

CHAPLAIN JIM'S THOUGHTS

February 7, 1991

Happy Easter and Passover (one is past-the other is coming)

I want to give you some scriptures for you to read and ponder during this time of year. They are: Psalm 37: 16-17, Proverbs 3:5-6, Proverbs 15: 1-4 and II Corinthians 5:7. I'm hopeful your curiosity has been piqued so that you will really read them. Now I'm curious and would like to know your reactions as you read these. Please write. I don't take scriptures literally but like to apply the truth to my daily life.

Here is a quote from the "Upper Room" by Terry Lee Davis. "God does not ask us to stop being human, to pretend that we do not hurt, or to wait in isolation. Instead, God encourages us on our own pain and helps us to see the new life which is emerging. We acknowledge our pain, and as we do, we learn to trust God with our lives."

We can find help and good advice in many places. Pass it along.

Peace
Jim



Charles E. Brackett	February 1997
Anthony Ardzinski	January 1997
Robert E. Bennett	February 1997
Gordon W. Parker	December 1996
Robert R. O'Brien	November 1996
Wes Brashear	

SHELBY — Mr. Charles Saul Byers, Jr., 74, died January 17, 1997.

He retired in 1982 from Nationwide Insurance as a regional sales superintendent after 32 years of service. He was a member of the Masonic Lodge of West Virginia, the Consistory League of Honor, the Ancient Accepted Scottish Rite and was an Oasis Temple Shriner, and the Society of Mayflower Descendants.

During WWII, Captain Byers was a B-17 pilot in the 385th Bomb Group based in England. As lead pilot of the "Garey B.", he and his crew led over 2,000 B-17s in a mission over Germany. Captain Byers completed 30 missions and was awarded five Air Medals and the Distinguished Flying Cross.

Mr. Byers is survived by his wife, Ina Forney Byers of the home; one son, Michael Forney Byers and wife, Eileen;

Dear George:

I thought that you would want to know that my Gordon died December 5, 1996 after a short illness with cancer.

A memorial service was held here in Bakersfield December 23rd. His ashes have been sent to Iowa where family and friends will gather May 28, 1997 at 11 am for a committal service at Spring Valley Cemetery at Moorhead, Iowa.

Being's Gordon felt closer to you. I'm sending this to you and you can forward to President and or Editor of Hardlife.

We have lost a real advocate for the 385th BGA. He was so proud to be a member of such a great group. He wanted to make another trip to England but that seemed a lot of miles away when you're not feeling up to par.

Our son had hoped to attend Tucson with us in November. I'm not sure if I can make it alone, to go without Gordon. I'm taking one day at a time. We'll have to see.

Sincerely,
Connie Parker
224 Myrtle St.
Bakersfield, CA 93304-2658

Gordon Wilson Parker

Services: Mon. Dec. 23, 11:00 a.m.

Memorial services will be held in the R.L.D.S. Church, 3637 Hughes Lane Monday, December 23 at 11 am for Gordon Wilson Parker who passed away December 5, 1996. Elder Edward Fugate, Sr. and W.M. Paul Owens of Bakersfield Lodge #224 F. & A.M. will officiate.

Gordon was born in Manteca, CA, April 28, 1918 and graduated from Burwood Grammar and Escalon High Schools. He has resided in Kern County over 53 years. He retired from McKenney's Heating and Air conditioning after 30 plus years and was a 50 year member of Local #460 Plumbers & Steamfitters.

Gordon proudly served his country in W.W.II in the Army Air Force and was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross and the Air Medal and 4 Oak Leaf Clusters. He was a lifetime member of the 385th Bombardment Group and a 52 year member of the American Legion Bakersfield Post #26.

Gordon was a member of the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, a Past Master of Bakersfield Lodge #224 F. & A.M., a member of York Rite Bodies, Al Malaikah Shrine, Kern County Shrine, a charter member of Moble Nobles, Bakersfield Chapter #125 O.E.S. and a past Sovereign Master of the Sequoia Council #228 of the Allied Masonic Degrees.

Survivors include his much loved family, wife Ila Connie, daughter Susan Alene Parker of Kansas City and son and daughter-in-law Kevin C. and Connie and grandson Patrick Parker, all of Lancaster, CA. Two of Gordon's favorite charities were the Shriner's Hospital for Crippled and Burned Children, 3160 Geneva St., L.A. 90020 and Bakersfield Endowment Fund, RLDS Church, P.O. Box 41122, Bakersfield 93384



Bakersfield Calif. newspaper

Ed Stern,

Sorry to notify you of the death of Tony Ardzinski of Inverness, FL. Tony flew twenty-five missions as tail gunner on Fred Heiser crew of the 550th Bomb Sqd. I am hoping you can publish this in the "Hardlife Herald" obituaries section.

Thank you
Julius L. King
7107 Letohatchee St
Panama City, FL 32404

P.S. I was the left waist gunner on Fred Heiser crew. I was nine missions behind, when his crew finish 25 mission and came home. I went down over Germany 9 Aug. 44 on my 26th mission with Lt. Bristol Crew.

Anthony Ardzinski, 73, of Inverness

Anthony John Ardzinski, 73, of Inverness died Tuesday, Jan. 14, 1997 at his residence. Born in Poland on April 9, 1923, to Karol and Paulina Ardzinski, he came here five years ago from Mahopac, N.Y. Mr. Ardzinski retired from the Consolidated Edison of New York as a mechanic with 41 years of service and was a World War II Army Air Corps veteran. He was a member of Our Lady of Fatima Parish.

He is survived by his wife of 45 years, Frances C. Ardzinski; two sons, Thomas of Ballston Spa, N.Y., and Edward of Saline, Mich.; three daughters, Carol Neeves of Sioux Falls, S.D., Cecilia Foglia of E. Amherst, N.Y., and Celeste Ardzinski of Inverness; one sister, Helen Persavich of Juneau, Alaska; and eight grandchildren.

Chas. E. Davis Funeral Home, Inverness. f/Ar



Robert E. Bennett

Robert E. Bennett, 78, passed away Saturday, Feb. 15, 1997 in Lakewood. Bob was born June 20, 1918 in Berkeley, CA. Bob served in the Army Air Force during WWII in the 8th and 9th Air Force as a B-17 pilot. Bob also served as an aide to General Vandenburg while in England. Bob came to Tacoma in 1973 when he purchased National Distributing Company, the Budweiser distributor in Pierce County. Bob sold the company in 1982 when he entered into retirement.

Bob's ownership of Circle B Stables, where he bred Thoroughbred racing horses, was one of his great loves. Bob is a past member of the Rotary Club and Oakbrook Golf and Country Club.

Bob is survived by his wife of 55 years, Frances; 3 sons, Terry (Sandy), Bruce (Betty) and Robert (Kathy); daughter, Linda Rodriguez (Edward); sister, Vera Harrison; niece, Jan Hubert-Anderson; 9 grandchildren.

Memorials are suggested to the Tacoma-Pierce Co. Chapter of the American Red Cross. A memorial service will be held Saturday, Feb. 22, 1997 at 3:00 pm in the Chambers Creek Chapel, located at New Tacoma Cemetery. Arrangements by Tacoma Funeral Home and Cemeteries, 564-1311.

Dear Ed,

It was with great sadness that Charley Mawer's crew, 549th Sq., 385th BG., learned of the sudden death of their Navigator, Chuck Brackett, which occurred on February 7, 1997. The crew had the honor of being lead crew. Chuck flew his first mission, Berlin, on July 21, 1944, and he completed his 30th mission, Dessau, Germany, on January 16, 1945, and it was a fine way to finish, because on that day, he and his crew flew lead for Division and 8th Air Force.

We will all remember Chuck's good humor and his total devotion to his family, his friends, and his crew. He was always very proud of his membership in the 385th Bombardment Group Memorial Association.

I am including with this letter a copy of the obituary for Charles E. Brackett taken from a Birmingham, Alabama area newsletter.

Sincerely,
Wilbur "Bill" Sunday

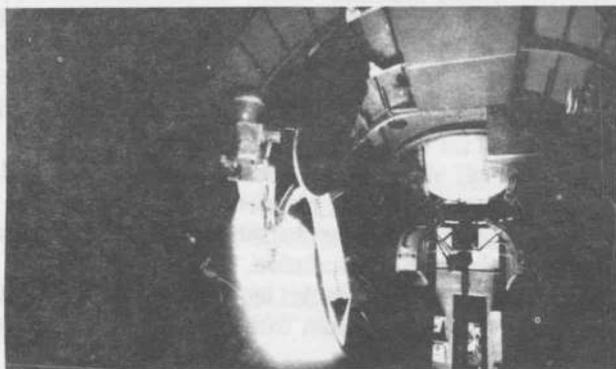
BRACKETT, CHARLES E., age 73, of Vestavia, died Friday, February 7, 1997. He was a member of Vestavia Hills United Methodist Church and he was a Mason. Funeral services will be held Monday, February 10 at 12:30 p.m. at Ridout's Elmwood Chapel with entombment in Elmwood Mausoleum. Visitation will be Sunday from 3:00 until 5:00 p.m. Survivors: wife,

Blanche Brackett; son & daughter-in-law, S! and Beverly Brackett; granddaughters, RhS RTV «rS! Joseph» Densmore, Jennifer Brackett; &eat-grandson, Jonathan Andrew Densmore. Memorial may be made to Vestavia Hills United Methodist Church Ridout s Elmwood Chapel directing.

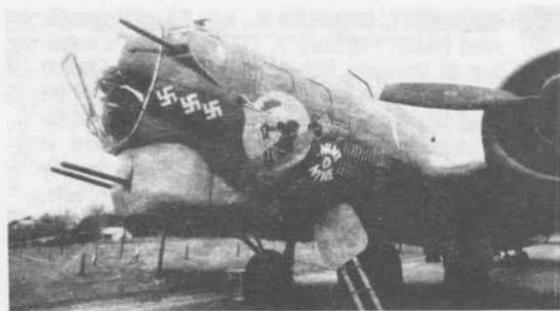
These pictures are from Ray Tucker.



Bust of General Ira Eaker at 8th Air Force Museum, Barksdale AFB, Shreveport, LA. Except for the B-36, static display of the aircraft flown by the 8th is located in a memorial park outside the Museum. Not as large as the one in Savannah, but definitely worth seeing.



Interior of B-17 "909"



Beautifully restored B-17G 231909 at Peach Tree-DeKalb Airport (Atlanta) back in November '96. Thought this photo would bring back a warm memory or two.



B-17 and B-24 on the ramp at Peach Tree DeKalb Airport (Atlanta) on 8 November '96. It was a rare and wonderful sight to see these two great airplanes in the traffic pattern at the same time.

Dear Mr. Stern;

Rather belatedly, I am getting back to WW2 and the 385th. I went overseas very late in the war, was a lead crew bombardier-navigator in Squadron 549, and involved only in missions ferrying back POW's and some food drops, including one to Schiphol Airfield in Holland. That's the one mentioned in The Mighty Eighth as the one in which we were the last group to be fired on.

I would like to obtain a picture of a plane with group markings. I remember that the tail markings were a red and white checkerboard, but not much more. Someone just sent me page 254 of The Mighty Eighth, and that has some very good information on our group, but nothing about aircraft markings. Perhaps you may be able to help me.

It feels great to have a contact.

Thanks
Oscar Sinibaldi
1000 Stevenson Lane
Towson, MD., 21286



January 10, 1997

Dear Roger,

This letter is in response to your letter, which I received in December. I apologize for the delay, but I have been very busy with a new experience in my life. I have published a book for the first time and I have been overtaken by the response.

The name of the book is THE WRONG STUFF about my experiences as a B-17 pilot in Europe. I am sending you (enclosed) a copy of the book due to your good intentions to honor those who gave their lives for you.

I have given an account of their misfortune in the book, as I lived with the four officers of Lt. McDoanld's crew and witnessed their midair collision. Hopefully, this will make up for the pictures requested in your letter, because I have no pictures, except in my memory.

I'm glad you are in touch with Andrew Ryan. He, like his brother Steve, is a very good person. He looks forward to your Memorial Dedication in '98, and I like to believe that I too will be able to attend. However, we must wait and see.

Thank you for what you are doing.

Respectfully,

Truman J. Smith
Lt. Colonel
US Air Force,
Retired

January 16, 1997

Dear Mr. Stern,

Thank you very much, for the pictures and the license plate. It is impossible for me to tell you what all this means to me. When I started with the Memorial I was a one man crew and had only the information of two planes coming down in Perle. Now I feel as a member of the crew and every day brings some other news. All the people are standing behind me. That will be a wonderful exhibition and a great day for those 18 members of the 385th B.G. In May Col. John B. Parker and me will meet the Commander Colonel Renuart Gene from Spangdahlem (Germany) to discuss what he can do for the Memorial Day Service. Col. Parker told me something about a fly over and from a lost man formation on that day. Now Mister Parker is in Florida for 5 months. His Address in Florida is:

John B. Parker
5413 Royal Oak Drive
Fruitland Park, FL 3473
Ph.(352) 365-0502

Two days ago I was in a house in Wowelange and the farmer was showing me a bag belonging to the McDoanld plane. On the bag the following sign "Aviators Kit Bag An 6505-1 Property U.S. Government" in the bag was something as an sleeping bag and inside was written "Bags Casualty Electrically Heated outer Ref. 5C U.S.A. 1 Con. FLLL 8355 ctd Serial No. 154" on the bag was painted with red color a big B. He was also showing me a big piece from the fuel tank from the same plane. He is giving all these parts for the exhibition. I made pictures from all and when they are ready I will send it to you I think that will be interesting to show in the HLH. Another man was from here was showing me in the woods the crash place of an engine. There was still a hole in the ground and when the wetter becomes better I will try with the metal detector to find more pieces. Near this place I found a piece belonging to a machine gun plane, it is as new. We organized a reunion for next week to speak about the monument.

If you are interested in the address of Col. Renuard please tell me and I send it to you. Until this time I got no HLH. But if your reunion is in Tucson I try to be there I hope it is not the first of November because that is the day everybody is going to the cemetery with flowers here in Europe. I'll to Phoenix and hire a car on arrival to travel to Tucson.

Thank you again for all your help and thank you to all the members of the 385th B.G. if I can help you or one of your friends please tell them its a great honor for me to help you. I'll stay in contact with you.

All the best for you and your family from your friend

Roger Feller

Rue de l'Ermitage 22
L-8833 Wolwelage
Luxembourg

pictures on page 7



Another license plate this one from George Behl

BULLETIN BOARD



1st Lt. Theodore "Ted" Smith-Pilot 1944-385th BG(H)
Sqd. Area. Ted passed away 11/12/96.
Just Sending it for info on Smith.
Jerry Ramaker

Know Francis Wiemersiage?

Anyone remembering this ball turret gunner of the
385 BG/549BS. Please contact his brother,
Roland Wiemersiage,
8456 Center Ave.,
River Grove, IL 60171
(708-456-6356)

Thanks Clark!

Right after the February edition went to press, we received a
\$ 100 check from Clark Robbins to help the treasury. Thanks
from all of us.

Another Interesting Book

The Cold Blue Sky: "A B-17 Gunner in World War Two."
Written by Jack Novey of the 96th, mostly about 1943. To
order a copy (hardback, 232 pages \$24.95), write Howell
Press, 1147 River Rd—2, Charlottesville, VA 22901. Toll free
phone 800-868-4512. Shipping cost \$5.00.

Reunion Registration Clarification

We're counting on the full \$ 110 registration fee from both
husband and wife. The registration fee (\$110 per person)
includes all activities- -adding up to less than previous reunions
when all functions are visited. Guests will pay only for meals.
Guests would include children, grandchildren, friends, etc.

Come and Enjoy!

Generation Gap Exposed

Page 3 of the February Hardlife Herald had a humorous story
on the snowy North Dakota winter. When we gave it to Wanda,
who does the layouts and the typing, we suggested that she
leave out the offensive words. She left out the really bad ones-
- but those that were left in are pretty much — accepted by
her generation, even though some of us think of them as "of-
fensive". Ah to be young again!

Notice Notice Notice

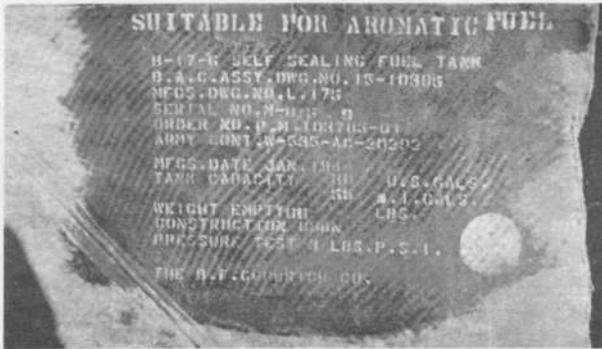
Arch Benner is resigning as 1 st Vice PResident because of health
reasons and Mike Gallagher will move up to his spot as 1 st Vice
President. Hopefully, Arch will join us at Tucson for fun and
relaxation

HAPPY CORRECTION!!!

Our October 1996 listed Daryl Messenger as one of those who
died. Happily we were wrong- -and we have no recollection or
record of how it happened. We didn't learn of the mistake until
member Charles Calderwood sent condolences- - and Daryl and
his wife called him to report he was alive and well. We didn't
get word until the February issue was out- -so, welcome back to
our world Daryl- and we won't ask for word about what kind of
trip you had!

EDITORS NOTE

Tucson's Reid Park Zoo (just 1/2 mile from our Hotel) is a
great visit. We enjoyed it in March with 2 friends- -its com-
plete, compact, uncrowded- -a very interesting hour or so visit
you'll enjoy- -and only \$2.00 admission fee.



Part of fuel tank, B-17 42-102606
McDonald-St. Ryan



Aviators Kit Bag an 6505-1
Property of US Gov't B-17 42-102606
McDonald-St Ryan
(Ph. Thurmes Wolwelange)



A part from a fuel tank.
B-17 42-102606
McDonald-St. Ryan
(Ph. Thurmes Wolwelange)



Aviators Kit Bag
an 6505-1
Casualty Bag electrically heated
Mr. Thurmes Wolwelange

Dear Sir,

We are in the process of establishing a museum here at Freeman Municipal Airport, formerly Freeman Army Airfield, in memory of all those who were stationed here during WW 11. This was a multi-engine training school for over 4,000 pilots who went on to fly B-24, B-25, B-26 and B-17 bombers. We are trying to contact former cadets as well as others stationed here at the field in the hope that they may have something to donate or loan to the museum. We hope to have the museum completed in time for our next Freeman Army Airfield reunion.

Sincerely,
Tom Jordan
Airport Manager
Seymour Municipal Airport
Box 702
Seymour, IN 47274

Dear Mr. Hruska,

This is in reply to your inquiry regarding information and photos of the 385th Bomb Group of WW 11. The U.S. Air Force Pre-1954 Still Photo Collection we currently retain contains 26 photos taken during WW II where the 385th B.G. is noted in the photo caption. Enclosed is a listing of the captions shown on the 26 photos we have of the 385th. If you wish to order copies of any of these photos, please enter the USAF negative number (the number with the AC suffix) on the enclosed blue order form and mail, with the necessary remittance, to address show on the blue order form.

Sincerely,
Norman G. Richards
Archives Division
MRC 322

Air Space Museum
Smithsonian Inst.
Washington, DC 20560

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR:

Dear Ed,

Just a note to enclose the "letter edged in black" received from friends of Bob O'Brien in the Netherlands. Bob wrote me a few months before this notice arrived, commenting on the work he was doing and said that his children had visited him this past summer. In the picture he enclosed he looked just like the Bob I remembered where he was the 548th Squadron Bombardier.

This past May I had a stroke which set me back a bit, but after therapy I'm in pretty fair shape. If all continues to go well, we plan to make the reunion in Tuscon in November.

Sincerely,

Sep Richard

December 1996

Message to the friends and relations of Mr. Robert R. O'Brien.

Most of you are probably aware of the sudden death of Bob on Saturday 16 november of this year.

At the end of november two death notices were placed in the Dutch daily press. One in " Trouw ", from the Rosenstock-Huessy-Gesellschaft and one in the " Haarlems Dagblad " in the name of the Rosenstock-Huessy-Huis and the many friends of Bob. The reason, it took so long for you to receive this message, is due to the circumstances surrounding Bob's death.

If I might be permitted to say so. Bob died on one of his many peace-missions which were both multifarious and global. He was always passionate and unceasing in his quest for the advancement of humanity in this world.

This last occasion where he as vice-chairperson of the CCIVS took part in an international conference for volunteers and their possible contribution to the better understanding of peoples, took place in Kampala, Uganda. Bob died 78 years of age, from a brain haemorrhage two days after the conference. He was discovered in a coma in his hotelroom in Kampala. He was brought to the Kampalen hospital where an atteirnl was made at resuscitation, but to no avail.

Subsequently Bob was cremated in Kampala and thanks to the intervention of the American Embassy his ashes were passed on to his family in Vermont. United States of America. Bob had expressed the wish that his ashes should be strewn over the North Sea as a last gesture to his comrades-in-arms. Many of them were shot down above this sea during missions to Nazi-Germany in the 1939-45 war. Bob himself was during the war, commander of a squadron of " Flying Fortresses ".

However, Bob also said: " If my children prefer that I'm interred in America I'll respect their wishes." The family have indeed expressed their wish to have the urn in Vermont.

Editor's Note: from Skywriting newsletter of Pima Air Museum in Tuscon. You'll see all these planes at the Reunion.

Interesting History. And they've just added a "mint condition" original WW 2 Jeep to their collection.

Battle Won, War Lost; Battle Lost, War Won

A Story of Two Airplanes

By Robert Serling

If airplanes could talk, two of the Pima Air & Space Museum's fine restorations would have quite a conversation reminiscing about what happened more than six decades ago.

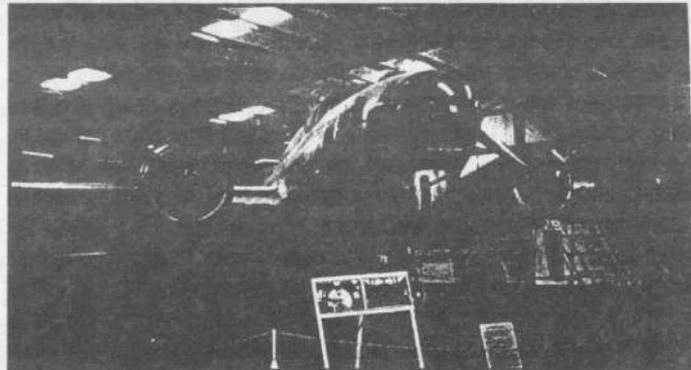
Four years before Hitler's 1939 invasion of Poland and the start of World War Two, these two bitter rivals competed to become the Army Air Force's primary heavy bomber - with an ironic result; the winner eventually was to be relegated to a relatively minor role when the US entered the war, while the loser would win everlasting fame and glory. The contestants were the Douglas B - 18, known as the Bolo and the Boeing B - 17 Flying Fortress; our B - 18 and the 390th Memorial Museum's B - 17 are improved versions of the ones that competed head-to-head 61 years ago.

In the fall of 1935, the prototypes of both bombers were flown to Wright-Patterson Field in Dayton, Ohio, where, along with the Martin B - 12 (an improved version of the Martin B - 10 bomber), they faced a series of evaluation tests to determine which of the three airplanes would win a multi-million dollar, multi-aircraft contract.

It was a one-sided contest almost to the very end - the four-engine B - 17 (designated Model 299) flew faster, higher, longer, and carried a bigger bomb load than either of its two rivals. The original B - 10 had been good enough to win the Collier Trophy for 1932, but the B - 12 was basically the same airplane and the outclassed Martin entry was the first to be eliminated.

A similar fate seemed inevitable for the XB - 18, a fine aircraft with interesting genes - the wings and the entire tail section were virtual carbon copies of the same components of the DC - 2 transport. But the bomber ran a poor second in performance compared to the bigger Boeing which exceeded the Army's specifications in every major category including range, speed, altitude and payload. By the last scheduled day of the evaluation tests, even the Douglas engineers expected to lose. Until...

Model 299 was taking off on the final test flight of the competition with two Army pilots at the controls. The big bomber got airborne but suddenly pitched in an abnormally steep climb. It stalled, fell off on one wing, smashed into the ground and burst into flames. Three of the four Air Corps men



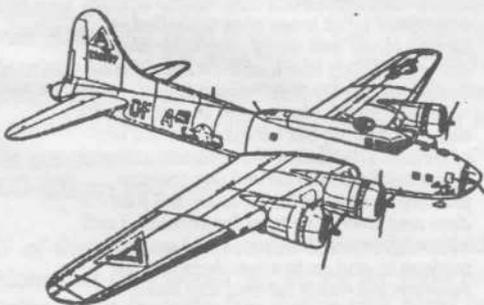
aboard managed to escape the burning wreckage but the Army major flying the plane and a Boeing test pilot serving as an observer died.

An investigation revealed that the takeoff had been initiated with the gust lock still engaged on the 299. An activated gust lock limited the elevators to either neutral or fully elevated positions; it was determined the elevators were in neutral position at the start of the takeoff, but automatically dropped into full elevation when the major pulled back on the yoke - raising the nose so sharply that a stall resulted.

The crash wiped out Boeing's lead in two and a half terrible minutes, even though the Air Corps itself conceded that the 299 wasn't at fault. The prevailing military opinion however, was that a four-engine bomber apparently was too much for mere men to handle safely. Douglas was awarded a contract for 133 B - 18's, an order later increased to 350 airplanes.

Boeing was thrown a few crumbs; a contract for only 13 B - 17's, and if it hadn't been for a handful of Air Corps supporters who still believed in the big bomber concept, the Army wouldn't have bought that many.

The sequel, of course, is well known - the B - 17 became the outstanding bomber of the European Theater, while the B - 18 was employed in a more prosaic, generally unpublicized role such as bombardier training, target and glider towing, and anti-submarine patrols. The B - 18 Bolo exhibited at the PASM has changed very little from the plane that won a temporary victory at Wright-Patterson. But the 390th Memorial Museum's B - 17 is one of the much later and vastly improved G models - a far cry from the ill-fated Model 299.



Dear Editor Ed,

The Truman Smith book THE WRONG STUFF, certainly is an easy read. Several of my friends found it difficult to put aside and most read the story in a couple days. You have probably had this input from a lot of people. It seems to tell it like a lot of us would remember, at least the fun times.

Enclosed is a high school students essay in tribute to our fallen comrades (of all wars) which was inspired by a high school assembly that was held to recognize all veterans during VETERANS DAY' 96.

George J. Behl

THE STATE JOURNAL-REGISTER

Sunday, December 29, 1996

DEREK MILLER, a student at Petersburg Porta High School, was honored at a special student assembly for his Patriotism and Americanism essay he did for Veterans Day 1996. The article appeared in The State-Journal Register.

He was presented plaques of appreciation and recognition by various members of Hayes-Kreil Memorial Chapter 159 of the Military Order of the Purple Heart.

THE STATE JOURNAL-REGISTER

Tuesday, November 19, 1996

opinion

Remember our veterans

By **DEREK MILLER**

PETERSBURG HIGH SCHOOL

To the American Soldier, who died bravely.

In the lines at Lexington and Concord, in the trenches of war-torn France and Germany, in the jungles of Korea and Vietnam, in the deserts of Mexico and Africa and Arabia, you were there. You were there, carrying the red, white and blue of the first truly free nation in the world.

You fought bravely against forces that sometimes seemed as if they would come you at any moment, against forces that were in many ways your superior, against men who would see democracy fade from the earth. Against injustices that seem to spring from every corner of the globe.

You were there, defending freedom and innocence. You watched good men die all around you. When the bullets began to fly, you fought on. You saw your friends go home in pine boxes or horribly scarred and disfigured, but you fought on.

You gazed in horror upon the dead and dying and many times you wondered how long it would be before you joined your friends on the other side, and many times you wondered why you of all people were here, and yet you continued to fight.

You saw the evil that exists in the hearts of men. And you saw what malicious deeds

these things can cause.

You were not a black man or a white man. It didn't matter what nation your ancestors called home. You were not a Latino or a German or an Englishman or an African or an Asian or an Indian. You were an American.

You marched boldly into the great beyond, at the bidding of a nation you love, the country you call your home, and though you were very far away, you took with you a piece of it and made your country proud.

You lie now here in the cold ground among your fellows, those who fell in service before you, honored by a simple chunk of granite or wooden cross, buried with the red and white stripes that symbolized everything you lived and died for.

You bear on your breast the medal and insignia of a hero. Though these tokens are small, and your contribution seems insignificant, and your death appears meaningless, I tell you now that they are not, for every cross that stands stark and white in our nation's capital, every name that appears on the solemn monuments, every purple heart that lies in a widow's or widower's home serves to testify to the glorious and magnificent spirit of freedom upon which this nation was founded.

Though history and your people may tend to forget your valiant sacrifice and your defense of American life, do not hang your head in shame.

Rather, hold it high, and let all the world

see that the American spirit will never die, and will continue undaunted into the future because of brave people like you.

Rest well, fallen hero.

This was inspired by, of all things, a school assembly. It was the day after Veteran's Day and the faculty was concerned that the student body had little respect for those who had fought for our country in past wars.

They gathered us together, we said the Pledge of Allegiance, listened to "The Star Spangled Banner" and then listened to a few veterans, one of them a science teacher who had seen combat in Vietnam, talk about what those men who died in foreign lands had really fought for and about how they had laid their lives on the line for a country they believed in.

I was moved. I had never thought of this day as anything but an excuse to get out of school. I had never thought about those brave soldiers who served our country proudly so that we could enjoy the freedom and liberty we take for granted. I will never again see this day as just an excuse to sleep in and go to town. I respect our veterans too much for that any more.

Though most of the bids in my school will probably forget about this gathering, I will never be able to shake from my mind the image of my science teacher nearly weeping as "Taps" was played at the end of the assembly. ■

705 Mendocina Ct #12
Florissant, MO 63031-6093
Sunday, February 23, 1997

Mister Ed Sterns
Editor, 385th BGMA NL
P. O. Box 2187
Fargo, ND 58108-2187

Dear Ed,

A phone call late Saturday night gave the final answer to my long search about the Keeley-Yannello midair crash. A Donna Adams, daughter of now deceased SSgt John Adams who was the tail gunner and the only survivor of the two aircraft midair, called me and stated that she had read my last submission to you that Yannello had borrowed Donald E. Jones B-17 "The Dorsal Queen."

She stated that her father as tail gunner was looking out the back and saw Lt Keeley coming quick and yelled "Oh S-----, here comes an airplane!" He then bailed out and survived, therefore Keeley hit Yannello, mystery solved.

She wanted to give me all of his photographs from the 385th days but I suggested that she call Mary Beth Barnard at the Wright 8th AF Heritage Museum in Savannah and offer her them first, then if she refuses them I would be happy to have them.

Additionally at her request I stated that I would ask you to publish her request for any and all information about her father and the Lt Paul Yannello aircrew, her address is as follows:

Ms Donna Adams
800 Lillian St.
Pittsburgh, PA 15210

She also said that around ten years ago the family got a letter stating that they had found the wreckage of the first Dorsal Queen and could SSgt Adams come to England to identify the personal belongings of the deceased crew members so as they might be returned to their families, however SSgt Adams had been dead ten years at that time.

If I am looking forward to springtime and Cardinal games etc., here in St. Louis I surely know you are looking forward to spring there in Fargo!

Thanks for all,

Sincerely,



ALLEN P. HOLTMAN
MSgt, USAF Ret
Mbr, 385th BGMA

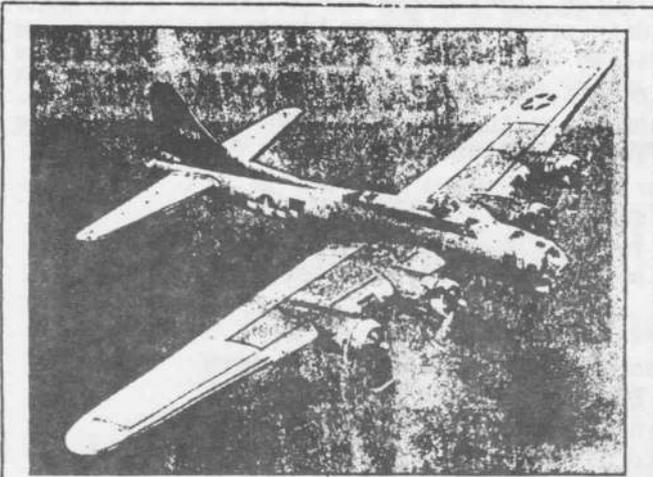
January 26

Dear Mr. Ed,

Even though it's been only 3 days since I last wrote, I thought it would be appropriate to send you some stuff now. (In other words. I'd rather that you store it than I.)

#1) Clippings from our recent newspapers of aircraft...good publicity. Our good and loyal member, Jerry Donnelly, received some good space in today's paper. Hence he shall receive a copy of this letter.

Bob Silver



A B-17 bomber

Food drop indicated end of war was near

Herald staff writer Elaine de Val-le's Jan. 26 article, *B-17 bomber crewmen relive combat episodes* brought back memories.

Like Jerry Donnelly (who flew 21 missions in a B-17 "Flying Fortress" during World War II, I am 72. When his group of B-17s flew over, I was standing on the roof of my house in Amsterdam, the Netherlands. They were flying at near tree-top level. I could see the tail gunners behind their twin machine guns, and the brightly painted tail fins, some with checkerboard patterns. The booming roar of all those

engines was incredible.

In the distance, I could see little black specks, cases of food tumbling out of the planes. It was a great and exciting day for the starving people of Amsterdam. We had been under German occupation two days short of five years. The food drop was one more event that made us feel sure that the war's end was near.

To all those men: Thank you, not just for the food drop but for all your courage and sacrifice during those terrible years.

GOTTFRIED A. VANHEURN
Miami

February 7, 1997

Dear Ed:

I called the writer of this letter, Gottfried A. Van Heum, and had a very pleasant talk with him. He was, as you can imagine, extremely impressed (can you blame him?) to realize that he was speaking in person with one of the pilots of the checkerboard aircraft. I also spoke with Jerry Donnelly and he states that he is going to set up a lunch meeting for Gottfried and some of the rest of us. I suppose that this is Jerry's way to try and make amends for having received all of this publicity WITHOUT ONCE HAVING MENTIONED MY NAME.

Bob Silver

Your Editor has received a number of calls about the April floods that Fargo is "enjoying".

We are still high and dry although some people are still not. I think we will be able to beat it.

Thank you for your expressions of concern.

Your Editor,
Ed Stern
April 10, 1997

1996

TREASURER'S REPORT
MARCH 31, 1997

Assets 3/31/97		11,625.56
Assets 3/31/97		
Saving Acct.	6,945.35	
Checking Acct.	9,210.11	
Total 3/31/97		16,155.46

PROFIT & LOSS STATEMENT

Income			
Dues & Donations (1)	10,711.00		
Interest	249.03		
Total Income			10,960.03
Expenses			
Newsletters (4)	6,124.67		
President	115.46		
Treasurer	128.00		
Wreath (England)	62.00		
Total Expenses			6,430.13
Net Gain			4,529.90

(1) Totals do not include \$600 Life Membership sent to Gt. Ashfield Church

(4) Due to last year's late report, more expenses were charged that year.

Respectfully submitted
John F. Pettenger, Treasurer

TOTAL ASSETS YEAR ENDING

1976	385	1987	20787
1977	2144	1988	19634
1978	1401	1989	19370
1979	2842	1990	16060
1980	1724	1991	20686
1981	11156	1992	18169
1982	13268	1993	20629
1983	20954	1994	14144
1984	20035	1995	11624
1985	26748	1996	16115
1986	29036		

Dear Ed,

January 26, 1997

I was recently looking at my Dad's WWII photo album, I saw the very same photo of my Dad (Harlan K. Inglis) and the crew of the Thoroughbred as was printed in the 385th Bomb Group (H) history book. In the history book, Bill Hart and Ed Kregulec were listed with the crew. Beneath the photo in the album, Dad had written "Thoroughbred crew minus Bill Hart & Ed (Ben James #4)." Bill Hart was POW, and Ed Kregulec had been killed by the time this photo was taken for my Dad. For the information of your readers who have the book, please note that the man listed in the book as Edward Kregulec (the man kneeling on the right end of the front row) was actually Ben James, a close friend of his. As for the man listed as William Hart, I have no idea who he was, and would be interested to hear from any of your readers if they know. Thank you very much.

Yours Sincerely,
 Stephen R. Inglis
 10230 Pleasant Lake Blvd. #E3
 Parma, OH 44130

Pilot of "Thoroughbred" Plane Receives Distinguished Flying Cross for Valor



Capt. Harlan K. Inglis (pictured above, third from left in bottom row-), 27-year-old first pilot on the Eighth AAF Flying Fortress "Thoroughbred", has recently been decorated with the Distinguished Flying Cross for "extraordinary achievement" while participating in numerous combat bombing attacks on Nazi war-making targets in Germany and the German-held territory.

Capt. Inglis' crew is pictured above in front of a Fortress. "The 'Thoroughbred', had not been painted on the nose of the Fort at the time the picture was made", Lt. Wilfeur R. Dennis, Public Relations officer, explained.

The name "Thoroughbred" was chosen by Captain Inglis for his

ship in honor of the varsity athletic teams at Murray State College, who are officially designated as "Thoroughbreds". This name was given to the Murray athletes by Dr. Rainey T. Wells in 1928. On their uniforms, all varsity athletes here wear a replica of the head of Man O' War, famous Kentucky racehorse. Captain Inglis is a graduate of Murray State and his brother, Prof. F. P. Inglis is a member of the faculty there.

Flight leader on numerous bombing assaults, Captain Inglis has also received the Air Medal with three Oak Leaf Clusters. Some of his more important targets have been Berlin's ball bearing works and electrical parts plants for engines, aircraft assembly plants at

Frankfurt and Regensburg, and industrial areas of Emden, Brunswick, and Augsberg.

One of his experiences, which he termed "damned annoying", occurred when he had to ditch his "Thoroughbred" in the channel returning from a raid over Europe. He made a perfect water landing and all the crew were safely picked up by a rescue launch when the Fort sank.

B-17 bomber crewmen relive combat episodes

By ELAINE DE VALLE
Herald Staff Writer

If the bombers parked at Tamiami Airport on Saturday could talk, they'd have a million stories.

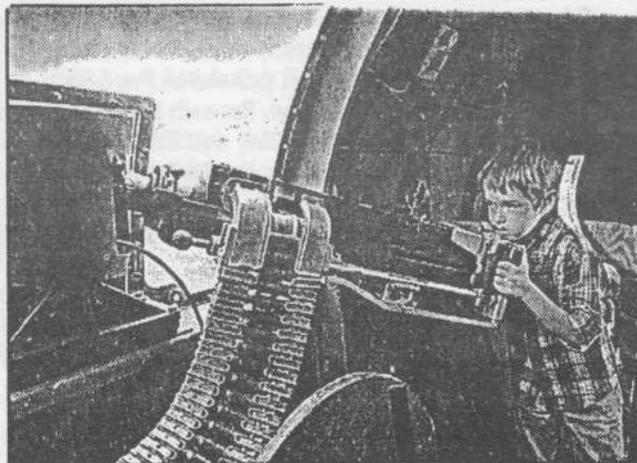
Jerry Donnelly knows some of them. He flew 21 missions in a B-17 "Flying Fortress" during World War II. But the one he remembers most fondly was a humanitarian flight over The Netherlands at the end of the war — the "Manna Chowhound" parachute drop.

"One week, we're hauling

destruction," Donnelly, 72, said. "The next week, we're delivering food to the starving people in the Netherlands.

"They drew a big white circle, and when we were over the middle, we cut the food loose. I can still visualize the people. There must have been 10,000 around that circle, jumping and somersaulting."

Donnelly took an hourlong ride in the bomber Friday morning, for old time's sake. He sat in



JON KRAL / Herald Staff

PRETENDING: William Lowery, 7, checks a machine gun on a B-17 bomber displayed Saturday at Tamiami Airport.

PLEASE SEE BOMBERS, 8B

THE HERALD, SUNDAY, JANUARY 26, 1997

'One more ride' in B-17 stirs wartime memories

BOMBERS, FROM 1B

the radio room, where the view is a little different from what he saw when he was the top turret gunner. But it still took him back.

"I've been saying to my family for the past 10 years that before I cash it in, I want one more ride," he said.

His children paid the \$300 for the flight.

"You can still visualize things in your mind. I saw a lot of other B-17s out there with us," said Donnelly, who was a member of the 549th Squadron, 385th Bomb Group.

"It's hard to explain. I don't really see any, but they're out there. And I can guarantee that a lot of other guys flew with me, too, even though they're no longer here."

Saturday, he hung around the plane some more, touching it, breathing in the smell of burnt oil.

"Maybe I can bum another ride," Donnelly said. "This is the greatest airplane ever built."

As he spoke, John J. Ricci eavesdropped. He pulled his dog tags from his pocket to introduce himself. Then the two swapped stories.

"When these planes first got to England, they didn't even have a tail gun, Ricci said. Then, more pensive, eyes gazing downward: "I lost too many friends on these."

Retired LL Col. Bob Gluck, 77, was almost lost. The Miami Beach man spent 20 months as a prisoner of war after being shot down over Germany.

Gluck, a navigator, had flown 20 missions before that last one, including the first air raid on the Schweinfurt ball-bearing plant knocked out by Allied air power. It was a crucial turning point in the war, he said.

While the old litters became friends, / hundreds of people walked through both the B-17 and the B-24 bombers on display Saturday, at the Weeks Air Museum, on the grounds of Tamiami Airport. They touched the metal walls, the switches in the radio room. They gazed down at the bombs — duds now — in the drop bays.

Kids pretended to be gunners shooting invisible enemy warplanes with machine guns.

Yvonne Ortiz wanted to sit in the "bubble in the very front" or the ball turret position. She was moved by a scene in the movie *The Memphis Belle*, where the ball-turret gunner almost falls out when his position is hit by fire.

"All the crew in the planes that fought had courage, but the guy in there had the most courage of all, 'cause he was locked in there. He was fighting alone," Ortiz, 34, said.

The Princeton receptionist didn't get her wish.

Marti Baker, a crew member with the nonprofit Collings Foundation — which maintains the aircraft — said Ortiz couldn't sit in the turret. "There's stuff in there, and it ends up getting destroyed."

The Collings Foundation, which exhibits the historic aircraft on stops around the country like the one at Tamiami, charged adults \$7 and kids \$3 to tour the planes. The money goes toward the \$2,000-an-hour cost of maintenance and fuel.

As people waited in line, they read the names of unknown heroes painted on the sides of the planes: pilots Charles Huntoon, Robert Prest, Jack Kimball, Carl

Rambo, nose gunner Robert Pedigo, waist gunner C.F. Skip Pease.

William Lowery, 7, gently stroked his hand over the names of Kirk Sneed and Thomas Parson, bombardiers. The first-grader at Vineland Elementary loves the museum, said dad James Lowery. "He's always pretending."

William said he wants to be a pilot. "I like watching them fly by and dropping bombs and all that good stuff."

Dad reminded him: "They < on't drop bombs anymore."

"Yeah, I know," William said, and he sounded somewhat disappointed.

Dear Ed, January 14, 1997
 You are doing a mighty nice job with Hardlife. Thanx!!

I was stationed at Davis Monthan for several months in 1949. I was there with the 34th BG. Was Sqdn. Ops officer of the 398th. (I'm not sure of the exact numbers).

I arrived there after getting advanced instruction from the TWA Pilots School in Albuquerque. We were flying B-24's.

While there (at Tuscon) the squadrons were sheering off the noses of the B-24's. The AF was going to cancel the contract for production of B-24's by General Dynamics.

Then someone noticed that our Sqdn. hadn't sheered any. Reason -our pilots had been trained by TWA how to land aircraft with NOSE Wheels.

We became instructors of the Squadrons-B-24's were saved! Also we were given B-17's later on and about the time the AF broke the Japanese codes and thought they were going to attack the West Coast.

So-all training stopped and we were all deployed to Alaska and South to Panama. My outfit went to Muroc Lake-along with many others.

Boy what a mess. My crew had the unenviable task of seeking the Japanese task force. Gas tans were installed in the bombays and we would fly West over the Pacific until our fuel made us turn back. If we found the fleet we were to loiter in the vicinity somehow using the bombay tanks!

Ed, I was stationed at Tuscon at least 3 times-once after WW II-so although I know I was there with the B-24's (in 1949), I'm not sure of the time frame for the deployment. Believe it had to be in 1942 because we began the 385th in Spokane in early '43 right??

All the best
 Jim McDonald

Editor's Note: Ken Laffoon sent us this from the 492nd Bomb Group. Notice this story is 50 years old.

WARBIRDS' SWANSONG
 Taken from May 1947 Arizona Highways
 by Jerry McLain

After WWII more than 7,000 retired army bombers, fighters, and training planes were left standing row on row at the old Kingman Army Air Field five miles east of Kingman. Arizona, now Storage Depot 41 of the War Assets Corporation. It was the world's greatest concentration of aircraft in one area at one time, covering five square miles. Kingman Army Airfield was a flexible gunnery base which once had an army population of 17,000 officers and men.

5,437 of the planes, offered for competitive bidding with the provisions that they would not be use for flight purposes since they were not adaptable for civilian use, were purchased for \$2,780,000 by Martin Wunderlich, a Jefferson City, Missouri, contractor, (it's rumored that the fuel drained from these planes was sold for more than the purchases price of the planes)

But so outstanding was the Kingman depot's safety record that in the delivery of 7,000 planes involving an estimated 21,000

flying men, there wasn't a fatal accident!

Only planes with low flying time were "pickled," yet Kingman soon had 1,100 such B-24s standing wing tip to wing tip.

At one time last summer the Kingman storage records showed 2,567 B-24 Liberators, 1,832 Flying Fortresses, 478 of the P-38 Lightnings, another 200 of the P-38 photo planes, 37 of the B-29 Superforts, not to mention 141 B-25 Billy Mitchell medium bombers and hundreds of P-47 Thunderbolts, P-40s of Flying Tiger fame and the A-26s, then America's newest and fastest medium bombers.

The depot sold B-17s at \$ 13,750 and B-25s at \$8,250. Prices asked on other types of aircraft included the A-26 at \$2,000 each; P-61 @ \$6,000 each; P-47 @ \$3,500 each; P-40 @ \$ 1,250, and A-24 @ \$ 1,650 each.

None but American citizens could purchase planes at Kingman, and before being offered for sale the ships were stripped of all confidential equipment such as bomb sights, radar and other radio installations.

Mojave Museum of History & Arts Kingman, Arizona
 (Submitted by Willie Sparks)
 from The Happy Warrior, 492nd Bomb Group Assoc.

Dear William,

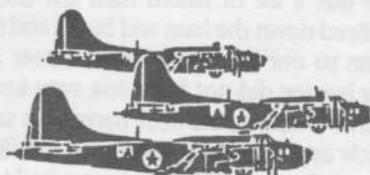
Dec. 11, 1996

I am Frank Falotico and am writing to you on the chance that you know a William A. Moeller who, in the 1940s, lived in Renton, Washington during World War II. We served together in the 7th Air Force - 494th Bomb Group, 865th Squadron. We were a 10-man crew on a B-24 Bomber. Of that crew we know that 3 men are deceased, 6 of us are living, and the one we can't locate is William A. Moeller, our radio operator.

Our bomb group gets together approximately every 18 months in different states for 4 days doing a lot of sight-seeing, talking about old times, and wondering about Bob Moeller.

If you know of this William Moeller or have some information about him, I would appreciate your writing me as soon as possible. Thank you very much.

Sincerely,
 Frank A. Falotico
 304 Golf Avenue
 Ellwood City, PA 16117



January 29, 1997

Dear Ed,

I was sorry to learn of Bill Wilson's passing away. Bill was the 548th Adjutant when we were at Lewiston, Montana and when we went over seas. We were given 6 day furloughs and the squadron tacked on a 3 day pass making it a total of 9 days. It was a 3 day train trip from Lewistown to New York and the East Coast one way. We applied to the Red Cross to borrow some money so we could fly home and they refused us. They told us to use our own money from the May 1 pay day and to take the train. A few of the boys from New York and New Jersey said they were going to visit with their families for about 10 days and would be a little late getting back to Lewistown (this they told only to their good friends). Anyway they kept their word and did return to Lewistown 7 days late A.W.O.L.. And of course they had to be disciplined for being A.W.O.L. 7 days. The punishment these guys received was that they had to march up and down in front of the orderly room and squadron area for 7 days with a full field pack on their backs.

I said to Wilson at one of our 385th reunions "Do you remember that punishment". He said "He did" I said "Do you know what those packs were full of—They were full of air and could not have weighed more than one half pound". Those A.W.O.L. guys took condoms and blew them up like balloons and stuffed them in the field packs to make them look bulging and full. Bill said "Son of a gun those guys were smarter than I gave them credit for."

Since I am giving away secrets I guess I can tell you about the missing barrel of beer. One night while we were at Great Ashfield a bunch of us from our hut decided to go over to the enlisted mans beer hall instead of going down to the Fox Pub. We weren't in the beer hall too long when 2 guys from another squadron got a barrel of beer from the back of the beer hall and rolled it almost to the door before anyone stopped them. Sam Steam said "Did you see that - those guys almost got that barrel of beer out before anyone stopped them." Sam said "we can do better than that." So he planned a strategy. A short while later four of our guys walked to the back of the room where the beer was stored. Two guys walked slowly, shoulder to shoulder, while two guys slowly rolled a barrel of beer behind them. As they got closer to the bar and the door, Sam Steam who was stationed himself down at the far end of the bar started singing "Cooney in the Holler, Possum on the stump" as a diversion and to attract attention so the guys could get the beer barrel out the door. This strategy really worked. Nobody saw the barrel of beer go out the door. As soon as we got the barrel outside we put in a quick call to 548 transportation for a vehicle which we had in about two minutes. On the way to the 548th area we stopped at the mess hall and told our cooks to join the party. There was a lot of baked ham left over from dinner. So our cooks sliced down the ham and bread and brought the trays of food down to our hut. Now we had beer and the food for a great party but we did not have one very important object. We did not have a tap for the beer barrel. So someone hopped into the vehicle and made a quick trip to the flight line and picked up a piece of aluminum oil line. So we had to knock the cork into the barrel and use the oil line to siphon the beer

out of the barrel. There was a lot of spillage but who cared. Boy that was some nice party. Why is it that everything always tastes better when it is "Captured" and you don't have to pay for it.

When the party was over there was still some beer left so we carried the barrel about 50 yards down the hedgerow of the farm field property adjoining our hut. For the next couple of days, anyone wanting a beer would just walk down the hedgerow and help themselves. After the party our hut smelled like a brewery. So we had to really scrub down our hut but it still had some beer odor but no physical evidence of any party. It really is a fond memory of one of the great times we had at Great Ashfield.

I have been to a few 8th Air Force and Veterans reunions but it just isn't the same as being with the fellows from the 548th and the 385th Bomb Group. There just seems to be something missing. Anywhere you go you will never find a greater bunch of guys than those who served in the 385th.

Keep up the great work Ed, I know you always say it is nothing. But we all know that it is something and really is a lot of work just reading crazy letters like this.

We do all really appreciate the great job you are doing.

Keep warm and stay healthy.

Best Regards

Marty Girson

January 1, 1997

Dear Ed:

In reading the recent issue of Hardlife, there was much discussion of the subject of raising dues. I, for one, think that raising the dues to \$ 12.00 (or 15) would be a small price to pay to continue publication. However, I hate to think of any member of the group not receiving his copy because of non-payment of dues. If that member is still "with" us, he should continue to get his copy. Whatever the reason that member does not pay his dues is his business. Our "business" should be to keep the 385th alive in all members. I don't know what percentage of the membership this might come to, but if necessary, I am certain that many of our members would be happy to subsidize the publication in some way. Naturally, the paying membership will be getting smaller. Bequests or other donations should be solicited if necessary. The main idea is to keep the publication going. What does the membership think? When you've got a good thing going, at this stage of the game, we can't afford to let go of it or deny someone from receiving his copy.

Your, for continued distribution,

Milton Taubkin

Editor's Note: Everyone seems to agree that we need an increase. We'll decide in Tucson.

DUBENDORF, SWITZERLAND 1944-1945

by Don Kabitzke

Recently I was introduced to a former Gunner in the Squadron of the 385th Bomb Group at Great Ashfield, England. He was Dale C. Ellington of Milwaukee, Wisconsin. His sons had told me about him and I contacted him to ask if he would address my WISCONSIN CHAPTER of the 8th Air Force Historical Society, especially when I learned that he had been interned in Switzerland after his Fortress was badly damaged by the Germans on a raid to Germany. It was his eighth mission and the pilot was forced to head for Switzerland and find sanctuary there as it was neutral territory. To their surprise, when they arrived over Switzerland, Swiss anti-aircraft gunners shot at them and a plane directed them to follow then to Dubendorf. This information took me by surprise as I always felt the Swiss were on our side. Dale told me it was the same up in Sweden. Switzerland was heavy with Germanic background people and the Swedes disliked us as we shut down their shipping of iron ore to Germany, who received 65% of their supply from Sweden. Both stopped the practice and treated the crews with dignity.

Recently Dale came to my home and brought me a cassette he obtained about an emergency field in Switzerland at Dubendorf. It lasted for 35 minutes and I found it most interesting. It showed B-24s and B-17s being photographed by local people during this period and after it was over they gathered it all and put out a single cassette. There must have been about 150 bombers there at the peak of this period. Some exploded in the air approaching the dirt runways, other belly landing, others crashing beyond the runways and bursting into flames. The runways were too short for this size plane and it took a lot of skill to land safely on them. Some were badly damaged, others low on fuel and each pilot had to make a decision on what was best for his crew. At the beginning of the war, some of the crews were shot in mid-air by the Swiss when they parachuted from their crippled aircraft. In some landings, parachutes were used to shorten the landings.

When the war ended, crews were flown in and what planes could not be salvaged were cut up with torches and the metal was melted and made into ingots.

Editor's Note: You've probably read of controversy with Swiss Banks who are accused of confiscating funds deposited with them by people who ended up in Auschwitz. The Swiss are said to have demanded death certificates before they would turn deposits over to survivors. Somehow the Nazis didn't issue death certificates at Auschwitz.

We had 4 planes that landed in Switzerland, according to our records. Anyone have any comments on how they were treated?

Dear Ed,

On page 107 of the History of the 385th Bomb Gp under the title of Post World War II it lists the reactivations of the 385th as a Strategic Aerospace Wing and the squadrons as Missile Squadrons.

I wrote to our old friend the Air Force Historical Research Agency at Maxwell AFB, Montgomery, Alabama and asked "Where?"

As you can see the 385th was equipped with Atlas D Missiles and KC-135A tankers, the squadrons seemed to be in various locations but remained in the missile "banana belt" of Strategic Air Command.

Mister Charles Ravenstein was a friend of mine and was tons over weight, this killed him in the middle 80s.

I hope this information is of interest to you and the troops.

Sincerely,
Allen Holtman

Editor's Note: The 385th evidently didn't "die" after WWII--here's a later history for anyone interested. Allen received this information from AF Historical Research Agency, Maxwell AF Base, AL 36112-6424

385th STRATEGIC AEROSPACE WING

LINEAGE. Established as 385th Strategic Aerospace Wing, and activated, in 15 Nov 1962. Organized in 1 Jan 1963. Discontinued, and inactivated, on 15 Dec 1964.

ASSIGNMENTS. Strategic Air Command, 15 Nov 1962; 818th Strategic Aerospace Division, 1 Jan 1963-15 Dec 1964.

COMPONENTS. Squadrons. 34th Air Refueling: 1 Jan-15 Dec 1964 (detached 10-15 Dec 1964). 549th Strategic Missile: 1 Jan 1963-15 Dec 1964 (not operational, 1-15 Dec 1964).

STATIONS. Offutt AFB, Nebr., 1 Jan 1963-12 Dec 1964.

COMMANDERS. None (not manned), 15 Nov-31 Dec 1962; Col. Edwin Garrison, 1 Jan 1963; Col. Allen A. Lathan, 20 Aug-15 Dec 1964. »

AIRCRAFT AND MISSILES. KC-135, 1963-1964; Atlas D, 1963-1964.

OPERATIONS. Controlled a mixture of strategic missiles and air refueling aircraft in the 1960s; the former served as a deterrent force and the latter provided airborne command post services and supported SAC's global air refueling mission.

SERVICE STREAMERS. None
CAMPAIGN STREAMERS. None
DECORATION. None
EMBLEM. None

More question and answers from Lt. Col Mark Wells.

18. What helped you most? Chaplain? Flight-surgeon? Other Crewmembers?

#18. I had no contacts with the flight surgeon other than those required. I do not recall being sick, requiring medicine or treatment. I did attend chapel services at times when the schedule permitted, but I had no interviews with the chaplain. Crew stability and mental attitude by far helped me the most. Our crew was disciplined, supportive of each other, there were no emotional hang-ups, no displays of fear, and we had a proper and sufficient amount of interplay between enlisted and officer. It was not all serious. Our co-pilot, Tom Helman, I believe it was he, told me that if and when I had completed five missions that "they would let me smoke a cigarette, have a shot of Johnnie Walker, and play with girls." I tried not to worry, I put the next mission out of mind, viewed the previous one as a mini-war completed, and did my best to enjoy my free time. It was not all bad (only most of it).

19. Was there one thing, above all others, that you feared (e.g., fighters, flak, ditching, accidents, lost, bailout, fire, etc.)?

#19. Flak. The random, statistically impartial burst of flak. During the heavy fighter attacks I could partially put it behind me. Over the heavily defended areas and in particular the target, the enemy fighters would sometimes break off for obvious reasons. Then time would expand, interminable time on the long run into and out of the target area. The front of the aircraft was very busy, but they had to look directly into the mass of flak burst. We guys in the back had nothing to do but keep a watch for fighters and store mental reports of observations, most of which were bombers going down. I saw a direct hit into the open bomb bay of one of our aircraft. No regrets for that crew. Many others suffered irrecoverable damage, fell away, and burst into flames. Some got out but most did not. Having to helplessly watch flak and its results was very disturbing.

20. How could you define "combat effectiveness" for B-17s and their crews?

#20. The American air offensive over Europe was by far the greatest team effort ever conducted. The words "team player" were important to the extent of life or death. Those runs, even the earlier ones with fewer bombers, required detailed planning. The leadership, the combat formation, and the crews who formed it were the keys to a successful drop of ordnance on target, while sustaining acceptable losses. The crew was the key element in that success and the pilots uppermost. No consideration could be given to individual and crew survival. We were only statistics going in and coming out. There could be no one, no crew, no squadron, nor bomber group who could play loner. You stayed with the plan, took orders, and followed the leader, or suffered the consequences.

Let's see if I can summarize "combat effectiveness" for bomber

con't on next page

crews. It obvious^{2v} started with the selection of individuals, merging of crew members, good training, and above all, crews who paid attention, took the training seriously, and developed crew discipline from the first day. The "good" crew had concern for their aircraft and equipment. You did not just walk away and forget it after each mission. The good crew used stand-down days to spend some time with their ground crews learning what they did, and how well they did it. From the time you entered the briefing room until final de-briefing it had to be serious business. No complaining. If you drew "purple heart corner" you took it with pride. The pre-flight period was very important. Consultation with the ground crew, checking all gun installations, inventorying ammo, and above all checking the proper installation of the bombs became second nature. Leaving nothing to chance; being ready for combat at engine start, not after the first fighter attack. Always being on the alert, head and eyes constantly roving even on climbout. Many aircraft were lost in the assembly maneuvers during bad weather. Everyone had to be alert for the possibility of a mid-air. No superfluous intercom chatter, no "hanky-panky, and no show of emotionalism. The real chore fell upon the pilot and co-pilot to hold a tight formation, stay in position and keep up the speed. This was true for the group formation and the entire bomber stream. Even when all was performed to near perfection there were tremendous losses. But without those ingredients the losses would have been immediately unacceptable. The best of tactics, formations, and discipline, and even fighter cover left some groups so decimated by enemy action that no discernable formation remained. When aircraft were seriously damaged it was necessary to get them out of formation. In most cases this meant other aircraft getting out of the way which put them behind. The chances of catching up were slim to nil. What were the options? Fall back and tuck under another group or attempt to form up strays. With an otherwise flyable aircraft but with a loss of power, these options were out, and if you were near or at the end of the bomber stream you fell into the nil category. The remaining option was to firewall it and head for the deck. Very few loners survived.

Can you cite personal characteristics of some of the crews you would have identified as superior?

Could you spot crews beforehand who were headed for certain disaster, or did casualties appear to strike at random?

#21&22. This brings me back to the individual and crew discipline. The superior crew had a sense of maturity, even at that young age. They were not cocky, arrogant and boastful. That could be observed in their "off-duty" conduct, their on-duty preparation and attention to detail, and with no outward signs of worry about death. There were subtle signs in the manner and condition of dress, personal appearance, cleanliness, language, off-duty activities, and use of alcohol, all of which have a reflection on personal integrity and crew discipline. We were among the lucky few who could die with a clean body, a fresh shave, a partially full stomach, a relatively good nights sleep, and dressed in clean clothing. There were no excuses for not trying even when staying "stateside" clean was very difficult under the circumstances. We had some laundry facilities, not completely adequate, but there were many women, young and old, in the surrounding communities who would pick up laundry, wash, iron, repair, and return it promptly for a pittance. There were some crews, enlisted and officer, who looked like escapees from a homeless shelter. Did this contribute to the survival of the superior crew and to the death of a less superior crew? I am sure that on the average it did to some degree, but a degree impossible to measure. The

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superior crew, no matter how well disciplined, was still subject to the random nature of flak and fighter attacks, but I would think that when they died it was with some measure of dignity. As an example of a crew headed for disaster, there was an occurrence during training at Pendleton, Oregon. During an over-water flight one pilot lowered his gear in an attempt to touch the waves. They survived it but there were severe repercussions from above. The crew continued training but they did not make it to England, at least as a crew. They turned back after leaving Goose, did not make it to Greenland, and I do not know what eventually happened to them. There were many instances of non-combat losses, one in particular that I remember distinctly because of the conditions. We were returning from a mission, still in group formation over England at about 5000 feet. It was a beautiful, clear, sparkling day a moment or two after sunset but with unlimited visibility. No turbulence. Many of us saw it. An aircraft in the low squadron slowly drifted upwards beneath its element leader. Both aircraft went down with no survivors. Some of the members on one aircraft were on their last mission. It was probably a preventable accident.

8700 Scenic Hills Dr.
Pensacola, FL. 32514
March 3, 1997

Dear Ed,

I was saddened to see the name William Shannon listed in the obituaries in the last edition of the "Hardlife Herald."

In the late fall of 1943 Shannon and I were stationed in Columbia, SC for B-25 crew training. The word came out that three navigators were urgently needed for B-17 crews in combat training at Avon Park, FL. The dart must hit the S's because in short order Shannon, Smith and Stein were headed for Avon Park. I was assigned to J.O. Leonard's crew and Shannon to Paul Stahlberg's. Upon completion of crew training we picked up brand new B-17's in Savanna and flew them over to the U.K. Arriving at Great Ashfield in Feb. 1944. We share a Nisson hut with Stahlberg, Neses (shot down in the channel in returning from a raid of Freidricshaven after just a couple of missions) and Jim Vance.

Paul Stahlberg had a wife and kids in the states. His aim was to fly every day, if possible, get his 30 missions in and return to his family. J.O. Leonard was (still is) a laid back Southerner completely unflappable in the cockpit. Our crew (Curly's Kids) never had any doubts he'd get us through 30 and we'd get back to the U.S. of A. in good shape. It happened.

Bill Shannon was brash, always smiling, very talkative and looked like Huck Finn. A guy like that could be a real pain in the neck when you are cloistered in a crowded Nisson hut.

I can't remember the date or the mission number when Shannon went from Huck Finn to Commando Kelly and gained our everlasting respect. For the majority of those who never heard this story let me pass it on.

On this mission shortly after opening the bomb bay doors Stahlberg's plane took a hit in or just below the Bomb Bay several crew members were badly wounded. The bombs were dislodged and hung by their shackles. Shannon grabbed a walk around oxygen bottle and crawled from the nose, thru the open bomb bay to administer to the wounded. After they were stabilized he went into the open bomb bay and with a screwdriver released the bombs. He then went back to his station forward.

For his actions Bill Shannon was awarded the Silver Star. Many of us thought the Medal of Honor would not have been too big a stretch. We should be proud he was a member of our group.

Bob Stein

EDITOR'S NOTE: Here is VP Mike Gallagher's impression of the Savannah Museum, followed by Ed Johnson's report and list of our members already on the list.

January 12, 1997

Dear Bob,

On our trip to Florida shortly after the new year, Marian and I visited the 8th Air Force Heritage Museum in Savannah, Georgia. We were very impressed. Our readings and prior discussions left us with a smaller, less elaborate, impression of the building and displays. Particularly impressive were the Rotunda and the amphitheater with multiple screens and a Hollywood-class depiction of a mission with realistic video and ear shattering audio. There wasn't a dry eye after the show and those of us with missions under our belt experienced the fear of bandits and flak once more.

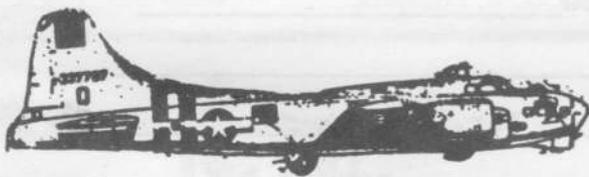
At some future time a biennial meeting should be scheduled in Savannah. A whole day could be spent by our members at the Museum. It would solve some of the program scheduling for the meeting.

I have sent to Ed Johnson my order and money for a personal Wall of Valor plaque in the Memorial Gardens. Hopefully many others have done the same by now.

The preferred sites in the Gardens may be gobbled up pretty fast. If we decide to have a memorial, someone should work promptly to see if we cannot get an option on one of the more desirable locations.

Let me emphasize once again how impressed I was with the Museum and how important I think it is that our Bomb Group erect a monument of which we, our children and our children's children can be proud.

Very Truly Yours,
Mike R. Gallagher.



Edwin Johnson
385th Bomb Group Memorial Association
695 Al A North #139
Ponte Verda Beach, Florida 32082

Today I received the following individual donation applications for our "Wall of Valor" program:

- | | |
|--------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1. 385BG | 2. George Jumper |
| 3. Hugh Bradford | 4. Edwin Johnson |
| 5. William Flagler | 6. Ben E. James |
| 7. Jesse R. Brown | 8. Willie D. Carte |
| 9. Bob Knight | 10. Herbert O. Hamilton |
| 11. F.R. Fuller | 12. Ernest W. Bemis |
| 13. Lloyd Ayres | 14. Clark B. Rollins, Jr. |
| 15. James E. Hughes | 16. Wayne Montgomery |
| 17. George E. Purkiss | 18. James M. Bond |
| 19. Elliot Vandevanter | 20. Ben T. Love |
| 21. H.W. Hiatt | 22. Lewis A. Smith |
| 23. Ira Barnes | 24. Garnett T. Tunstall |
| 25. Michael R. Gallagher | 26. William Wheeler |
| 27. Frank B. Walls | 28. George H. Platt, Jr. |
| 29. Robert Cavan | 30. Leslie Thompson |
| 31. Bob Valliere | 32. David Framer |
| 33. Edward J. McElroy | 34. Wm. Gaylord Watson |
| 35. David S. Dennis | 36. R. Pokorny |
| 37. Robert W. Hake | 38. Milton Shalinsky |
| 39. George S. Hruska | |

These applications will be held so that these names, along with the names that you will supply from additional applications, will be grouped together on our "Wall of Valor". However, donations are being processed now so that individual receipts can be mailed to the donors.

Sincerely,
Debra Smith
Finance Officer

January 14, 1997

Dear Mr. Stern,

Just mailed Mr. Ed Johnson the check for my husbands', George H. Platt, Jr memorial stone. He so enjoyed receiving and reading eve. / word of the 385th BGMA Newsletter. Before George passed away (October 24, 1995) he asked me to continue to renew the subscription. Forgive me for being tardy- Endosed is a check for \$ 15.00.

Thank you, and all those responsible for the wonderful editions of the 385th BGMA Newsletter!

Florence Platt

LAST CALL FOR THE 385th Wall Of Valor

By Edwin Johnson, 550 Sqdn.

Our first call for 385th veterans to get their names on the 8th Air Force Heritage Museum's Wall Of Valor brought in enough applications to fill two columns of the Wall and spiJLl three names over into a third column. This is pretty good but there are twelve columns on each Wall section and we 'cf like to see the 385th fill at least that third column and hopefully even a fourth. We're the only outfit so far to group its names together on the Wall so lets make a good showing. You can refer to the December Hardlife for details but here's the gist:

For a \$100 donation to the Museum you get your name, rank and outfit ID chiseled into a 4" by 12" stone panel. There are two lines of 22 letters each on each panel (punctuation and spaces don't count) and 24 letters are included in the basic cost, with a \$1 fee per letter over 24. Your can put almost anything you want on the panel but keep to the 22 letters per line limit:

CPL JONATHON SMITHSONIAN
385 BG HQ STAFF

Or you can use 550 SQ (any SQ), POW, KIA, WIA, MY HUSBAN, DFC or BINKS CREW, "MY GAL SAL" - whatever you want that fits. Be sure to use the 385 BG identification.

Be advised that although this is the last call for the 385th Wall area, you can always get your name on the Wall anytime after that - but you'll be a lone 385th straggler!

Your Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ S t a t e _____ Z i p _____

Phone: _____ Spouse _____

RankStation Name

Sqdn.Bomb GP .Ftr . Gp.

O t h e r :KIAPOW
ESC and EVAs

Enclose \$100. minimum for each 4" x 12" panel. Add \$1 per letter for each additional letter above 24. Make checks payable to: 8th Air Force Heritage Museum. Mail checks and applications to: Ed Johnson, 695 AIA Mortb \$139, Ponte Vedra Beach, Florida 32082.

Number Of Letters Total \$ Amount

Mastercard Number Visa #

Exp Date Print Name

Signature _____

Fill in the two lines below exactly as you want them to be chiseled on your Wall Of Valor name plate:

(1) _____

(2) _____

EDITOR'S NOTE: Our 1998 (or 1999) Reunion will probably be at Savannah. Let's have an impressive showing. Deadline is 2 weeks after you get this Hardlife Herald -- let's get a lot of names so we can have some boasting rights when we see it.

February 25, 1997
Tuesday Evening

February 21, 1997

Dear Ed,

Dear Ed;

Received the "Hardlife Herald" this morning and each newsletter is a happy reminder of 50 years ago. Thank you for printing a letter by Michael Campbell on page 20 of the February Edition.

I was one of the original crew of the "Dozy Doats". We were the original crew to fly her. Ed White was our pilot, Bill Fife was co-pilot, Harold Albrecht was navigator, John Bember was our Bombardier. I was engineer: Top Gunner", Jim Dillon was "Radio Man", Al Jarosz, Tom Potter, Jesse Roland, Bob Winn, made up the rest of the crew. I left England on the 1 st week of September 1944. And to the best of my recollection West's crew took over the "Dozy Doats". I have a picture of "Dozy Doats". Published in the Air Force Magazine September or October of 1944. I had it enlarged and in a frame. The lettering on the tail is quite plain but the name of the ship is not visible. The Dozy Doats was on a mission to drop guns and ammunition to the French Marqui. If Mr. Campbell would like more information I would like to hear from him.

If he can make it to Tucson in November I'll be happy to talk with him.

Al Jarosz stayed in England till the group returned home. He may know more about what happened to the "Dozy Doats" Al's address is Albert Jarosz

284 East 232rd St.
Willowick, Ohio 44095-3254

My name & address

Daryl B. Bentley
775 W. Roger Road #92
Tuscon, Arizona 85705

See you at the reunion

Daryl Bentley

Just read the article about Charles Bech-the fellow whose father was Foreign Minister of Luxembourg. It so happens that I remember him quite well because of his manner. Actually, my contact with him was in a rather professional way. He had brought his crew for a dental check and have dental records made for identification purposes as was done with all crew members. Bech's appearance was a bit different.

When he presented himself, he stood upright, actually clicked his heels, bowed a bit from the waist and said "Sir, I am Captain Bech together with my crew for the examination." Now, I have done the same thing for most of the crews that came to the group, - but clicking of the heels and bowing from the waist - never! I had to reassure myself that this was still the good old USA Air Force. This guy was good-looking, alert and would have done well in a movie about the war.

As I remember it, he never flew a mission with our group. It seems that he was an escapee from the French army that had been captured by the Germans. As a result, if he were to bail out and be captured, he would be shot, ergo that terminated his service, at least in the ETO. That is what I had heard at the time-true or not, I do not know. It was also related that he was shipped back to London to work for the government of Luxembourg in exile until the war was over.

Don't know if this adds anything to your story, but I thought it might be an interesting side-light to it.

All the best and hope you enjoy Tuscon,
Milton Taubkin

409 Foothills Rd.
Greenville, SC 29617
February 7, 1997

in the October, 1996, issue of the Hardlife Herald, the name of Dari G. Messenger appeared in the obituary column. Knowing that he had a medical problem, I did not question the report, and subsequently sent his wife a condolences. To my great delight, three days later his wife (and Dari) were on the phone to say that Dari was alive and well.

I assumed that you would like to be notified to make a retraction, but it was not forth-coming in the December issue, so perhaps you have not yet been aware of this unintentional, but to Dari, a serious error. Life is fragile at best!!

Thank you for taking care of this, and for your efforts on our behalf in editing a fine Newsletter.

Sincerely,
Charles M. Calderwood

Footnote:

I flew 30 missions with the 385th, two of them being to Frankfurt, during which we logged 7:30 and 7:45 respectively. After the war, I flew a 34 year tenure with the Airlines. My last flight in 1979 in a DC-10 was non-stop from Miami to Frankfurt. Our flight time from abeam London to Frankfurt was 29 minutes. I sometimes rationalize about what a different air-war a couple of jet engines on the B-17 would have made.

I was privileged to fly many military and commercial aircraft during my career. Like none other, the B-17 rates my salute and arouses my sense of patriotism

Charles M. Calderwood

385th B G M A

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