

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



NEWSLETTER OF THE

**385th BOMBARDMENT GROUP MEMORIAL ASSOCIATION**



**COMBAT UNITS**

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 549th BOMB SQ.  
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AUGUST 1990

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It's too hot in Oklahoma to get anything out of President Sam this month—and, to be perfectly honest, your editor forgot to tell him it was time for another timeless epistle from him.

So— this issue of Hardlife will go to press without a word from Sam. But there's plenty about the Tulsa Reunion, which would probably have been his main topic of conversation.

Unless it would have been "pay your dues", "send in your letters", "locate a few lost members", "have a good summer". That, plus boasting about his garden no doubt cover the subjects.

So—from North Dakota, where we've had such a good summer that we haven't needed to run our air conditioning more than half of July, regards to all.

And Sam—in case we forget, we'll need another Pres Sez for an October Hardlife. Start planning!

Your Editor

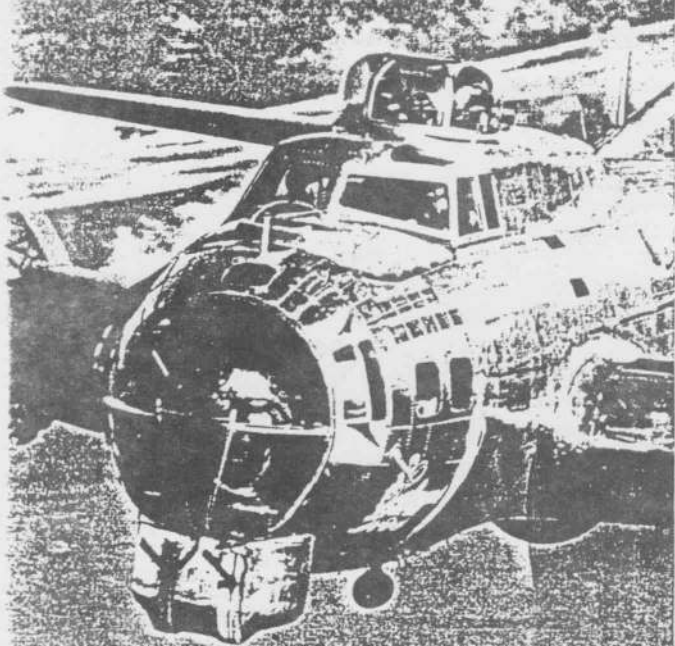
**13TH REUNION - 48TH ANNIVERSARY**  
**TULSA, OK — JUNE 5-9, 1991**

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

Anyone for a visit to Harlingen?

# HOST SQUADRON of the CONFEDERATE AIR FORCE

P LAJ • J Ad 1



## AMERICAN AIR POWER 1939-1945



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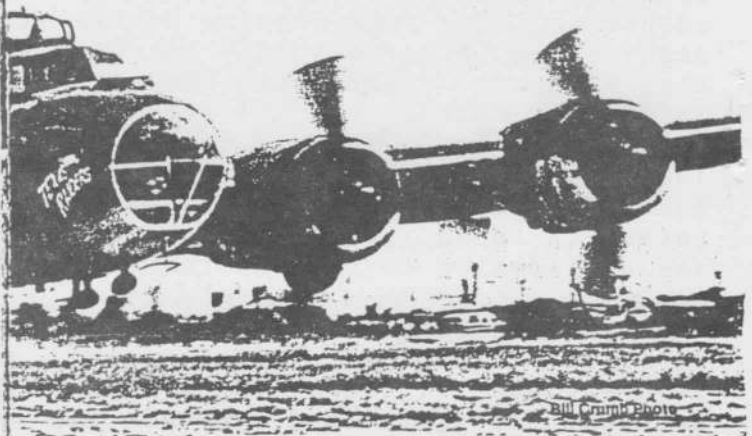
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P-40 Warhawks of Flying Tiger fame flew with 26 allied nations.

Various P-40s join CAF Warhawk over CAF Headquarters.

B-17 Flying Fortress landing under attack at Pearl Harbor.  
CAF WWII AIR POWER DEMONSTRATION



Bill Crank Photo

### SIGHTS AND SOUNDS OF A TIME JUST PASSED.

December 7, 1941  
DEMONSTRATION

Famous Navy Cats  
F8F Bearcat  
F6F Hellcat  
F4F Wildcat

Jay Miller Photo



AIRSHOW 90- SALUTE TO AIRPOWER FEATURING...WORLD WAR II, AIRPOWER DEMONSTRATION, TODAY'S MILITARY JET AIRPOWER, AEROBATICS.

DATES: OCTOBER 12, 13, 14, 1990.—VALLEY INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT, HARLINGEN, TX.

## Hardlife Herald Suggestions

This is issue number 4 in 1990. You can check this by looking at the number on the first page. If you miss an issue, write your editor—we usually have a few extras.

They are NOT forwarded by the Post Office, so if you change addresses or Box numbers, be sure to let us know.

We NEED your letters to keep the Hardlife Herald interesting—and if you'd enclose a picture, either connected to your letter or just a recent snapshot, it would add interest. Some of those "before and after" pictures aren't too flattering—but we're all old enough to understand.

Our Great Ashfield Church is working on a stained glass window as a Memorial to our Group. The following letter gives us some of the preliminary information, along with the first suggestion as to the appearance.

Dear John,

I now have a design for the stained glass window and I enclosed a photograph for you. I will paint out some of the details. The red and white is a tail fin of a B-17 and this picks out the red and white in the stars and stripes which



hangs next to the American Altar. We felt it very important to have the three trees as part of the design and we also felt the sky played a major part, hence the amount of sky, you will notice the trails in the sky. Also, on the right handside, you will notice a loop. Apparently a B-17 that flew from Great Ashfield looped the loop. The dove above this is for peace and also adds to the religious significance. The white stripe at the top are the runways. The three crosses just below the dove which gives the appearance of planes are actually crosses. On the left hand panel you can see the planes stacked in the sky, these are only done in block form as it would not be appropriate for a church window to have planes on it.

We hope you like the design and would very much appreciate your comments. I have also sent a photograph to Sam Lyke. If all goes well, we would hope to have the window in site for 1992 the great year of celebration.

We have been told that the window would cost £ 5500 to make and install and we already have £830 in the stained glass window fund which is held in a separate account and we hope to raise some more towards the window fund this winter. I hope this figure is not too frightening.

Perhaps you would let us have any details of the next reunion here. We hope you will be here in 1992 as there will be celebrations to make the 50 years since you came here.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Stephen Miles  
The Limes  
Great Ashfield, Bury St. Edmunds,  
Suffolk, England

Editors Note: A suggestion is being sent to Stephen Miles that the tail be olive drab as we were during most of the war instead of the red and white checks that was developed in '45. Send us your thoughts.!

## VIDEO CASSETTE (VHS)

385th Cassette from Col. Marston Leonard's film. Col. Leonard edited our group history book. Many members are shown in action including both air and ground crews. Recognized by me were Gen. Doolittle, Gen. Castle, Col. Vandevanter, Col. Jumper Hamilton Schulz, Group bombardier Lewis & Murray S-2 and the Alexander crew - also the 200th mission party. Aircraft Honky Tonk Sal, Madam Shoo Shoo, Ship 2102486. These ships were later salvaged. Honky Tonk Sal had a mid-air with a B-24. Part names Badger— and C—coast.

The cassette is 50 min. with voice on the last 30 min. For viewing drop a card to John Pettenger, Box 117, Laurel, FL 34272.

## The Sturm Fighters

The history of our Group's combat experience can be divided into four general periods—the first through July to the end of 1943 when there was very little fighter protection as our planes penetrated into Germany; the second during the first 3 or 4 months of 1944 when the German fighters continued their conventional attacks; the third, from about April 1944 when the German fighters developed new tactics now known as Sturm Fighters; and fourth, with the development of Germany's Jet fighters which started operating toward the end of 1944 and into 1945.

Robert M. Foose has given us permission to reprint a fascinating and detailed account of the countermeasures that the Luftwaffe developed in their efforts to contain the growing might of the 8th Air Force.

In the beginning, the new tactics were shockingly effective. Then, countermeasures increased the cost to the Luftwaffe and led to our ability to overwhelm the attacks and inflict unbearable losses as they were forced to use less-experienced pilots to replace their losses.

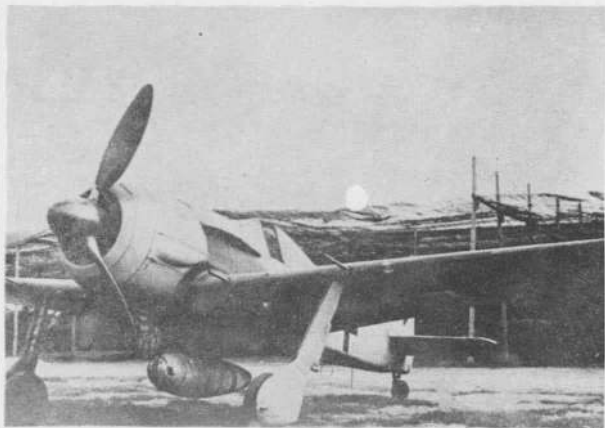
This story, which your Editor discovered in the 94th Bomb Group's Newsletter, offers information that most of us were not familiar with. Your comments, especially with reference to the October 6 Berlin mission which is mentioned in the story, will make interesting reading. You can write direct to Robert M. Foose, 5141 Peeble Lane, Columbus, OH 43220—if you do, please send us a copy for the Hardlife.

### THE STURM FIGHTERS

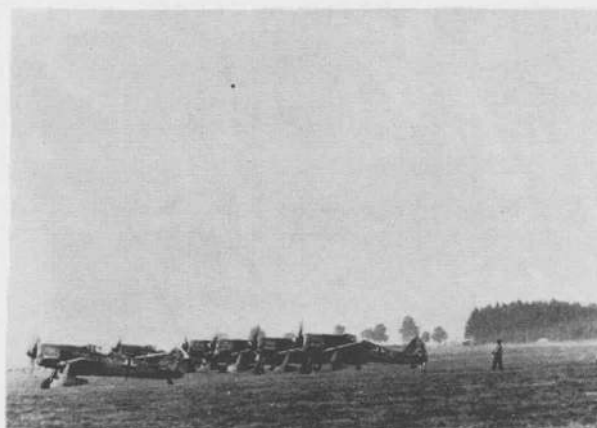
The Spring of 1944 saw many changes in the air war over Europe. The fighter groups of the VIII and IX Fighter Commands were no longer just escorting the ever growing bomber streams into occupied Europe; they were now taking a serious toll of enemy aircraft in the air and on the ground. The Mustangs, Lightnings and Thunderbolts had been given the green light in early April to actively look for targets of opportunity after completing their escort duties. The Luftwaffe's pilots now had to worry about being shot-up on the ground as well as in the air. Plus the P-51 Mustang was appearing in increasing numbers which meant better fighter cover on deep penetrations into Germany. In general, the 8th Air Force was now looking to take-on the Luftwaffe at anytime or anyplace.

The pattern of attack by the German day-fighters on the U.S. bomber formations during this period was to assemble their single and twin-engined fighters in groups of 50, 100 or 150 aircraft (one to three Gruppen strength) and vector the pack into a position for a head-on attack. These tactics proved productive when done by experienced pilots and when unmolested by escorting fighters, but the loss of over 1,000 pilots during the first three months of 1944 (many of which were Geschwader, Gruppe, and Staffel commanders) brought about a sharp decline in the overall experience level of the German day fighter arm. Also with the ever increasing numbers of escorting fighters, the Germans were being forced to punch their way into the American bomber formations and usually at a high cost. It was easy for the Luftwaffe's High Command to see that the day-fighter force was being bleed to death. Therefore the tactics to bring down the "Viermots" (4 Motors) in large numbers and keep losses to an economical level needed to change. During this period of 1944, Major Hans-Gunter von Kornatzki had formed Sturmstaffel 1 (Assault Squadron) utilizing the A-8 variant of the Focke Wulf 190 and was based at Salzwedel, Germany; and the original fifteen pilots which formed this unit with him were all volunteers. His tactics were to attack a bomber formation from behind in a wing-tip to wing-tip arrowhead or company front alignment and close to almost ramming distance before breaking off the attack. This would not only provide a "shock" value to the attack but would also allow a better chance for a sure kill due to the slower closing rate from behind, and at point blank range. The mass attack would also swamp the bombers gunners as well.

The A-8 version of the FW-190 had extra armor added to protect the cockpit and ammunition areas, plus on some aircraft a 50mm frontal windscreen was also added. To further protect the pilot an additional side-mounted piece of plexiglass was mounted to the cockpit canopy. The armament was also upgraded to a pair of 30mm MK 108 (short barrel) cannon which replaced the outer wing 20mm cannon. These fired high explosive ammunition which proved to be very deadly when a concentrated pattern hit a B-17 or B-24. The MK-103 (long barrel) 30mm cannon was added (in an under wing mounting) on some later versions of Sturm FW-190's and had a longer range and were more accurate than the MK-108 cannon. All of these additions made the FW-190 A-8 a very deadly adversary to the bombers but the extra 400+ lbs of weight did reduce it's performance, thus making it easy prey to the escorting fighters.



An FW-190 A-8 of JG 300 (note MK-108 30mm cannons in outer wing gun bays). (Bundesarchiv photo)



The six FW-190's about to take-off are from IV/JG 3 (commanded by Hptm. Wilhelm Moritz). (Bundesarchiv photo)

Attacks by the Sturm fighters on the bomber formations would be carefully chosen, so that the maximum amount of damage could be inflicted on the bombers without risking heavy losses. The German home defence network would track the bomber streams not only by radar, but by aerial and ground observation as well. When the fighter escort was found to be thin or nonexistent, it was plotted and passed onto the various Jagddivisions (fighter divisions) throughout Germany and occupied Europe. The same held true when a Bomber Group or Combat Wing was found to be flying out of the main bomber stream. When the aforementioned situations occurred, the German fighters or Sturm Gruppen which were normally circling over some massing point, would be vectored onto the weak area of the bomber stream. The Germans also used any available cloud cover to mask the approach of the Sturm Gruppen so that complete surprise and the shock value of the attack could be obtained.

The first major success by Sturmstaffel 1 occurred on April 29, 1944 against the 3rd Division's 447th Bomb Group. The Combat Wing to which the 447th BG was attached (4th-A CBW) was having equipment problems on it's two PFF aircraft. The formation lost visual contact with the other formations due to the heavy contrails and cirrus clouds over Germany and soon found itself off course and without fighter escort as well. In the

area of Magdeburg, approximately 100 enemy fighters hit the 4th-A Wing. The FW-190's of Sturmstaffe 1- 1, led by Kornatzki made their attack on the 447th and brought down eleven of the Group's B-17's. The soon to be classic mass attack from the rear and in line-abreast formation was used, and with some Sturmbrocks (battering rams) closing to within ramming distance. The overall attack lasted 20 minutes and a total of 18 bombers were lost from the 4th-A CBW.

The initial results of these mass close-in attacks were encouraging to the Luftwaffe's leaders and the forming of a full Gruppe (45 to 50 aircraft) was ordered. A IV Gruppe was formed and added to Jagdgeschwader 3 (Fighter Wing #3) in early May and was led by Hauptmann Wilhelm Moritz. During the month of May, the aircraft of IV/JG 3 were active on a number of occasions, and their first victim was another 3rd Division outfit, the 96th Bomb Group. This Group was hit on May 8th in the Nienburg area and lost 10 of their aircraft (one of which was rammed by an FW-190). Again the unit on the receiving-end of the Sturm unit was out of the Division formation and without fighter cover. Four days later, the 4th CBW was struck by aircraft from J G 11, 27, 53 and J G 3 (including IV/JG 3) in the Frankfurt area and loosing 33 B-17's to their mass assaults.



Many of the original Sturm pilots came from the Wild Boar night fighter units of JG 300 and 301, one of which was Lt. Karl Bretschneider shown here getting out of the cockpit of his FW-190. (Bundesarchiv photo)



Hauptman Wilhelm Moritz, Gruppen Commander of IV/JG 3.

The Normandy invasion forced the Luftwaffe to move a number of its Home Defence units to the invasion front. The Sturm Gruppe of JG 3 was moved to Dreux, France on June 7th and over the next three weeks was chewed-up in the numerous air battles over Normandy, after which it was sent back to Germany to re-build.

The defence of Germany during June and early July was left mainly to JG 300 and 301, as well as several twin-engine day-fighter units. A second SturmGruppe was formed in mid-June from elements of II/JG 300, and the unit's first real success was on June 26th, when 15th Air Force bombers struck targets in the Vienna area. One group, the 455th came under heavy fighter attack and lost 10 B-24 Liberators, some of which were to the Sturm fighters of II/JG 300. The losses were not all one-sided on this day, with II/JG 300 loosing three pilots killed and several wounded.

Major Walter Dahl, Geschwader Commander of JG 300, was developing at this time the Gefechtsverband concept. The Gefechtsverband or "battle formation" was made up of a Sturm Gruppe (FW-190 A-8's) and two Begleit (escort) Gruppen (equipped with Me-109's). One of the Begleit Gruppen would provide a close escort to the Sturm Gruppe, while the other acts as Top Cover. The escorting fighters would fly in groups of four in an echelon formation. Their primary responsibility was to take-on the bomber escorts (when present) so that the Sturm fighters could attack the bombers unmolested.



This Me-109 G-10 is of the type which flew in the escorting Gruppen for the Sturm fighters. The photo was taken in the summer of 1944 and note the under-wing 20mm cannon are no longer carried. (Bundesarchiv photo)



One of the most successful Sturm pilots was Major Walther Dahl who was Geschwader Commander for JG 300 and had a total of 36 bomber kills to the credit. (Hans Hoehler photo)

The first success for the Gefechtsverband tactic came on July 7th against the B-24 Liberators of the 2nd Air Division near Bernburg, Germany. The ground control officer of the 1st Jagddivision provided Major Dahl with a running commentary of the bombers progress. The CBW which contained the 492nd Bomb Group was reported as without fighter escort and Dahl immediately directed a Gefechtsverband made up of IV/JG 3 as the Sturm Gruppe and I and III/JG 300 as the escort Gruppen onto the bomber formation. The low squadron of the 492nd took the full brunt of the Hptm. Moritz 's Sturm fighters and all 11 Liberators of the formation were wiped out. One additional 492nd aircraft was lost, along with 8 more B-24s from the 44th and 392nd Bomb Groups, while the Sturm fighters lost five pilots killed.

The 91st Bomb Group was next to be hard hit by the Sturm fighters on July 20th. A Gefechtsverband made up of two Sturm Gruppen (IV/JG 3 and II/JG 300) knocked down nine of the 91st Fortresses for the loss of 3 Sturm pilots killed and 1 wounded. The same two Sturm Gruppen also accounted for nine more B-17's shot down, plus an additional 15 B-17's damaged, all from the 303rd Bomb Group on August 15th.

The 15th Air Force was to meet the Sturm fighters again on August 23rd, when a Gefechtsverband comprised of units from IV/JG 3, I and II/JG 300 struck the 451st Bomb Group which was attacking Markersdorf. Nine of the Liberators went down to the guns of the Sturm fighters before friendly fighter support could arrive.

By early September 1944, three full Sturm Gruppen were now operating against the heavy bombers formations over Germany; IV/JG 3 based at Alperstedt, II/JG 300 at Erfurt-Bindersleben and the newly formed II/JG 4 at Welzow. The Germans had been rebuilding their day-fighter strenght and by the fall of 1944, the Luftwaffe promised a more responsive and aggressive reaction to the aerial incursions into Germany. On September 11th, the Sturm fighters were out in force and on the receiving end was the 100th Bomb Group. The Sturm Gruppe of II/JG 4 made a mass frontal attack on the 13th-A CBW's low group, and in 30 seconds wiped out all eleven aircraft. The attack was so sudden that the thin screen of escorting fighters could not react in time to lessen the blow. On the same day, other Sturm fighter units hit the 92nd Bomb Group and extracted eight more B-17's in a matter of minutes. Major Dahl himself accounted for two B-17's on this day. The losses were also heavy for the Sturm fighters with II/JG 4 losing 12 pilots killed and 4 wounded and II/JG 300 having 10 pilots killed and 2 wounded.

On the next day, a Gefechtsverband was formed consisting of II/JG 4, III/JG 4 and I/JG 76 (the latter two Gruppen acting as escorts to the Sturm fighters) and intercepted a disorganized 306th Bomb Group and shooting down eight of their bombers with another crashing on it's return to England. An additional 4 pilots were killed (one of which was Kornatski) and 1 wounded from II/JG 4. This made a total of 16 pilots killed and 5 wounded in just two days, losses which a Sturm Gruppe could not sustain in order to continue to exist. The other Sturm Gruppen of IV/JG 3 and II/JG 300 were also active and probably were responsible for the six aircraft lost by the 351st Bomb Group.

The greatest success of the Gefechtsverband concept took place on September 27, 1944 against the Liberators of the 445th Bomb Group. The 445th was flying out of the main bomber stream and unescorted when a Gefechtsverband made up of Sturm Gruppen from IV/JG 3, II/JG 4 and II/JG 300 and two escort Gruppen made a mass attack from the rear and continued the assault through the entire formation. In short order 27 B-24 Liberators were shot down (one by ramming) and the rest of the group would have met the same fate if fighters from the 361st Fighter Group had not quickly responded to the bombers call for help. Uffz. Ernst Schroder (of 5 Staffel II/JG 300) had a double victory and Lt. Oskar "Ossi" Romm (Staffel Kapitän of 15 Staffel IV/JG 4) shot down three of the Liberators. The II/JG 4 suffered the loss of 7 pilots killed and three wounded.

The heavy losses noted by II/JG 4 over a short time period where partly due to the lack of combat experience and/or training of some of the pilots which were filling the gaps left by battle casualties or the transfer of veteran pilots. One example was that of Fw. Emil Boesch, who joined IV/JG 3 and found himself in action only after a 20 minute orientation flight. Another factor was that the Sturm fighters had strict orders to continue onto the bombers in spite of attacks by the fighter escorts. There are a number of occasions when our fighter pilots would rack-up multiple kills against large formations of German fighters which did not take evasive action. Captain William T. Whisner of the 352nd Fighter Group on one mission (November 21, 1944) had six kills to his credit and this occurred to other pilots as well. These continual heavy losses would eventually lead to neutralizing the Sturm fighters as a potent weapon against the bomber formations.



Several successful Sturm fighter missions occurred in October, with II/JG 4 and I/JG 3 attacking the 38th Bomb Group on the 6th near Berlin. All eleven of the 38th's high speed squadron were knocked down in a mass attack from the rear. The next day it was the turn of the 94th Bomb Group, when elements of all three Sturm Gruppen launched an attack from out of an upper cloud layer onto the 94th's B-Group and taking out eight aircraft in short order, with Lt. Klaus Bretschneider of II/JG 300 claiming three B-17's, one of which he got by ramming.

November 1944 would be a month where the 8th would focus on the bombing of the German oil targets and on almost every occasion the Luftwaffe rose to do battle. One of the larger aerial melees occurred on the 2nd, with IV/JG 3 and II/JG 4 being in the thick of it. The 1st Air Division's 91st (hit by IV/JG 3) and 457th (attacked by II/JG 4) Groups receiving the attention of the Sturm fighters and losing nine and twelve aircraft respectively.

The losses incurred by the Sturm fighters were heavy also with IV/JG 3 losing 11 pilots killed and 4 wounded, while II/JG 4 lost 6 killed and 3 wounded. Lt. Werner Gerth of IV/JG 3 and a Knight's Cross holder rammed one B-17 over Bitterfeld and was killed when his chute did not open. The losses would continue to mount throughout November, especially on the 27th, when the bomber escorts extracted a heavy toll from JG 300. The three Gruppen of JG 300 formed a Geschtsverband along with two Gruppen from JG 301 and when over the Harz Mountains, the Geschtsverband was engaged by Mustangs mainly from the 352nd and 357th Fighter Groups. The Mustangs broke-up the German formation and inflicted heavy losses on both German units. The combined losses to JG 300 amounted to 18 pilots killed and 5 wounded, and JG 301 a total of 9 pilots were killed and 3 wounded.

The Ardennes offensive in December would call on the support of all the Luftwaffe's day-fighter units, including the Sturm fighter units. The support of the offensive would bring about a number of costly air battles for the Germans, the first of which took place on December 23rd. A large Geschtsverband was formed from units of JG 4, 11, 27 and 54. The aircraft of JG 27 and 54 were jumped by the 56th Fighter Group over the Bruhl - Bonn - Euskirchen area and suffered heavy losses (32 aircraft were claimed by the 56th). The other elements of the "battle formation" flew on to intercept the bombers and were next met by the 479th Fighter Group. The Sturm fighter's losses for the day came to 6 pilots killed from II/JG 4 and 2 pilots killed and 3 wounded from IV/JG 3.

The air battles continued on the 24th with all three Sturm Gruppen seeing action. Near Liege, IV/JG 3 launched an attack against the unescorted 487th Bomb Group and quickly shot down a number of Fortresses, one of which had General Fredrick Castle on board. The arrival of the fighter escort prevented further bomber losses and made the Sturm fighters pay a heavy toll, with the Sturm Gruppe of JG 3 losing 7 pilots killed and II/JG 300 with 6 pilots killed and 7 wounded. One of II/JG 300 losses was Lt. Karl Bretschneider, who was shot down and killed over the Knoll Hills by a Mustang.

The last real success of the Sturm fighters was against the 100th Bomb Group on the last day of 1944. The 100th's target was Hamburg, Germany and its oil refineries; and when near Roterburg their fighter escort was drawn off by several Me-262's and dogfight in the distance. This left the 100th open for attack and the Sturm Gruppe of II/JG 300 and their

escorting Me-109's took advantage of the situation. Typical of a Sturm attack, 12 of the 100th's B-17's were shot down before fighter support from the 78th and 364th Fighter Group's could come to their aid. The Sturm fighter's losses were 6 pilots killed and 3 wounded.

On New Years Day, two of the Sturm Gruppen (II/JG 4 and IV/JG 4) participated as part of Operation Baseplate, the attack against the Allied airfields in Holland and Belgium. St. Trond (base of the 404th FG) was hit by II/JG 4 and lost 8 pilots killed, 3 captured and 1 wounded in the attack, and had only 10 FW-190s servicable by day's end. The airfields at Eindhoven and Gilze-Rijen were hit by JG 3 and proved to be one of the more effective attacks of the day. The Sturm fighters of the IV Gruppe lost 4 pilots killed and 1 captured. The overall losses to the German day-fighter force was around 230 aircraft but more importantly the pilots of those planes could not be replaced.

The death knell for JG 300 and it's Sturm Gruppe came on January 14th, when a Geschtsverband was formed by units from both JG 300 and 301. A total of 189 Me-109s and FW-190s were vectored onto a pack of bombers from the 95th, 100th and 390th Bomb Groups. The German fighters ran into the bomber escort screen from the 357th Fighter Group and a huge air battle ensued with tremendous losses to JG 300 and JG 301. Some of the Sturm fighters did managed to break through to the bombers and managed to wipe-out a whole squadron from the 390th BG. The 390th lost a total of nine Fortresses on this day, but their losses were minor compared to the cost that JG 300 and JG 301 paid to knock them down. JG 300 lost 32 pilots killed and 7 wounded and JG 301 a total of 22 pilots killed and 8 wounded. These figures do not include the aircraft shot down and where the pilot bailed out and was not wounded. The losses basically neutralized both units as effective home defences forces. This would also be the last time that the Sturm fighters would inflict large losses on any one bomber group. Their continual losses, shortage of fuel and the dense fighter escort screen was making the assembly and successful execution of the Geschtsverband concept almost impossible.

The success of the Sturm Gruppen against the U.S. bomber formations throughout the latter half of 1944 can not be denied. The loss of entire squadrons or bomber boxes became almost routine when the Sturm fighters were encountered. When reviewing the worst single mission losses by Bomber Groups of the 8th and 15th Air Forces, many of these can be attributed to the Sturm Gruppen. Although their successes were many, the continual losses to both the bomber gunners and escorting fighters made for an almost even balance sheet. It can only be imagined if these tactics would have been employed earlier in the air war what the results may have been against our bomber formations.

#### ADDENDUM #1

The following list includes Sturm fighter pilots with 5 or more four-engine bomber kills:

<u>Rank &amp; Pilot</u>	<u>Unit</u>	<u>Bomber Kills</u>
Oberst Walter Dahl	Stab/JG 300	36
O f w Konrad Bauer	II Sturm/JG 300	32
Hptm Werner Ger th	IV Sturm/JG 3	25
Hptm Hans Weik	IV Sturm/JG 3	22

O f w	Walter Loos	IV Sturm/JG 3	22
Lt .	Willi Unger	IV Sturm/JG 3	19
Lt .	Klaus Bretschneider	II Sturm/JG 300	19
Obit	Waldemar Radener	II Sturm/JG 300	16
Of w	Willi Maximowltz	IV Sturm/JG 3	15
Of w	Rudi Zwesken	II Sturm/JG 300	11-t-
Obit	Ekkehard Tichy	IV Sturm/JG 3	11
Fhr	Richard Loefgen	II Sturm/JG 300	10 +
Major	Wilhelm Moritz	IV Sturm/JG 3	10
Fw	Hans Schaefer	IV Sturm/JG 3	8
Obit	Oskar Romm	IV Sturm/JG 3	8
Fw	Oskar Boesch	IV Sturm/JG 3	8
F w	Hans Theiss	II Sturm/JG 300	5
Uf f z	Matthaus Erhardt	II Sturm/JG 300	5

The aforementioned list does not include pilots from II Sturm/JG 4. The records for some German fighter groups are either incomplete or were lost after the war.

#### ADDENDUM \*2

The pilots of our bombers and fighters were not the only ones to christen their aircraft with the names of wives, girlfriends or quotations. The following short list is an example of some of the ones carried on aircraft from II Sturm/JG 300:

<u>Aircraft Name</u>	<u>Pilot</u>	<u>Unit</u>
"Pimpf" (a young lad)	Uf f .z Mattaus Erhard	5 S taf f eJG 300
"Titt Wau Wau"	Fw .Koch	6 S taf f eJG 300
"Edelgard" &	Uf f .z Ernst Schroder	5 S taf f eJG 300
"Kolle Alaaf" (Cologne carnival shout)		
"Rauhbautz VII" (tough guy)	Lt. Klaus Bretschneider	5 Staf fel JG 300
"Muschi"	Uf f .z Paul Lixfeld	6 Staf f eJG 300
"Roter Hahn" (Red Cock)	F w Hans Theiss	6 S taf f eJG 300
"Gloria"	Fw .Pr els s	6 S taf f eJG 300

#### Information Sources:

Battle Over The Reich by Alfred Price  
 Focke Wulf 190 at war by Alfred Price  
 Le Focke Wulf 190 by J-Bernard Frappe & Jean-Yves Lorant  
 Luftwaffe Fighter Units by Christopher Shores  
 ...mit Kurs auf Leuna by Werner Girbig  
 Six Months to Oblivion by Werner Girbig  
 Misc. 8th Air Force Mission, Division and Tactical Narratives or Reports

*Editor's Note: The following letter is especially interesting read in context with the previous story about the Sturm Fighters.*

Dear Ed,

At Last! The terror and horror of the August 6, 1944 mission to Berlin is witness to all of us who mourned for those air-men who died that day over Berlin.

It is a miracle that anyone survived such an ordeal as Bob McGhee described in the April 1990 issue of the BGMA Newsletter.

One procedure described is most unusual wherein Bob described that the lead and low squadrons would go into the target first and that the high squadron would follow. Colonel Van's policy was "Close it up and close it in" for group bombing as well as affording the greatest firepower defense against enemy fighter attack. I know this to be a fact as conversation with Col. Van indicated that he depended on his high and low lead squadrons to do precisely that. Keep the group together were his words to me. I'm quite certain that others have heard the similar words in the air and on the ground.

All crew members knew just how vulnerable the B-17 was to a determined enemy fighter frontal attack. The effort of

this type always score hits and the morbidity tables indicate the losses of airmen and aircraft. There was some mention of this in the days that followed this mission and we all had to "gear up" for this eventuality which could occur again. According to Bob's report, the enemy fighter attack was a rear attack from above and to the rear of the 11 A/C. Also, it is gathered from this report that Bob's plane probably received a direct flak burst which caused the airplane to explode. Bob had already salvoed his bomb load during one of the short level flight periods, so the plane exploded from external reasons rather than from a bomb load.

There was a recurring briefing note to all crew members present that any crew who straggled behind the group was bait for the enemy fighters and if you survived the attack, you could belong to the Purple Heart Order.

The main question that bothered me was, "Who gave the order to have the high squadron leave the proper order of the formation to come in last over this target?" The last thing a squadron should do is leave the group formation which could not only put themselves in danger but also deprive the group of the essential cover of firepower from the gunners and turrets. This question may never get answered. The troops who lost their lives over the target will have carried all the essential elements of intelligence to their graves.

I realize that this question poses somewhat of a controversy....and it is the last thing I wished to do in writing these comments about that mission. So, if I have offended anyone regarding this viewpoint, please forgive me.

I pray that those airmen who have survived this horrible experience will try to understand my viewpoint and perhaps dig out the truth of what really did happen to cause the high squadron to fall back out of the group formation.

Our crews are too good not to realize that there had been a problem appear that was far from the normal bombing formation over a target. The level of experience was exceedingly high and just perhaps a mistake was made which could have been avoided in the matter of the lives and aircraft over this target.

Victor W. Ferguson  
Lt. Col. USAF-Ret.

P.S.: Consider this as a probability. Bob mentioned that there were German fighters off the wing at about a five mile range. He did not know of the German fighters overhead and to the rear of his airplane. It is within the possibility that a German fighter pilot, speaking perfect English said the command to the high squadron lead and therefor the "set up" was complete. The squadron was then ready for an attack.

If anyone can come up with something else, let it be known. Unfortunately, we never carried Flight Recorders on the aircraft. Perhaps the command should have been challenged and/or verified before the execution to leave the group? Many lives could have been saved.

V. Ferguson  
515 W. 3rd St., McGregor, TX 76657

Dear Ed,

I collect books in a narrow range relative to combat aircraft. Recently I bought a box full of books in order to get three which were of interest to me.

Among these books were two copies of Aviation Cadet class books. Class 44B, Marfa AAF Advanced Flying School, Marfa, Texas. The books are as near perfect as I have ever seen for their age. No signatures, notes, marks etc.

Would it be possible for you to put a note in the next bulletin that these two books are available (sale or trade) to graduates (or relative) of Class 44-B, Marfa.

I could sell them to some collector, but I want 44-B grads to have first choice if any can be located.

Sincerely,

Lamar Peeples  
P.O. Box 1773, Coos Bay, OR 97420  
(503) 269-7331

*Ian's book has gotten great reviews. Order your copy to address listed.*

*Ian McLachlan*  
**FINAL FLIGHTS (Dramatic  
Wartime Incidents Revealed by  
Aviation Archaeology)**  
*Thorsons Publishing Group,  
Erington Estate,  
Wellingborough, Northants,  
England NN8 2RQ*

*14.95 pounds*

*Final Flights*, subtitled "Dramatic Wartime Incidents Revealed by Aviation Archaeology," takes advantage of the extreme British interest in digging up the remains of crashed WWII aircraft and piecing together often complex stories on the aircraft and its crew. Sometimes when aircraft crashed or were shot down, the remains would be quickly buried and forgotten in the turmoil of war. Decades later, these wrecks can reveal their secrets to the expert investigator of wartime events, tactics and aerial battles and their excavation can serve as a tribute to the bravery and airmanship of the crews who flew them. Author Ian McLachlan's personal investigation

of over 100 known crash sites has resulted in an outstanding collection of true stories behind some of the most fascinating wrecks.

# EXPRESSIONS HEARD ON AAF

## STATION 174

Station 155 (courtesy GBC Sned) Snedecker of Station 174.

One never knows, does one.  
I've had it.  
You cahn't miss it.  
Good show!  
Actualeh?  
Queue  
Top drawer  
Gen (information, usually pronounced gin)  
Oh to be in England.  
Now that April's there (Often misquoted)  
Oh, my aching back! (and variations)  
Don't get your bowels in an uproar.  
Do you want your ticket punched?  
Do you want egg in your beer?  
Tell the chaplain.  
Things are rough in the ETO.  
I see you talking but I can't  
hear a thing you say.  
Don't give me a bad time.  
You've got rocks in the head.  
I take a dim view of that.  
The kid ain't too bright.  
I never touch the nasty stuff.  
Would you care to take part in a  
small game of chance?  
Got any dirty, old, beat-up  
pounds you don't need?  
Log some sack time.  
It's out of this world.  
As rough as a cob.  
How about that! (Often how boot that).  
I suppose she twisted your arm.  
I should have stood in bed.  
I hate wah! Eleanah hates wah!  
I was selected by a board  
comprised of my friends and  
neighbors.  
There are two ways to do a  
thing, the right way and the  
Army way.  
Achtung!  
Beat your gums.  
Shoot the breeze.



Chew the fat.  
Sling the bull (and variations).  
Milk run  
Big B (Berlin)  
Stand down  
Abort  
Promote (acquire)  
Moonlight requisition  
Snafu  
By the numbers  
Stand short  
Jerry  
Heinie  
Kraut  
Spam ribbon  
Limey  
Honey bucket  
Buzz bomb  
Soup (bog)  
Biscuit (mattress in sections)  
Feather merchant  
Paddle foot  
Grand agitator  
Typewriter jockey  
Fly boy  
Chair borne troops  
Wheel (key personnel)  
Tail end Charlie  
Hot shot  
Big time operator  
Raunchy  
Flak happy  
Rubber eggs  
Good deal!  
Eager beaver  
Chow hound  
Browned off  
Sweat it out  
Ike (Eisenhower)  
Blood & Guts (Patton)  
HAP (Arnold)  
Monty (Montgomery).

Contributed by G. B. (Sned) Snedecker  
Group Historian, S-2



Fred Castle, who features on our logo.



## EAST ANGLIA 1942-1992

The people of England are preparing to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the arrival of the United States Army Air Forces in 1942. "Return to England 1992" is a project that is being coordinated by the East Anglia Tourist Board to provide a huge welcome in 1992 to all the veterans who arrived in England during the Second World War and became such an important part of their lives.

There will be many special events - flying displays, Glenn Miller style concerts, memorial services, film festivals, exhibitions, garden parties etc. There are full details available of what remains of your old airfield and there are people waiting to show you around and take you to the pub for a drink.

If you would like to be kept up to date with information, please write to Jane Sullivan, East Anglia Tourist Board, Toppesfield Hall, Hadleigh, Ipswich, Suffolk IP7 5DN, England.

## Letters to the Editor:

Dear Captain Bash -

Over the years, I have often thought of you and wondered what had happened to you. So, when I saw your name on the latest roster, issued several months ago by the 385th, I decided to drop you a line and just say "Hi!".

Our association was brief but to me memorable. If I am not indelibly fixed in your memory, I'm sure you can be forgiven. To nudge your memory a little, here are some bits out of the past.

I was a spare ball gunner and checked out as a flight engineer in February 1945 in the Green Squadron (551st). You were, I believe completing a second tour. You were kind enough to accept me as your engineer gunner on Feb. 21, 1945 in a mission to Nuremberg. I was filling in for your regular engineer.

I flew six missions with you. Each of the missions was interesting because, aside from the purpose of the mission, something was always happening. If you recall, you were assigned a ship that consumed more gasoline than it should have and the mechanics could not find the problem. So, we landed- in Europe three times to re-fuel and continued on to England. We were always transferring gasoline in flight.

On February 26, 1945, on the mission to Berlin, the bomb bay doors developed a malfunction and would not close electronically after the bombs were dropped and we were in the SOP dive off the target. That was when I, as the engineer (I), was elected to get out on the cat-walk with an oxygen bottle (no parachute) and, handcrank the doors up. The challenge was not enough, however. Whenever I stopped to rest for a second, Lt. Rosenbloom, in the nose, would hit the malfunctioning switch and rip the crank out of my hand causing the doors, to re-open and the crank to whack me in the shin. I finally managed to get the doors up and as I glanced back toward the radio room, Simmons, the radio operator was standing there pointing the old rusty carbine we used to carry in the ships. He explained later that he was not going to let me fall out of the bomb bay without a parachute and fully intended to kill me if I started to fall out.

On another mission, we ran low on gasoline and had to land in France at a captured German airfield. As we started to roll for take-off, the ship veered to the left and we dropped the left wheel off the runway into rather deep mud. It was then that you suddenly realized that the brakes were locked and with your typical cool precision, unlocked the brakes, applied power, jumped the ship back on the runway and we took off.

I'll never forget the technique you used to break me in as a green engineer. While we were airborne, you asked me to find and replace the supercharger fuse for No. 3 engine (I believe). I searched that ship from the nose to the tail gunner's hole and could not find it. As I dejectedly reported to you that I could not locate it, you then advised me that that did not surprise you as the fuse was in the engine nacelle and it was hard to reach while airborne. I learned a lot about the B-17 during the search.

On a more serious note, I am grateful to you for giving me the chance to complete my tour and especially as an inexperienced engineer. Also, a few days after you noted that I was still a buck sergeant, you saw that I was promoted to staff. I was also told by another gunner, several months later, whom I met in the U.S. that I made tech about one week after I left the base. The orders did not follow me, as they do now and I finished up as a staff.

Well, I have run on long enough. Before closing. I'll just call your attention to one more item. While we were flying, the standard photograph was taken. If you have that photo and are not sure of all the players. I'll describe it. We are standing in front of "Honky Tonk Sal". Back row, left to right: Sessions, Bash, Rosenbloom. Front row, squatting: Lubicie, waist gunner; Simmons, radio; Mike, engineer; Tackaberry, tailgunner; Oglan, ball turret (killed on the ground by irate farmers after he bailed out holding another gunner in his arms who did not have a parachute).



In closing, I send my regards, captain and wish to express my appreciation for some pleasant memories and experiences. Maybe we will meet, again, one day.

Sincerely,

Leonard A. Mika

*Editors Note: After Bob died, Mrs. Bash sent the following to T.R. Fuller, who sent it to us — thanks to all 3 of you for this interesting tribute to one of our great pilots.*

Dear Ed,

I must thank you for your continued kindness in furnishing the Hard Life Herald. It's always so much enjoyed, nice to see the 385th BGA is still going strong, and new members are coming forward from time to time.

I wondered if any present member would recall an incident which took place at Great Ashfield during activities!

The story goes that a certain crew, or group of flyers, engaged in a card game one night before a mission. Much money exchanged hands. One crew member won a good 'pot' by the end of the night. The flyer in question became concerned, where to hide the money as he was due to fly a mission the next day. He came up with an idea.

Finding a biscuit tin he placed the winnings, mostly those white five pound notes, and looked for a hiding place. Another idea occurred.

He walked outside the mission hut, and found a tree several yards away. From the tree he paced so many yards, dug a hole, and buried the money.

It seems the flyer failed to return from the next days mission. As time went by the subject of the missing winnings came up again during the 1950's.

I heard the story that the lucky winner came back to Great Ashfield to look for his long lost treasure in the late 50's.

But his luck ran out. He must have survived the war as a P.O.W. On his return to the old base, he searched for the tree which he used as a marker. But unfortunately, the tree which held the key to the location of the treasure had been taken down and cleared from the area. Nothing was found, no clues to the location.

So I guess to this day, a rusting biscuit tin, bearing those hard earned winnings is still buried somewhere in the bounds of Great Ashfield airfield.

I have never heard or read, of anyone ever finding it. Think of the interest it could have earned if it had been placed in a bank!

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

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To Mr. W.W. Varnedoe Jr.,  
5000 Ketova Way, Huntsville, AL 35803

Dear Bill Varnedor:

Thanks ever so much for your informative letter, and that you were directly involved with dropping the "manna from Heaven" onto the heads of my fellow starving Hollanders. I saw that happening from the roof of my parents' house at the South End of Amsterdam, and at the drop-zone of the then formerly Schiphol Airport, which has since rebuilt and has the train from Amsterdam to The Hague running beneath its station-building, and the Highway runs beneath the main runways, which must have been quite a piece of constructing, as it is nothing but clay in that region, as the airport was constructed on the bottom of Haarlemmermeer (lake), and the location used to be known as a "safe haven for shipping on the lake" and that is the origin of the name "SCHIPHOL".

Thus Boeing B-17 "Possible Straight" flew fooddropping missions in 550th Squadron, 385th Bomb Group, 8th Air Force, on May 6 and 7, 1945. (We were liberated on 5th May, 1945 when the Nazis signed the papers in Ede, Gelderland, where I later (September to late October, 1948) served in the Primary Training with the Royal Netherlands Field Artillery, but actually a member of the Inspection Military Administration, before going to the Officers training school in Kampen, Overijssel, and North of Zwolle. And you were a navigator. Must not have been much fun, Bill, with your 26 combat missions, and we Hollanders are grateful to your efforts to get us the food we needed so badly. Holland had a food storage for SEVEN YEARS in T940, and that the NAZIS took everything away in 1940, and left us to eat grass, non-stinging nettles, the potatoe-peels from the Nazi military kitchens, and raw sugarbeets, and tree-leaves, if they were still standing, as everywhere the trees were burned in tin-cans, as the power was cut off to the houses, and

*Letters to the Editor con't.*

the fuel for our heaters were removed to Nazi-land. Those persons, who did that to us, are now out of their mobile home bodies, and those coming after them are not all that bad.

(I told him of how we wagged our wings to answer some Dutch who were waving to us. - Bill V.)

Yes, I had the fellows do that to me too, when I waved to them from the roof with my white bedsheet, and later, during the day, when I went to work at a nursery, where there was also vegetables available for the citizens of Amsterdam, I carried an old Stars and Stripes in my pocket (folded), which I brought out at the sound of engines overhead. My late dad brought it over from New York in 1926, after he had served three years at our then branch office of "JOOSTEN AND JANSEN LTD", Stockbrokers in Raw Rubber, Coffee, Tea, and Tin, and GOOD YEAR was our biggest client! S<3) if your B-17 had those, and they were sound tires, they must have been made from our former companies's loads of raw rubber from Ceylon.

Again, many thanks for your services to us Hollanders and those of your crews.

Sincerest regards,  
FLFM News Services,  
703-2888-273 Stree,  
Aldergrove British Columbia, VOX-1 AO, Canada

Dear Ed,

At the Fargo Reunion Hospitality Suite we saw part of a videotape which contained excellent B-17 combat footage. It was not the "Wings From The Past" tape, I have.

We happened to speak to one of the members who had put the tape together. I didn't get his name, but he said he was thinking about getting the tape reproduced and offering it for sale to members. He said to watch for news of it in Hard Life Herald. Been watching for news of the tape's availability, but no luck!

Do you know anything about it? I thought this letter might bring a response from whomever was considering the project so we could determine if it is still in the works or has been abandoned.

If the project is still alive, I'd like to put in my reservation for a copy.

Sincerely,

Chuck Flynn  
275 East Drive, Copiague, NY 11726

Dear Ed,

Our Engineer gunner was from North Dakota and try as we may over the years, we have never been able to make contact with him. By any chance you wouldn't have heard of him or knew him would you? We were part of Lt. Kaplans crew, 549th Squadron, 385th Group. His name was Alfred Flesner.

Sincerely Yours,

Bruce H. Ey  
35 Southwell Road, Wethersfield, Connecticut 06109

Dear Ed,

Two things were of interest to me in the June issue.

1. Thornton Audrain's letter tells of X (X-ray) 123 (339123). This is the 17 that was assigned to our (Crow's) crew when his crew left. We named it "Possible Straight" after the call "123", which sounded like a poker hand. We never got to paint any art on the nose. (We had in mind a hand holding 5 cards, Ace, duce and trey showing and two down.)

2. Ron McInnis' letter tells of the 2 March '45 raid to Dresden. That was my number 3, and I was really "green". I was in the 550th but was pulled to fly with another crew that needed a navigator. As I remember it from a hazy 45 years distance: I was in the lead 17 of the low element of the low squadron. I never got the bandit alert, but suddenly noticed the 20 mm bursts all around us. I didn't know what they were and started to note in the log how odd the flak looked; then it became clear what was happening. They did indeed come back from 12 o'clock in a company front. One Jerry pulled up and appeared to stall at about 2 o'clock. I lined up the right cheek gun on him, remembering all the instructions on how many "rads" (gun sight rings) to aim; but the gun jammed. I charged it and tried again—another jam. By the time I cleared that fool gun it was all over and both our wing forts and the one we were flying off of were gone! Sometime during all this I salvaged the bomb load on the pilot's instruction.

I never did find out which crew I was with, or which 17. Anybody out there know from this account?

Also, as I remember the story, the other groups in the bomber stream were turning short of the IP. The 385th went to it, which put a gap in front of the 385th. This invited Jerry to hit us. True or not? Anybody know?

Yours,

W. (Bill) W. Varnedoe, Jr.  
5000 Ketova Way, Huntsville, AL 35803



Letters to the



## Robert C. Cribb

Robert "Bob" Carson Cribb, 70, of 104 Granger Road, died May 31, 1990, in Spartanburg Regional Medical Center.

A native of Greenville, he was the husband of Mary Justice Cribb and son of the late Richard Noah and Margaret Boyd Cribb. He was a member of Una First Baptist Church and was retired from Burwell Chevrolet. He served with the 8th Army Air Corps, during World War II. He was a member of American Legion Post No. 28 and was a graduate of Spartanburg High School.

Also surviving are a daughter, Lola Mae Cribb of the home; two brothers, Irvin C. and Richard Boyd Cribb of Spartanburg; and two sisters, Grace Jennings and Frances Cribb of Spartanburg.

Robert Compton — May 1990

Jack Daniel — May 1990

John Holmes — Feb. 1990

Gerald Thacker — April 1990

Dear Ed,

In the April 1990 issue of "Hard Life Herald" on page 20 there is a mention of "Ruby's Raiders".

This new plane was assigned to the 549th Squadron and named after Ruby Newell who was voted the most beautiful WAC in the E.T.O. Cpl. Ploss painted her picture and name on the side of the plane.

A nice celebration was held on Christening day. Both air and ground crews were present in Class A uniforms. Ruby was most pleasant and indeed a beauty.

Quite a few celebrants participated in this event and a great time was had by all. Many pictures were taken with her.

Lt. Frank Blackwell was assigned as pilot, Earl Martin was tail gunner and incidentally he is a member of 385th BGMA. He sent some pictures etc a few years back.

I am enclosing a picture of the Air and Ground crews and a list of their names.

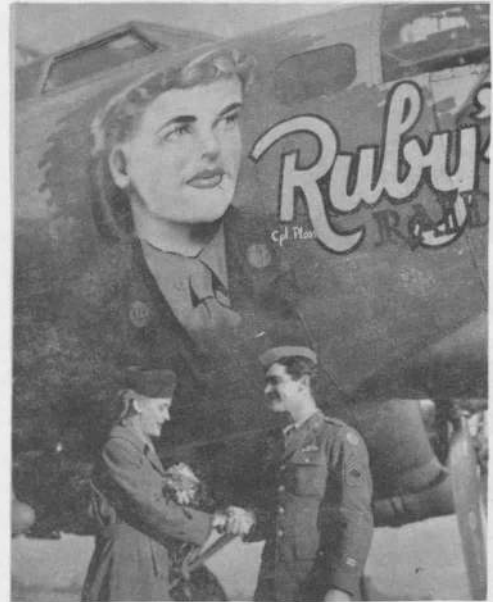
Also pictures of three ground crew members and each are active participants of the 385th BGMA.

Some one had written in that the plane was named after a Lt. Ruby (pilot) but you can readily see for yourself that it had to be Ruby Newell.

With best wishes,

W.H. Bill Koon

104 Wedgewood Dr., Lafayette, Louisiana 70503



Cpl. Ruby Newell and M/Sgt. J.E. Gill (ground crew chief engineer)



Huby Newell - Ruby's Raiders

(Pictured with Ruby Newell) Pilot - Frank Blackwell; Co-pilot - Herbert McGregor; Bombardier - John Heister; Navigator - Marshall Lash; Eng., Gunner - Stephen Fabeny; Radio Gunner - Orval Garrett; Waist Gunner - Maurcie Shannon; Ball Turret - George Stasney; Tail Gunner - Earl Martin; Engineering Crew Chief - Joe Gill; Engineering Asst. - Walter Radzikowski; Armament (Behind Ruby Newell) - Bill Koon

Letters to the Editor con't.



Ruby Newell - most beautiful WAC in ETO and Bill Koon (armor ground crew). Plane dedicated in her honor.



Cpl. Ruby Newell - Sgt. Walter J. Radzikowskt - engineering ground crew.

□ □ □ □ □ **LIFE MEMBERS** □ □ □ □ □

- Marie Clark Croley - 219
- William F. Somomento - 220
- Vela Cole-221



## NEW MEMBERS

- Samuel M. Cole
- Daryl B. Bentley
- Paul Van Boven
- Winfred L. Walls

Dear Ed,

Two months ago, my wife and I paid a visit to Elmswell and the site of the 385 B.G. where 46 years ago I put in time as a crew member with the 548 B.S.

It would have been difficult to identify anything as I remembered it (the train depot is still standing, but in bad shape) had it not been for a Mr. Rose who is a life time resident along Great Ashfield Road. Mr. Rose was a teenage boy in 1944, and recalled the Great Ashfield Base vividly. He very graciously drove us about the area, and pointed out the few remnants of the base which are scattered amongst the homes and vegetation. It was certainly a nostalgic experience for me! Mr. Rose then drove us to Bird Green near Rattlesden where we met Eddie Leighty and his nice English wife. Eddie was a crew member with the 447 B.G. in 1944. You might say that eddie Leighty found a permanent station at Rattlesden.

In the Leighty home, we found Eddie surrounded by BI 7 memorabilia. He through the years has been in contact with many of the flying crews. I was really surprised when he gave me a copy of the 385 B.G. Memorial Association Newsletter as I never knew of the Association's existence. All in all, it was a most interesting and rewarding part of our stay in England.

I am enclosing a copy of a page from an English newspaper dated October 1, 1944 in which the news item about the "Seven Angels" appeared. I believe you might find it interesting along with the addendum to the article as follows: Early in our tour at Great Ashfield, we had sent a letter to Hedy Lamarr asking her approval to name our ship "Heavenly Body". After some time and a dozen or so missions on #6008-N, Hedy sent her consent along with two autographed pictures. We had her portrait reproduced on the nose of our ship and captioned "Heavenly Body". The base Public Relations Officer considered it news worthy, and prepared a story for release in each crew member's home town paper. He wanted a picture of us all in front of our plane to go with the story. This picture was to be taken upon our return from a 48 hour pass. While we were away, another crewtook'our ship, "Heavenly Body", on a mission. Well, Ed, this is where the enclosed news item of the "Seven Angels" comes into the picture. We got a new 17 to finish our 35, and, of course, it remained nameless as there could be only one "Heavenly Body" for us.

I have often wondered over the years when I thumb through my tattered scrapbook if the "Heavenly Body" ever did evolve into the "Seven Angels".

With best regards,

Fred Nestler  
21333 Via Colombard, Sonoma, CA 95476

## Bible Told Story of Flyers Saved From Sea

"SEVEN Angels." Is a queer name to give a Flying Fortress, but the seven airmen who christened her took the name—for very good reason—from a chapter of the Bible.

They read in that chapter, in the rich allegory of Revelations, the story of their own peril in the sea, and of their rescue.

Their bomber, the "Heavenly Body," made an emergency landing in the English Channel. It broke into three sections.

The portion in which the pilot and co-pilot were trapped sank beneath twenty-foot waves. The other seven of the crew huddled in a rubber dinghy or clung to its sides.

In his pocket Staff Sergeant Gilbert Woerner, the twenty-one-year-old radio operator-gunner had inserted an English pound note. Back at base he found it had been opened at

### Revelations, Chapter 8

And in that chapter he found an exact allegorical description of the experiences of himself and his six comrades.

Seven of the crew lived—and Chapter 8 of Revelations reads:

*"And I saw the seven angels which stood before God."*

It goes on:—  
*"And another angel came."*

The airmen, buffeted by the waves and drenched by the salt spray, looked up and saw a British air-sear rescue plane circling overhead. Its pilot was giving their position to rescue craft by radio.

*"There was silence in Heaven about the space of half an hour."*

The airmen waited thirty minutes, then they saw a rescue launch speeding their way.

*"And the smoke of the incense, which came with the prayers of the saints ascended up before God out of the angel's hand."*

The plane above dropped smoke bombs to direct the launch.

Back in England Sergeant Woerner showed his crew-mates the Bible passage.

They read it with reverence and amazement—and they chose an immediate name for their new Fortress.

*It will be "Seven Angels"*

## GILCREASE MUSEUM

### THE NATIONAL TREASURE

Gilcrease Museum is the world's greatest collection of American paintings, western Americana, and native American artifacts. Together they tell the story of the development of America from man's earliest arrival in the New World through the 19th century.

Acquired by Thomas Gilcrease, the Oklahoma oil man who was one of the very first to collect American art and history, the Gilcrease collection was acquired by the City of Tulsa in 1955.

The Gilcrease collection is the most

outstanding museum of its kind in the world.

Featured are 10,000 paintings and sculptures picturing the westering spirit of America.

Galleries are devoted to the work of major artists: Frederic Remington, Charles M. Russell, Alfred Jacob Miller, George Catlin, John Mix Stanley, Albert Bierstadt, Thomas Moran, Charles Schreyvogel, Olaf Seltzer, and W. R. Leigh.

Major works by Thomas Eakins, John Singer Sargent, Gilbert Stuart, John Singleton Copley, John James Audubon, Winslow Homer, and Andrew Wyeth. Paintings of the Taos School and by living artists concentrating on the American West.

Rare documents and books include more than 90,000 books and manuscripts describing the life of man in the New World. On permanent display are the original certified copy of the Declaration of Independence and Articles of Confederation, and a letter written by Thomas Jefferson on July 1, 1776. And many more.

Featured in galleries devoted to American history and in extensive visible artifact storage are many of Gilcrease's internationally famous collection of more than 50,000 works of various Indian cultures from ancient to recent times.

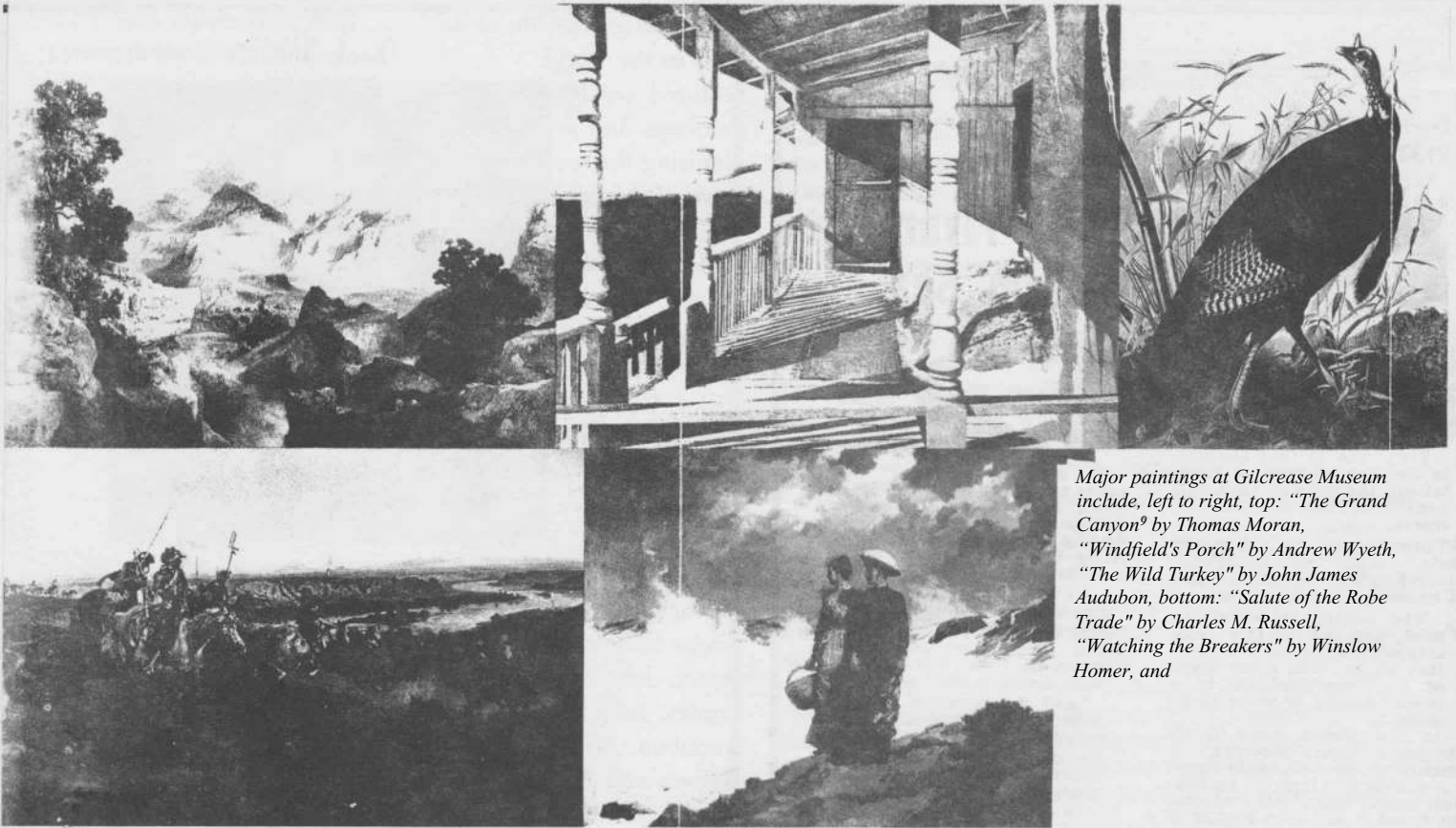
Visiting Gilcrease is rediscovering America.



*"Washington and Lafayette at the Battle of Brandywine" by John Vanderlyn.*



*"With the Eve of the Mind" by Frederic Remington.*



Major paintings at Gilcrease Museum include, left to right, top: "The Grand Canyon" by Thomas Moran, "Windfield's Porch" by Andrew Wyeth, "The Wild Turkey" by John James Audubon, bottom: "Salute of the Robe Trade" by Charles M. Russell, "Watching the Breakers" by Winslow Homer, and

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