

OHIO AIR FORCE GOLDEN GOOSE WAR HORSE THUNDERBIRD WANDERING DUCHESS CURLY'S KIDS
 SKY GODDESS ROUNDTRIP TICKET PICCADILLY QUEEN BLUE CHAMPAGNE MARY ELLEN
 SALLY B RAUNCHY WOLF CHOWHOUND YANK GELDING WINNIE THE POOH DRAGON LADY
 HONKY TONK SAL "HAYBAG" ANNIE MISS AMERICA STARS AND STRIPES
 HESITATIN' HUSSY PREGNANT PORTIA DORSAL QUEEN WAR WEARY
 GROUND HOG LEADING LADY ALEXANDER'S RAGTIME BAND
 BIG GAS BIRD LIBERTY BELLE HUSTLIN' HUSSY L'L AUDREY LONESOME POLECAT HARES BREATH
 STAR DUST ANGELS SISTER
 SKY CHIEF MARY PAT
 MR. LUCKY PERRY'S PIRATES SLO JO TARGET FOR TONIGHT SHACK N LADY
 BARBARA B MADAME SHOO SHOO GIZMO ROGER THE DODGER SACK TIME JUNIOR OL' DOODLE BUG
 PAT PENDING POSSIBLE STRAIGHT MICKY 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 LATEST RUMOR MAIDEN AMERICA MISSISSIPPI MISS
 SPIRIT OF CHICAGO BIG STINKY VIBRANT VIRGIN MISSION BELLE SATAN'S MATE
 SOUTHERN BELLE VAT 69 OL' RUM DUM FOOLISH VIRGIN LULU BELLE SLICK CHICK
 MARY ELLEN III HOT CHOCOLATE RAGGEDY ANNE MAC'S HACK OL' RUM DUM FOOLISH VIRGIN KITTY'S REVENGE
 HELLS BELLS LIL-LU YANK LADY ANN CRASH WAGON III RAGGED BUT RIGHT BELLE OF THE BLUE
 PRINCESS VAL IN LIKE FLYNN STORK CLUB THE JOKER AIN'T MISBEHAVIN' MARY ELLEN II
 FICKLE FINGER OF ?

HARD LIFE



HERALD



NEWSLETTER OF THE 385th BOMBARDMENT GROUP MEMORIAL ASSOCIATION



COMBAT UNITS

HQ. SQUADRON
 548th BOMB SQ.
 549th BOMB SQ.
 550th BOMB SQ.
 551st BOMB SQ.

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AUGUST 1992

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PREZ SEZ:

By now everybody should be back in the land of the big P.X. after that wonderful trip to the U.K. or any other points in Europe that some of you took in. Wish you all could have made the trip with us.

I would be remiss if I didn't use this space this month to thank all the Villagers of Great Ashfield, David Wade and Ian McLachlan for the wonderful hospitality and good time we were shown on the trip. Does anyone have any ideas as to how we could reciprocate ?

The ceremony at the U.S. Cemetery at Madingly was quite impressive and I'm sure brought a few tears to some eyes. The numerous low circles of the old "Sally B" was certainly a fitting tribute at the end of the ceremony and was well appreciated by the men.

My personal difficulties on the trip, turned out to be a lead in for a heart attack, which hit two days after our return. Glad to report I'm feeling a lot better and well on the road to recovery.

IT'S NOT TOO EARLY TO START PLANNING YOUR ATTENDANCE AT OUR NEXT REUNION - IN JUNE - IN SPOKANE.

Regards,

Sid

ASSOCIATION OFFICERS

EDITOR, HARDLIFE HERALD

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

CHAPLAIN JIM SEZ:

I am writing this the last part of June, 1992 and can you believe it is hot - dry - dry and hot in Seattle (Bellevue). We are experiencing water rationing and it is hard to get used to saving every drop.

How grateful I am that God never withholds his love. Even though we all experience "Spiritual Dry" spells now and then, as we are here with the lack of water, we still know that God never turns His back on us.

Our lives can become dry, spiritually, when we neglect letting God shower His grace on us. In the Psalms 1:1-3 this truth is given us.

'Blessed is the man (woman) who walks not in the counsel of the wicked, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of scoffers; but his delight is in the law of the Lord, and on his law he meditates day and night.

He is like a tree planted by streams of water, that yields its fruit in its season, and its leaf does not wither. In all that he does, he prospers.

We all can grow and prosper in living when we do not neglect God's Spiritual input.

Love,

Chaplain Jim

□ □ □ □ **LIFE MEMBERS** □ □ □ □

Paul N. Grilliot



Waldemar Hahn
John Grissinger
James R. Child

June 1992
July 1992
Jan. 1992

Clovis McWilliams, 83, St. Joseph, died Monday, May 25, 1992, at a local hospital following a short illness.

Mr. McWilliams was a partner of the McWilliams, Burnham, Dickens and Fiquet Insurance Agency for 38 years, retiring in 1971.

Active in Democratic politics, he had served on the St. Joseph City Council, the first and second City Charter commissions and as chairman of several city and county campaigns.

A native of Clarksdale, Mo., Mr. McWilliams

had lived most of his life in St. Joseph. He was graduated from Central High School of St. Joseph and, William Jewell College at Liberty, Mo., where he received a bachelor of science degree.

He was past president of the Alumni Association at William Jewell and received the Citation of Dred G. Giller. She survives of the Achievement Award in 1956 from home.



that college.

Mr. McWilliams was a member of the First Baptist Church; past president and member of the board of the Pony Express Council, Boy Scouts of America; was an Eagle Scout; Chieftain of the Tribe of Mic-O-Say, honor camping society of Camp Geiger; and a recipient of the Silver Beaver Award.

Mr. McWilliams also was a member of Macdonald-Dugger-Duncan American Legion Post No. 11, past president of St. Joseph Area Chamber of Commerce, past president of St. Joseph Downtown Optimist Club, past president and general campaign chairman of the United Way, and a former member of the board of the Elks Lodge No. 40, B.P.O.E. He was a charter member of the Y-Fry Club Class No. 1, of which he was currently vice president; and was a member of the St. Joseph Country Club.

During World War II, he served as a major in the Army Air Corps Intelligence, 385th Bomb Group of the 8th Air Force in England.

In 1938, he married the former Millie G. Giller. She survives of the Achievement Award in 1956 from home.

Personnel who served at Lewistown, Montana

Army Airfield B-17 training base will hold a fiftieth-anniversary reunion September 12-13. This includes the 548th Bomb Sq., 385th BG; a former bombardier of 401st BG will open the bombsight vault. He may have been the last to shut and lock it when they left for England in 1943.

This is part of Lewistown's Chokecherry Festival. Anyone available to go, write:

Jack Milburn
Giltedge State
Lewistown, Montana 59457

NOTICE

If you would like extra copies of the 50th anniversary reunion insert, please sent \$1.00 for postage to:

Ed Stern
Box 2187
 Fargo, ND 58108

LIST OF 99 MEMBERS TRAVELING TO ENGLAND FOR THE REUNION

Charles and Blanche Brackett	Herbert and Mary Macy
Jessie and Marion Brown	George and Marie Menkoff
Westley and Mary-Ellen Brown	Edward Metcalf
Barney and Ila Coble	Edward and Bevery McElroy
Sydney and Lena Colthorpe	Robert and Constance McNeilly
Thomas and Margaret Conway	Richard and Mary-Jane Molzhan
Roy and Margaret Courtney	Karl and Marguerite Moravek
Nancy Moran	Thomas and Darla Newton
David Smith	John and Ruth Pettenger
Bartlett and Ruth Dickey	John and Joanne Pickett
Henry and Druisila Dworshak	Charles and Mary Price
Clarence Fauber	Juan and Mary Provencio
Charles and Eunice Flynn	Willard and Vivian Richards
Francis and Oliver Fuller	Daniel Riva
Leon and Barbara Lamoureaux	Kay Waseleski
Michael and Marian Gallagher	Clark and Margaret Rollins
Jack Gesser	Col. Bob Smith
Drue and Pam Gillis	Charles and Peggy Smith
Bill and Barbara Grodi	Chuck and Beth Smith
Robert and Elizabeth Hach	Ed and Richard Stern
Willard and Lance Hagman	Susan Fineman
Terry Sylvester	Robert and Lois Taylor
Barbara Byler	Robert and Jennie Vandiver
Debra Janzen	Sam Vandiver
Thomas and Norma Hair	William and Louise Varnedoe
William Hausman	Rolland and Arlene Vencill
Henry and Martha Jones	Robert and Coralie Wilson
Robert Jones	William and Kate Wray
Robert and Marietta Long	Steve Zaputil
Clifford and Shirley Lybeck	Joseph and Phyllis Zwick

EDITOR'S NOTE: In addition, the following joined us for part of the Tour.

Gordon Stead
George and Alice Salvador
Emery and May Blanchette
Bob Valliere
Mrs. Connie Gombert & grandson
Roy and Betty Batey
Ty Winton

THANK YOU

A special "Thank You" to these wonderful Great Ashfield people who hosted us at "lunch" as they termed the sumptuous meals we enjoyed on Saturday after the dedication of the stained glass window. It was an opportunity to get better acquainted with them.

Beatty Orford and Robert Miles.
David Johnson
Rowley and Angela Miles
Dennis and Angela Dyball
Fred Purcell
Stephen & Petrina Miles
Mr and Mrs. Hamilton
John Clarke
Stan Fulham
Eric & Ella Barker
Roy and Di Barker
Stuart and Shirley Cannell
Spencer Symonds
Mrs. Irwin
William Black
H. Gemmill
Peter & Jane Bullivant
Bob and Linda Orford

Thanks to the 401st Bomb Group Newsletter for this good advice on planning your moves.

DON'T LET GO OF THE ROPE

The following letter to an insurance company clearly describes the consequences of making unplanned moves.

In his latter the bricklayer wrote: "In response to your request for additional information in block number 3 of the accident reporting form, I put "Poor Planning" as the cause of my accident. You said in your letter that I should explain more fully and I trust that the following details will be sufficient.

I am a bricklayer by trade. On the day of the accident I was working alone on the roof of a new six-story building. When I completed my work, I discovered that I had about 500 pounds of bricks left over. Rather than carry the brick down by hand, I decided to lower them in a barrel by using a pulley which fortunately was attached to the side of the building, at the sixth floor.

Securing the rope at ground level, I went up on the roof, swung the barrel out and loaded

the brick into it. Then I went back to the ground and untied the rope, holding it tightly to insure a slow decent of the 500 pounds of bricks. You will note in block number eleven of the accident reporting form that I weigh 135 pounds.

Due to my surprise at being jerked off the ground so suddenly, I lost my presence of mind and forgot to let go of the rope. Needless to say, I proceeded at a rather rapid rate up the side of the building.

In the vicinity of the third floor, I net the barrel coming down. This explains the fractured skull and broken collarbone.

Slowing only slightly, I continued my rapid ascent, not stopping until the fingers of my right hand were two knuckles deep in the pulley.

Fortunately, by that time I had regained my presence of mind and able to hold tightly to the rope in spite of my pain.

Approximately the same time, however, the barrel of bricks hit the ground... and the bottom fell out of the barrel. Devoid of the weight of the bricks, the barrel now weighed approximately 50 pounds.

I refer you again to my weight in block number 11. As you might imagine, I began a rapid descent down the side of the building.

In the vicinity of the third floor, met the barrel coming up. This accounts for the two fractured ankles and the lacerations of my legs and lower body.

The encounter with the barrel slowed me enough to lessen my injuries when I fell onto the pile of bricks, and fortunately, only three vertebrae were cracked.

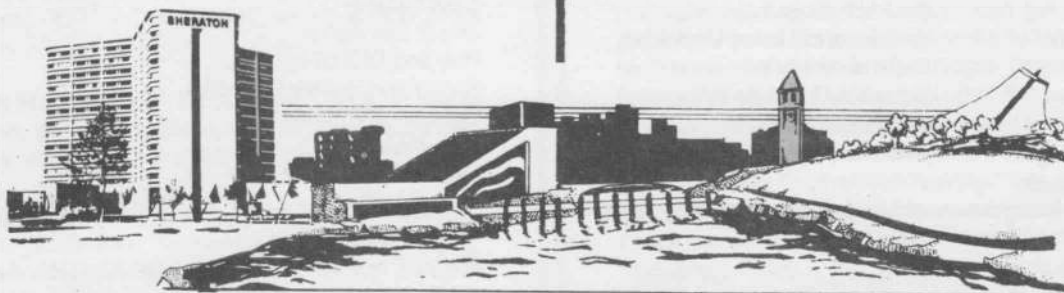
I am sorry to report, however, that as I lay there on the bricks — in pain, unable to stand and watching the empty barrel six stories above me — I again lost my presence of mind. I let go of the rope!

**385th BOMB GROUP
50TH ANNIVERSARY REUNION
SPOKANE, WASHINGTON
AUGUST 25-29, 1993**

We'll be back to our roots-where we formed in 1943-for what should be the biggest ever-our 14th Reunion-with Spokane rolling out the red carpet to welcome 385th members and guests. An exciting agenda is being planned by Host Bob Smith.

Tours galore are being arranged to help us enjoy and explore the Inland Northwest. "Historic Spokane's Age of Elegance Tour", a luncheon cruise on Coeur d'Alene Lake in Northern Idaho, a trip to Greenbluff Orchards and Arbor Crest Winery's spectacular Cliff House, a trip to Grand Coulee Dam, Tours of Geiger Field and Fairfield AF Base, the Fairchild Base Heritage Museum-all will be on our schedule during the 4 day Reunion.

Barbecued steak dinners, the Reunion Banquet and Dance, plenty of time for reminiscing, renewing old friendships, relaxation, golf, and every possible type of outdoor activity are available for our enjoyment.



If you can spare an extra week or two, a 5 day tour of the Canadian Rockies, an Alaskan cruise, a visit to Glacier Park, Yellowstone Park, the Grand Tetons-any number of suggestions are available (Call Group Coordinators at 509-455-4354 for complete information, brochures, etc). Spokane has a wonderful Convention and Tourist Bureau you can reach at 1-800-248-3230. Headquarters Hotel will be the Sheraton Spokane, N 322 Spokane Falls Court, Spokane, WA 99201 -9951.

Spokane is served by Alaska, Continental, Horizon, Northwest and United Airlines. It's on Interstate 90, and is served by rail and bus. If you drive, try Interstate 94 and stop in Fargo on the way! A FREE MEAL IS GUARANTEED.

Complete reservation forms for both the Hotel and the Reunion will be printed in the next Hardlife Herald.



Sheraton-Spokane Hotel

The Sheraton Spokane offers you 15 floors of splendid accommodations, superb restaurants and lounges, and outstanding meeting facilities all located in the center of Spokane. Each of the 380 rooms and suites is designed to be your private world of comfort. You can count on the gracious hospitality of the Sheraton to help make your stay a memorable one. We're only a few minutes walk from popular shopping and entertainment areas, key government and business offices. And we're adjacent to Riverfront*Park, the Convention Center, Ag Trade Center and the Opera House, our performing arts center.

Sheraton Spokane Hotel Welcomes: 385th Bomb Group Reunion

Name: _____

Arrival Date: _____ Departure Date: _____

Address: _____

City, State & Zip: _____

Company Name: _____ Phone No.: _____

I will be arriving by: Plane Train Car Estimated Arrival Time: _____

Sharing room with: _____

Please Reserve:

Special Services and Facilities

- Year-round pool *1881 Dining Room •
- Coffee Shop • Roof top lounge •
- Entertainment lounge • Room Service •
- Meeting and Convention facilities •
- Airport transportation • Free parking •
- Gift shop and newsstand

\$66	L_1 King or queen	\$169	Two-room parlour suite
\$72	G single	\$169	O single
	double		double
\$99	One-room executive suite	\$187	Three-room statesman suite
\$99	single	\$275	O 1 Bedroom
	double		2 Bedroom

if there is a possibility you will arrive after 4:00 p.m., please complete the following information. "I will be arriving after 4:00 p.m. Please hold my room on a guaranteed payment basis chargeable to my credit card," or "I have enclosed the first night's room rental to guarantee my room reservation for late arrival."

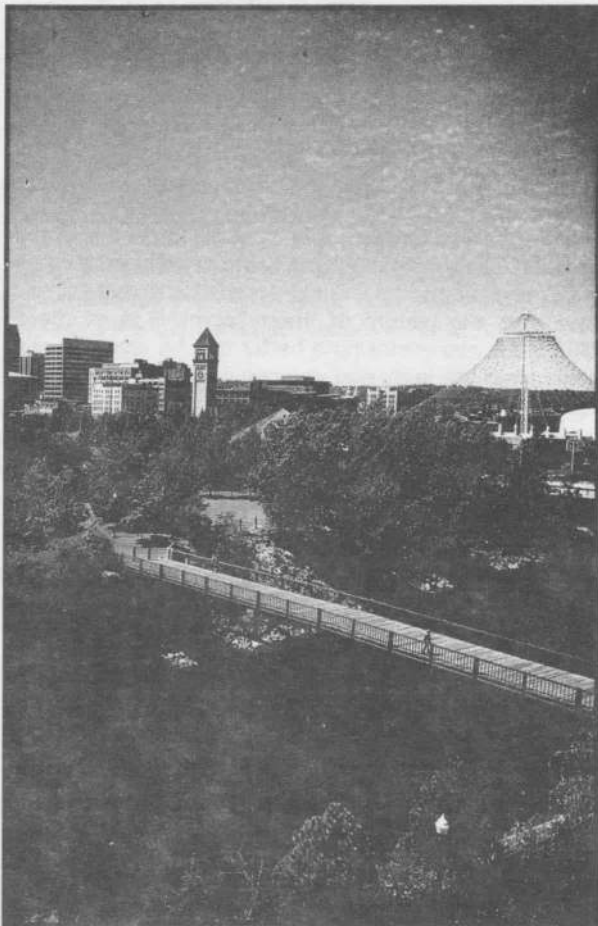
Credit Card Co. / Credit Card No. / Exp. Date

Signature _____

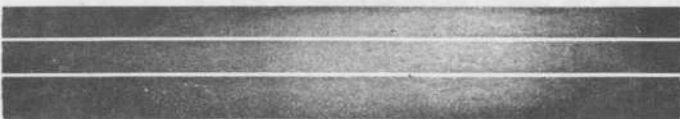
\$ _____
Amount Enclosed

SPOKANE

You'll Love it Here!

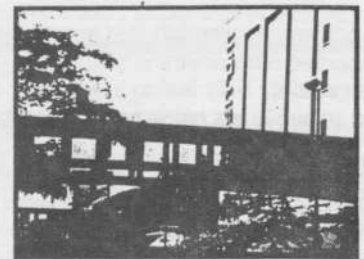


Spokane, Washington USA

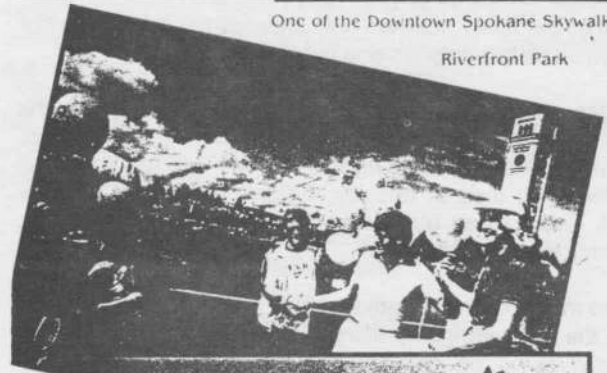


Spokane...You'll Love It Here! And with all of the amenities that Spokane has to offer, we know that you'll enjoy your stay in our Lilac City.

Spokane offers plenty of contrast and variety, a spirited community in the midst of a natural wonderland of forests, lakes, and mountains. A place where big hearted hospitality and western vitality make it a one-of-a-kind destination.



One of the Downtown Spokane Skywalks



Riverfront Park



Indian Canyon Golf Course

Action-packed or easy-going, Spokane is always in step. Stroll through Riverfront Park and take in an outdoor concert, or just enjoy the lawns and trees along the river. From the park, a network of footbridges carry you over the thundering Spokane Falls to still more shops and restaurants. Golf on any one of a dozen challenging courses, play tennis, or go horseback riding along the Spokane River. Travel the downtown skywalk system to the finest in department and specialty stores, or spend hours browsing through the shopping malls that dot the area.

OUR QUEEN LASTED QUICK

By Tom Helman

In a letter to the Ed:

I have recently been corresponding with another of our good friends in England, a man named Ray Bowden this time, of USAAF Nose Art Research Project in London. It was in response to his asking for particulars on the arty Flying Billboards of our fabulous fortress paint jobs fame.

As former co-pilot and subsequently self-anointed scribe of the John Richey crew OHIO AIR FORCE, it became my chore to try explaining why our great plane only sported her name in drabby block letters and a handful of ugly swastikas and bombs painted on her pretty nose. No boobs or buns sketched on the side of our old virgin, ours was no bimbo bomber. No way we'd give jerry anything better than just us to shoot at.

It's not my recollection that any of our crew were too much concerned with anything but finishing our tour in one piece, and certainly only losing sleep over more important things than an airplane's name or other rembrantal works of art.

We cared so little that we neglected to add to the 14 nazi "Signs of the double-cross" we were pained to wear. In fact I do remember we had discussed from time to time painting out the swastikas, as Sir Lord Haw Haw, with glee, had chortled that the fancy nose-art only showed the krautjocks the way to those hot-dogs among us.

Besides, ours were painted on backwards, inverted with the arms pointing counter-clockwise. Disgusting. And wierd. And ugly. And they were right below MY window. I was no hot-dog, and mad at nobody, I didn't even have a water pistol. Gosh. I was but the co-pilot, a known unnecessary, and only along to help dirve.

But so much for the swastikas, I only mention them as a lead in to the most intriguing story of the month; all because of my yakyaking on the same subject in a letter to Ian McLachlan that you printed in the June 1989 Hardlife. That's three years ago.

It so happened that Ian had sent me a picture he had, asking for a positive identification. I answered with, "The picture of the good looking American bomber pilot pointing at some swastikas painted on the side of a B-17 named "Ohio Air Force" is indeed John Richey. He's in Class A uniform and all grins as they had just pinned the DFC on him for the Munster job. Handsome ain't he (?)"

You won't remember this Ed, but in eary July (7/6/89), you sent me a Straus-card memo that one Ronald L<ar>juer of Peoria had requested from you a copy of that very picture I had mentioned, and which he had read about in my piece in the Hardlife, and you in turn were asking me to cough one up.

Now right here is where we get in the fly paper. For some reason, and not having been told differently, I figured this guy from Peoria was probably out of Richey's unquestioned past (of which I DID know somewhat).

Oh ho, I thought, but who is this guy? I'd heard about guys from Peoria. Yeah. Its a place not far from Chicago, and John lived for years in the fifties and sixties right near Mid-way where he headquartered as a TWA pilot.

You gotta know Ed, this could have been stickier than fly paper, I had been Richey's co-pilot you know, the best he had ever had; He got me (brand new) but a month out of flying school, and for a long eight months of the only combat for either of us. My job, and not much else, was to make HIM look good, ever and always good; and even after 45 years ('44 to '89), call me loyal, still; and I have never changed. (And I never played co-pilot for anyone again either.)

So my first move was to pop an airmail to the beach at Boca Raton where old friend John fans himself these days with the funnys of the Wall Street Journal. Retired life is rough on him.

"Who is this guy Hanauer", I wrote, "A friend? or an irate husband from outta the past? Or present? Were you ever a Boy Scout? Girl Scout? Maybe a Priest? or a rumrunner? Tell me!"

Well Ed, I'm still awaiting his reply, I guess I knew that at the time as John don't write much, so I simply grabbed the ball by the bull and dropped a line to Peoria, saying that I didn't have available the picture of John "pointed at all those swastikas" but was enclosing a better one he would surely like (it even had ME in it); and you can get his address from the BGMA roster.

It was in just twelve days that I was to learn, from Peoria, that my "musing fantasy of Ron and John" didn't play in Peoria, not at all. Was my nose wet! This guy Hanauer was one of us!

He wrote, "I am sorry to say that the picture you sent was not what I was looking for. What I wanted was a picture of the B-17 named "Ohio Air Force."

"You see," he went on, "my crew was the last to fly her, as we were shot down March 16, 1944 over France. And up until I saw your story in the Hardlife, I could not remember the name of the airplane that we flew that fateful day."

Well Ed, forgive my dirty mind. But do you remember the first girl you ever kissed? (Really!) Ever wonder, in the ensuing years, whatever happened to her? (I think I married mine.) Does ye old heart thump abit when you remember? Aha.

Now that's the same old feeling I had for (OAF the B-17) #4 230-737 (the first Boeing Seven-Thirty-Seven).

How many times I had wondered, whatever happened to our dear old Queen? For how long did she make it without us? And would we, will we, ever know?

We got her brand new, all the way from the Seattle factory, and she was ours until we flew her last on a very rough ride to Brunswick, Germany on 29 February, 1944.

My oh my, in but a couple weeks from when we had said good-bye, she had been ingloriously felled from the sky. To think, our beloved queen of queens:

Those dirty hunks, they shot her, they shamed, her, they broke her heart. I'll never own a BMW!

We flew her to her maiden battle to Emden, Germany on the 27th of September, 1943. And but 171 frightful days later, on 16 March, 1944, she had met her fate.

On page 4 of the June 1989 Hardlife, Ian notes that 2nd Lt. W.H. Krause was the pilot of 737 (the OHIO AIR FORCE) when she went down, by "en ops", on 16 March 1944.

And Ron Hanauer (Sgt Hanauer then) was the Krause crew flight engineer, flying top turret. The target was Augsburg, Germany, but they went down over France. I wonder where.

And he reports the fighters knocked out three of her engines, killing the co-pilot and bombardier, and wounding the navigator and himself, in a battle that must have been a doozy.

On page 18 of the December 1989 Hardlife, Ron writes he has written the story of both the battle in the air and the ones that followed on the ground, as an evader and a prisoner. I, for one, would surely like to read it.

Although I appreciate hearing of our airplane's final day, and I emphathize grievously for the Krause crew, I fear there remains more questions than there has been answers.

My adrenalin begins a boil when I ponder, that less than four months before that fateful day in March, on 29 November, 1943. I was wounded in the very same seat the Krause co-pilot was killed.

And, too, at the same time, was our top turret gunner Mike Siwek badly wounded in the same turret as was Ron Hanauer.

So I can't help but wonder, were all those contrary jerrys on a stinking avenging mission? Was this an omen, foul like them? To auger our old girl with the curse of those 14 damned "crosses of the devil?"

NOTICE

Any of our members interned in Sweden during the War? If so, Flygren a Scandinavian aviation magazine, would like to hear from you. Write Andy Robertson, 107 Lancaster Road, Morecambe, Lancs LA45QJ England.

EDITOR'S NOTE: New member Don Kabitzke, 2464 No .Sheman Blvd, Milwaukee, WI, 53210, is organizing a Lake Michigan Chapter of the 8th AF Historical Society. Write him for details and membership information.

MEMBER GORDON STEAD FOUND THIS

Gordon Stead found this sad piece of news in his local paper and sent it to us. Bob Pearsall, a former pilot in the 486th Bomb Group who had flown 35 missions and survived, was killed by a taxi outside Buckingham Palace when he stepped off a curb. He was there on a tour taking part in the 50th anniversary of the 8th Air Forces, and it happened just a week after we were there. Sad, but understandable-have to look left instead of right to see on-coming traffic over there.

NOTICE

Ex President Sam Lyke received a nice "Thank You" letter from the President of the 23rd Infantry Regiment, Korean War Branch after Sam, Sid Colthorpe, and Cheryl Horn, and Bill Nicholls all had responded to a request with regard to our Memorial at Arlington cemetery. "The quality and dedication of your organization is exemplified by the support and direction you individuals have afforded us" he said. Nice to be appreciated!

A REUNION NOTE OF INTEREST TO GUNNERS, NAVIGATORS, AND BOMBARDIERS

Buckingham/Page Army Airfields, Ft. Myers, FL. All trainees, staff, and civilian personnel are invited to a reunion Nov. 5-8, 1992. For more info, contact Donna Perko, Ft. Myers Historical Museum, PO Drawer 2217, Ft. Myers, FL or call 813-332-5955.

SECOND SCHWEINFURT MEMORIAL ASSOCIATION

Bud Klint reports that there've been several 385th applications for membership since we learned of this organization from the June Hardlife Herald. If you flew to Schweinfurt on October 14, 1943, you're eligible to join. The only 385th casualty was Bob Vandiver's Navigator, Phil Vockerath-which leaves 359 potential members from the 385th. Write to Bud Klint, Second Schweinfurt Memorial Ass'n, 5728 Walls Ave., Ft. Worth, TX 76133.

EDITOR'S NOTE: New member Donald Kahitzke, who transferred to our Base in England into the Service Group, has sent us a great bunch of stories of his recollections of 1943-45 in England. We'll be running them in future *Hardlife Heralds*. Here's the first-brings back lots of memories of the Ground Echelon's trip over on the *Elizabeth* in July 1943.

Also, Don wants information on Col. Charles Beatty & Sgt. Fred Kuchenbacker from around Ashtabula, Ohio, and a Sgt. Stuckey who did statistical work in the 385th.

THE BEAUTIFUL "QUEEN ELIZABETH"

Little did I realise, back in my high school days, how the British Luxury Liners the "Queen Mary and the Queen Elizabeth" would play a part in my life.

With the prospect of war looming in the distance, work proceeded as one of main reasons was, their greater value as troop transports should war come. It was a smart move. The Mary was in North Atlantic service and doing good, the war broke out. The *Elizabeth* sneaked out of Scotland on one of the most secret undertakings of World War II. The story about that is worth a book on it. A skeleton crew of civilians carefully sneaked out of Scotland on her and headed to New York to escape the Germans who would have considered it a real feat to put it out of commission for good.

Both Queens were outfitted in the U.S. The Mary was stripped of her valuables which were put in storage for the duration. Some of the work was done on the West Coast at Long Beach. They both then left for Australia and New Zealand where they took on troops and headed for the Red Sea where they unloaded their troops who were to fight against Rommel and helped turn the tide of the battle.

By the way, the Germans sunk the *Elizabeth* 5 times before the war ended. On the runs between Australia and New Zealand, the Queens naturally had to cross the equator, coming and going. Neither of them were air-conditioned as they were Built to operate in the-Atlantic Ocean where heat was not a problem as they did not intend to cross the equator. At times the heat and humidity was so great that on several occasions the troops were on the verge of mutiny. There was nothing that could be done, and besides, when the Africa conflict was resolved both of the liners were shifted to the U.S. where they were refitted for the North Atlantic crossings.

The *Elizabeth* was originally designed to take care of the needs of 2,500 paying passengers and crew. When the British notified the U.S. that they were pulling the Queens out of the Pacific for refitting in the U.S., General George Marshall, Chief of Staff ordered that the liners be stacked as tight as possible. On the first crossing after refitting, there were 17,500 men and women aboard, including me.

The British government's investment in the Queens paid off well. There was tremendous opposition to the construction of these two great liners. The English, like us, were in a Depression and money was hard to come by. Thank goodness that they were built. Goodness knows how short the war was cut by their being made available to our gover-

ment as troop transports. They charged our government \$85.00 per person to carry our troops across the Atlantic. On the return trips from Grenock, they carried bonded whiskey, RAF Cadets who were being trained in the U.S. and Canada, along with wounded from both countries.

When my squadron, the 88th Service Squadron was ordered to get ready to depart from the B-26 Training field at Lakeland, Florida, little did we realise where we were headed for. The majority were sure it was to be in North Africa as that was where the action was. Little did we realise that we would be travelling aboard the *Queen Elizabeth*. That would have been dreaming. We were put on a troop train for Camp Shanks, New York where we were given a final check of our equipment, especially our shoes. They took away our nice shiny brown ones and given the rough dull ones in case of gas warfare, we hated them, but there was nothing we do about it.

The whole camp was one mass of mud. The streets were not paved. Mud was everywhere as there was no way to avoid it. The barracks and the messhalls were the same.

We welcomed the day when we were finally shipping out. As we assembled in front of the barracks to march down to the railroad yards to board troop trains for New Jersey, one of the Lieutenants walked to where I was standing, and put a full box of 30 caliber Carbine ammunition and told me to take care of it, as that was all we had and would probably need it in an emergency. They came for it the first night in England in order to post guards at the base. They were smart for bringing that box.

Once we got across the East River to the Cunard Lines Dock, it did not take long before we started marching up a gangplank inside of the *Elizabeth*. Little did we know there would be over 17,000 aboard once we pulled away from the dock. The planning must have been worked out by genius's to feed that many men from all the various camps onto trains, into the river yards onto ferries and across the river in a smooth operation, in so short a time period. Once we were in the cabins assigned us, it was only a few hours and we were on the move. We went out on deck to see New York and the waterfront. The *Queen Mary* was at a dock getting ready to sail. Not far away was one of the most pitiful scenes I saw during the war. There was the French Liner, the *Normandie*, the most elegant object ever built which moved. It was meant to surpass anything afloat so the French could get some of the Atlantic emigrant trade from the English and the **Germans.** **EDITOR'S NOTE:** it was probably sabotaged at the pier by the Germans-if so, a very successful bit of work by Nazi spies-as we remember, BEFORE Pearl Harbor). The Germans came out with the *Europa*, the 3rd largest to date and they were after a lions share until the war forced her off the Atlantic. I didn't have the slightest inkling that I was to return to the U.S. aboard the *Europa*.

There was an arrangement made whereby outfits like mine would rotate from the cabins down inside the ship to the Promenade deck which had been enclosed for just that reason. Up near the bow they installed long old fashioned outhouse troughs for latrines. When the ship raised up too high, urine ran down the Promenade deck. You always had to be on the alert. We always were looking for cardboard to

sit and lie down on.

It took a lot of walking to get to know how to get around on the Queen. The dining rooms, PX's and water room were scattered around. Some of the staircases were 75 feet wide and kinda overwhelmed one not used to seeing such a huge object. We had to learn fast if we were to survive. We all were issued a pass and a celuloide button with a number and the same color. Mine was green with a big 3 on it. It was announced what number was being fed, and both your card and button had to be shown or you were tossed out of that line. The first day was a disaster. While you were in the chow line, they announced that the water room was working and time to get your ration of a canteen a day, not a drop more. No one could do it for you. Then they would announce that the PX was open on another deck. Now you had three problems. You had to make up your mind now as to what you felt was the most important. I chose water, filled my canteen and ran for the chow line.

Early the next morning the First Sergeant came into our cabin and asked for about 10 volunteers to help the cooks out with fruit after each meal. At first we hesitated, then we decided there was nothing else to do, so we went to the dining room. One of the cooks took us to an elevator and we went down into the hold of the ship. Here was where all the food was stored. Huge refrigeration storage rooms were filled to the ceiling with crate upon crate of oranges, apples and other fruits. We would load up a freight elevator and head back to the dining rooms, here we stacked the cases after they were opened. At mealtime we handed the fruit out after we removed the fancy paper wrappers. We were ordered not to allow one piece of paper to leave the room. They were afraid that someone would throw them over the side of the ship and submarines might pick out our trail, after all, we were all alone out there in the Atlantic.

After we dropped off the Pilot at the Ambrose Lighthouse in New York Harbor, we headed out to sea. Shortly we found that we were in a huge convoy moving down the middle of it. We felt safe with all those ships around us. They would surely protect us from torpedoes. Overhead were all sorts of aircraft from anti-submarine patrols watching over us. As the line of ships thinned, so did the overhead aircraft. The last of these was a balloon. The next morning when daylight arrived, we were shocked to see that we were all alone. Authorities in the know felt that the Queens had a better chance alone as they could outrun any submarine. The ship's Captain received an envelope containing secret courses to follow and by following those changes of courses, both in England and America the commands which were in charge of convoys knew exactly where the ship was at all times. One minute we were headed west, then maybe south, and all the other points of the compass to throw the German Submarine Services off. It must have worked as the Germans announced 5 times they had sunk the Elizabeth. The second day at sea we were surprised to learn that the security of the ship was under the command of the United States Navy. All the gunners aboard wore navy blue. We had a chance to talk with a few before they went out to the gun positions on the bow. They told us they had been told they were assigned to guarding a garbage scow for the city of New York who was dumping it way out in the Atlantic. They were the original crew and enjoyed. There was plenty of leave in New York and Grenock, Scotland while loading and unloading was taking place. Some get all the luck.

The first evening out to sea, I had found a paperback book and was really surprised at what I was reading. The book was titled, "The Coming Battle of Germany". It was written by a retired U.S. Air Force General and the first publishing date was 1941. There are copies still available if you get a book store who are glad to do it. They have a publication where they advertise and are successful in obtaining out of prints that way. The copy I had was dated 1942. There were later printings I learned later on. This one really fascinated me the more I read it. It told me that I would be on a huge ocean liner with thousands of other air force personal on the way to England, which would be transformed into a huge aircraft carrier from which thousands of bombers would be launched against Germany, eventually defeating them.

The book had accurate plans which were used and named the invasion points with accuracy. It was World War II written in 1941, and absolutely accurate in its predictions. The timetable for the surrender of Germany was only 16 days off. He drew the blueprint for the major battles across Europe. It later has to come as a surprise to me to read how the Japanese had purchased copies of our Army and Navy Journals, for a dollar a copy and had set up their defenses of the major Pacific Islands as laid down in those books by our own forces, yet it took until invasion of Guam, where General Howland Smith, "The Father of Modern Amphibious Warfare" figured out what the Japs were doing to us. He ordered the invasion of Guam to be reversed and come in from the rear, completely taking the Japs by surprise and making it a costless victory.

For some interesting reading on this subject, I would recommend General Smith's book "Coral and Brass". The Japanese planned their sneak attack at Pearl Harbor as laid out in the Army Journal and witnessed by them in 1936 as invited guests when it was used as a war games exercise. The same could be said for "The Coming Battle of Germany". Truth IS stranger than fiction.

About midnight of our first night out, one of the Lieutenants from my outfit came walking up to where I was sitting on the Promenade Deck reading that book. He had been named the Officer of the Day for the ship that day. He talked me into walking the decks with him as he felt so all alone. We went down into his quarters into his cabin. In his footlocker were several bottles of liquor. He poured us a small drink and we left to make the rounds of the ship. It was better than what I had been doing.

Around 1:30 a.m., we came upon a full Colonel who was wearing an armband which read "TROOP COMMANDER". He was the ranking officer who dealt with the ships' Captain directly. One of the first questions he asked was, "Where are the troops smoking?" We had been told there would be absolutely no smoking from 6 pm to 6 am due to a total blackout. The Lieutenant turned chicken and motioned towards me and said, "Maybe the Sergeant Knows". The Colonel looked at me and I asked him if he wanted me to lie or tell the truth. He wanted the truth. He also smoked and it bothered him also. I told him that we went down into the cabin where we spend out alternate and and went into the toilet, locked the door and six of us or so smoked, brushed the butts and flushed them down the toilet. That really bothered him and he remarked that there must be a better way. He then asked how we felt about the food and other routines. I quickly told the feeding arrangements stunk.

I described the dilemma there was in the chow lines, the water lines and PX lines. He asked what I thought would help. I suggested that we forgo the noon meal and use the time between breakfast and supper to keep the water supply and PX available then. He thought it was a good idea. It must have. Around 9 in the morning the ships Captain came on the loudspeaker and announced that would be the order for the rest of the voyage. He further stated that we would be able to smoke on all open landing between decks at all times. It worked out fine and there were no more complaints.

It was surprising how fast time moved. We were busy and it moved quickly. The day before we docked at Grenock, Scotland, and off the Irish coast, most of the day an announcement came over the ships speaker asking for a Staff Sergeant to report to his organization immediately. This went on all day, and toward sundown it stopped. They had found his body hanging in a medical room somewhere on the ship. He had committed suicide. They buried him at night off the coast of Ireland. It later developed that he had told members of his outfit that he was sure he was going to be killed by the Germans.

We were told that we had been moving in a giant circle the last night off the coast of Ireland, and when day broke, we headed for the Firth of Clyde and into the safe harbor at Grenock. They would not allow the large liners to do that in the dark as it was too dangerous. When we finally arrived in the huge inner harbor at Grenock, I was amazed to see aircraft carriers, submarines and all sorts of naval ships of all description either at anchor or at a dock. The Elizabeth was too large to use the small docks and we dropped anchor about a block from shore. We were unloaded into small lighters of ferry boats by squadrons. At the shore was a large railroad yard filled with passenger trains backed into the yard.

As we came off the ferry boats we were greeted by a Scottish Bagpipe band, kilts and all. The equivalent of the Red Cross gave us tea, coffee and crumpets while we were waiting for the trains to be filled. We had left a delegation behind to bring our 2nd barracks bags. They were stored in the swimming pools aboard ship, each unit covered and separated by huge canvases. Finally we boarded the train and we were off for England. In a few minutes we were passing slowly through Glasgow where we were greeted by hundreds of children alongside of the tracks. We soon learned what they were after. The GIs were throwing their spare U.S. coins out to them as we felt it would be quite awhile before we could use them.

About an hour after we left Grenock, the train stopped and we were told to get off and get something to eat. Ladies were serving meat pies and tea. This would prove to be a disaster later on that night. The meat in the pies was greasy, hard and not too tasty, but better than nothing. There was nothing else to eat.

Continued in next issue.

ALL IN THE EYES OF THE BEHOLDER!

Strikes, Third Air Division's publication for the week ending 21 Apr 1945, featured, among others, the bombing results of bombardier **William C. "Kelly" Mellilo**, graduate of San Angelo class 43-11 (5 Aug 1943). Kelly, leading a squadron of the **385th Bomb Group on 18~Apr 1945** against an important communications target at Kolin, Germany, **placed 94% of his squadron's bombs within 500 feet, and**



"Kelly" Mellilo

100% within 1,000 feet of the Mean Point of Impact! He bombed from 19,700 feet. (Strike results photo above.)

Mellilo donated the 21 Apr 1945 edition of *Strikes* to our archives. Also forwarded were copies of two "Combat Wing Four" congratulatory messages for exceptional

bombing results relating to two other instances of precision bombing by lead bombardier Mellilo.

EDITOR'S NOTE: Anyone remembering Ralph Everett Quint (nickname Rocky), a pilot who was killed in 1944 in the 385th, please write or call Jerry Sanford, PO Box 191 Thermopolis, WY, 82443. (307-864-3575).

Word comes from Bill Koons of the impressive record of James & Helen Child's grandson, Brian M. Devine. He won the commandant's award for earning a 3.99 average in an Arabic language school. He graduated with a 3/3/3 proficiency, a first ever in the Middle East School. Congratulations, Helen! Jim would have been proud of him, too.

EDITOR'S NOTE: One of our newer members asked why the name of our Newsletter is "Hardlife Herald"- sounds a bit grim and foreboding. Hardlife was the call word that our flyers used to contact the tower at Great Ashfield. It, and the whole front of the Newsletter was suggested (and designed) by Bob & Mary Cripps (just before he died.)

EDITOR'S NOTE: John Richardson has sent us 10 copies of the June 11, 1943 orders sending the flight echelons of the 548th, 550th, and 551st overseas. Anyone who'd like a copy, please write, and you might send a couple of bucks for expenses. Col. Van, the 549th, and some of the other men were evidently on separate orders.

385th BOMBARDMENT GROUP REUNION**50th ANNIVERSARY**

1942 -1992



**SERVICE OF THANKSGIVING
AND THE DEDICATION
OF THE MEMORIAL STAINED GLASS WINDOW**

conducted by
The Right Reverend John Dennis
Bishop of St. Edmundsbury and Ipswich



All Saints Church, Great Ashfield.

10.30 a.m.

SATURDAY 16th MAY, 1992

THE MEMORIAL STAINED GLASS WINDOW

Designed and made by Mr. & Mrs. R. Warboys

The design of the window includes the plan of the main runways of the Airfield, which runs through the stone tracery at the top of the window. In the top right hand corner is the dove bearing an olive branch.

Flights of symbolic aeroplanes pass through rays of light, superimposed by the path of a B. 17 bomber which managed to perform a loop the loop over Great Ashfield.

In the left window there are the three poplar trees which meant so much to the pilots and navigators on return flights. The trees rise over the mist and countryside and the sight of them meant the men were safely home.

The lower part of the window bears the shape of the tail of the B.17's which flew from the village and the letter 'G*' denotes the aeroplanes from Great Ashfield. 385 is the number of the U.S.A. Air Force Bombardment Group and to its right is the official badge of the Group.

If you stand back and study the window closely, you will see on the right hand side, cleverly woven into the glass and lead, the outline of the head of an eagle - the symbol of America.

The village is indebted to the members of the 385th Reunion Group for their generous gift of this window, which certainly enhances their Altar.

16th May 1992

1942 £ 1992

VISIT TO ENGLAND HIGHLIGHTS

The weather? Unbelievable-so hot in London that people were lying around in the open spaces like we'd do at the beach-not sure, but it seems that some of the men had stripped to their Jockey shorts for their noon lunch break. It didn't rain once during the first 10 days-raincoats were just as non-essential as those gas masks and auxiliary electric units we hauled over to England in 1943.

The roads? Wide enough for our bus to pass with a good 6 inches to spare-reminded us on some of the rural roads of the way our fuel trucks maneuvered back then. The main roads were more than adequate.

The countryside? Just gorgeous. We'd forgotten how beautiful the English countryside was-flowers, trees, crops (Canola seed is a new one that is a gorgeous yellow), Wheat Rye, Sugar Beets. Wonderful what enough rain and sunshine will do. And those long evenings-light until 9:30 or 10 at night.

The People? Invariably friendly, delighted to see us, wonderful hosts, proud to remember the days they spent with us. Most of them looked awfully young to remember us-kids of 50 or so! And even in the bigger places- Bury, Cambridge, London, they were glad to visit with us-especially when we praised the dog they were leading. England doesn't allow dogs to visit-they have no rabies there and don't want any.

Our old Base? A few hardstands still there (they called them "frying pans", which we did not remember from WW2 days), some of the perimeter, a few of the back roads, an occasional foundation for an old barracks, a few Niessen huts, our 3 trees (one replaced after being blown down). And you should see that crops that Rowley Miles grows on our runways!

The food? Better than we ever imagined, from the huge breakfasts furnished each morning by the Hotels, to the banquets with their fine food and fancy desserts. Don't remember any Brussel Sprouts, either, but we wouldn't have noticed because we happen to like them (!). As an example, the "lunch" we were served after the dedication by our wonderful host family started with soup, then salad, then pheasant, potatoes, green beans, creamed leek, stuffing, rolls, then a choice of 4 or 5 desserts, then cheese and crackers, and finally chocolates. We may have forgotten a course or two-but you get the idea. Oh yes, a drink before and a brandy after. And there were seconds on everything! Hard to come back without a few extra pounds.

The speeches? Surprisingly short, wonderfully nostalgic and friendly. For example, at Madingly for the Memorial Day Service at the American Cemetery, 6 speeches were listed—and they didn't take over 30 minutes for the whole batch. And a very moving invocation. The Chaplain said "Adolph Hitler boasted that the 3rd Reich would last a thousand years. But for the brave men who lie here, we would still have 950 years to go. We thank them for giving up their

tomorrows so we could enjoy our todays". Maybe that isn't exact, but that's the idea. Most impressive to all of us. And Rowley Miles talk at our opening session, and the services at the Church were equally impressive.

Our Accommodations? You wouldn't believe how they keep their old buildings "modernized". Several of the hotels we were in dated back to the 16th century-and they were great in every respect. The same goes for all their buildings-they don't tear them down, they remodel and repair. Farmhouses from the same 16th century (and Churches) with modern kitchens bathrooms, heating systems.

The Military Museums? First, a visit to Churchill's Command Post under #10 Downing St with its life-like depiction of those grim 1942 days, Hindon, Duxford, Parnham-all with complete Air and Ground displays that would have kept us busy all day. The whole of the British Isles were on display. For that matter, and one could have spent months going from one historic spot to another.

Ian McLachlan! How could anyone have spent the time he did with us, being the perfect host all the way-then looking at doing it again with his next most favorite Bomb Group. His slide show alone had to take hours & hours to prepare and it was worth it. Our heart-felt thanks, Ian, and to all of you-it was great to see Ian Hawkins, too. What a wonderful bunch of historians. Their research and writings need to be read by all of us-they keep our history alive.

Our Travel Agent? Thanks to John & Ruth Pettenger for doing the work over here-added congratulations to the David Wade organization. Sue & Jackie, who shepherded us around couldn't have been more accommodating and helpful. No matter what came up, they handled it. "My room's too small"-they found a bigger one. "I Can't eat meat"-they came up with fish. Whatever it was, they handled it with courtesy and good humour.

The prices? We were warned that a Pound, which cost about \$1.85, would buy about what \$1 does here-and the warning was right. Beer in a Pub cost about \$2.50, a Scotch about \$3 or \$4. Gasoline was about \$5 a gallon and the regular price on our rooms at that nice Hotel in London ran up around \$200 per day. A train trip from Cambridge to Edinburgh was over \$100 one way. So, if you're going, take money! Clothing-incredibly high, both ladies & mens.

And finally, the people of the Great Ashfield area? The friendly warmth of our whole visit started the first night at the banquet at the Bull Hotel. We may have missed some, but were able to visit with John and Lucy Ellis, Stephen and Petrina Miles, Rowley and Angela Miles, Les and Peggy Gordon, Roy and Diane Barker, Beattie Orford, and Kate Miles. More at the dedication ceremony-even met Ray Goodwin, the artist who donated the painting of the 3 trees that we raffled in Fargo-and all the hosts for the lunches after the Dedication-and the barbeque-we were really wined and dined and treated like royalty. A truly memorable experience and each of us received a handsome crystal paper weight engraved with a B-17 and dated-a beautiful souvenir of our visit, a gift from the people of Great Ashfield.



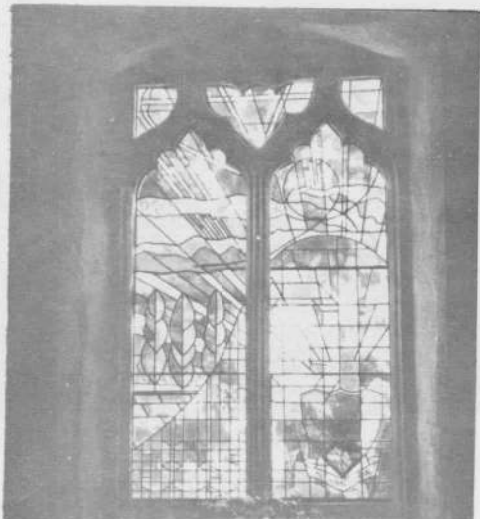
"Our" St. Andrews Church during the window dedication



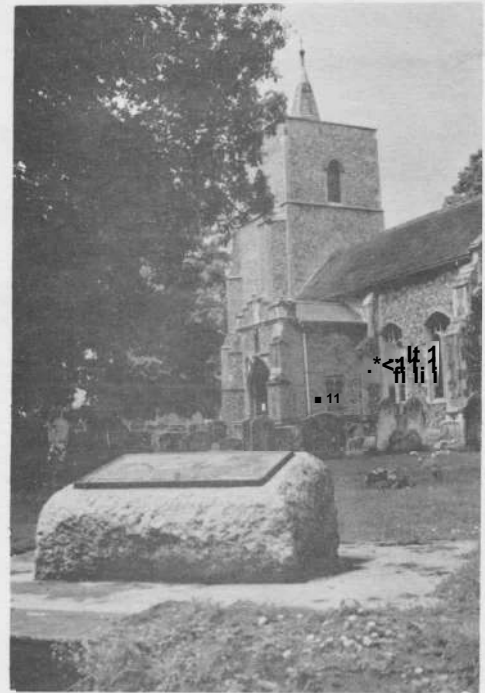
Just after the dedication at Church



Colors presented at All Saints Church
The 385th memorial stone is in the foreground



The stained glass window from inside the Church



The Great Ashfield Church with 385th memorial in foreground

Dear Ed,

i am enclosing some pictures made while we were at Great Ashfield this May. Among them is a photo I made in 1945 out of the door of my barracks in the 550th Squadron area. While there this time, we found the same, exact spot with the same farm house and barn. That picture is also enclosed. It is located at Darsham's Farm. Mr and Mrs. Clements, the present residents, were out to greet us. Another photo shows the building in Communal Area No. 2 where the 550th showers were located and it shows that wet, often muddy field on Darsham's farm we used to cross after our showers to return to the 550th area. Remember?

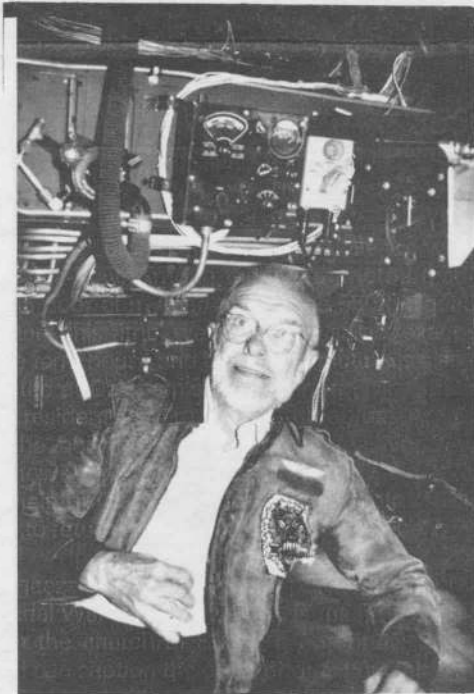
The old geezer in the Navigator's position in the Mary Alice, the Imperial War Museum's B-17, is me. The cushion was in a pew in the church in Bury St. Edmonds. But you were there and can caption the other photos yourself.

After our very enjoyable and nostalgic visit to Great Ashfield, Louise and I rented a car and drove to the Manchester area to visit some English friends, then drove up into Scotland for more sightseeing and fun. I even managed not to kill us driving on the wrong side on those narrow roads!

I spoke to Ian McLachlan about the possibility of his writing a history of the 385th. I know, I too have the blue book, but there are errors, and more importantly, I'd like to see it full of "air stories" that all of us have. Many have appeared in the Hardlife Herald. Can I work up some enthusiasm for this?

Sincerely,

Bill Varnedoe
5000 Ketova Way
Huntsville, AL 35803
(205) 881-3288



Bill Varnedoe at Navigator's Post



We helped with the roof repair
for "our" Church



Cushion in a pew at the
Church in Bury St. Edmond



Darsham's Farm, 1945
As seen from the back door of the BOQ
of the 550th Sqdn, 385th BG



CELEBRATING THE MIGHTY EIGHTH



ROYAL WORCESTER

Plate shown smaller than actual size.
Diameter: 8 inches (21cm)

The quality of reproduction here is inferior to that of the actual plate.

THE MIGHTY EIGHTH COMMEMORATIVE PLATE 1942-1992

This unique plate has been specially commissioned for the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the United States of America Eighth Air Force, "The Mighty Eighth", and their entry into combat in the European theatre of war during World War II. As well as being an appreciation from Britain for the major part it played in regaining freedom for Europe, the plate is also a dedication to the men that did not return.

The plate is to be manufactured to order by ROYAL WORCESTER LIMITED in the finest bone china. Royal Worcester was established in 1751 and has held the Royal Warrant since 1789. Each plate is fired in England with the dedicated craftsmanship associated with Royal Worcester, one of the most prestigious names in the history of fine bone china. Twelve different colours are used to achieve this striking commemorative design.

THE IDEA



The idea of this commemorative plate and its design is by David Johnson who as a boy in the war years lived on the edge of a World War II air base in Horham, Suffolk and watched the daily air base traumas first hand and was known by many of the ground and air crews. David is pictured above, the third child from the left in front of "his" two crew chiefs, behind which stands their B17 "New York Express". For his contribution since the war David has been made a life member of the Eighth Air Force Historical Society, a life member of the 95th Bomb Group (H) Association and the Chairman of Friends of the 95th Bomb Group in England.

THE ARTIST

The artist, Geoffrey Wheeler, lived next to the Mighty Eighth Headquarters in High Wycombe during the war and now is a resident of East Anglia. He is more widely known for his specialist steam locomotive and traction engine illustrations but also shares the same time absorbing interest in the air war he experienced as a teenager.

THE STORY ON THE PLATE

It was decided to give the plate no gold edging, and therefore no boundary, suggesting an endless sky which the Mighty Eighth knew only too well. The numbers of all the flying groups which made up the Mighty Eighth are shown round the rim of the plate and are therefore shown "in the sky" where they belong. These groups were either assigned or attached to the Eighth. It is hoped that Mighty Eighth veterans will proudly enjoy identifying their individual group on the plate.

The Mighty Eighth Insignia is in the centre of the plate with the two flags of the United States and Great Britain, "Old Glory" and the "Union Jack", without which no plate symbolising friendship would be complete. Below the insignia, the words "The Mighty Eighth" are written on the famous yellow ribbon. At the bottom of the plate is the "handshake" of friendship together with the dates 1942-1992.

The selection of the B17 Fortress, B24 Liberator, P38 Lightning, P47 Thunderbolt and the P51 Mustang was limited by space. It is acknowledged that there were many other types of aircraft used by the Mighty Eighth in the war but it is felt that veterans would not argue with this choice. These five aircraft, aligned as they are with the five points of the star in the Mighty Eighth's famous emblem, are shown with the three fighters "the three little friends" flying over and protecting the heavy bombers. The bomber crews welcomed the sight of the fighter support but unfortunately was not always available to the flyers; the skies were not always "blue skies".

On the rear of the plate, as well as the Royal Worcester back stamp, are listed the men behind the flying groups, the numbers of the various ground support groups that together with the flying groups formed the Eighth Air Force in Europe. Without the ground support the flyers could not have operated.

PRIORITY BUY ORDER FORM

I wish to place an order for the Mighty Eighth commemorative plate for \$39.60 plus \$3.00 towards postage and packing. Total \$42.60.

As the plates are manufactured to order and are being dispatched to you direct from the factory in England you will receive your plate 8 to 10 weeks from receipt of order.

QUANTITY REQUIRED _____

SHIP TO:

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

City

State

Zip

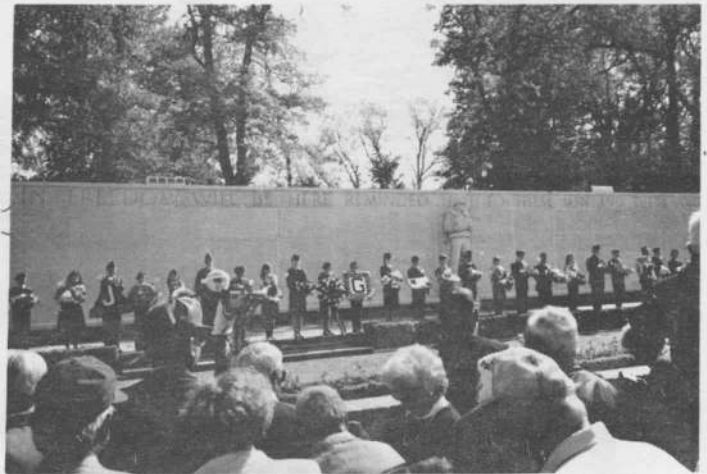
Return this order form to:

*John F. Pettenger,
385th B.G. Assoc.,
P.O. Box 117,
Laurel,
FL 34272 - 0117*

*PLEASE ENCLOSE CHECK
PAYABLE TO 385th B.G.M.A.*



The 385th flowers at Madingly
"It Stood Out!"



Our floral memorial at Madingly



Fly-over at Madingly.
P51 s? Your paddle-foot Editor thought so.



We had a good look at Madingly. The Sally B-we helped
restore her and we got our money's worth!



"Sally B", a beautifully restored and maintained B-17F and
star of the movie "Memphis Belle". The nose art for the
"Belle" is painted on the right forward fuselage. The aircraft
is located at Duxford Aerodrome. The cockpit - looks and
smells like new!



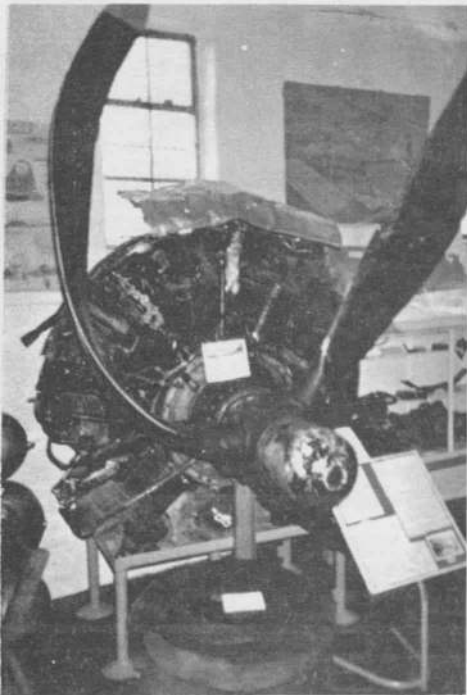
Bill Varnedoe & John Pickett
Duxford



Ian



At Duxford



Engine from Hutchinson's plane
dug out of the swamp and on display
at Parham Museum



Ian McLachlan
welcoming us to the Control Tower
and Museum at Parham



Back - Rawley Miles & Sid Colthorpe
Front - John and Lucy Ellis



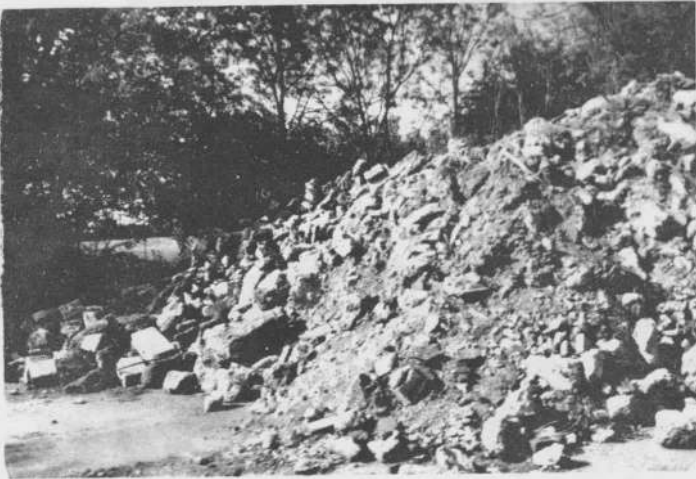
Steven & Petrina Miles at the Bull Hotel
for the opening banquet



A Section of the runway at Great Ashfield on the farm of Roy Barker



Bldgs still left in the Communal Area No. 2



The old runway? Or maybe part of a hard-stand



Our 3 trees



John Pickett tells Louise Varnedoe an "air story" at the Flying Fortress Pub.



Roy Courtney & Ed Stern



A Couple of good looking models



Some of our Great Ashfield friends waving a last goodbye.



Flying Fortress Pub
R-L Ed McElroy, Bob & Connie McNeilly, Mary & Herb Macy
385th Reunion Tour



Marie Menkoff & Irene Huber

GI AIRMEN IN EAST ANGLIA

Three new videos 245.



This video tells the story of the airbases and aircraft, the bombing missions and the experience of the US servicemen in East Anglia on and off duty 194^

The commentary is written and narrated by Roger A. Freeman, historian of the 8th Air Force. The video is compiled entirely from original 1940s archive film, most of it in colour, shot by the airmen themselves, together with excerpts from official USAAF films. 40 minutes £17.50

GI Airmen in East Anglia is also available on NTSC American standard video at £22.50. Other videos available on NTSC by request. For air mail postage to USA please add £3.50 for one video, £6.00 for two videos Payment in pounds sterling. .



The videos are available by post from the East Anglian Film Archive on receipt of a cheque made payable to the University of East Anglia. Prices include postage and packing except on overseas orders. For other videos and East Anglian outlets see overleaf.

East Anglian Film Archive, Centre of East Anglian Studies, University of East Anglia, Norwich NR4 7TJ, United Kingdom 0603 592664

EDITOR'S NOTE: This is a gripping video that's made for showing here. It's worth seeing. If you order a copy, take it to every reunion-it will be a BIG attraction.

385th BGMA APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP

Please Print

LAST NAME, First, MI.

Spouse's Name

Street or P.O. Box #

(J)
Telephone Number

City, State, & Zip Code

Squadron or Support Unit

The annual dues are Ten Dollars (\$10.00)
Life-time memberships are one payment of \$100.00
Make Check out to "385th BGMA" and mail to:
John F. Pettenger, Treas.
Box 11 7
Laurel, FL 34272-01 17

POW Capture Data
Date
Place
Stalag Unit

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

EDITOR'S NOTE: Some interesting book reports for your information (from 8th AF Historical Society 2/92).

Casdorff, Paul D.

Let the Good Times Roll: Life at Home in America During WWII

New York: Paragon House
276 pp., \$21.95, ISBN 1-55778-164
Publication Date: 1989

The title of this book indicates clearly its major theme. "America," writes Paul Casdorff, professor of history at West Virginia State College, "came out of the war in better shape than when it started." The "good times rolled as the country joined in the crusade to beat Hitler and Tojo, and for those Americans who did not suffer in combat or lose loved ones. World War II was nothing short of wonderful." More seriously, Casdorff argues that the domestic home-front marked great changes in American life with no segment of the nation untouched by war-time prosperity, dislocation, and changing values and sensibilities. "Money and movement," Casdorff writes, "brought on by the war fostered a what-the-hell attitude that did not vanish with the return of peace in 1945." Casdorff attempts to tell this watershed story with a chronological organization using thirteen chapters beginning in December 1941 and closing with Japan's surrender in August 1945. He wants the reader to understand what was happening just as if he or she were absorbing the information gleaned from the newspaper and popular magazines of the period. Surprisingly, it works better than might be expected because Casdorff bounces often and goes backward and forward in time in vignettes as a particular topic arises. For example, when the problem of

conversion from peace-time production to war-time economy arises in December 1941, he outlines what F.D.R. had attempted before, and he sketches out the entire organizational problems and solutions that were to come. Similarly, he uses brief biographical sketches to put people and events in perspective. Short sketches of sports heroes, politicians, musicians (country included), entertainment figures, and intellectual opinion makers and leaders of all sorts dot his chapters. Interspersed is also a roll-call of interesting information on such things as the draft and draft-evasion, victory gardens, rationing and the illegal market, price controls and production, strikes and labor relations, wojjien in the work force, and race relations.

Although there is a growing interest in just how World War II acted as a major turning point in American history, this book, except for its new detail here and there, offers to the historian little new interpretational understanding of the home front as a catalyst for the America to come. The strength of the book lies in its often eccentric choice of topics and the odd bits of information presented. It is an old-fashioned social history, intended for a general audience of non-historians and is without notes or bibliography. It most resembles Richard Lingeman's *Don't You Know There's a War On?* (1970), and together they do give a fine list of wonderful minutia, but historians will still need to read John Morton Blum's *V Was for Victory* (1976) as well as Geoffrey Perrett's *Days of Sadness, Years of Triumph* (1973) to put that minutia into better perspective than just "good times."

JAMES A. HODGES
The College of Wooster

The Munster Raid: Bloody Skies Over Germany, by Ian Hawkins. TAB/AERO Books (McGraw-Hill), Paperback, 400pp, 6" x 9", B&W, 1984, 1990. ISBN0-08-365001-6.

This is a book you can quickly become immersed in — it captures you. It tells much more than the story of a few bloody bombing missions, including the building of the bases, the first-hand perspectives of the various people involved, and stories of the combat fliers. It is a stop-frame, variable-speed movie of the times, first setting the stage, then telling the story, stopping to examine critical aspects, and giving candid comments of the participants. But it doesn't stop there — it continues to the present day, telling where those people are now and what their mature impressions are. It is also a documentary, containing accurate historical details about units, tonnage, etc., and it has an index that makes it ever so more useful just for enjoyment or for serious study. It is supplemented by a softcover booklet entitled *Seven Days in October*, by Paul M Andrews, an expert Air Force Analyst and 8th Air Force historian, who records all of the aircraft involved and the activities of the various groups — a very valuable addition. (JWH)

B-17s Over Berlin: Personal Stories from the 95th Bomb Group (H), edited by Ian Hawkins. Brassey's (US), Inc., McLean, VA. Hard Cover, 308 pp, 8-1/4" x 9-1/2", B&W, Order from Macmillan Publishing Co., Front and Brown Streets, Riverside, NJ 08075.

In his own words Ian Hawkins says: "This book is an attempt to tell the story of the 95th Bombardment Group from the viewpoint of those who are in an ideal position to relate the facts of what happened, when it happened, and how it happened....This is the story of young American civilians who were suddenly thrown together amidst the maelstrom of a global war that took place nearly fifty years ago; how they rapidly adjusted to service life, how they lived, how they fought, and how they died." Hawkins lists himself as feditor of the book, because it is mostly made up of first-hand accounts of the participants; but he is much more than that. His is the creative frius that selects and arranges the material and inserts the commentaries and footnotes that make it a really magnificent group history, in my opinion, *second to none*. In presenting the story of this one legendary group, he tells the story of almost the entire 8th Air Force, which is no mean task; but he did it! (JWH)

Letters to the Editor:

Dear Ed,

Where to start? I think, first, we must thank all those who helped to organise our return to Great Ashfield for the 385th Reunion and the Dedication of the stained glass window, John Pettinger, I think had a hand in it and invited us to the dinner at Long Melford, David Wade, and particularly Mrs. Beatie Orford and her brother Robert Miles who entertained us at Hall Farm for the weekend, and those others at Great Ashfield who arranged things and made us so welcome on our return after seven years. How like 1976, the brilliant sunshine, the David Wade coaches unloaded their passengers, and happy clusters of American and Local people busy chatting, looking for old friends and enjoying being together.

We all enjoyed the simple service conducted by the Rector, the Rev. Frank Potter and the magnificent address by the Bishop, followed by the moving dedication ceremony as the window was formally made part of the Church; and those missing comrades so fondly remembered.

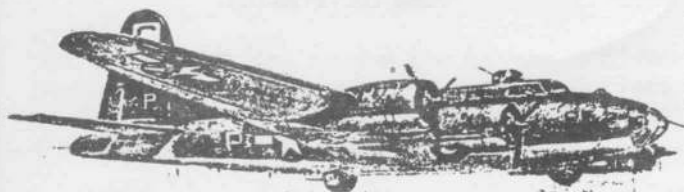
The dinner at Long Melford was a very special occasion, the gathering in the reception where we met once again so many who remembered cups of tea or coffee at Fox Farm, and especially Charles and Peggy Smith who entertained us so well at their home in Atlanta in 1979, and Bob Valliere, whose wife, Nancy, was sadly not with us, who entertained us in New York the same year.

It was good to sit once more in our old seats in All Saints Church on Sunday morning and to take part with our friends in the familiar service of Holy Communion; afterwards to join with others once again to admire the new window, so beautiful in the spring sunshine.

Once again to the old airfield where we shared happy memories with many old friends, also, with several, we remembered John Ford, and the occasion when his daughters spread his ashes from a light aircraft on the scene below which he loved so well.

Back in Monmouth we still have our memories, and we would like to say that if any members and families are in this area to discover the beauties of the Wye Valley and our Border Countryside, there will always be a 'cup of tea or coffee' as of old at Fox Farm.

John and Lucy Ellis
13 Dixton Close
Monmouth
Gwent NP5 3HE .
Monmouth (0600) 215944



Dear Ed,

THEY STILL MAKE BRITISH WAR BRIDES.

Several months ago before going to the reunion in England, I had been corresponding and phoning Jennie Sage, a British lady whom I met thru a singles club.

When we met it was love at first sight for both of us. Inclosed is a photo of Jennie and I in the front of the All Saints Church the day the stained glass was dedicated.

We are engaged and will be married later this year.

BEST REUNION I EVER ATTENDED.

Sincerely,

Paul W. Van Boven
385th Bomb Group
551 Squadron



Paul W. Van Boven and
Jennifer Sage
New British War Bride to Be



Right Reverend John Dennis
Bishop of St. Edmundsbury and Ipswich

EDITOR'S NOTE: Ty wrote a thank you to 81st Tac Wing who furnished color guard in England.

Dear Sir:

The 385th Bombardment Group entered combat in Europe in July, 1943, with an authorized strength of nine ten-man combat crews in each of four squadrons. In the succeeding twenty-two months, the group sustained on the order of two thousand casualties and losses of approximately 169 B-17's. In 1975, some survivors organized a "memorial association" in Atlanta to renew and/or sustain friendships formed during the war.

On departure from England, a memorial plaque to our fallen members was removed to the local churchyard for permanent safekeeping. The Association in recent years has financed a memorial stained glass window in "our" church at Great Ashfield, dedication of which was conducted by Bishop John Dennis (ex-RAF) on the 16th of May, 1992.

To those of us in attendance, one of the outstanding aspects of the event was the official presence of our colors and color guard. The personnel selected for this duty were exemplary in bearing and demeanor and are deserving of our commendation and thanks. They reflected favorably on our country, the USAF, your command, and even, if one may stretch a point, a few old soldiers.

Thank you for providing this detail - and them for giving us a thrill!

Sincerely yours,

Tyler C. Winton
Lt. Col. USAF, Retired



Ty Winton with color guard at our memorial plaque at the church.

Dear Ed,

While reading the June 1992 Newsletter I had this idea that maybe you could help me. This is my story: When the 385th reunion was held in Florida hosted by Jay Dunlop (last minute, couldn't make it) I sent many of Bob's (my husband) war things - uniforms etc. One was a very little notebook (sure he kept in his pocket) with all the missions, time, place, etc. in it. For some reason I didn't get it back and Jay tried with no results. Maybe you could mention this in one of your newsletters. Someone might have it and didn't know where it came from or where to return it.

We lost Bob at an early age and his two sons are still asking about this book which they had seen and loved. It meant so much to us and I would love to surprise them and get it back in the family where it belongs. Bob & I made it to one of the first reunions. Someday I hope to go again. Still keep in touch with Jay Dunlop (Pilot), Bob Burr (Co-pilot), and my Bob was Navigator. "My Gal Sal" B-17, 385th. Not sure if "My GAL Sal" was the same one they flew over England. I think there was a Bob White also - never got to know the rest of the crew.

Hope you can help me out. Enjoy reading the Newsletter.

Thank you very much.

Sincerely,

Ethel S. Piechatte
2651 Valley Drive
Saginaw, Mich. 48603

Forgot to tell you we have four daughters but the boys are the ones that want this book so badly. Daughter No. 1, Born July 1945. Bob got home day before she was born. They let him complete his mission without R&R so he could make it- "How about that".

Dear Ed,

In June issue - read with great interest article by Armando Marsilli concerning Gerald Schafer. He was in Cleatis Cornwell crew. Navigated us from Kearney Neb to Valley field England perfectly by the southern route. Would like to correspond with Armando or Gerald's relatives. We were shot down April 22, 1944. Gerald was not with us that day.

So sorry his chute failed him. I was Co-Pilot.

Yours truly,

Harlan Cook
6245 N. Frankfort Pl.
Tulsa, OK 74126-1507

Dear Ed,

It was nice to see you at Great Ashfield in May. I hope everything went well.

Ed, I need some help. Does anyone remember Robert Grover. Sadly he died in 1964 at the age of 44. Robert was with the 385th. I have part of an address (40 Lake View Drive, Burton, Ohio). Does he have any relatives, if so I would like to hear from them.

Many thanks,

Clint Cansdale
"White House"
New Road, Elmswell
NR Bury-St-Edmunds
Suffolk IP30 9BT
Tel: 0359 42246



F. L-R S/Sgt Harold Rusten, T/Sgt Lester Shaak, S/SGT William Lichowit, T/Sgt William Kratzer.
B. L-R Lt. Richard Meyer, Lt. Charles Purtell, Capt. Harold Madsen, Lt. ?? Thurnton, Lt. Ernest .Harper (not in picture.)

Dear Ed,

Enclosed is a "snapshot" of our crew the 550th Bomb Squad of the 385th Bomb Group.

In June of 1944, we were in New Foundland, where we were awakened by an "explosion" of a B-24 on the tarmac. We thought the Germans had landed!

We arrived in Iceland on June 6 and was greeted with the news of the invasion of D-Day. From there we went to England, where a few days earlier the Germans had bombed the hangar at the Air Base.

Within the next 9 months we flew 30 missions, some were "Lead Crew Missions" with Capt. Harold Madsen of the 550th Squadron. I was proud and still am to be able to serve my country with a great "Bunch of Guys".

P.S. Do you remember our mascot "Joker", a black dog?

Best wishes to all,

Lester L. Shaak
RR1, Box 680
Wernersville, PA 19565

Capt. Harold E. Madsen - Pilot
Lt. Ernest R. Harper - Co-Pilot
Lt. Charles H. Purtell - Navigator
Lt. Richard A. Meyer - Bombardier
T/Sgt Lester L. Shaak - Engineer
T/Sgt William S. Kratzer - Radio Operator
S/Sgt Robert W. Houston - Ball Turret
S/Sgt William S. Lichowit - Waist Gunner
S/Sgt Harold V. Rusten - Tail Gunner
Lt. ????? Thurnton - P.F. Radio Operator

Dear Ed,

This is in response to a letter by Roy Batey in the April 1992 issue of Hardlife Herald. He stated that he would like to know the history of the B-17 'Gypsy Princess'. I can furnish some of that history.

I was her first pilot. She was given to me on March 3, 1945 with only fifty hours on her. I named her and commissioned the nose art, but I cannot remember who did it.

My crew and I flew her on her first mission on March 5, 1946 to Ruhland to bomb an oil refinery. Then I think on all of the following missions:

March 8th - Dortmund/Oil Refinery
March 9th - Siest/Marshalling Yards
March 12 - Stetin/Oil Depot
March 15th - Oranienberg/Marshalling Yards
March 18th - Berlin
March 22'nd - Ratagen/Ground Support

We then flew 'Rum Dum' on its 98th, 99th, and 100th missions. The 'Gypsy Princess' may have been flown by another crew on these three missions: (I don't know this for sure.)

March 31 st - Brandenburg
April 3 - Keil
April 4th - Keil

I believe I flew my 34th and 35th missions in her on April 5th to a jet field near Nuremberg and on April 7th to a small arms factory at Gustrow.

That's the last I saw of her. She was a great plane, warmer and more quiet and responsive than 'Stork Club', 'Rum Dum', and the other's I flew.

Sincerely,

Lewis A. Smith, O.D.
321 South Hillside
Wichita, Kansas 67211-2194

Dear Ed,

Last summer, I took my vacation in Europe and spent a wonderful 10 days in England. I took a day to visit the home of the 385th at Great Ashfield. Roy Barker, whose farm is the site of what was once the air field found me at the Great Ashfield Church and became my most wonderful host for a tour of the places that hold still many memories for you and the members of the 385th. As we drove from place to place in Roy's farm truck, he told me many stories passed on to him by his grandfather who farmed the home place at the time you were there. Is it true that it took the MP's two weeks to finally round up the two trainloads of girls who came from London to help you celebrate your 200th mission? It was a wonderful experience to visit Great Ashfield and I hope many of you can maintain the strong ties that bind us to that place and the friends we have there. The photo on this card is one I took of the B-17 that starred in the movie "The Memphis Belle". The plane is in "mint" condition and on display at the Duxford Aerodrome. I received the May '91 Hard Life Herald, but none since. Can you catch me up on any issues since then?

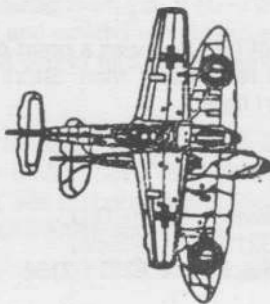
God Bless,

Ray Tiecher

EDITOR'S NOTE: We very much doubt the story about girls on our Base after the 200th mission party - but we've learned of several things that went on that we knew nothing about. Does anyone have any factual information on Roy's story? Please don't answer unless you KNOW.



Ray Tiecher on the bombing and gunnery range near Tabulr, Saudi Arabia.



Dear Ed,

The article in the April 1992 issue, Major Nelson underground hiding in N. French Village, by 2nd Lt, John Alquist needs additional facts to make it more interesting for the readers.

The B-17 involved was the "Raunchy Wolf" and the navigator who crash landed the plane with Major Richard Miller, is the writer, 2nd Lt. John W. Bartemus. Also, seven, not ten, of the crew hit the silks. The engineer, Frank Pifer, was killed by a direct hit in the top turret from an FW-190.

Richard Miller, the Co-pilot, is the only member of the crew I have been in touch with over the years and he is now deceased.

Very truly yours,

Joe W. Bartemus
62 Westland Ave.
Rochester, NY 14618

P.S. Earl Frye was the pilot on this crew.

Dear Ed,

P.S. When I got home in June-'45 my wife told me we had been invited for lunch by Sterling Bristol Jr.'s parents. Lt. Bristol's sister, (still in high school) was there. A brother was a P.B.Y. pilot in the Pacific at the time. It was the toughest duty I ever went through.

Buell Sedgwick Martin

Dear Editor,

My husband, Lawrence E. Oliver, was tail gunner on plane #239908. He completed his life on earth Feb. 13, 1992. In going through his papers I found this letter that he wrote back in 1989.

His time in the service of his country, his subsequent capture and imprisonment were very important to him - he was a true American in every sense of the word.

We planned several times in the past years to attend a reunion but his health just never permitted. First a stroke in '83, heart attack in '87 and finally Cancer in '92. But each time he was there in spirit.

I had his letter typed because his hand writing, due to the stroke, was hard to decipher. He enjoyed the newsletter so much.

Sincerely,

Norma Oliver

Dear Ed:

I was surprised to see plane #239908 piloted by 1st Lt. Fred Fulton. (Fred Fulton, page 5 of June 1989 Newsletter). Fred and seven others were killed on 3-23-44. Two of us bailed out after the plane exploded.

Our's was a short lived tour starting with the day we arrived at the base around 10 A.M. Having stowed my gear at my new quarters, I decided to check out the operations. Upon locating the board listing crews, I noticed an Oliver was listed as tail gunner flying with a Lt. Clark. Wanting to meet this other T.G. Oliver, I asked a Cpt. Bennett where I might locate him and the Capt. said he didn't know him since "he had arrived only that morning." The early mission had been scrubbed because of fog and the raid on the rocky coast in the Pas de Calais's area was a late plan. Finally arriving at the hard stand and drawing my ammo and gear, I was met by one mad pilot who advised me I'd have to load and lock during take off. I test fired about the time we hit the coast of France, made our bomb run, plaster whatever (?) and headed for home. No flak, no fighters. I asked myself "what is all of this bull they have been feeding the folks back home about how rough it is - why it's nothing but a piece of cake - a can of corn!"

The next day I flew with the same crew and pilot to Posnan, Poland. A three hour and 40 minute running battle with some of Hermann's best. Yeah, piece of cake! Yeah, can of corn! Yeah, stupid! The battle time has gotten longer through the years, but not much. I fired approximately 2500 rounds of ammo, warped both barrels on my guns, and got my wrists slapped at the briefing the next morning by the armament officer. Later Lt. Clark told me to forget what I'd been told at the briefing and he didn't care if I had been referred to as "Machine Gun Kelly", the sound of my guns was like music to his ears.

The first mission I flew with my regular crew was to Regensburg. Flak like you would not believe raked us all the way out. We lost one engine on the way in and one over the target. There we were, looking at the majestic Alps - so close you felt that you could reach out and touch them!

I said that Fred Fulton was some kind of pilot. Well! he flew that plane back to England on two engines. Now I've heard of other pilots flying on two engines, but did they fly that far? We got to the base about dark-thirty with 78 holes in our plane, and already listed as MIA.

Later came the recalled mission to Berlin and the next day we made it all the way. I cannot remember the missions in order, but I seem to remember Brunswick, Rostock or Lubreck, Berlin, Regensburg, Pas de Calais's, Posnan, Munster.

On March 23, 1944, we had a mission I, the old veteran that I was, considered a "Milk run". As the old Dutchman said, "Too soon we get too old, too late we get too smart."

On the above date, my "milk run", with the help of some faulty navigation, turned into a nightmare. The Luftwaffe rose and hit us with everything they could put in the sky. From the coast going in all the way to the target and back to Holland we fought them, losing both wingmen and two

stragglers that replaced them. The only relief that we got was when we passed over the 80 mm battery that put in their first bursts right in the middle of bur formation. We were hit in the lift wing, and almost immediately, Alexander, our ball turret gunner, reported gasoline pouring off the trailing edge of the wing.

We were attacked again by FW-190's with one of them hanging behind our left wingman, rocking from side to side, blasting away. Finally, the B-17 pulled up, stalled, and went down.

The Jerry was a cocky S.O.B. and proceeded to slide over to give us the same treatment, but he misjudged his distance, and I blew his ass away. Honest Injun, I could have hit him with a rock. Let's hear it for old "Dead Eye".

When I arrived in the waist I noticed gasoline fumes so strong that you could almost swim in them, and I no sooner unfasted the crotch straps on my 'chute when someone yelled "Fighters!" It was a frontal attack with 20 mm cannon. The plane shuddered and the last shell exploded in the radio room and must have ignited the gasoline fumes because there was instant fire from the radio room forward.

With the engines running wild, the plane fell off on its left wing and twisted to the right throwing me against the waist door. I opened the door and pushed myself out. Momentarily, the door closed over my seat type 'chute, and held me dangling, staring at the horizontal stabilizer. With what seemed like an eternity, the plane's twisting, and my pushing and praying, the door finally let go and I was falling free.

Now there isn't anyone up there except you and God, and you know He is wondering if I can really do anything on my own, so I grabbed the ring and pulled it! Never mind the guy that talked about free falling 15,000 feet before he opened his 'chute. Come on man, I've been there! He was either so scared he couldn't move, or he couldn't remember the Indian's name:

Would you believe that the previous night we listened to this professional "sky diver" who said that in order to direct your descent you must first double yourself up into a ball, then slowly stick out an arm and then a leg and soon you will have everything under control. Well he lost me on the first step. Do you have any idea how fast you spin doubled up in a ball in that thin air? I also wondered when he last bailed out of a burning B-17, but why go into that?

I looked down and saw a 'chute before it dropped into the clouds, and I later found out that it was Travelstead, the man who replaced me as tail gunner. He landed on one side of the woods, where a farmer helped him get into the underground.

My landing sometime later was on the other side of the woods. I enjoyed 5 minutes of freedom, eventually ending up in Stalag Luft I, 75 to 100 miles north of Sweden, at beautiful Barth on the Baltic, where seven sewers meet the sea.

Written by Lawrence E. Oliver.

Dear Ed,

Thank you very much for another very interesting newsletter. Needless to say, all of us in East Agnolia are very much looking forward to renewing friendships with the many 8th Air Force members, who will shortly be making a nostalgic return to their former airfield, in this 50th anniversary year.

I am DELIGHTED to know that Bob Burch has finally located his uncle's (Jim Burch) grave in Southern France. I didn't know that he'd finally located the grave until the 385th B.G. Newsletter arrived today. Full circle; ; ; ;

When Bob Burch first wrote to me about four years ago for my assistance in trying to locate Jim Burch's grave, I wrote back with as many names and addresses as possible that I knew could possibly be of help in his search. I also recall telling Bob in my letter "Whatever you are looking for. Always remember that someone, somewhere has all the information you need." So it has proved...

I'm sending the story of Lawrence Oliver, (385th B.G.) to you for POSSIBLE inclusion in a future 385th newsletter. The story recently arrived from Joe Blagg (95th B.G. veteran) in Brownwood, Texas, who was one of many 95th B.G. veterans who assisted me in compiling the 95th Bomb Group Anthology. "B-17's Over Berlin" which is now in its third printing.

Incidentally, the Munster Raid "Black Week" book is now in its sixth printing, so the graphic accent of John Pettenger, "Dick" Whitlow, etc. are still in print.

Enclosed are recent versions referring both updated books. I suggest that the 385th B.G. Veterans should seriously consider forming an ANTHOLOGY COMMITTEE and compile "The 385th Bomb Group Anthology. You would be VERY SURPRISED at the number of UNTOLD stories/accounts regarding what will happen when the LAST 385th B.G. veteran passes away.

What other B.G. and F.G. Association does to establish scholarships for young American students (usually relatives of veterans of the 8th Air Force. This is a possibility.

All the best and thank you,

Ian Hawkins & Family

LAWRENCE OLIVER

During the Second World War S/Sgt. Lawrence Oliver was a tail gunner with the 385th Bombardment Group (H), Great Ashfield, Suffolk, England. He grew up in the town of Groesbeck, Texas, U.S.A.

On 23rd March 1944, Lawrence's crew, whose pilot was Lt. Fred Fulton, went with the 385th on a mission to Munster, Germany. Their B-17 Flying Fortress, No. 42-39908, sustained so much battle damage that it became doubtful whether they would be able to return to their base in England.

Soon, it was decided to bail out, and the order was given, the crew knew that they were over Holland. Lawrence lan-

ded in a ditch which was full of water. As he was climbing out of the ditch, the Germans arrived and took him prisoner.

He was loaded on to a truck which proceeded toward a small town nearby. As the truck entered the outskirts of the town, Lawrence noticed a sign by the side of the road announcing the town's name. It was Groesbeck, (Holland). . .
.SMALL WORLD!

Lawrence Oliver died in January, 1992, in the town of Brownwood, Texas. He was a friend of Joe Blagg, also of Brownwood, who was a navigator with the 95th Bombardment Group (H), Horham, Suffolk, at the same time as Lawrence was with the 385th.

Jae Blagg sent this story in April 1992.

Dear Ed,

I enjoyed the last issue of Hardlife with all the reprints of articles from English papers.

I've been reading all the books I can get hold of on WWII, the 8th AF, and B-17's. I must write to Ian Hawkins and get his books. So far I've read Roger Freeman "The Mighty Eighth - A History of the U.S. 8th Army Air Force". Does anyone in the 385th know how many were members of the group? It's a tough question, since there were always new crews arriving and some leaving, but surely one of the operations officers might have an idea of the total number. I'll throw in two suggestions for the next reunion after Spokane: Rapid City, SD and Dayton, OH. Both are somewhat centrally located. Rapid City was the OTU for the 385th, or at least for some of the group. Dayton has an excellent Air Force Museum at Wright-Patterson and is a bit larger in population. There was a "mini-reunion" there a number of years ago which I attended - but I don't think it was a full-scale reunion.

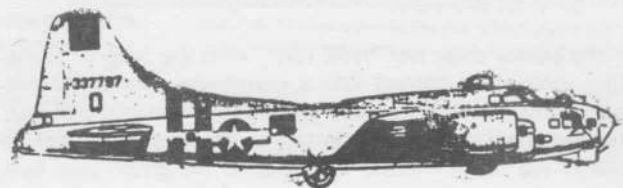
Keep Hardlife coming....I really enjoy it.

Regards,

Hal Heidbreder
211 Cherry
Blissfield, MI 49228

EDITOR'S NOTE:

According to figures in our group tiistory, we estimate that the total personnel was about 3300 combat & 1700 ground. Anyone come up with a more accurate figure? And, we were at Dayton in 1987, Hal.



Dear Ed;

This is something I complain about from time to time, not really important. This time it I refer to Frank May's log.

Whenever the mission of Aug. 9-1944 is mentioned in the newsletter it is shown as a completed mission. The group history does the same.

▼ ■

Sometimes the target is called Furth, and then Nurnberg. The target was a M.E. 110 plant at Furth across the Ludwig canal from Nurnberg.

We were recalled and shot down by Flak, at 10:30 soon after turning for home. We were still carrying the incendiary load and went up fast.

It was my 4th time out with Lt. Bristol, I had done 16 with Lt. Fred Borns and 2 spares. K.I.A. were Lt. Bristol-Lt. Falkner, Nav.-S/Sgy Burroughs TTG. Anthony Mosca B.T.G. was badly burned before bailing out. Anthony, called Jr. was age 19, and was, and still is one of the nice guys of the world. I had the safest exit from the tail.

Lt. Bristol's home is less than 30 minutes from here on Rt. 44.1 visited his mother 9 years ago.

Frank May's log was confiscated, and all my records, from 5s and every piece of paper I ever had in the service, was sent home to my wife after we went down. Was this a group policy? I know other P.O.W.s whose records were not sent home.

I did two of the Maquis missions with Lt. Fred Borns. We are on the loading list, page 25, April Newsletter. About 4 years ago I sent a letter about of the drop trips when we were followed by a B-17 from the 351st group. They were close enough to see the name of the ship. (Scotch & Soda). They salvo'd their bombs (on safe) on a pick. Later at Stalag Luft 4 I would meet a guy from the 351st. He knew the Scotch & Soda crew and they had told him of the strange mission. They thought we had bombs and they wondered: Where the heck are these guys going?

At Stalag Luft-4 (I think on my first day there) I met S/Sgt Atiyeh from our hut in the 550th Sqdn. He is on the loading list McDonald's crew, Page 25, April Newsletter, and the only survivor of the July 13-'44 McDonald/White collision at Munich. (I was still with Boms crew) and we were hit with pieces of B-17s.

We went to the old base in 1989, could not get very well oriented. I thought the 550th crew huts were well uphill from the line, but there was no elevation of the height I seem to remember. Can anybody help on this?

We also went to St. Wendel Germany, site of the little known air crew camp I was in before we were transferred to Luft 4 and then, SOME of us to Luft 1. St. Wendel is all hills and valleys and I could not find the hill top the camp was on. We were riding with another couple in their car so I did not have much control of the trip. It was a Sunday. Places I might have gotten information were closed. We were 4 days on the Moselle at Cochem and down the Rhine to

Rudesheim. The Germania statue is there. It was pointed out to US (P.O.W.s that is) by a German Sgt. on the train trip to St. Wendell in Aug. 44.

It is only June 9 and this letter is finished! A ninth grade education is a terrible thing to waste!

Thank you,

Buell Martin
1 Morningside Ct.
Avon, Conn.
06001-3314

Dear Ed,

My name is Walter Rogers. I was a member of the 549th Squadron, 385th Bomb Group. My ship's name was "Round Trip Ticket" #1, #2, #3. No. 1 was destroyed by a direct hit and exploded, No. 2 exploded on the ground. No. 3 we had so long (76 missions) they made it "War Weary" and retired it, then we were given a new plane which was named "Ruby's Raiders" which we had until we flew back home in it. I was a Crew Chief, with Joe Gill, on these planes until we went home. I'm just writing all this to more or less introduce myself to you.

The reason I'm writing to is to get some information from you if I can.

In the latest issue of the "Hard Life Herald", June 1992 on page 19 you have a list of names of members you say you haven't heard from for years. Well, it happens that two of those men I was well acquainted with. Richard Whiting #13045 was a clerk in the Engineering Office and Roger D. Palmer was a gunner on our first plane crew. If you have the address of these men I would sure like to have you send them to me.

Thank you very much,

Walter Rogers 33273700

My name was changed from Radjickowski



Dear Ed,

I'm writing this letter because I feel strongly that the name of our (ship) plane should be listed among the great ships on the Newsletters masterhead. My crew was the 1st replacement crew to come to the 385th, 549th Sqdn. When we arrived, some of the crews in the group had in as many as 12 missions, however, we were the 2nd crew in the group to complete the then required 25 combat missions. Our 1st mission was 8-24-43 to Eureux and our crew never missed a single mission for the next 12 missions the 385th went on. I went on only 21 missions and was returned back to the states for Pilot training but I never got that far and I spent 10 weeks in the phsyco ward down in Biloxi, Miss., Kessler Field. I did recover from my nerves problem and ended up my career at Dover Air Base, Dover, Del. as a tow reel operator teaching P-47 pilots to fire on a moving target. As you can see from my list of targets we went to on the front of this letter, most were humdingers and perhaps my stay in the ward was justified. The pictures of our crew and the one of the 3 members of the crew with the only picture of the nose showing the "Ground Hog" are my proof that we existed and were part of the 385th. Please put our "Ground Hog" name right up there with the "Golden Goose."

Frances B. Moll

P.S. I meant to tell you where we got the name of our plane. When we got to the 385th the 'Ground Hog' was the oldest plane on the base and it had never been on a mission. Therefore 'Ground Hog'. In fact the Ground Hog still had the high pressure oxygen system in it and we flew it with the high pressure system on several mission before the ground crew, headed up by Sgt. Pete Peterson, took the old obsolete system out and installed the new system for us. Maybe the only plane that ever flew combat for the 385th with the high pressure oxygen system. We got an RBR leave after our 17th mission and were gone for 7 days and while we were on that leave the Hog got shot down, a victim of anti aircraft. Some of our friends told us about it when

we got back from the R&R and how they got lumps in their stomach & throat seeing it go down. I'll sign off again. Ed, I am a member (lifetime) of the 385th Bombardment Group Memorial Association.

Sincerely,

Francis B. Moll

#15 Munster was the worst!

Also I witnessed the Ball crew pull out of formation, all engines running and head down to Sweden. Remember it well!

Dear Ed,

Saw your notice in this issue of the Hardlife. I flew 30 missions with the 1st A.D. 303rd came back and later volunteered for another tour and was sent to the 385th early spring of '45. As I recall our crew Dean C. Johnson, Pilot, did not become operational until the very last. We were slated for some Missions but seems to me Patton or someone had taken them before we took of so all we did of note were the food drops to Holland, so knew very little of the 385th. If you wish to drop me OK, although I have enjoyed the Hardlife a lot. I am damn glad I flew no combat as I a confirmed tail gunner more than six feet, went back over as a ball turret gunner. It was a matter of a waist gunner, shoving the door down to get me fastened in. I went on a raid to Marunburg, 11:30 hrs with the 303rd. No way I could have stood the ball that long.

Thanks Ed, hope you can read this. My health isn't too good.

Jesse W. McLaughlin
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Ozark, Ark. 72949

385th BGMA

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