiser, and he spots it in daylight for us." The Group turned and the Navigators gave headings to England. That Group was scattered all over the South Coast as they were running out of gas. I am sure somebody caught plenty for the Boo-Boo and a WAAF radar operator deserved a big KISS!

Lt. Robert Lammers, R.O.

DIT DIT DIT DAH
AIR SEA RESCUE

December 8, 1993

When I went to the 385th at Great Ashfield after my tour to run their radio school I had my first crew to ditch. Since there was no specific instruction for ditching I included it in my radio training.

The first was late 1943. Bury St. Edmonds needed a radio operator so they borrowed one from us. They made a successful landing and then had an average time (33 minutes) to get the dinghies into the water. But it was nearly dark. They tied the boats together and all seemed well enough. They started to question the Radio Operator if he was sure he got through with an SOS. He assured them he did everything Lt. Lammers had taught him. He sent in "O" urgent message and an "R" came back. He did this as soon as they were hit. When the pilot said we may have to ditch, he called in SOS to Air Sea Rescue. When the Pilot said we are going to have to ditch because he could not control the aircraft the R.O. again called SOS and screwed the key down. Then they splashed.

But as darkness came upon them they were not so cocky and kept questioning the R.O. Did he get a receipt from A.S.R. and who was this Lt. Lammers anyway?

By this time it was very dark and it was not funny as they got colder and colder. Then someone said they thought one of the dinghies was leaking. This just about pushed the panic button, and were again on to the R.O. He tried to assure them he did everything he was told to do. And they know where we are. Along early morning they spotted some boats traveling at high speed. Now to fire a veri pistol or not? The R.O. told them they were off the coast of Belgium - could be Germans. They saw the outline of the shore. Lucky they did not!

At the first break of dawn a motor torpedo boat came straight at them with Hurricanes at low level and Spitfires high. As they pulled along side screaming get your blood arses in here ,we are in range of the shore batteries. They grabbed them bodily then threw them to the M.T. boat. "Hurry, Hurry!"

The skipper told them it was too dark last night to attempt it and they knew exactly where they were, then plotted their courses and tides. Those boats you saw were E boats - German M.T.B. Had you fired a flare, they would have answered with machine guns. A little after you spotted them, we put up a big show with them. The little boats had a little heard of private war.

The Wing command sent me a letter for my good training. Col. Van read it to the group at supper.

I had one other ditching while at the 385th.

1st Lt. Robert Lammers

DIT DIT DIT DAH
FIRST MEMPHIS BELLE FILM 1943

One day I happened to be in the orderly room and a camera man came, asked the I/Sgt if he could get someone to help him, one who knew his way around. I/Sgt Robinson asked if I could help Mr. Wyler out. I told I would be glad, what did he have in mind? The I/Sgt Bob is one of our oldest combat men and is R.O. gunner with about 23 missions and an original member of the 1 st Group way back in McDill field in Florida."

Mr. Wyler said he would like to get some shots inside the B-17F of different positions, some views of planes landing and anything I might think of. I'll get Sgt. Art Cressman of my crew, he is an excellent gunnery man. Fine fine!! To start with we could tow a B-17 to a gravel pit so we could shoot in to sand bank. Well, Robinson said, you are welcome to my jeep.

So we picked up our flying gear and went to see the engineering officer, Capt. Kamykowski, to tow our plane to the gravel pit. I told him the 8th AF had given Mr. Wyler authority to do documentary for the folks back home. We did not know it was the first movie of Memphis Belle. It would be taken with Capt. Morgan and crew on a War Bond tour back home when they completed 25 missions. The Memphis Belle was to become the most famous plane of the 8th AF.

So Cressman was the right waist gun and I was the left and Radio gun. All was fine so far -- but when the tracers hit a rock they would ricochet, because they were lighter. Every fifth shell was a tracer. Needless to say that caused some commotion as some civilians thought we were being strafed during an All Clear, so the M.P.'s came out, Col. orders to stop firing the machine guns.

So, into Colonel Wray's office. He told us we were too darn realistic and kind of laughed. It would have been OK if the fire wardens and the Bobbies had not complained. But Mr. Wyler got his film.

Mr. Wyler asked if we had any ideas with out any shooting? I told him we could turn the ball turret forward and he could get a shot taking off through the view window if he wanted a thrill. You will think your butt is going to scratch the run way! Fine, fine!! This is a comoat ready plane so we better get OK from Capt. Fishburn. We could get O'Connors and Richardson from armament to help along with Cressman to pull the guns to make room for his cameras. Landing probably be too nerve racking, so we take him out manually once we were airborne.

When we landed .Capt. Beasley got out of the waist door and kissed the ground and Lt. Hubbard patted the propeller and hugged it. Mr. Wyler liked those shots.

We took Mr. William Wyler, Movie Director, on a practice mission so he shot a lots of film of the formations. Capt. Beasley took some movies during combat so he made copies for himself.

Little did we know this young photographer would become famous in his own right. It was fun for us too, except for those darn tracers.

The Group flew on a mission and he wanted to show them landing. We got him a place he liked and he shot his film from the back of a truck. My plane landed and I was standing in the foreground. Someone else flew our plane that day.

Lt. Robert S. Lammers

DIT DIT DIT DAH
AIR SEA RESCUE II 1943

The second ditching of one of my crews was again with 385th at Great Ashfield. I run the radio school and taught ditching procedures to new crews and radio operators.

I do not remember the crew or pilots name. The over the Seine estuary and the radio operator had called in "O" then "SOS", when the crew ditched they were in sight of land. There were RAF planes overhead for escorting them out. As they hit the water on Air Sea Rescue-a single engine float plane landed and taxied to their wing tip. Again the hurry-hurry up and get your "bloody arses" on board some way and hang on.

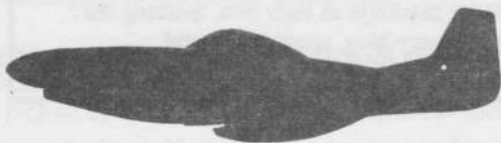
They walked off and on to the ASR plane and never got their feet wet. In the meantime the Abbeyville boys decided to get into the act and attacked the Spits and the RAF scrambled Hurricanes and more Spits. What ensued was a "Hell a va" big air battle.

Meanwhile the float plane could not take off with all of the weight hanging on the float. So it taxied into the channel. After a few miles the soaking wet crew and flying boat were met by a motor torpedo boat. Again they got the hurry-hurry up and "get your arses on board" as they were bodily hauled on board. The skipper yelled, "Hurry boys, this isn't healthy here." The dog fight continued overhead as more RAF came into the scrap. They made it home safely.

When they last saw the B-17 it was still afloat. Except for the float plane ride they would not have got their feet wet.

This was the last ditching I was aware of. On June 6, '44, the Allies landed in France and from then on many of our planes landed on our bases in France.

Ist/Lt. Robert S. Lammers



Does Social Security Owe You Military Service Credits?

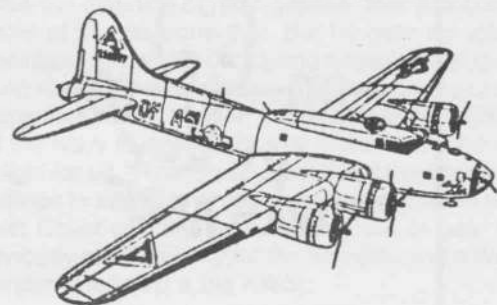
R.C. Hanis says he has received a considerable "windfall" because of the addition of \$160/year Social Security credit for the time he spent in the service; and he suggests that others may do the same.

I have checked this out with the Social Security Administration and they have told me that it may or may not make a difference. If you have had sufficient "high yield" years since 1951, your benefits will be calculated under the "new start formula" and your military service probably won't make a difference. However, if you have had periods of relatively low or no Social Security earnings since 1951 (such as employment with the Post Office or other employer not covered by Social Security), your benefits could be calculated under the "old start formula" in which your military service could bring additional benefits.

It won't hurt to check it out with your local Social Security Office, which has systems that will tell, whether your military service will affect your benefit computation. (Note: this provision may apply even if you served in the armed forces of one of our Allies.)

Whether this provision applies or not, make sure your dates of military service on your SSA record, because it may make a difference someday. Take your discharge papers.

If you do obtain a "windfall" because of this notice, why not show your appreciation by taking out a Life Membership or donating to The 8th AF Memorial Control Tower, Heritage Center, or the American Air Museum in Britain!



More stories from Don Kabitzke of the Wisconsin Branch of the 8th AF Society.

THE OPERATIONS MAP

One of the first projects our woodwork shop was given was to make a plywood wall map for the Bomb group to place it's map they would be using to brief combat crews about the mission they were to undertake that day. We could only work there at night when the group was not using the room. We ate supper and headed for the briefing room where we spent the night working.

Being as the walls were made of brick, we had to drill holes into it by hand in which we pounded wooden pegs to which we could attach slats which in turn supported the plywood on which the maps were pasted. It was slow and tedious work as we had a huge wall to cover. We were told it was to be the largest map in England for that purpose. We believed them. We spent a week of nights getting the job done. In the meantime they found more mounting areas for other information boards to put information on. It got to be quite a project.

We had just about finished the master wall map base when a Major came and drew a sketch of a device to mount on the map which would enable them to accurately figure out the mileage of a given mission. This enabled them to figure out fuel consumption and time. It was like a thermometer. A string pulled a wooden piece up a trough on which mileage figures were calculated. All of the navigation points were marked with pins. The string was moved from point to point and wound up back at the base. Then they simply looked at the markings on the gauge and they had the exact mileage the mission would take. It was simple, crude yet it did the job.

The group was happy with the work we did. We even got a bottle of liquor as a thank you. From others I have seen since in books, ours had to be the largest. I seemed to be up in the Public Relations office for ever pounding more press into walls on which to hang press releases on.

BRITISH BEER

English beer was a new experience. The only people in the world to refrigerate beer was the Americans and they were daffy, so thought the English.

It did not take us long to get used to it. It was a lot heavier than we were used to, I soon got to liking it. Beer was a very important part of the English way of life as it provided a time to relax and be with friends at the end of the day. They could nurse a pint for several hours. If you finished it sooner, it was said that "You drink like an American."

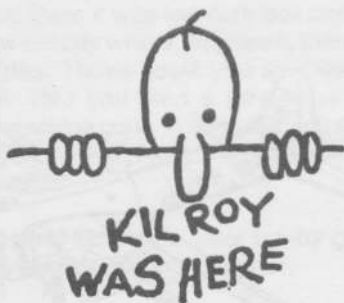
Our government did all in its power to see that the English had enough grain to make beer. It's true value was the vitamins and minerals their bodies needed to keep them healthy, just as the lowly lime kept away scurvy.

One thing that I really liked I first met near Blackpool after the war had ended. In that area they served a drink called "SHANTY". It was a mixture of dark beer and lemonade. Absolutely delicious.

FISH AND CHIPS

Fish and Chips are a staple part of the English. Here again it's morale value and a valuable source of vitamins and minerals made it a must for the English. The fish were mostly from the North Sea and the potatoes home grown. They were needed to keep them healthy. The potatoes and fish were in rather large portions and we liked them that way. The potatoes were rather large slabs and they were delicious. Both were deep fried.

Fancy wrappers were unknown. The local dealer took a section of newspaper, formed it like a funnel and filled it. Crude but simple. It served the purpose. We did our best to get to town often to get a meal of them. Somehow the American version is just not the same.



K Mens that James J. Kilroy worked in the FOR River Shipyard (Bethlehem Steel) in Quincy, Man daring WWIL. His job was to inspect each portion of construction before the next stop was undertaken. In order fix the test leader to be assured that the sections had been inspected, Kilroy began to mark "KILROY WAS HERE" an every section he inspected (floors, ceilings and walls of the ships). As it was wartime and production was essential, **** ships went to sea without being painted over the inspection marks. It wasn't long before soldiers, sailors and marines picked up an the "KILROY WAS HERE!" markings as their own, masking tire slogan and caricature on everything around the world.

FROM ALABAMA "PROPWASH"

Reprinted from the 401st Bomb Group Newsletter. Any other theories as to the origin of Kilroy?

8TH AIR FORCE B -17L JBOMBER MARKTb<TGS

8th AIR FORCE 3rd Division HQ Elveden Hall B-17s & B-24s

[A] 94th BG - 4th Combat Wing - Bury St. Edmunds - Station 468

331-QE 332-XM 333-TS 410-GL

[7] 95th BG - 13th CW - Horham - Station 119

334-BG 335-OE 336-ET 412-QW

[c~] 96th BG - 45th CW - Snetterton Heath - Station 138

337-QJ 338-BX 339-AW 413-MZ

[~D~] 100th BG - 13th CW - Thorpe Abbots - Station 139

349-XR 350-LN 351-EP 418-LD

[~G~] 385th BG - 93rd CW - Great Ashfield - Station 155

548-GX-Blue* 549-XA-Yellow* 550-SG-Red* 551-HR-Green*

◆Colored prop bosses.

[~H~] 388th BG - 45th CW - Knettishall - Station 136

560* 561* 562* 563*

*No squadron letters during hostilities.

[~j~] 390th BG - 13th CW - Framlingham - Station 153

568-BI 569-CC 570-DI 571-FC

[K] 447th BG - 4th CW - Rattlesden - Station 126

708-CQ-Yellow* 709-IE-White* 710-IJ-Red* 711-IR-Blue*

*Colored engine cowlings.

[T] k52hd BG - 45th CW - Deopham Green - Station 142

728-9Z* 729-M3* 730-6K* 731-7D*

*These squadron codes were used after VE-Day.

[p~] 487th BG - 4th CW - Lavenham - Station 137

836-2G 837-4F 838-2C 839-R5

[~S~] 134th BG - 93rd CW - Mendlesham - Station 156

4-Q6* 7-R2* 18-81* 391-3L*

*Squadron codes used after VE-Day.

in 490th BG - 93rd CW - Eye - Station 134

848-7W* 849-W8* 850-7Q* 851-S3*

[fw] 486th BG - 4th CW - Sudbury - Station 176

832-3R 833-4N 834-2S 835-H8

[~X~] 493rd BG - 93rd CW - Little Walden - Station 165

860-NG* 861-Q4* 862-8M* 863-G6*

◆Squadron codes used after VE-Day.

Letters to the Editor

Dear Ed,

Attached is a copy of my letter to Mr. Rodger Walsh in response to his published letter in the December 1993 H.L.H. I hope the information supplied will be of use to him as I like to think that my helping him repays some of the kindness and help I have received from you and other members of the 385th BGMA during the search for my dad and family.

Since I wrote you last I have managed to find 2 brothers, a sister and more cousins than I could possibly count. They have all received me very well indeed and some of them even knew of me but did not have my name in order to start their own search. A family reunion is being planned for sometime in the spring/early summer. I am looking forward to meeting my family for the very first time.

My very best wishes to you for a very happy and successful New Year.

Very sincerely yours,

Vance Pennington
10 Gilpin Close
Mitcham
Surrey, KT17 3BW
England

Dear Mr. Walsh,

I noticed your letter in the December 1993 Hard Life Herald and thought that I just might be able to help you with your search for old RAF maps etc.

There is a book shop in England that specializes in both old and new aviation/military publications and are well known for being able to acquire old books and printed maps etc. They often have publications regarding the 385th and have many in respect of the "Mighty Eighth", WW2 military aircraft and more.

If I may suggest you write to them with precise details of your requirements I am sure they will do everything they possible can to help you further.

You should write to:
Cliff & Marilyn Bishop
East Anglia Books
Station Road
Elsenham
Bishop's Stortford
Herts CM22 6LG
England

Phone: (0279) 813791, Fax (0279) 815919

I hope this information will be of use to you and to save you any wasted time I have written to the book shop and asked them to send you a copy of their latest catalogue which I hope you receive safely and find interesting.

With regards to your search for a 24 hour watch. Unfortunately I haven't a clue where to begin to look for such a momentum but the Eighth Air Force Historical Society has recently issued a commemorative 24hr watch which is supposedly based on the original USAAF issue. I am lucky enough to have one which I wear with great pride. If you can not get an original then perhaps you would like to enquire about these. If you are not a member of the 8th AFHS I will gladly arrange the purchase for you through my membership, although stocks are very limited.

I wish you luck with your searches.

Very sincerely yours

Vance Pennington.

P.S. My father served with the 385th at Great Ashfield.

Dear Ed,

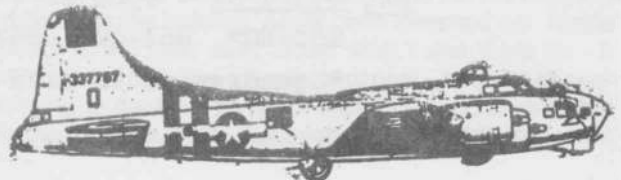
I attended the recent reunion of the 8th A.F.H.S. which was held in Chicago the end of September and beginning of October. Unfortunately there was present only five members of the 385th Bomb Group. The photo shows Mr & Mrs. Shalinsky at the table with me. We also had at the table..Al Audette and wife, Chuck Halper and wife, and Charles DuShane. Even though there were only these few members of the 385th B.G., it was a very enjoyable reunion and I wish that there would be more members showing up in San Diego in 1994.

With best regards, I am

Bob Valliere



L-R Anne & Milton Shalinsky & Bob Valliere
8th AFHS Reunion - Chicago 1993



Dear Bob:

My wife and I have just returned from a trip to England and whilst we were there we of course paid a visit to Great Ashfield and vicinity. We visited Bill Hinchcliffe who you may remember as one of the persons responsible for the Bygones Museum at Woolpit, missed by many on the tour in 1992 but which was a wonderful representation of the airfield in the area. Bill is a great person and very interested in preserving the history of the 385th.

Now it seems that a few hardworking souls want to restore the control tower at Rougham and use it as a museum for the three WW2 American airfields; Rougham, Rattlesden and Gt. Ashfield. They have been given the lease on the portion of land which contains the control tower and two other buildings so what they need now is financial as well as physical help. Bill Hinchcliffe would like to form a committee consisting of some of the "old flyboys", as well as local folk.

I am enclosing photos taken during our visit showing the control tower, a Nissen hut and another building which could be fixed up and used as a souvenir shop and snack bar. There has already been quite a bit of work accomplished, clearing debris and installing doors. They have a new skin for the Nissen hut which will be put in place as soon as the weather permits. (When we were there it was extremely windy and very wet). The rain and wind have not dampened spirits, though, and everyone we spoke to is very enthusiastic. I think it would be a wonderful memorial and it would preserve something that was our life 50 years ago. If anyone is interested in helping in any way you can contact either Bill Hinchcliffe or Clint Cansdale (address and phone no's below).

I don't know who to contact with regard to the 94th Bomb Group (Rougham) and the 447th (Rattlesden) but they should be included. I am sure that there would be many in those groups who would be interested.

Bill, I am sending a copy of this letter to Bob Valliere and Ed Stern. I am sure that with our help those hardworking historians can succeed in building their (and our) museum. These are the only remaining buildings that are in fairly good condition, most of the others are in pretty bad shape or are being used by the farmers for their machinery.

I would also request at this time that we send a copy of the newsletter to Bill Hinchcliffe as he is a great supporter of the 385th.

We had a great time in England in spite of the bad weather. We spent a delightful afternoon with Chris and Mary Irwin who had entertained us in June 1992.

Sincerely,

Emery Blanchette
13638 SE 37th Street
Bellevue, WA 98006
(206) 643-5206

William Hinchcliffe
The Old Schoolhouse
Heath Road
Woolpit, Suffolk 1P30 9RU
ENGLAND

Clint Cansdale
White House
Elmswell, Suffolk
ENGLAND

94th BG
Memorial Assn
423 NW 33rd St.
Corvallis OR 97330



Nissen hut being cleaned up and a new roof will be installed.



Control Tower - Rougham

Metal door was made and installed by Clint Cansdale. They are already working on the renovations using their own money.



This building could be used for a shop and snack bar.

EDITOR'S NOTE: Norway was occupied for 7 years! There's a marvelous museum in Bergen depicting the resistance to the Germans.

Dear Ed,

I'm wondering Ed, assuming you scanned the warming snow scenes of the Lillehammer Olympics just past, if perchance you caught the TV documentary showing how a squad of Norwegian skiers way back in 1943 quite probably decided who would win the war when they pulled the plug on Hitler's secret weapon, his own atomic bomb.

And I'll bet not many know that we of the 385th had a key role in that same escapade. The ski-boys got it started but we sky-boys finished the job, also in 1943.

And then at the same time, same mission, I know it will thrill you to hear the John Richey B-17 Ohio Air Force crew experienced a strange encounter of the surprising kind, a battle of the wit with a nomad Flying Fort.

The Norwegians have got to be maybe the toughest and nicest of anybody anywhere and I think they just showed they CAN ski. Hitler occupied them in the war, I'd guess, for no more reason than to hide his heavy water (deuterium-oxide) plant. But Adolf chewed too big a bite when he tangled with the Norways. He left the place with no more water than he could spit. And he never did get "the bomb."

The video was put together by CBS News, I think, and they had a lot of good black-and-white of first maybe four skiers plodding in the roughest bunch of snowed in rocks of anyplace. Somewhere along the way the RAF dropped in maybe a half-dozen more ski troops with supplies of both food and dynamite.

Their destination was a huge building perched atop about a 100 foot cliff, its only access a cantilever bridge spanning I suppose a nippy cataract that roared below. Because the bridge was guarded by a couple jerrys the commandoes opted to scale the cliff-face to an unguarded opening in which they squeezed in one by one, hanging their plastic in all the right spots.

Needless to say they got away clean after doing a noisy job of wrecking the place, although they couldn't know how much of damage there was. But somehow they learned the Germans worked up a frenzy to rebuild. And then it was I guess they called for we heavy guns.

On November 16, 1943 we were briefed on bombing what they told us was a hydro-electric installation at Rjuken, Norway, a town the map says is about seventy air-miles west of Oslo (and incidentally about a hundred air-miles southwest of Lillehammer). To my knowing no mention was made what this place in the boonies really was. The word atomic! I would have thought it an elixir for a belly ache.

Would you believe it? It was 0230 hours when that stuffy mouth orderly hit the billet front door with his drop your sox, grab your rox crap, a lousy time to tell we were sheading to the North Pole.

My log says it was Mission number 9 for the Richey crew;

take-off was in the dark, all forming on Splasher 7, and we were #6 low squadron on Gregg's left wing (Purple Heart corner). Form-1 was 10 hours 5 minutes, and mission altitude was a balmy 12000, which was a happy place meaning no oxygen needed, netting the Richey cockpit (he and me) two full packs of Luckies burned, one pack each way.

There's nothing quite like an early fall cruise on such a day as I remember this one. The sky was clear and the air calm and if it was cold I didn't notice, for at this altitude the B-17 heater was as warming as a frosted ice chest.

Who'd athunk there was a war going on, there were no signs of jerry except one lone 109 only saying howdy as he gave escort way out of range at about 8:00 o'clock high. To think we had come nearly 700 miles, and this was the welcome committee?

Our Navigator Frank McKibbin made like a tour guide as we hit landfall, telling us our target was dead ahead at 8000 feet elevation, so we would unload from but 5000 feet over the ridge tops. And he said if we look hard, we could make out the city of Oslo at a faraway 3:00 o'clock; it was on the north end of one long fjord.

I have no recollection how large an armada we marshaled for a job this size, I think we were a three-group combat wing of sixty three. But in any case it seemed we had a large case of overkill. We must have obliterated the joint, plus half the mountain.

Strange thing about the CBS film I thought was, that at first and only mention of American bombers playing a part, they flashed a shot of I swear a B-25 before about a ten-second glance of some faded shots of a couple or so B-17s, oh here cums da cavalry!

While CBS it seemed to me was careful to give the air bombers no points for our part, they finished the story saying that jerry decided to cut and run to jerryland with a few large tanks of the happy water soon after our visit. They must have been stashed out of our reach, downhill by the riverside.

Somehow they loaded them aboard some sort of boat anchored in a fjord in the vicinity, aprepping for the trip to the fatherland when lo and behold, another gallant Norway hero with icewater for blood swan the creek and detonated the whole kibosh into a sunken mess of plain old H-2-O, for der endo der fuhrer bombo, ha.

So Ed, would you care to guess at a few what-ifs? First if is: what-if none-of-the-above ever happened, and the Nutzis got their bomb? Would London have been the Allies' Hiroshima? And When?

What I can't figure is howcum we caught jerry with his pantys ankled? It had been months since the Norwegians blew their cover. They had to know that Rjuken was well within our range, as it was over a month since we had flit 500 Forts 800 miles to Marienburg, where we ruined Herr Hermann's lunch and brand new fighter plant.

Maybe he didn't know we were coming (to Rjuken) but he

surely did when we got there, or maybe that 109 was on a nap patrol. Our flight line, as far as I know, passed within 100 miles of Denmark so it would have been no surprise to us for a waylay first order.

In its stead though we got a surprise in another way, you may say the ghost of a mysterious phantom fortress, an eerie aerie.

We were maybe a hundred miles south of Norway, achugging away at our usual breakneck pace, not exactly napping none of us while scanning for Hornets or where-ever, when our tail-gun rear-view mirror Gesser called out a lone B-17 that had come out of nowhere at great speed and nestled all friendly-like on our left wing.

This was weird. Who were these guys? or WHAT were they? Their paint job was a desert camouflage tan and brown, not a drab olive as was our bird. They had no guns nor turrets that we could see, and all hatches were plexiglassed. There was no ident of any kind, not a serial number or the USA Star and Bar, and not one clue of whether friend or foe. Was this a fox in the henhouse?

Was he kraut? or the man in the moon. Could be a ghost Buck Rogers with the deathray. Will he conk all-four our Cyclones and make us swim? A dunking in the cool North Sea looked to me worse than a jump off a monkey's lawnmower.

What to do? It was our move. Do we shoot him down? Or is that murder? What a fix. We'd been had, and all by the nose-hair.

But do we dare use radio? What? And bring down wrath from the high brass up front? Best no. But somehow they gotta know. Oh?

We'd swap a kingdom for some fighter help, just one lone P-38 could flush this guy's tank, but where IS he, doing sack time? No matter, for then Richey got the most pregnant idea of his twenty-three years (tomorrow was his 23rd birthday).

Let's spook em, he grunted, shoot em some green-greens; and I promptly popped off a couple of green-green flares, our usual SOS call for fighter help; maybe they'll take the bait, he grinned.

And it worked, or I guess it did, for at the first flare out, the pesky tramp did a quick left turn, heading east to who knows where? Auch tu Luftweedersane?

Now you might think this was a happy ending for a hard day at the office (I can think of worse). Perhaps it was, but a bit soon for happiness, we had a long way to go, and we all dropped to the deck and raced for home, ahopping the hungry waves of an ugly old North Sea, praying our fighter boys would wake from their nap and come give us a hand, hopefully before Fritz awoke from his. Not!

But fighter no-shows were nothing new, many times like today, it was planned that way. To my knowledge, we were not briefed for little friend help this mission, not even for withdrawal. One can only wonder if we had had protection

as we should have had, would we have been accosted as we were?

Believe me Ed, to this embattered combat crew there were many unanswerable posers hatched, some unposed until later, but all to blister for sure an ulcerated jitter. Frustration worse than fear.

For what it's worth, this tough bunch was but five weeks away from a record 12 in-a-day confirmed Jerry kills out of 24 claimed and they had a problem with these guys picking our number. Could be Lord Haw Haw was sending a message. He played head games.

Chance was, our flying Purple Heart Corner was best reason we got tagged, the place IS the lowest and the last and most exposed in the group rear, the most likely spot for a wolf dressed like a goat bent on ruffling tail feathers, hence the calling, PHC.

But this was the identical setup on the Munster raid. We were lowest in the low squadron in the low group, the dunce corner for Peck's bad boy. At that time, we were run out of formation when a parachutist above us scattered the three of low Squadron B Flight and we had to dive for our lives. Would this time be the same? A look down at a hungry North Sea a couple hundred miles from Norway would make an asteroid gulp gumballs. Scared me.

As I recall, this unheralded clandestine visit was maybe fifteen minutes, and seemingly nobody but us even noticed. But, if so who could do a thing about it? Without something sprier than this Boeing chariot we were ariding, our fate was dung.

Quite aside of all good reasons WHY NOT we were the lucky one of the draw, the notion NOT SO persisted. It takes but a touch of paranoia to prove to a gut that Jerry has no problem at names and number requisition. Great Ashfield security was a joke.

Nevertheless, our kids were ready to fight. They babbled like sandlot pepper talk.

Our top-turret gunner Mike Siwek, a tuffy Pole from Hamtramck, laid claim to the turncoat's cockpit, I'll take it out in only one burst, he said. And ball-turret gunner Chuck Schaefer boomed, just say when - to skipper and I'll saw off the bloke's tail.

The rest of the backroom crew could do no more than try to cop a looksee. Gesser in the tail, and radioman Lane could do no more, while waist gunners Simpson and Hair with lusty GI vigor waved the one-finger salute at the guys next door they couldn't even see.

And the front room crew was no better off. Navigator McKibbin and (only bombardier ace of the war) Winnerman couldn't even wave, not to worry on those two jox in the wheelhouse.

So Ed, as they say, all's well that ends well. And at this late date I'll not belabor the chop job CBS News did on over 600 men of their own countrymen. But dang it, don't they know, that you gotta dance wit da guy whut brung ye?

And didn't your pal Andy Rooney once ride with the 385th? Foo.

Tom Helman
718 Sherman St.
Medford, OR 97504

Dear Ed,

I spent a couple of hours at the Boca Raton airport looking at a B-17 and talking to some old guys who flew in them back you remember when.

I was in Sioux Falls when the bomb was dropped in Japan. Stayed there several weeks after the war was over. Since I didn't have enough points to get separated, I got assigned to Salina, Kan., for a few months before getting a discharge in December of '45.

Incidentally, during training in 17s, I wound up spending several months in your part of the country - Rapid City. Spent a lot of time flying over North Dakota during the winter when it got down to 40 below at 20,000 feet. Remember?

But all that was compensated for during those week ends spent in the Black Hills at Hot Springs with the nurses at the veterans hospital. So it went.

If you ever get to South Florida during the winter or to the Baltimore area during the summer, give me a call. In Boca 407-394-4671. In Baltimore, 410-338-1412.

Keep in touch.

Best regards,

Irv Garfinkle
7507 La Paz Blvd., #408
Boca Raton, FL 33433

EDITOR'S NOTE: Rapid City is 500 miles from Fargo, Irv. We don't have to go up 20,000 feet to get to 40 below -- at least not during the winter of '94.

Dear Ed:

Just got the latest "Hardlife Herald" and was surprised to see I had an R92 on the label. I felt sure I had paid last year but found no record. So, I immediately sent John Pettenger a check for one hundred dollars to pay for my life membership so I wouldn't have that happen again. I sure enjoy reading the newsletter and each time I think about writing to see if you could print a letter to see if I could find out what happened to one person I remember from the 385th.

I was a member (Tail Gunner) of Milligans crew and when we became a lead crew, I was left out when the Co-pilot took over the tail position. I flew several missions before being transferred to the 9th AF about July 30, 1944. There were several of us transferred to the 397 Bomb Group and I was in the 597 Bomb Squadron.

I remember riding down to Bournemouth in the south of England on the train. I was looking through some old letters I had written my mother and the name Robert L. Fletcher was mentioned. I found later his serial number was 18075234. He must have been on some one's crew. I was a S/Sgt. Engineer Gunner. I was in the 549th of the 385th but I am not sure what squadron he was in. We were quite close for a while because we were from the 8th AF and proud we had been there. The 9th AF personnel didn't like us to talk about the 8th AF and we were called up a few times to the CO and told to stop praising the 8th AF and the B-17. We were flying in B-26's then and unlimited missions so we couldn't see an end to our missions. They weren't nearly as meticulous in taking care of the planes and equipment as the 385th. Two examples are, parachutes, on one occasion I was given a chest chute with rings on the harness and rings on the chute and never checked till we were in the air. Fortunately I didn't need to use it but when I told the pilot and that we did it differently in the 385th, I was reprimanded. The gun barrels were never removed from the ship and were real dirty and I couldn't fire them if I wanted to. When I asked about this I was told we do it differently here. We pulled Guard Duty, KP, and any other details they could think of even after we had just flown a mission. Needless to say Fletcher and I along with the other 8th AFers didn't fare too well and I would like to know what happened to him or any others that went to the 397BG. Can anyone tell me what crew he was on and maybe any other information about him?

Sincerely,

Clarence Abrahamson
3291 Lemon Dr.
Simi Valley, CA 93063

Dear Ed,

Please find enclosed a photograph which I hope you can fit into Hardlife Herald.

The story behind it is that Jeff Balding, the son of a 385th veteran, contacted Jerry Donnelly who put him in touch with me prior to a visit Jeff and his wife, Susan made to the UK last year. We picked up Jeff, Susan and her sister Nancy from Stowmarket then spent several hours exploring Gt. Ashfield. Jeff's father died in 1977 and had spoken little of his days as a Fortress crewman but the experience had left its mark and Jeff would now like to hear from anyone who remembers his father who was with the 551st from April 1944 until July 1945. He flew a number of combat missions but we're not sure how many. The movement orders in my files are incomplete and don't mention a Balding. Normally, I'd go through the microfilms but my reader has broken so I'm stuck until it's repaired or replaced. If, in the meantime, someone can recall him, both Jeff and I would be delighted to hear.

All the best for now.

Ian McLachlan
25 Stradbroke Road
Pakefield, Lowestoft
Suffolk NR33 7HN
England



Dear Ed,

I enclose a copy of the history of the 4th Wing which of course includes the 385th Group. I was a member of the ground personnel when the Group was formed at Geiger Field and later on was transferred to 4th Wing. I look forward to, and eagerly read, and save, each *Hardlife Herald*. I was in the Motor Pool and often drove Sep Richard around and it was he, I think, who recommended me when Col. Fred Castle needed a staff car driver. Castle was a wonderful man and a couple of years ago I visited his old home and local library where there is a memorial to him. Gen. Robert Burns took over the Wing until the war ended. It was a time like no other. I have many mementos including a F.W.190 Joy Stick and the pilots helmet with throat mike from a flight to Munich with Gen. Burns a day or two after the war ended. The field had several perfect FW 190's lined up and I took what I could. There were many different kinds of aircraft including jet (not the 262 or comet) on that field, of which I have "fuzzy" pictures of. Even one of me in a cockpit of a 190! I once drove Gen. Doolittle, who was a friend of Gen. Castle, when he visited. I note his recent death. *! sometimes see recent photos of people I knew, or knew of, in the news letter including Sep Richard and James McDonald, Robert Payne and many others.

Regards
Norm Valentine



Dear Ed,

I recently received a copy of the December, 1993, "*Hardlife Herald*" and my congratulations to you for putting together a splendid newsletter.

I want to thank you for the copy and I greatly appreciate the review you wrote, on page 13, about my new book, "*Wrong Place, Wrong Time*". I have already had requests for copies of the book from a number of 385th flyers. I have sent a copy of the write-up to my editor. I know he will be delighted with it.

Dick Whitlow has written me for a book, and I noticed on page 14 of the "*Herald*" he had provided you with a picture of Lt. Jim Burch. Dick said he was shot down on the Munster Raid, so perhaps Burch was his co-pilot. Also the article on page 18 brought me up-to-date on those aircraft that landed on the Greenland ice cap. I had been following that story for years.

Sincerely,

George C. Kuhl
2328 Redwood Drive
Augusta, GA 30904

Letters to Ian

Dear Sirs,

I wonder if you can help me please? I am trying to find some information about an American airforce base at or near Great Ashfield which was used during the last war.

The brother of an American friend, name of Stevens died during the war when his parachute failed to open. The plane apparently got into difficulties within minutes of taking off and everybody had to bail out. The irony of the situation was that this American had chosen to swap parachutes with an Englishman on board only a few minutes before!

My American friend would very much like to visit the grave of his brother, but does not know where to start looking. I understand that there is a US Airforce cemetery at Madingley, near Cambridge; is it possible that he could have been buried there?

I know this is a longshot but any information you can provide me with would be greatly appreciated.

I am enclosing a SAE for your convenience and look forward to hearing from you.

Thank you, in anticipation.

Yours faithfully

Penni Wilson
5 Wayland Court
Adel, Leeds
LS1 6 8LU

Dear Mrs. Wilson,

Your letter of 19 July to the 390BG MAM has been forwarded to me and I'm pleased to say I can help with some information about Lieutenant Charles A. Stevens of the 385th Bombardment Group from Great Ashfield.

Briefly, he died on 30 November 1943 when his B-17 Flying Fortress "Liberty Belle" suffered a fire on board during formation assembly. A full account plus photographs appears in my book Eighth Air Force Bomber Stories and I enclose two flyers plus copies of the relevant pages. I've checked my files and he's not buried at Madingley although some of his crew are but families were given the choice after the war to have bodies returned to America, so I presume he's buried Stateside.

Apart from being an aviation author, I'm also the UK historical contact for the 385th BG and that group is very special to me so, if there's any way I can help your friend, please give him my address. There's also a veterans and families association and, coincidentally, the pilot of "Liberty Belle" is currently President. I know Bob Smith would be delighted to hear from the brother of one of his crew.

I hope I've been of some help and look forward to hearing from you.

kindest regards,

Ian

Dear Ian:

The Hard Life Herald of the 385th BGMA for June, 1993 carried a copy of an article presumably written by you in a British aviation magazine and submitted to the Herald by Charles Price. The article dealt with the installation of a twenty millimeter cannon in the 385th B-17, Roundtrip Jack, 42-5897. It contains a statement that puzzles me.

The article states that a twenty millimeter cannon was installed in a 550th aircraft which flew on a mission into Vitry-en-Artois on August 15, 1943 to confront German fighters making head on attacks, "but not one German fighter came out to play." On the mission that day I flew as navigator on Jerry Mudge's crew, and I can assure you that at least one ME-109 came out-not to play-but to fight. Ed Stone and his crew were lost in the Channel, and some of our crew bear scars to this day as a result.

Roger Freeman's Eight Air Force Diary says in his account of the August 15th mission that one 385th B-17 was badly damaged and landed on an RAF field. That was Mudge's aircraft, number 186 N. As we did not return to Great Ashfield that day we were not debriefed with the other crews and my log was not collected. I still have it. My flight plan included a chart showing nearly all of the 385th aircraft by number, the name of each pilot, and the position of the aircraft in the formation. Of course, there were last minute changes sometimes, and as I do not claim to be completely infallible, there is at least some chance that my chart is not an absolutely accurate record of the actual formation of the 385th as flown that day. However, my flight plan shows that Binks was scheduled that day to fly 601 K. Could it be that the aircraft with the cannon flew in combat

another day?

The cannon I do remember. My very hazy recollection of it leads me to believe that it was flown on one of the long missions to the east, perhaps, Warnemunde on July 29 or Marienburg on October 9. At any rate, it was pleasure to read your account, and I certainly agree with your conclusions about Tommy Thompson's initiative and spirit.

Sincerely,

Verne D. J. Philips
1011 West 31st
Austin, Texas

Dear Verne,

Many thanks for your letter of July 8th last year and my apologies for the delay answering but this past year's been extremely hectic. On top of coping with an unhappy divorce, I had a deadline to meet for my latest book, "Night of the Intruders," so much of my correspondence slid aside and I'm only now getting back to it.

I was delighted to have your input on the cannon story and you're quite correct. Checking 385th records, the text I have for August 15 is as follows: "Our bombers, 20 of them went out under the direction of Major Piper. They went to Vitry En Artois, an important Nazi fighter base in Northern France. The bombing, as agreed by the returning airmen, and as proven by the pictures was almost perfect. Captain Davenport went along in Lt. LaCasse's ship as bombardier. Lt. Kavaliunas of the Intelligence Section went along, too, with Lt. Jack Schley. All went well going in and during the bombing run, but the return was rough. Enemy fighters and flak combined to give our men some uneasy moments, and we knocked down at least three of the fighters. Lt. Stone's ship was missing. Lt. Mudge's ship had trouble too, and landed at another field in England. We don't know yet the extent of the damage of Mudge's ship or his crew, and there is no word yet on Stone."

Sadly, there were no survivor's from Stone's aircraft and I'd be grateful if any Hardlife readers could add their recollections to this account. I'd also like a picture of Stone and his crew if anyone has a print I could copy. The MACR list shows: Stone, Edward S. 1 Lt, pilot; Larsen, George G 2Lt, Co-pilot; Atkinson, James B 2Lt, navigator; Taylor, Darrell D 2Lt, bombardier; Kalisko, Anthony T TSgt, top turret; Rusk, Harry STSgt, Radio; Paige, Rogert E, SSgt, ball turret; Burns, Samuel G SSgt, tail; Glaxner, James A SSgt, left waist; Rankin, Elvin C SSgt, right waist. Their aircraft was 42-30598 and was hit by enemy fighters and flak.

Let's hope we can prompt further input. I'll copy this and your letter to HH.

Very best wishes,

Ian McLachlan

Dear Ian,

I'm an associate member of the 385th BG Association and need a little help. Currently, I'm putting together a project on the 8th Air Force and it's operations during April 1944. When attending the Chicago reunion of the 8th AFHS, I ran into several of the 385th members and just about everybody said to get in touch with you.

Question: Do you have copies of the 385th Mission Reports for April 11th and 29th, 1944?

I have been watching the "Hardluck Herald" for any notes from you on your next book project. Any updates that you can give?

Best Wishes,

Robert M. Foose
5141 Pebble Lane
Columbus, Ohio 43320

Dear Bob:

An up-date on my latest book is that NIGHT OF THE INTRUDERS is due out on April 18th and should be right up your street because it tells the story of Mission 311 on 22nd April, 1944 and will contain material relevant to your own investigations. Enclosed is a flyer giving details on how to obtain it in the USA. It goes into detail on events that day and, hopefully, will be a readable account as well as providing information for historians such as yourself. Like you, I've put in an appendix giving background facts to avoid cluttering the story with too many names, ranks and serial numbers.

Good luck with the research.

Best wishes,
Ian

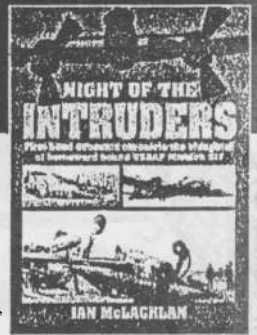
EDITOR'S NOTE: We lost McDevitt & Cornwell crews on the April 22, 1944 mission.



NIGHT OF THE INTRUDERS

First-hand accounts of the tragic slaughter of USAAF Mission 311 by Ian McLachlan

Fifty years on, this dramatic account details USAAF mission 311 to Hamm on 22 April 1944 when American bombers suffered their highest ever losses to German intruders. Meticulously researched yet vividly written, the book describes the ferocious action over Europe, and the carnage and confusion over England, revealing the facts behind what went tragically wrong.



CONTENTS

- Commemorating a fierce air battle still remembered with horror and disbelief on both sides of the Atlantic.
- Features eye-witness accounts, published here for the first time, of the disastrous 8th Air Force mission when some 150 bomber aircrew failed to return from Europe, and 14 fighters were lost.
- Describes the subsequent carnage over East Anglia when German fighters, hidden by friendly radar echoes, followed the Americans home, attacking 20 bombers and killing or wounding more than 60 aircrew.
- Written by a successful 8th Air Force author and packed with human interest stories, it chronicles in extraordinary detail all the raid's events including RAF and German losses in combat.
- Covers many famous USAAF, RAF and Luftwaffe units, serving a wide veteran and enthusiast market.
- Will fascinate East Anglians who remember the tragedy or who are interested in local history.
- Appendix detailing further information on aircraft and crews.

Hardback, 238 x 169mm, 224pp, 120 illustrations, £17.99 net, ISBN 1 85260 450 6, Book No. R450

Available from all good bookshops at £17.99/\$39.95 or direct from the addresses below at £20.49/\$42.45 inc p&p

Patrick Stepbooa Limited Haynes Publishing Tel: 0963 440635 Zenith Books Tel: 1-800-826-6600

Orders to: Haynes Publishing, Sparkford, Near Yeovil, Somerset BA22 7JJ (if in the UK)
Zenith Books, P.O. Box 1, Osceola, WI54020 (if in the USA)

Please send me.....copy(ies) of NIGHT OF THE INTRUDERS

I enclose a cheque/postal order (payable to PSL/Zenith Books) for £/\$.....

Name

Address

Post code/Zip code

PSL is part of Haynes Publishing

The B₀ 17 Flying Fortress U.S.A.A.F. W.W. II. MEMORIAL FLIGHT

Dear John,

Many many thanks for your kind letter of the 19th November and the very generous donation of \$500.00. I apologize for the delay in contacting you, unfortunately we have experienced great difficulty in finding office staff just recently and we are all stretched to the limit. Your donation will be a great help to us in our work, I am sure you appreciate how very expensive it is to keep 'Sally B' airworthy.

Please pass on our thanks and appreciation to all concerned with the 385th.

Kind regards,

Maggie Dodge
for B-17 Preservation Ltd.

In Remembrance

of all ground personnel:
 You may have stuffed papers or
 repaired a wing or two
 rewired in the cockpit or
 replaced a tire that blew.
 You may have fed them early -
 loaded bomb racks in the night,
 whatever your mission on
 the ground
 It was special in our sight.
 You cheered the planes when
 off they went
 and prayed while they did
 fly.
 You cried when one did not
 return
 as you kept vigil on the sky.
 But you dried your tears,
 put away your fears,
 for there was service to
 do once more -
 every plane was needed to
 end this nasty war.
 "WELL DONE GOOD AND
 FAITHFUL SERVANT".

This poem by Jill V. Chandler was inspired when she witnessed an "older man" walk up to a B-17 at Feltz Field in Spokane. She watched him as he quietly looked, touched, admired and finally walked away. Obviously, a former B-17 airman reliving an old love affair.



Lady of His Dreams

For a brief moment the old man
 Became young again.
 He was in the presence of a lady
 He had not seen in forty-six years.

He wanted to touch her and to thank her:
 For the many times she had been
 Good to him.
 But he was in total awe of her beauty.

What do you say
 After so many years?
 Few can relate to the moment when
 A man meets an old mistress like her.

Only a special man can
 Appreciate this love affair.
 Yes, in a brief moment it all came back.
 Again he was in her presence,
 The Lady of His Dreams

— JILL V. CHANDLER



Heart pounding, a knot
 In his throat,
 He spoke as he touched the lady
 He had loved so long ago.

Many have had old loves,
 But this was different.
 She was no delicate lady,
 Rather, a mighty Fortress, a B-17.

385TH BGMA

ED STERN, EDITOR
 P.O. Box 2187
 Fargo, ND 58108

FORWARD & ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

Non-Profit Org.
 U.S. POSTAGE
 PAID
 Fargo, North Dakota
 Permit No. 1761

R 94
 Joseph B. Koscinski
 Rt 2 Box 21A
 Stone Lake WI 54876-9533