

OHIO AIR FORCE GOLDEN GOOSE THUNDERBIRD CURLY'S KIDS
 SKY GODDESS HONKY TONK SAL SALLY B ROUNDTRIP TICKET WAR HORSE PICCADILLY QUEEN BLUE CHAMPAGNE WANDERING DUCHESS
 HESITATIN' HUSSY RAUNCHY WOLF "HAYBAG" ANNIE CROWFOUND STARS AND STRIPES YANK GELDING MARY ELLEN DRAGON LADY
 GROUND HOG "HAYBAG" ANNIE MISS AMERICA PREGNANT PORTIA ALEXANDER'S RAGTIME BAND WINNIE THE POOH
 BIG GAS BIRD STAR DUST LIBERTY BELLE HUSTLIN' HUSSY LEADING LADY LONESOME POLECAT HARES BREATH WAR WEARY MARY PET
 ANGELS SISTER LIL AUDREY MR. SMITH SUGAR JO

HARD LIFE



HERALD

SKY CHIEF PERRY'S PIRATES SLO JO TARGET FOR TONIGHT SHACK N LADY
 MR. LUCKY MADAME SHOO SHOO GIZMO JUNIOR OL' DOODLE BUG
 ARBARA B PAT PENDING POSSIBLE STRAIGHT MICKY ROGER THE DODGER HALF AND HALF SWEET CHARIOT
 ROUNDTRIP JACK MY GAL SAL HOMESICK ANGEL LATEST RUMOR MAIDEN AMERICA IMPATIENT VIRGIN RAGGED BUT RIGHT SWINGING DOOR
 WICK BUNNY SPIRIT OF CHICAGO VIBRANT VIRGIN MISSION BELLE FOOLISH VIRGIN RUBY'S RAIDERS MISSISSIPPI ME SATAN'S MATE
 SOUTHERN BELLE HOT CHOCOLATE RAGGEDY ANNE STORE CLUB MAC'S HACK RAGGED BUT RIGHT LULU BELLE SLICK CHECK KITTYS REVIEW
 MARY ELLEN III HELL'S BELLS IN LIKE FLYNN LI-LU LADY ANN CRASH WAGON III THE JOKER AIN'T MISBEHAVIN' BELL OF THE BLUE MARY ELLEN II
 PRINCESS WAL FICKLE FINGER OF ?



NEWSLETTER OF THE 385th BOMBARDMENT GROUP MEMORIAL ASSOCIATION



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

VOL. XX No. 4
 Editor: Ed Stern
 Printed by Interstate Printing
 Fargo, North Dakota
 AUGUST 1993

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

PREZ SEZ:

ASSOCIATION OFFICERS

- PRESIDENT**
 Sid Colthorpe
 316 Woodside Dr.
 Hampton, VA 23669
- 1ST VICE PRESIDENT**
 Robert C. Smith
 N 12019 Anna J Drive
 Spokane, WA 99218
- 2ND VICE PRESIDENTS**
 Mrs. Lee Colthorpe
 316 Woodside Drive
 Hampton, VA 23669
- SECRETARY**
 George Hruska
 7442 Ontario St.
 Omaha, NE 681214
- TREASURER**
 John Pettenger
 Box 117
 Laurel, FL 34272-0117
- CHAPLAIN**
 Rev. James H. Vance
 15929 SE 46 Way
 Bellevue, WA 98006-3240

ASSOCIATION OFFICERS

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

8TH AF HISTORICAL UNIT CONTACT

Gerry Donnelly
 10770 SW 46th
 Miami, FL 33165

HONORARY MEMBERS

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

PAST PRESIDENTS

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

See you in Spokane! It looks like an all time high for this Reunion, but there are still a few rooms left for late-registrants.

You can call Bob Smith at (509-466-7824) or the Sheraton Spokane (509-455-9600) and they'll see that you're taken care of.

Try to get there Wednesday, August 25th (to get in on the Grand Coulee tour)--but the main activities start on Thursday. If you can't make it all, Friday, Saturday, and Sunday will give you plenty of time for reminiscing.

Be there!

Sid



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

CHAPLAIN JIM SEZ:

Hi again,

I have a puzzle a friend gave me that fascinates me greatly. It is a "Peg Puzzle". In playing it you jump one peg over another until you have just one long peg left - then you have won. There is no instruction that tells you which peg to move next. You probably have one yourself or have heard of it.

I tried and tried, dozens of times, to win and always ended up with two or three pegs left that could not be removed. All the time I was wishing I had the answer so I could win. Then one day I won!! I had removed all the pegs, except one, legitimately. Geri, my wife, asked if I could do it again and why not write the instructions. Well, I tried and tried, dozens of times, to win again but I had lost the steps to win. Then one day I ended up with all pegs off the board but one. I won, again!! But I didn't record the steps it took, again!!

I keep trying and I keep winning "eventually" without written instructions of which jump to make next. I finally realized it was the challenge of doing it myself right without written help, that was so satisfying.

Sound like life? We are given instruction on how to face each day (one day at a time) but not how to SOLVE every little problem. We have the one in which to have faith that we can do it but we must learn to do it ourselves. That's the challenge and that's oh so satisfying, when you truly stop to think.

If this gets to you before the Spokane Reunion then I will say 'I hope to see you there' but if it doesn't then I hope you all had a good time!!

As always Sincerely with love,
Jim

Thomas E. Pritchard

DUNMORE - Thomas E. Pritchard, 67 of Dunmore died May 24, 1993, at Pocahontas Memorial Hospital after a short illness.

He was a retired chemical engineer, a member of Phi Kappa Alpha, Marshall University, Honorable Order of the Kentucky Colonels, Dunmore Community Center board of directors and an Air Force veteran of World War II. He was a member of Spring Valley Presbyterian Church, Huntington.

Robert Kramer

Robert W. Kramer, 75, Monroe, died Friday, Nov. 27, 1992 in St. Clare Hospital.

He was born June 22, 1917 in St. Joseph Hospital, Dodgeville, the son of Martin W. and Margie (Williams) Kramer.

He entered the U.S. Army Air Force May 21, 1942 in Milwaukee and served as master sergeant with the 549th Bomb Squad, 385th Bomb Group. He served overseas from June 14, 1943 to Aug. 11, 1945 in the battles of Air Offensive Europe, Normandy, Northern France, Rhineland, Ardennes and Central Europe. He was an armament chief and received the Good Conduct Medal, Distribution Unit Citation Badge and the European-African-Middle Eastern Service medal with four overseas service bars. He was discharged Sept 29, 1945 at Camp McCoy.

After service, he returned to Montgomery Wards. In 1946, Mr. Kramer and Ernest Wenger were in partner-

ship in Wenger-Kramer Hardware Store, formerly Geigel's Hardware. The partnership was dissolved in 1952 and he was employed at Unite Telephone Co., and then at Wisconsin Power & Light Co., where he was a Pioneer member and retired in 1979.

Mr. Kramer was an assistant Scout master, assistant Boy Scout master and was the first DeMola Dad. He was a member of Grao Lutheran Church, a past president of the council and usher, a 50-year member of the Smith Lodge 31 Masonic Order of Free and Accepted Masons, a life member of the 8th Air Force and of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, and a driver for the Nutrition Program.

Survivors include his wife, home; a son, Terry, Baraboo; daughter, Mrs. Duane (Vicki) Fenrick, Campbellsport; and five grandchildren.

World War II veteran loved B-17s

By SALLE RICHARDS CROOKS
Star-Gazette

If anyone wanted to get World War II veteran John Alcock's attention, all they had to do was mention B 17.

"The B-17 was his love," said his wife, Doris Alcock.

John Alcock, 70, of 120 W. McCann's Blvd., Elmira, died Friday, June 11, 1993, of cancer at Elmira's Arnot Odgen Medical Center. Calling hours will be held from 2-4 p.m. and 7-9 p.m. today at Barrett Funeral Home, Elmira. Funeral services will be held there Monday at 11 a.m. Burial will be at Woodlawn Cemetery.

From 1942-45, Mr. Alcock was an Army Air Corps ground crew chief for a B-17 in England. His tour of duty allowed him to get

OBITUARY

John Alcock

to know relatives in England and Scotland.

"He came to America when he was 5 years old," Doris Alcock said.

Mr. Alcock and his older brother came to the United States on an ocean liner a year after his parents had immigrated, she said.

"He was Quite proud of his service," said his daughter, Cheryl Flaherty of Horseheads. "He faithfully attended all his Air Force reunions. He stayed in close touch with his buddies."

Doris Alcock said about 40 members of her husband's unit,

the 548 Bomb Group, a division of the 8th Air Force, hold a reunion every year.

They attended the last one in Tennessee in October.

Mr. Alcock always lived in Elmira once he arrived from Scotland, but he loved to travel, his wife said. He and his brother returned to Scotland to celebrate their 50th year in America. Mr. Alcock and his wife also visited to Scotland after he retired in 1984.

He went to work at Thatcher Glass after he returned from World War II, his wife said. He was a mold maker and supervisor for the mold-making shop in Big Flats.

After he retired, Mr. Alcock also was able to spend more time putting around his yard and small garden and doing

woodworking, his wife said.

"He liked to make toyboxes for the grandchildren," she said.

He also taught himself to cane and refinish furniture, she said.

Mr. Alcock was also an avid golfer, a sport he took up while still in his teens.

"He was the caddy master at Mark Twain Golf Course before he went into the service," she said. "He always liked the game."

Mr. Alcock is survived by his wife, Doris; son, Chris, of North Bend, Ore.; daughters, Diana Basmaian of Spotswood, N.J., Cheryl Flaherty of Horseheads and JoEllen of Broadalbin, N.Y.; brother, Albert Alcock of Tennessee; sister, Joan Brenzo of Elmira Heights; mother-in-law, Lyda Knowlton; eight grandchildren and many aunts, uncles and cousins in England and Scotland.



Tom A. Altobelli
John Alcock
Robert Kramer
Thomas E. Pritchard

1993
June, 1993
Nov, 1992
May, 1993

**ITINERARY
385th BOMB GROUP
50th ANNIVERSARY REUNION
SPOKANE, WA, AUGUST 25-29, 1993**

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 25

9 am - 5 pm - Registration
5 pm - 12:30 am - Grand Coulee Dam Tour

THURSDAY, AUGUST 26

9 am - 5 pm - Registration
8:30 am - 12 Noon - Historic Spokane Tour
11 am - 4 pm - Cruise Lake Cour de'Alene
1 pm - 5 pm - Winery Tour
Hospitality Room - #317 - All Day

FRIDAY, AUGUST 27

8 am - Geiger Field Tour - Group 1
12:15 pm - Geiger Field Tour - Group 2
2 pm - Past President's Meeting
Hospitality Room - All Day

SATURDAY, AUGUST 28

8 am - 10 am - Men's Business Meeting
9 am - 12 Noon - Ladies Business Meeting -
Spokane Club
10 am - Squadron Meetings
6 pm - 7 pm - No Host Cocktails
7 pm - 12 Midnight - Banquet, Speaker, Dance

SUNDAY, AUGUST 29

8:30 a.m. - 10:30 a.m. - Breakfast & Business Meeting

EDITOR'S NOTE: Some more history from Bill Varnedoe that brings back some memories.

AFTER COMBAT

While we didn't have it as rough as crews flying in 1943 and 1944, enemy opposition had by no means disappeared. The 12 B-17's lost from the 385th during our tour were just as lost as any downed earlier. The sporadic fighter opposition, such as that on my third mission to Dresden, was pressed by the Germans with just as much determination. And the nasty English weather, which made flying so hazardous, was exactly the same. If anything, weather was more deadly late in the war, since there were more of us milling around in the soup. We also flew more frequently than the early crews. I put in my 26 missions in only 56 days, an average of one every other day! I once flew on 10 consecutive Group missions, with 8 of them being on 9 consecutive -days.

Sometime about now, early May 1945, George Crow became very ill. Don Black took over as Pilot and we were assigned F/O Dolliver J. Kent as Co-pilot. George eventually recovered and went back to the states via Air Transport Command (ATC).

On the 6th and 7th of May, Don, Dolliver, George Lentz and I flew mercy missions to the Dutch with the 385th Group. They had placed plywood doors inside the bomb bays, rigged to the bomb release shackles. The bomb bays were then loaded with food packages. We flew in very low over an airfield, marked by white crosses, and dropped the food. Our drop point was later to be Schipol, the main airport for Amsterdam. Many Hollanders were out waving at us and we wagged our wings back at them. Don particularly remembered a Dutch kid standing on a dike, waving an American Flag, and he like to have made a snap roll wagging our wings back at him.

In May our radio operator, Bill Kozosky, went to Lintz, Austria for a week or two to help man a control tower. While he was there, we also flew two passenger ferry run missions from Lintz to France. We carried up to 25 Frenchmen per trip back home. They had been deported by the Germans as forced labor and had become Displaced Persons (DP's). We made a sight-seeing tour out of these missions, by flying low enough to see the details of the continent. This was a novelty, since all of our combat missions had been at least above 20,000 feet, and now we weren't distracted looking at flack or searching for enemy fighters. At this time we could see, first hand, just how destructive our bombing had been. The English would clean up the rubble immediately after a bomb or V-1 fell, keeping the general appearance neat. But our bombings were so frequent and destructive that the Germans couldn't (or at least didn't) keep up. The rubble and debris were everywhere in great piles as if the bombs had just fallen.

We flew right up the Danube River which sported several fairytale like castles, a sight worth many bucks today.

On the return trip, the French would grin, laugh and pat us on the back when they saw what we'd done in Germany. It was certainly unmistakable how pleased they were. We tried to balance the load of passengers by putting some in

the nose, some in the waist, but most on some bleacher-like benches built into the bomb bay. Even though the waist had the most room, and several rode there, it was too far aft for good balance if many were in it. Now I wanted to see the Eifel Tower and took a detour to pass within sight of Paris. However, when word spread among them that Paris and the Eifel Tower was in sight, the bomb bay emptied - ALL of them wanted to see it out of a waist window. None of us could speak French, and it was difficult to get the problem across to them. It was all the pilots could do to keep us flying while we tried to herd them back!

16 May was one such trip when we landed at Chartres, France. I remember the runway there, there was a railroad crossing it at one end. Just as we touched down our tail wheel hit this railroad giving us quite a jar, but it caused no damage.

22 May was the other ferry mission when we landed at Laon, 40 miles northeast of Paris. After unloading, we were unable to take off, because a starter (on number 3, I think) would not function. We, therefore, spent the night there at a transient BOQ named "Hotel De Gink." The next day, we learned that it might be several days before a starter and mechanic could be flown in, so we elected to try a 3 engine take off. We feathered No. 3 and revved up the other three engines, then let her rip. There was an airspeed indicator in the nose at my station and I must have resembled a spectator at a tennis match as I looked from the air speed dial to the fast approaching end of the runway and back. 80, 85, 87 and finally 90 at the very end.

Don bounced us off the ground at 90 IAS! The field has like a plateau-like hilltop, so we could drop down a little into the adjacent valley to help our airspeed, once clear of the runway. Unfeathering and windmilling No. 3 got it started, and we were on our way home.

On one of these trips we picked up some souvenirs. I got a German helmet, and Don got an Italian automatic pistol. He was playing with it in the cockpit on the way home, figuring how to disassemble it, when, whang, it fell into pieces. He could find only 5 pieces and spend the rest of the flight rummaging about the B-17 cockpit hunting more. But, actually there were only 5 pieces, as he found out, and the gun worked fine. Back on Great Ashfield, I put the German hardhat on to show to some Airmen, when Col. Jumper (the CO) came by. I had a briefcase in my right hand, which I quickly switched to my left, and was about to throw him a snappy salute, when I realized there were no more hands left to take the helmet off. I gave him a salute with it on. He looked king of startled, but returned the salute, and said nothing.

June 1945 was a time of relaxing and waiting. There were enough rumors to fill a book. We were going home as a Group, one by one, by ATC, by boat. We were flying as a Group to the Pacific. We were to be converted to a transport Group, and so on, without end.

The Germans were very rank conscious. Therefore, the officers of the crew wore their officers uniform under their flying suit. If shot down and captured, officers were given

better treatment, as befitting their rank. It was also a sort of superstition that this "mission" uniform should not be cleaned until after a full combat tour. Naturally, the "mission" uniform was not the one we wore to London. But now that the war was over, this uniform could, maybe, be cleaned and salvaged. We went down to the flight line and got pans of 100 octane gasoline for the job. My pinks came clean OK, but the gas turned my hands white as snow.

Rumors turned to facts when orders came through that the 385th would fly back to the good old USA and there disband. A small cadre > would remain to deactivate the field or turn it back to the Brits. (These few would go home by boat.) R day, return day was set for 18 June. As senior-crew in the 550th Squadron, we were given the privilege of a B-1 7 equipped with LORAN. LORAN stands for Long Range Aid to Navigation and at that time was brand new.

I went to class and learned how to read it. It was very similar to the English G-Box, and was read by counting pis on an oscilloscope tube. But, unlike the G, the coverage was worldwide.

The LORAN experts were assigned as our passengers, as every aircraft was to carry 11 passenger paddlefeet (no-flyers) in addition to the crew.

On the 19th June 1945, the first contingent of the 385th Bomb Group took off from Great Ashfield on the first leg of the journey home. First stop, Valley, Wales. We, Black's Crew, were in B-1 7G serial number 42-102684, which we named "Sweet Chariot", because it "was cornin' for to carry us home" like in the old spiritual song says. According to Operations Orders No. 168, we were crew no 4 of 18 crews leaving on that date. Our crew was:

Pilot - Donald E. Black
 Co-pilot - Dolliver J. Kent, Jr.
 Navigator - William W. Varnedoe, Jr.
 Engineer - George D. Lentz
 Radio Operator - William M. Kozosky
 CT Gunner - John S. McDaniel
 T Gunner - Herman L. Lancaster
 B Gunner - Ira H. Barnes
 W Gunner - John E Peters

And as passengers:

John D. Hite - Crew Chief
 Lewis J Sorrell
 Peter Wassenaar
 Henry E. Brewer
 Joseph J. Voss
 Charles E. Hixon
 James T. Raftery
 Donald E. Sherlock
 Edward R. Pierce
 Albert J. McGee
 John L. Begley

When we got to Iceland we were still in thick clouds. There were a few low hills and we let down as low as we <dared without breaking out. I gave a best calculated position for the field, and just as we got to that spot, a small hole appeared in the clouds right over the runways. Don stuck the Fort up on one wing and slid down the hole to get into a traffic pattern and land.

Blue West One in Greenland was our next destination. BW-1 is located on the west coast of Greenland at the head of a fjord on a small piece of land between the water and a glacier. There would be no go-around. One either landed or hit the glacier. High rock hills were on both sides forming the fjord. In the briefing we were told, when flying up the fjord, look for a three fingered set of small peninsulas. When you see them, put your wheels down because the field is around the next bend.

We took off from Iceland at 1240 hours and sighted Greenland about 1730 hours (5:30 pm). The briefing proved accurate. There were high rocks on both sides of the fjord we flew up and the three fingered land put in its appearance on schedule, and down went our wheels, then there was the runway, but we were on the ground safely at 1810 hours. The field, itself ran uphill toward the glacier. Nevermind the wind, one always landed toward the glacier and tookoff the other way.

Greenland in June had essentially 24 hours of daylight. It was awkward getting sleep and rest in broad daylight. From here we were to fly over Goose Bay, Labrador and on to Bradley Field in CT. We took off at 0125 hours on the 25th June, 1945. There was supposed to be a radio beacon north of Goose Bay. We were to home on it, then turn south to the states. Well, I could not receive any signal from this station. I dead reconed to the spot it was supposed to be and there below was a radio tower, but we still could not receive anything, even directly over it. Assuming this was the correct station, since it was out in the middle of nowhere, we made our turn south. No doubt that was the proper station, for the rest of the check points fell right in line.

Our crew split up at this field. I took a troop train to Camp Miles Standish, then another to Ft. McPherson, GA. After a nice 30 day leave, still another troop train carried me to Sioux Falls, SD. While there, the US dropped the atom bomb on Japan. I was then sent to Rosecans Field, MO, arriving 13 August 1945. I was supposed to be training for ATC, but they knew I had enough points to be discharged very soon, so they dragged their feet in the actual training. I had class one hour per day, the rest free time. Out of boredom, I took the entire instrument flying course using their Link Trainers. Although I had never done a takeoff, landed, or flew in formation, I was a very good instrument pilot.

Sure enough by 18 September, I was back at Ft. McPherson, GA being released from active duty. I actually started back to school at GA Tech in the fall '45 quarter that was just beginning while on my terminal leave. My effective date of discharge is 22 October 1945.

APPENDIX 1

3,405 B-1 7's were made and 8,680 B-17G's. Most were flown to Kingman Field, AZ after and war and sold for scrap. Less than a dozen remain in 1992.

After World War II, a team headed by a civilian, but with military participation, made as unbiased a critique as possible of the effect of the bombing campaign over Germany.

This group, known as the U.S. Strategic Bombing Survey (USSBS), made extensive on-site surveys in Germany, questioned many German POW's and key officials, and reviewed many documents, both Allied and Enemy. The final summary concluded that despite some mistakes, painfully pointed out, the victory in the air was complete and that Allied air power had been decisive in the war in western Europe.

One of the mistakes, for instance was the campaign against the German ball bearing industry. Not only did the raids fail, but if they had succeeded the target was inappropriate, as the Germans had developed a suitable substitute.

Targets that DID have devastating effect were the oil and fuel production and the railroads. Toward the end, even the Nazi Big Wigs had trouble getting fuel for their cars. And although some trains still ran, the general economy was largely brought to a standstill due to lack of transport.

So emphatic was the conclusion of this commission that their final judgment is quoted.

Allied air power was decisive in the war in western Europe. Hindsight inevitably suggests that it might have been employed differently or better in some respects. Nevertheless, it was decisive. In the air, its victory was complete; at sea, its contribution, combined with naval power, brought an end to the enemy's greatest naval threat-the U-boat; on land, it helped turn the tide overwhelmingly in favor of Allied ground forces. Its power and superiority made the success of the invasion. It brought the economy which sustained the enemy's armed forces to virtual collapse, although the full effects of this collapse had not reached front lines when they were overrun by Allied forces. It brought home to the German people the full impact of modern war with all its horror and suffering. Its imprint on the German nation will be lasting.

REGISTRANTS SINCE JULY 22

Steve W. Z aputil	Joe & Ph> iis Zwick	Jerome B. Schuman
Harry M. and Evelyn Java	Stanley * Mary Halstead	Heyward & Lois Porter
Marie C lark C roley	Opal Williams	Andrew J. Struke
Clifford and Shirley Lybeck	Tom & Ann Helman	Robert & Rose Lopiano
T homas & Nomja Hair	Charles D. Bright	Howard T. Rembert
Casimir & Rose Deutschman 41	Joseph & Shirley Brocker	Herman & Doris Siederer
Ronald & Mary Nolan	Norman & Harriet Radin	James & Frances Payne
Francis & Olive Fuller	Frank & Helen McNamean	R. E. "Bob" & Fran Benndt
Arthur & Ann Montano	Floyd & Dixie McAllister	Edward & Dot Elbert
Verne & Lavon Phillips	Jack & Dorothy Surritt	John & Grace Messbauer
Juan & Mary Lou Provencio	Joyce W. Huff	Frank & Mildred Bexfield
James M. Bond	Tom C. Harrison	William & Jeanne Csonka
John E & Betty Davis	Charles & Irene Huber	Charles E. Irving
Robert & June Wills	Carl & Mary Grundler	Clement & Terry Irons
Horner & Jean Howe	John M & Peggy Connolly	Ted & Martha Lou Findelss
Harold J & Vera Wrigley	John & Marilyn Richey	Marvin & Mavis Unruh
John & Jean Bember	Jack T. Gesser	Wayne L. Horn
Albert & Priscilla Audette	Gunnar H. Tennessee	Earnest & Helen Martin
Joe & Sue DeGiacomo	Paul S. Duletsky	Gordon & Connie Parker
Charles & Margorie Guffey	Joyce Horton	John W. Wood
Frank M. Sutter	Emery & May Blanchette	Lester & Dorothy Crawford
Harold & Florence Albrecht	Michael & Sharon Kindya	
	Roy & Margaret Courtney	

EDITOR'S NOTE: Another of Don Kabitzke's memories.

COLONEL ELIOT S VANDEVENTER, JR.

The first that I learned about the Colonel was in the book "Queens Die Proudly" which came out soon after the war began. It told of how the Air Forces in the Phillipines were driven out all the way down to Australia. In the book it told how the Japanese bombed their bases and overran them when they followed up with an invasion. The Colonel at that time was a Lieutenant and a member of a B-17 Fortress Group. He had the good sense to take a Fortress up in the air away from their base when told that the Japs were coming, circling well out to sea undetected by them. When he felt safe he returned to base, picked up his fellow pilots who lost their planes and headed for Australia.

The next I heard of him was from his Adjutant who gave us a biography of him the night that all the ground crews at Great Ashfield were ordered to a meeting in the Enlisted Men's Mess at 7:00 p.m. The headquarters Staff had arrived and wanted to meet with us. The Major lectured for 15 minutes before the Colonel arrived as how he was a graduate of West Point and how proud he was of it. He would demand absolute discipline at all times, and he kept going back to his being a West Pointer. He scared the hell out of us and we were sure he was some kind of monster. How wrong the Major turned out to be. He told us that when the Colonel entered the room we would be at attention and the proverbial pin could be heard falling on the floor.

Shortly after the Colonel came into the room and marched up the aisle to the front of the room. Everyone stopped breathing till he said, "at ease". He went on to explain that he and his staff had flown in and the planes would follow soon, then the ground crews would arrive by boat. He told us that the days ahead would be exciting and for us maintenance crews he would drive us hard once the crews started going on missions. Damage would increase and there would be times when we would work straight through for three or four days catching up on the work necessary to keep the maximum amount of planes in the air. We would work hard, and we would play hard. If the weather kept the planes on the ground for a few days in advance, we would be given liberty for the maximum amount of time. He kept his word. He also told us that the air-crews would eat steak and we would have Spam, and if we didn't like it, we could go to his room and send us to gunnery school or whatever. Only one man from our squadron took him up on the offer. I never did learn how he made out.

The 385th under the Colonel lead the raid on the Heavy Water Plant in Norway which provided material for the Germans attempt at the Atom Bomb, and also an aircraft plant at Marienburg, Germany, which the Germans surrounded with English, Dutch and French prisoners of war. Both were completely destroyed. Not a single prisoner was hurt. General Arnold stated the Marienburg raid was the best example of the finest bombing of the war up to that time.

The Colonel was the youngest bomber commanding officer in the Air Force. In four years he went from Lieutenant to General. What a fine man he was.

THEY ALSO SERVED

When my outfit, the 88th Service Squadron arrived at the 385th Bomb Gp. Base at Great Ashfield, in East Anglia, construction on the base was not quite completed. Many of the quonset type buildings had to be bricked in at the ends. Irish bricklayers had been brought over from Ireland where there at least was some work for them to do to earn a living. At about 10:30 in the morning they would send a man up a pole or the side of a building to see where the "Tay Wagon" was. Once it was spotted, all work ceased until they had they "Tay". It was my impression that they also had laid the concrete runways and other ground construction. Recently I learned the truth. It was U.S. Aviation Engineers who actually constructed the majority of the bases that the RAF had not erected.

In early 1942, our Aviation Engineers arrived in England and immediately went to work. At nearly every site they were sent to build an aerodrome. It was mud, mud and more mud. With moden knowhow and machinery, work progressed at a fantastic rate. Over 270 bases for both the 8th and 9th Air Forces had to be built. I still am amazed more each passing day when I read of the huge amount of men and materials to build up our air forces in such a short span of time. That the Eighth started out with two planes in 1942 at Hunter Air Force base at Savannah, Georgia, and by early 1944 would put up 2,000 heavy bombers for a single raid was a miracle.

On D-Day Plus-1, these same engineers were building a 3,500 foot runway on the beaches in Normandy under fire, they succeeded. By July 16th, 15,000 wounded were flown off that strip to England. In the first 3 months, 50,000 were flown to England in C-47's without the loss of a single life. It was the ability of our engineers which made it possible for the close ground to air cooperation all across Europe which brought us victory. A new base was put in operation every 36 hours.

The 834 Engineer Aviation Battalion hit the Normandy Beaches on D-Day Plus-1 and 337 days later had moved some 700 miles in support of General Patton's 3rd Army in their dash to Pilsen, Czechoslovakia. Due to their rapid movements, which news reporters hated, little was, or has been, written about the wonder workers. Many fields were being built or repaired under enemy fire. Piper Cubs and other aircraft were used to survey potential sites while fighting on the ground below was still in progress.

In England, at Lymington, just north of the Isle of Wight was where we serviced the 50th Fighter Group, (P-47's). It was used by the RAF as a Spitfire Base. The runways just were not strong enough to hold the heavier 47's. On the east end of the east-west runway, about 150 feet in was a drop off of about 8 inches. When the planes landed on it, they would received a severe jolt when they dropped off, causing the 500 pound bombs to tear out of their shackles and bounce as high as 10 feet off the ground, frightening the pilots. Something had to be done. The base was shut down

for 24 hours to rebuild the runways. The night before, everyone on the base formed a human chain and rounded up about 150 wild horses belonging to the king and corralled them in the next field.

We then stripped off the steel rod mesh which the RAF used, Engineers moved in with earthmoving equipment and smoothed it all out and rolled it tight. We then put down straw, covered the tar paper and pressed steel landing mesh was hooked together and smoothed out, steel angle bars were driven in on the outer edge and welded to the mat. By nightfall we had a new air base. Everyone on the base outside of the cooks were involved in the project and got quite a kick out of seeing the results of our labors. The engineers considered this just one more job. As the war progressed we could see the results of their efforts all over Europe. They did their part to bring the war to a successful conclusion. A job well done.

EDITOR'S NOTE: Interesting reading - one Squadron's history for 1945.

Our apologies-it's the 550th. If any of you have something like this for another Squadron, send it in!

**550TH BOMBARDMENT SQUADRON (H)
385TH BOMBARDMENT GROUP (H)
APO 559**

History
February 1945

The second month of the year started off with a bang when Major Walls was promoted on the first of February. Formerly Capt. Walls, he is Group Training Officer, and hails from Pittsburgh, PA. Frank has been with the Group since its early days back in March '43.

At the beginning of February we had in our Squadron some four hundred twenty seven enlisted men and one hundred seventeen officers.

Feb 2. . .saw Sgt. Masiello return to the Squadron after a very long stay at the 65th Hospital. Capt. Hieser also returned after being up there for some time. Fit Officer Koval reported for duty from the 4th Combat Wing. 1st Lt. McDonald who was a Navigator on Capt. Kearin's crew finished his missions and is going to stay on as Assistant Orientation and Education Officer on the base.

On the 3rd of February Fit. Officer Monroe was appointed a Second Lieutenant, Cpl. Stapleton, a Sgt. and PFC Nelson a Cpl. in addition to four new PFC's in the persons of Ex Pvs. Clayton, Lakes, Grover, and Reed.

The 4th brought the Squadron a new crew with Fit. Officer Mignone as pilot. On the 5th 1st Lt. Stodola became Capt. Sotdola, and 2nd Lt. Boyce moved up a grade to 1st Lt. T/Sgt Johnny Holmes who was badly wounded in the arm last month was transferred to the 65th Hospital for further treatment.

Along about the 6th four of our gunners left for home having completed their missions. They were Sgt. Lechowit,

Wood, Shaak, and Kratzer. Capt. Bartholomew's crew went to the Rest Home for a week. Squadron flew missions on the 1st, 3rd and 6th of February, hitting Wesel, Berlin, and Chemnitz, to round out 243 missions, and loosing no casualties. Two other fellows, T/Sgts Geyer and Peterson, and two Officers, 1st Lt. Collins and Long, left for the 70th. 1st Lt. Hefner and Lehman, finished and went to the 482nd Bomb Group. On the 8th 1st Lt. Lamica and Pohorilla also left for the 70th.

On the 10th a lot of things happened. Capt. Madsen and Lt. V.D. Myers left for the 70th and home, as did S/Sgt Pullio, Johnson, 2nd Lt. Pollard went to the 548th Sq, as Co-pilot, and 2nd Lt. Bryan and crew were assigned to our Squadron. Next day found 1st Lt. Purtell leaving for home, and 2nd Lt. Snow being relieved from assigned and transferred to the 4th Combat Bomb Wing. On 12th February 1st Lt. Kearing made Captain, and ten combat men were promoted to S/Sgt. In addition two new crews were assigned to the Squadron (Crow and Tipton) and I went on leave. Lts. Cocke and McGregor were promoted to 1st Lt. During the week our planes to bombed Chemnitz, Munster, and Frankfurt, many of the men and planes remaining on the continent due to weather conditions and enemy action.

The big event of the month as far as Squadron history goes was the party on 23rd February. This enlisted men's dance was much like the one held in November of last year, and the food was even better, since this time we had ice cream in real cones. The band from Gibraltar Barracks played for dancing from 0800 till 1100, and a swell time was had by all. A small program is attached.

February being a short month, not as much happened, and your historian being on leave missed a little too. Enough for February, 1945.

John C. Hambrook
Captain, Air Corps
Adjutant

**550TH BOMBARDMENT SQUADRON (H)
385TH BOMBARDMENT GROUP (H)
Office of the Commanding Officer
APO 559**

History
March 1945

March, 1945! This was not a good month for Thrift's Terrers. It started right off by not being a good month. On 1 March two of our planes collided on a combat mission, when they were over Slype, Belgium, and six officer and ten enlisted men were killed, all being buried over there on the continent. Some of our best flyers were among them. . .Lt. Rusecky, Armbruster, Tripp, Burger, and Davis, to say nothing of ol' Sgt. Clabaugh, on this thirty third haul over the Jerry-Land. Of the survivors, one, Sgt. Lejkowski is all broken up mentally, and is going home a grounded beaten gunner. The other survivor is Sgt. Jones, and he is still in the hospital and will be for a long time.

After the 1st, the 2d dawned bright and clear, and WHAM...two more crews failed to return, this time being

listed as missing. Lt. Tipton, and Lt. Vaadi and their crews were the boys we lost on this day. The target was Dresden that day, and combined with the previous, they were two terrible days for the Fightin' Fiftieth.

Lets look at our strength for March 1st... 129 officers and 433 Enlisted Men....and on March 31 st.... 114 officers, and 442 Enlisted Men....all of which doesn't look like much change had taken place in between, but the changes were many and varied. To begin with we were assigned six new crews and four individual officers during this period...the latter four being Capt. Schott, Capt. Murphy, both from the USA, and Lt. Baldwin and Fl O. Artines, from the 551st and 549th irrespectively. To end with we saw Capt. Stodola, Lts. Lecombe, Shoemaker, Wilson, Sevra, Starkel, Cowan, Eaton, LeDoux, Meyer, Poage, and Cbx headed for the 70th RCD, Lts. Boyce and Fit. O Koval to the 549th (lead crews) and Capt. Marchall to Hq. 385th Bomb Gp. Lt. Robert E. Lee was assigned to the Squadron on March 29th with principal duty as Squadron Gunnery Officer. He is just over from the States.

On the enlisted side of the strength book, we find, besides the six new crews, that we gained some ground men. These came from the 70th Reinforcement Depot, and were ex-Infantrymen, and new arrivals from the States. Pfc Simpson, now is Sq. Supply, Cpl. Wissing, in Refueling, Cpl. Snell, in Flight Equipment, Pfc Barker, in Sta S-1, and Ramsland, and How, Motor Pool, and Mess Hall, respectively, were some of these new men. M/Sgt Heiney, our Armament Chief, returned from the hospital. Balancing out these gains in men were the loss of three crews, three men to the 70th RCD, and two men to other units, including one S/Sgt Dresner, to the 65th General Hospital, WIA.

Promotions came thick and fast, silver bars settling on the shoulders of 2nd Lts. Amis, Dunlop, Charlton, Delieto, Poage, Zmudka, Schnake, Briedenstein, Bryan, Crew, Giberson, Harris, Cooper, Yates, Kokos, Muchow, Staats, Danciger, Hering, and Iverson. Single silver became twin (new captains) for Lt. McCauley, Thornock, and Marince. The enlisted men were in for their share, too, fourteen making T/Sgt, not including ground men, two of whom made M/Sgts, T Sgt Mooney, and Kirby, both Crew Chiefs and old men in the Squadron, thirty making S/Sgt, including Sgt. Bell, our old Orderly Room Clerk, turned RCM gunner, and Sgt. Picard who had the bad time last month as a Pvt for being drunk at briefing. In addition to these top three graders, thirty four men became three stripers, all combat men. The ground men advanced too, Pfc Childress, a driver, becoming Cpl, along with Daniels, and Rodovicz, Stresnak, Vokes, Ellis, and Kissock (all Engineering), and Cpls. Beach (Sq Opns) and Hoyt (Sq Communications) becoming Sgts, with Sgt, Krikava making S/Sgt in the Sq. Communications Section. A few went down, Sgt Richardson to Pvt for being a bad gunner (socially) and Sgt Koreff (ex S/Sgt) dropped his rocker for not doing his job.

The Squadron participated in seventeen missions during March, hitting such targets as Hamburg, Chemnitz, Dortmund, Soest, Swinemunde, Hanover, Jena, Bitterfield, Ornaienburg, Berlin (when Lt. Cocker and his crew became missing), Zwischenahne, Hendeke, Dresden and Ullum. Our

total of wounded mounted as Lt. Aires, Urias, Sgts Lejkowski, Jones, and Eshleman, joined the Purple Heart parade.

All the men, ground and air, took full advantage of furloughs, leaves, passes, and rest home facilities, including Major Thrift, our CO, who spent seven swell days at the rest home. Pvt. Lakes was a bit confined in his movements as a result of a court martial, to the extent of three months in the Guard House, for being AWOL.

We had two men on the 3rd Division Championship ARC basketball team, Lt. Aires, and Sgt Moran. Our lawn mower is fixed and ready for mowing down the Spring grass, which is growing over everything. Three men left for the Infantry from our Squadron. Sgt. Touvell installed two concrete posts at the entrance to the Site, and they are now a bright RED. On the first of March we put out a Squadron Order, copy attached. Supply conducted a successful bike inventory on the twentieth, finding none lost or strayed!!

Next month should find the Athletic program of Tennis, Track, Softball, Baseball, and everything else in full swing. April will be a good month.

JOHN C HAMBROOK
Captain Air Corps,
Adjutant

550TH BOMB SQUADRON HISTORY APRIL 1945

April was a month of mingled gladness and sadness, for this squadron, as well as for the Army and World as a whole. On the twelfth of the Month President Roosevelt died. To each man in the squadron it was a real personal loss. On April fourth one of our newest and finest officers, Capt. James Murphy, an old friend of Major Thrift's went down over Germany on his first operational mission. His aircraft collided with another bomber over the North Sea. On the ninth of the month, 1 st Lt. Burich and his crew went down after a German fighter collided with his plane. Those are the sad notes.

The glad notes include the very rapid steps toward termination of the war in Europe. On the land and in the air the Allied Armies are cleaning up the continent. To the Officers and Men in the Squadron all this is significant of a job well done, and a possibility of a return to the States, permanently or for a short time. Many of our old Officers and men left, for the States during the month, to be replaced here by new crews piloted by Lt. Faulkner, Swana, Gunn, Sanders, Mills, Bennett and McKenerick, and Lt. Smith. Those who returned home after completing their tours included Capt. Brashaer, Capt. Kearin, Capt. Tocco, Capt. Smith, Lt. Platt, Zmudka, Winter, Click, Stasts, Audrain, Shanke, Daneiger, Giberson, Hering, Shattenkirk, Yates, Young, Kokos, Cooper, Piechotte, Dunlap, Monroe, Davidow, Muchow, Aires, Charlton, Capt. McCauley, and Flight Officer Axelrod. The enlisted men departing were even more numerous, including T/Sgt Hudson, Seaman, Land, Phillips, Lause, Har-

ris, Manilla, Pickett, Fitzpatrick, Hanson, Cappanelli, Cook, Parisian, Musz, Stead, Ilaria, Schwartz, Anderson, Edwards, Klosterman, Nepse, Sharrar, Chesnut, Czonka, S/Sgt Bird-sall, Corty, Bregman, Evans, Styler, Sweet, Slonecker, Pritchard, Kunko, Wissman, Overly, Wright, Guncher, James, Solomonto, Smith, Lejkowski, Johnson, Rourn, White, Bevilaqua, Obitz, Carroll, Sanders, Jones, Stuebe, Sipes and Dunn.

Two enlisted men who were formerly listed as MIA made themselves present, when Sgt. Childress escaped from his German prison camp to return to the Sq. and then to the USA, and Sgt. Lejkowski, who was one of the two survivors on the early March mid air collision of two of our ships, came back here prior to return to the Zone of the Interior. The other survivor, S/Sgt Jones, who had ridden the tail of the torn aircraft to the ground and suffered only minor injuries also came back prior to returning to the States. His story is one of the most amazing "Air Stories" to be told in these parts for some time.

We had our share of promotions during the month, ending up in a blaze of glory, when Major Thrift, our Commanding Officer, came through with silver leaves. Prior to that Lt. Tocco, our Squadron Navigator, now home, made Captain, 2nd Lt. Davidow, Maloy, Wallner, Aires, Langley, Piechotte, Snowden, Young, Seiffert, were promoted to 1st Lt., Flight Officer Mignone and Uzman were appointed 2nd Lts and WCJB Thompson was appointed CWO. This last appointment is particularly notable, since "Tommy" has been our Armament Officer since we came overseas, has one of the finest sections in the group, and has been a WOJG since February 1943. Our assistant squadron operations officer, Lt. Branch doubled his shoulder decorations, and 1st Lt. Baldwin, one of our lead pilots also made Captain.

The Enlisted Men also went to town, eleven combat men being promoted to T/Sgt, twelve to S/Sgt. and forty five to Sergeant. After ground men promotions were announced, including Cpl. McGee to Sgt. (He's the key man in our armament section), Gartrell to Corporal, prior to transfer to the Infantry, Cpl. Opalewski, to Sgt. (He's clerk in the Station Material Officers Office) S/Sgt. Weathers to T/Sgt. (T/Sgt Weathers is one of the oldest men in the Station S-1 Section from the point of service on this base, and is in the Officers Section), and S/Sgt Warych, as Radar Specialist, was promoted to T/Sgt.

On April 26th at a Squadron awards meeting, Col. G.Y. Jumper presented the Air Model to fifty two Officers and Men. The Bronze Star was presented to two of our Crew Chiefs. M/Sgt Hallisey and M/Sgt Kirby, for exceptional maintenance efficiency over a long period of time, thus enabling their aircraft to complete over ninety operational missions with a minimum of mechanical failure.

T/Sgt Espende proceeded to France on two month special duty on April 21. He is an expert automotive mechanic. Sgt. Neins, our Softball Pitcher, went to school on the 15th, for a six week period. That means that we have to find us a pitcher to start off the Softball season. Cpl. Beatty, Gartrell, and Ramsey went to the Infantry on the 13th of the month, as our quota for the ground reinforcement program. On the 17th, Lt. Doene who has been on detached service at 3rd Air division, as pilot for the Commanding General,

went to the USA, on a special trip, and came back in early May. Pvt. A.A. Bleveins went AWOL on the 15th., and was restricted for a two month period by a special court and fined forty dollars. Two of our Flight Officers, Axelrod, and Cousins were court martialed by special court for misuse of a Jeep, and each was fined 100 dollars.

Operationally, April was a month of fifteen missions, with 159 planes hitting the targets, without one abortion. Targets included Kiel, Germany, Untuschlatersbach, Gustrow, Hof, Schluasheim, Nauruppin, Inglestadt, Raudnic, Kolih, Aussuam and Wustermark, besides three French targets. Our last mission was flown on the twentieth of the month and was #293 in the FTC for us.

The month ended in a series of snow flurries, very unappropriate for this time of year, and on the 30th of the month, we found ourselves twenty men weaker than at the first of the month our strength totaling.

Officer-107	Enlisted Men-429	Total-536
	Compared with April 1st.	
Officers-114	Enlisted Men-442	Total 556

That's all for April 1945. Weather put a stop to any real steps in the athletic program, though on the ninth we received a trophy for our part in the Softball league, at a banquet held for all first and second place teams. OUT!

JOHN C HAMBROOK
Captain, Air Corps
Adjutant

550TH BOMBARDMENT SQUADRON (H)

May 1945 will be remembered by millions as the month of Victory in Europe. The eighth and ninth of the month were set aside throughout the civilized world, especially in the Allied Nations, as days of celebration and prayer. It just happened that our Squadron had an officers' chicken party on the evening of May eighth, and a wonderful time was had by all.

The only mission of an operational nature during May was a food mission flown on May second. It was the Squadrons' two hundred ninety fourth mission and our last in this theater.

Personnel did not change much during the month. On the first we had one hundred six officers and four hundred twenty-nine enlisted men. Capt. Smith IA, Lts. Davidow, Muchow, Monroe, Charalton, and McGregor went home through the 70th RCD. 2nd Lt. Kirk Weis, who has been on DS at 3rd AD for a long time was transferred to that Hq. Capt. Wilson, our Engineering Officer, went home, to a special assignment. On the twenty-ninth, our Squadron Commander, Lt. Col. Thrift, was transferred to Group Hqs, to take over as Group Operations Officer. It was a great loss to the Squadron but in Major Frank B. Walls, our New Squadron Commander, we have a man of great experience in flying, administration, and military matters. He comes to the Squadron from the job of Group Training Officer. Major Walls has been in the 385th Bomb Gp as Pilot, Sq Operations Officer, Flight Commander, and Training Officer since February 1943. One of our pilots was transferred to another

Bomb Group, Fit. O. Stroud. Besides our new Squadron Radar Officer, 2nd Lt. Berger, just over from the USA.

The point system and over age discharge policy really operated for the Enlisted Men in the outfit. On May eighteenth M/Sgt Gearhart, our old Line Chief, and Pfc Houser, an Armament man, both went home to be discharged on the point system. On the same day M/Sgt Baratovich, T/Sgt Tweedy, S/Sgt Peterson, and Barber, and Sgt. Gemlick left for the States for discharge since they are over forty two years old. Some of our combat men went home also, S/Sgt Jones, Steube, Joseph, Wesler, and T/Sgt Peckenpaugh, being among the few.

Officers came in for their share of the promotions, with Lt. Knight and Hughes becoming Captains, and Lt. Glass, our Communications Officer Lt. Asmus, Faulkner, Mignone, Varanedoe, Withrow, Burr, Crow, Carpenter, Thayer, Knopf, Swana, White, Oberts, Coggiola becoming first Lieutenant.

The Enlisted Men didn't do as well in May, Cpl Faltisco making Sergeant, Pvts Gerald and Pennington rising to Pfc, and Sgt Wesler becoming a S/Sgt

While we only had one man assigned to the Squadron during May Cpl. Soditch, a Radar Man, we did have a great number of men come back to us from the continent on their way home. Most of them had been prisoners of war for anywhere from two months up to a year and a half. Capt. Binks came back for a visit and told us about his evasion and eventual capture by the Germans. He was MIA in February 1944. T/Sgt Browning went down in Oct. '43, and came back to visit us after being liberated, and on his way home. Our Group flew many men from the PW areas to France and England, running a sort of Transport service. Those who went on these missions said the country in Austria was beautiful. Souvenirs in the form of Nazi flags, arm bands, knives, rifles, pistols, were brought back by these men. Lt. Cocks and all of his crew came back, except Sgt. Martsch, who was killed and Sgt Ryan who was wounded. They landed in Russian territory on March Seventeenth. Men took advantage of furloughs and passes, forty four men going on furlough in May. Pvt. Lakes was released from the guardhouse on May Seventeenth, after serving out his sentence for being AWOL.

All unit censorship has been cancelled, and lots of interesting information can now be sent home in our letters, including our Geographic location, trip overseas, and things like that. Most of our time now days is taken up with training, getting the planes ready for long flights, which necessitates a great many modifications, and listening to rumors about where and when and how and if we'll be going home or not. The weather has been fair, with quite a bit of rain, and the long evenings are taken up with ball games, dances, eatin', sleepin' and writing letters.

We're now "Walls Warriors", instead of "Thriffs Terrors."

JOHN C. HAMBROOK
Captain, Air Corps
Adjutant

550TH BOMBARDMENT SQUADRON (H)
385TH BOMBARDMENT GROUP (H)
APO 559

History
June 1945

On June first our Squadron strength was 102 Officers and 415 Enlisted Men. That day Sgt. Farrar and S/Sgt Stafford left for home on points. Three Mickey Operators also left, Lts Thronton and Rockwood, and F/O Artines. Lt. McDonald an operationally completed Navigator joined the Squadron again as Asst. Sgt S-2 on the fourth of June Lt. Lariviere joined the Squadron as Engineering Officer. S/Sgt Diver, Sgt Wait, Cpl. Taylor, PFcs Cselusack and Dillon also joined from the 303rd Group. 2nd Lt. Sanders was promoted to First Lt. S/Sgt Johnston and Morris left for Paris to go home with General Patton since both live in California or someplace. Lt. Cocks's crew was finally assigned to the Squadron on the fourth also, after being in Poland, Russia, Turkey, Germany, France and Belgium, getting back from a forced landing behind Russian lines sometime in March. On the 6th, Lt. Dery make Capt. He's our Squadron Navigator. On June 7th a lot of men joined the Squadron to go home with the Air Echelon only a few days later. On the 8th, Sgt. Brick was transferred to the Detachment of Patients at the 65th General Hospital. On the 9th Lt. Holland was also transferred to the hospital. On the 10th T/Sgt Glidden, S/Sgt Pruitt, and Sgts. Laing and Ferlazo were transferred to the 96th Bomb Group for the Air Army of Occupation, they have less than 85 points. On the 7th of June the Air Echelon was alerted for departure for the Z of I. On the 11 th of June Cpl. Fowler was also transferred to the 96th Group. On the 12th F/O Black was appointed 2nd Lt. Black. On the 14th Cpl. Silvius joined the Squadron. On the 17th of June Lt. Doane went home from the 3rd Air Division and he was dropped from our assignment column. On the 18th Capt. Stern was promoted to Major effective the 16th of June. He assumed Command of the Ground Echelon the next day, when the greater part of the Air Echelon left for Valley Wales, Iceland and the USA. On the 19th also the Squadron was relieved from assignment to the 45th Combat Wing and assigned to the 20th Bomb Wing. The transfer of the Air Echelon left the Squadron with 23 Officers and 151 Enlisted Men. Sgts. Clark and Ricamore were assigned the 21 st, they were gunnery instructors and will go home with the Ground Echelon. Pfc's Taggart and Heyman were assigned on the 22nd. On the 23rd the Ground Echelon was alerted for movement. Also Cpl. Grewenig, Pfc Herrera, Inman and Greenberg were assigned from the 70th RCD, and Sgt Faltisco, Heredia, Davenport and Quinn were transferred to a Transport Wing in France. On the 24th Nine men arrived to join us. All truck drivers. On the 26th of June we started using the new revised Morning Report form. On the 28th F/O Morthorst became 2nd Lt. and Ten men left for the 96th...men who wanted to stay in the UK. By the 30th several other changes had taken place in Personnel, and we were getting ready to move to the port any day. We had 2 "final" beer parties but most of the beer drinkers seem to be gone - We had a lot of beer left after both parties. Little did we know we'd be writing a July history right here in the same spot. Oh well.

JOHN C HAMBROOK
Captain, Air Corps
Adjutant

550TH BOMBARDMENT SQUADRON (H)
385TH BOMBARDMENT GROUP (H)
APO 559

History
July 1945

In July, we started with a strength of 25 Officers and 184 Enlisted Men. 10 of the Enlisted men joining us on 1 July from the 96th Bomb Group in exchange for 10 of our men who volunteered for the OAF. 1st Lt. Denver W. Kinney, formerly our Squadron Ordnance Officer was transferred to the 100th Bomb Group on 2 July, along with T/Sgt Guffey, T/Sgt Manning, and Pfc. Pennington who have applied for discharges over here. At the same time, we got another 2 officers and 4 enlisted men from the 96th Bomb Group to go home with us.

On 8 July, Lt. Gunn and his crew, including Capt. Schott, Capt. Dary, Lt. Glass, Lt. Eyman, Lt. Lee, and CWO Thompson, took off in their replacement airplane for another try at flying home. Their first attempt came to grief at Valley Wales when "Haybag Annie", a veteran of something over 100 missions without an abort, came to a tragic end after losing her brakes upon landing. Nobody was hurt, luckily enough, and, except for an unpleasant delay, and the loss of a good airplane, no harm was done. The replacement aircraft, incidentally, turned out to be one that had been interned in Sweden for over a year, but it was in good shape when it arrived here.

On 10 July, after many changes of minds at higher headquarters, the balance of our combat men were transferred to the 70th ROD to go home. This reduced our strength to 9 officers and 126 enlisted men. We saw them go with mixed emotions, but poor Joker was broken-hearted to find his bunk mates all gone, and it took over a week for him to snap back to his usual cheerful and peppy self. Joker was the veteran amongst our combat personnel, having been with us for some 15 months and having flown several missions. He was highly indignant at being left behind and being forced to associate with "Paddle-feet", but he has now become accustomed to us and seems as happy as ever.

On 12 July, Sgt. Pisani, our mail orderly for almost 2 years, was transferred to the 65th General Hospital to be sent home. He was one of our most dependable men and we hated to lose him. Another man, Sgt. Ramsland, was transferred out on the 27 July to be shipped direct to the Pacific, where men of his 238 SSN are needed.

Our shipping date, variously scheduled for 10 July, 15 July, 27 July, was set back to 5 August. We kept busy during the month with an athletic program, more liberal pass policy, and various policing and packing jobs. A little extra excitement was furnished by our prize swimmer, Sgt. McCarty, who was the only double winner in 8AF swimming championship, and who went on to win the 400 meter in Paris, and, when last heard from, was headed for Nurnberg to represent us in the European championship there. Also, another Squadron Beer party was held, but we've lost our beer drinkers and we ended up by having to spread our

supplies over 2 nights in order to dispose of it. An unhappy occurrence during the month was the destruction of a fine hay stack belonging to Mr. George. It caught fire, presumably from spontaneous combustion, about 2230 on the 24 July and it burned for over 24 hours, with both our own and the British Fire Department working on it. Also to be listed among the unfortunate happenings was the sentencing of our inimitable Pvt Lakes to 6 months confinement for another AWOL charge.

We ended the month with 9 Officers and 124 Enlisted Men - plus a fervent prayer that this is the last Squadron history that we will write in the ETO.

JOHN C. HAMBROOK
Captain, Air Corps
Adjutant

EDITOR'S NOTE: The Book Review section of the Fargo Forum, July 4, had this review of a book by Harry H Crosby of the 100th B.G.

It's a flattering review and maybe it's of interest to some of us.

□ **A WING AND A PRAYER**, by Harry H. Crosby, is published by Harper Collins (\$27.50)

What's in a name?

"A Wing and a Prayer" uses a tired, shopworn phrase for its title. But in the book, author Harry H. Crosby tells an uncommon story of his wartime experience in precise and incisive language.

Crosby tells how he failed to become a pilot when the United States entered World War II and was made a navigator instead. He joined the Eighth Air Force's 100th Bomb Group based at Thorpe Abbots, 100 miles from London.

Crosby suffered from air sickness and was initially not a very good navigator. But his skills gradually improved and he became known for his precise flight plots and the accurate timing of his forming up and rendezvousing.

Crosby became a much-decorated and recognized lieutenant colonel. He was also one of the very few survivors of his group; the 100th Bomb Group suffered extremely heavy losses of planes and men, and was long considered a "bad luck" outfit.

Although Crosby provides exciting descriptions of many of the actions in which he participated and the personalities of his colleagues, the book tells mostly his own intimate story.

He reflects hard and deeply about himself, the righteousness of the war, and his relationships with superiors and subalterns, with his wife back in the States and with the women he met in England. He chronicles the coming and the departure of a string of officers commanding his group with diverse degrees of ability and commitment.

He also writes about the appalling regularity with which his fellow fliers were blown out of the air by German flak or fighter planes, parachuted to become prisoners of war or bled to death from wounds on the long, cold flights back to base in crippled planes.

Crosby writes in short, crisp sentences, with no flowery prose to distract and suffocate the reader. He is direct in his statements.

At one point, Crosby asserts — without a shade of braggadocio — that he personally influenced world history: On a bombing mission with orders to hit targets of opportunity, he refused to bomb Bonn because it was "the city where Beethoven went to school." After the war, Bonn became the capital of the emergent Germany largely because it was the only major city that had not been flattened by U.S. bombs. (Reviewed by Norman N. Brown, Associated Press.)

REFRESHER ON BASIS OF MEDALS AND AWARDS

CROSSHAIRS-Ju»19S<i

From the February 1993 edition of *Hard Life Herald*, newsletter of the 385th Bombardment Group Memorial Association, we have 'lifted' the following. *Editor's note -- it wasn't from us they lifted it!*

"According to regulations, awards are made on this basis:

- Medal of Honor Heroism beyond call of duty;
- Distinguished Service Cross Extraordinary heroism;
- Silver Star Gallantry in action;
- Distinguished Flying Cross Heroism and extraordinary achievement in flight;
- Soldier's Medal Heroism not in action against an enemy, and

Air Medals are given in an automatic system:

- Every sortie counts one point;
- Every enemy aircraft shot down counts five points;

For the first five points, the airman gets an Air Medal.

For each succeeding five points, up to 20 he gets an Oak Leaf Cluster.

Since achievement of 25 points (either thru 25 missions and two Nazi, or any other way) is considered 'extraordinary achievement', the DFC is presented for that number of points."

[Ed. Comment: We've had differing versions-will someone pass on the official definition of a 'sortie' and a 'mission'. If a sortie is credited on the basis of flying hours, regardless of reaching the bomb line, what is the requirement? Is it conceivable for an airman to accumulate five points-or qualification for an Air Medal by five flying efforts that fall short of a completed sortie or mission? Help!]



Medal of Honor



Distinguished Service Cross



Silver Star



Distinguished Soldier's Medal Flying Cross



Air Medal

385th BGMA APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP

Please Print

LAST NAME, First, MI.

Spouse's Name

Street or P.O. Box #

() 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 117
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: Interesting statistics from Oregon's Vets News thru Crosshairs.

**Self-explanatory'
WORLD WAR H STATS
(For appreciation of cost of The Big Hate!)**

**World War II Stab
Profile of U.S. Servicemen
(1941-1945)**

◆38.8 percent (6,332,000) of U.S. servicemen and women were volunteers.

*61.2 percent (11,535,000) were draftees. Of the 17,955,000 men examined for induction, 35.8 percent (6,420,000) were rejected as physical! or mentally unfit.

◆Average duration of service 33 months.

◆Overseas Service: 73 percent served overseas, with an average of 16.2 months abroad.

◆Combat Survivability (out of 1,000): 8.6 were killed in action, 3 died from other causes, and 17.7 received nonmortal combat wounds.

◆Noncombat Jobs: 38.8 percent of the enlisted personnel had rear echelon assignments-administrative, technical, support, or manual labor.

◆Average Base Pay: Enlisted: \$71.33 per month; Officer \$203.50 per month.

**U.S Active Military Personnel
(1939-1945)
(Enlisted and Officer)**

	Army	Navy	Marine*	Total
1939	189,839	125302	19,432	334,473
1940	269,023	160,997	28,345	458365
1941	1,462315	284,427	54,359	1,801,101
1942	3,075,608	640370	142,613	3,858,791
1943	6394,472	1,741,750	308323	9,044,745
1944	7394,750	2,981365	475,604	11,451,719
1945	8367,958	3,380,817	474,680	12,123,455

**U.S. Armed Forces
Toll of War
(1939-1945)**

Killed		Wounded	
Army/Air Force	234,874	Army/Air Force	565,861
Navy	36,950	Navy	37,778
Marines	19,733	Mannea	67307
Coast Guard	m	Coast Guard	132
Total	292,131	Totsl	6 71,278

Merchant Marine*

Died as POWs	37	Dead	5,662
Missing/Presumed dead	4,780	Killed at Sea	845

Estimated International Costs of World War II

Battle deaths	14,904,000
Battle wounded	25,218,000
Civilian deaths	38,573,000
Direct economic costa	\$1,600,000,000,000

ADDRESS CHANGES

EDITOR'S NOTE:We asked the Post Office for an Address Correction on the June Hardlife Herald (first time in 2 years), and we got over 50!

Some said "Forwarding address expired", some said "Temporary Away", and some had a new address. We don't know whether you who had address corrections received your copy or not, nor do we know if those temporarily away received theirs when they got back.

So-here's the list. If you didn't get your June copy (with the new Roster of 1340 members), let us know and we'll send you one as long as our supply lasts. Since it cost 35\$ to hear from the PO, and since it will cost some 60\$ or so for the new copy, please send \$1.00 along with your request.

And, please let us know when you move in the future!

- | | |
|--|---|
| Rick Davis | Ralph McCool
12550 Lake Ave.-1312
Lakewood, OH 44107-157 |
| Patrick H. Hall | Daniel Riva
Daytona Beach, FL |
| Bernard Gottheim
493 Fanshaw L.
Boca Raton, FL 33434-6138 | M.K. Coopwood
Edward F. Solomon
1204 Sandringham Rd.
Bala Cynwyd, PA 19004 |
| Adelbert Wagner
2401 D.W. Holcombe Blvd-101
Houston, TX 77030-1901 | John D. McGregor
9650 S. Ocean Dr.-305
Jensen Beach, FL 34957 |
| Leo LaCrosse | David Spillane
V.W. Ferguson
509 W. 3rd
McGregor, TX 76657-2307 |
| Ct. | George H. Salkeld
John H. Johnson |
| Paul W. Ryan
PO Box 615
Wilmington, IL 60481-0615 | Lester Schaak
Douglas R. Dymond
1621 NE2 ST403
Ocala, FL 34470-8215 |
| H.W. Hiatt
2481 NE Coachman Rd-202
Clearwater, FL 34625-1708 | Edwin R. Johnson
5051 Ming Ave.-16
Bakersfield, CA 93309-4752 |
| Harvey O. Snider
6212 29 Ave. W.,
Bradentown, FL 34209-7008 | Forrest V. Poore
23253 Westwood St.
Grand Terrace, CA 92324 |
| Matthew F. Peters
6440 Outer Loop-106
Louisville, KY 40228-1865 | |
| Sylvan S. Lieberthal
9801 Gross Point Rd.
Skokie, IL 60076-1173 | |
| Charles Grinder | |
| Phillip Kleoyne
1318 Craig Ave.
Janesville, WI 53545-2535 | |

Wm. D. Carte
208 N. 6th St.
Hampton, VA 23664-1415

George Wise

James P. Hanson
Box 221
Oak Lawn, tL 60454-0221

Vlrs. Ardis Bartholmew

Ashley R. Bean
RR 1, Box 2494,
Norway, ME 04268-9745

ester Shaak
3 Old West Penn Ave.,
Wernersville, PA 19565

Wm. N. Sweeney

Mrs. Clarence Cragoe
1805 30th St. NW-216
Bemidji, MN 56601-5643

Saul M. Kupferman
1327 Merry Lane NE
Atlanta, GA 30329

G.E. Broening
820 North Rd.
Boynton Beach, FL 33435-3238

John S. Stevens

John E. Greenwood
607 State Street
Alton, IL 62002

Robert W. Fillman
5118 Bluffview Dr.
Berrien Springs, MI 49103

Rachel E. Stigre

Harold D. Cleary

Carl Wilk

Francis X. Schuster

Mrs. Charlotte Ford Harrington-^{erry} Devine
1611 Selkirk Dr.,
Leesburg, FL 34788-7659 Fargo, ND 58102

Mrs. Ginny Chealander

Willis Tulare
Box 696
Houston, MN 55943-0696

Wilmont C. Grodi
12089 Fairhope Rd
San Diego, CA 92128-2049

Brian & Laura Oakley

Mrs. R.B. Fordyce
60 Whetstone Gap Rd.
Lal- way. NC 28747-9; 764

Donald P. Hale
1207 Hemmingway Lane
St. Chai les. MO 63304

Robert Fillman
5118 Bluffview Dr.
Banian Springs, MI 49103-1436

Bartlett C. Dykins to Robert D. Dykins

Roy D. Larson
28 Main St.
Mashpee, MA 02649-2200

Tom A. Altobelli
Stephen A. Troccia

Letters to the Editor:

Dear Ed,

On June 30th, we had an enjoyable mini-reunion in Tulsa at Joseph's Restaurant. The food was delicious and we had a lot of time for war stories. As an added experience Major General Ed McFarland, Ret. visited with us informally covering the "Air Force Today" and also covered baseclosings.

Any men and their wives in Oklahoma and any adjoining state (or any state for that matter) who would like to be informed about any future mini-reunions, write George Menkoss, 5819 E. 64th Pl., Tulsa, OK 74136-2132, and you will be notified. The next one will be in Oklahoma City, and maybe organized by Ted Findeiss.

Those who were present in Tulsa were: Jerry Gentis, Walter and Norma Beauchamp, Manley and Rosalie Cottongim, Jr., Dyton and Katherine Matthews, Sam and Mary Lyke, Ted and Martha Findeiss, Mr and Mrs. Richard W. Vrska, George and Marie Menkoff, Major Gen. Ed McFarland.

Respectfully,

George Menkoff



L-R: Gen. McFarland, Richard Vrska, San Lyke, Walter Beauchamp
(Sam was telling the Gen. how the cows ate the cabbage in WWII.



L-R: Norma Beauchamp, Marie Menkoff, Mary Lyke, Katherine Matthews



L-R: Richard Vrska, George Menkoff, Mrs. Vrska, Mary Lyke, Sam Lyke, Katherine Matthews, Dyton Matthews, Norma Beauchamp, Walter Beauchamp, Marie Menkoff

Dear Ed,

I received this letter enclosed and wonder if you could find space in the Hard Life Herald in the next issue.

In our 385th Roster I found addresses of Boyd, Henshaw and John Miller (men that he mentioned) and have sent them copies of this letter also to ask if they are the men in the letter. I wrote Volpe and told him what I did.

Also gave information that target for that day Mar. 16,1944 was Augsburg. Planes name was "Lonesome Polecat". We lost 3 planes that day, 2nd Lt. W. H. Krause in "Ohio Air Force", 1st Lt. McLaughlin in "Wildhaus", and the Meyer plane "Lonesome Polecat".

Sincerely,

Sam Lyke
4992 SE Princeton Dr.
Bartlesville, OK 74006

EDITOR'S NOTE: The June Hardlife Herald had a letter from Jacques Leroux in France asking for info on Bill Grodi and crew. Here it is.

Dear Ian:

I wish to apologize for being nearly two years late in replying to your letter of inquiry, regarding my crew. I have had several moves and am finally semi-retired and found time to unload boxes and will attempt to bring you up to date on our ship for the Group archives, as I feel I owe this to the fine crew that flew with me.

Our ship #42-30270 was named "The Old Shillelagh". We were one of the original crews assigned to the 385th at Geiger Field, Wash, (orders 2/28/43).

We flew our own ship over and arrived in England in early June 1943.

July 29, 1943 we were headed for Warnemunde and over "Helgoland" (the coast) we were hit by flack and our #3 engine would not feather, as a result we could not keep up with the formation and decided to return to the base. The engine next caught fire and all attempts to extinguish it were of no avail. The fire was burning back to the wing which was loaded with fuel. The decision was then made to ditch in the North Sea. The ditching was successful and all survived without injuries. We inflated our life rafts and cranked our portable radio until we were picked up by British High Speed Rescue boat, approximately 1 50 miles off the coast of England. This I believe the end of our fifth mission.

Our sixth mission was to Regensburg on Aug. 1 7, 1943, we landed on a desert strip somewhere in Algiers. We had minor damage, although I remember we had some flack damage to the oil tank on the #3 engine. I remember inspecting this with Sgt Cavitt the Engineer, nevertheless the order was given that anything that could fly was to return on this mission, bombing Bordeaux on the way back. Somewhere past Marseille we lost oil pressure and were unable to feather the engine, it was impossible to keep up with the formation, and we fell behind. Shortly thereafter four ME 109's hit us. We were no match for them and eventually after we had only one gun left firing and several men wounded, I gave the order to bail out. Everyone left the

plane, as I know, as I was the last one out. All the crew members were immediately picked up by the Germans, except myself, Lt. Hughes and Lt. Kneale. Lt. Kneale had a broken leg and was cared for by a local Doctor and eventually thru the Underground was returned to England in early 1944. Lt. Hughes and myself were picked up by the Underground and brought together. We walked thru France over the Pyrenees at night and were thrown in prison in Barcelona (Madello) (I returned in 1983 to visit.) I will not elaborate on our experiences thru France and Spain, as this is another story. We returned to England in December 1943.

Upon return to the U.S. I became an instructor pilot in B-29 aircraft, was retired from the service on a disability, then became a Mortgage Banker until the present. I am semi-retired, doing Real Estate Appraisals and living in a retirement area in Arizona.

If you have not already, you should contact Lt. Hughes and Lt. Kneale for their personal experiences. I have lost track of the other crew members, although I would love to hear from them.

Sincerely,

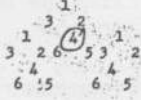
Wilmont C. (Bill) Grodi
25222 S. Cloverland Dr.
Sun Lakes, AZ 85248

MISSISSIPPI AIR CREW REPORT
H/TORTAFF: This report will be compiled in triplicate by oac-n Army Air
Forcen organization within 48 hours of the time an aircraft is
officially reported missing.
DRGAI(ZATION: Location AA? tHSA; COMMA. D or AIR FORCE VIII B.C.;
U/Jn Daub (H) S-i'ua'd' roqhbist Bomb (H); Detachment
CU-Y: Point «f Doimrture jpartk
Int'nded Ikuination _ib5
KATI FR OCEditIOIS AT D VISIBILITY AT TIME OF CRASH CH /HEN LAST REPORX...
Over'Cuac
GJA... (d)JSC<^~24H; Time
of last known whereabouts of missing aircraft, toward Spain Tibet of Toulouse
(b) Specify whether () Lent Sighted () L'at contacted by R.-d'. x.43~35N, 1625E
() Forces Down; (X) Seen to Craohj or () Information not AvailA ible
ALUHAFT 'AS LOFT, OR IS BELIEVED TO HAVE BEEN LOST, AS A RESULT OF: (Check only
or*) () En-iry Aircraft; () Enemy Anti-Aircraft; () Other Circumstances ao
foilo':: Causa amx'owxi
1800 FT: Type, Model and Serie B-17 E'
*FGHAS: Tyne, Model and SerieR-1620-97 » A.A.F. Serial Nuinbor(a) 43-382.02
(b) 45-58516; (c) 43-59040 5 (f) 43-58723
fi: ?A1: 'D JE in?HS' (Furnish below Make, Type and Serial Number) 50 Cal. Machine Guns
404i-1; Xb) 5022IV 1 (c) 495574z J.; (d) 5031
(i) 502879 ; (g) 584235 ; (h) A 495056
-iSOGS YH...L.FEMERREDREDAS: (7) Jctto Ca nun lty JQ(X)
or (b) Non-Battle Casualty
of PL-RO'S ABOARD AIRCRAFT: Crow LL ; Pa ni conc:cm ; T ota 1 AU
-Hur, #iUi pilot, furiinrh the following parli-alar: I If more than 20
imrvui were <-boar<-i lirmf... A.K. ft, 11ot similar particulars on ooparato sheet
4 attach origin!
to this form).
Name* in Full Serial
(Guest Name First) Q'Th' I'L'Kr.
Gardi, Blalout C. lot-Lt. 1.01560101.
Gardner, John K. 2nd-Lt. OeovouSO-
Gioula, Aylalbert 1st Lt. 106701311
Cavitt, Brian W. 781-1c 37206853
nutyk, Toha Ft. S/Sgt 31169109
R'liv, Jotlier J. S/Sgt 12128930
-Fi-u7-snr. 1. avilii J. S/Sgt 57452510
CjundHy, Danner-M. S/S8* -10110461
Elliott, GuQTfoa-1* S/Sgt 33697624
Contacted By 'La nt Saw Forced
Number Radio: Sighted Orrrh Landing
ED:IRD R. SB3N
1st Lt. ieur., Air Corps

HTSSIBC KA REPORT

A/t No. 270 Squadron 51 Group 3^5 . Date Missing 29/7/43
 Pilot **W.O. ttrodi, 1st Lt#** Ball T. Gunner **Franst** S/Sgt
 Co-Pilot **J.J. Bughee, 2nd Lt#** iTT Gunner **E.W. Cavett, 1/Sgt#**
 Navigator **A#D« Knoalo, 2nd Lie** Tail Gunner **B.7. Dauffl* S/Sgt#**
 Bombardier **L.T. Jeneff, 2nd Lt#** R77 Gunner **BJT. Healy, 8/feft,**
 Radio Operator **J»F» Aatyk' S/Sgt i** LW Gunner **Canaday, S/Sgt#**
 Observer

Target **gamatnnda**
 Position of A/t in Group: (Circle on diagram)
 Position of Group in Formation: **High**
 How many chutes were seen? **Bend**



The A/C lost to: ~~XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX~~ Other:
 Where did A/C sustain initial damage? **So daoago**
 Where was A/C last seen? **54^30*B#-O3^4D*B'**
 How many previous raids made by crew? **4**
 Date of last P/fc briefing? (Approx.) July 28> 1943

Give a complete narrative citing all known facts not covered by the above questions, using reverse 3ddo if necessary. If weather was con*, trituting factor, describe briefly#.

Ho. 3 engine prop could not be feathered and caught fire about 1 hear fran English Cowl. Fire was creeping closer to gas tanka.. Were picked up by V* Klr-Soa Iteoch? S«mc» "bout 8 bows otter dltehng.

John H. Johnson on file

JA. A TACH SY.T. YIJES:- DE CHITIUN ur tat.on, rvMyou
 VTAHFU TO MIGSHG AIRCRAFT
 v... ITTACH ...
 :SIAL K'HIK'-R OF OFFICER IN CHARGE HERE...
 Classification changed
 to...
 by E. A. BRAGUNAS, Lt. Col., AO
 by F. W. MURPHY, Capt., AO
 Date
RESTRICTED
 Date Report August 17, 1943
 Signature of Preparing Officer
M. A. R. GRESH, 1st Lt., AO
incl #1

Dear Ed,

I would like to mention our B-17 which was named "Sugar Jo". Our Pilot's name was Sam St. Clare. His wife's name was Jo. Our Co-pilot's name was Robert Wilson. Our Chin Turrent Gunner's name was Jack Pullio. Waist Gunner was John Manillo and I was the Ball Turret Gunner. Our Radio Operator was Harold Tandaker and our upper Turret Gunner was Don Parker. I cannot remember the rest of our crew. Would like to get in touch with them.

We started flying with 550th Squadron on or about August of 1944 and finished our 25th mission on Marsh 4th, 1945. Our Commanding Officer was Col. Geo. Y. Jumper.

John H. Johnson, Jr.
 P.O. Box 326
 1110 Friendly Pt.
 Horsehow Bend, ARK 72512

Dear Mr. Lyke,

I found your address in the Spring 1991 Friend's Journal of the US Air Force Museum, when you were listed as the source-person for information concerning a reunion of the 385th Bomb Group.

For many years, I have been fascinated by the story of one of the bomb groups B-17, serial number 42-38160, which made a forced landing in the Lake of Zug, Switzerland, on 16 March 1944. Last fall I started gathering information on this incident for a possible article in the Museum's Friends Journal, and it is for that reason I am writing to you.

Has the 385th Bomb Group ever published a book (or monograph) on its experiences in the ETO? If so, would it be possible to. buy a copy?

I would also like to get in Contact with surviving members of the crew of this particular aircraft. The names that I have (along with known addresses at the time of their interment here) are:

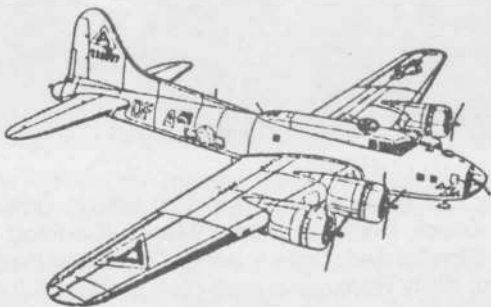
- Robert W. Meyer - La Crosse, Wise. - Pilot
- Boyd J. Henshaw - Mt. Vernon, Wash - Co-Pilot
- Jarrell Legg - Chesapeake, W. VA. - Tail Gunner
- Elbert Mitchell - Soulsbyville, Cal. - Waist Gunner
- Louis Liening - Coldwater, Ohio ■ Waist Gunner
- John E. Wells - Jeffersonville, Ind. - Radio Operator
- John Miller Jr. - Girard, Ohio - Top Turret gunner
(I have a doubt about the first name)
- Charles W. Page - ? - Ball Turret Gunner
- Carl J. (or L.) Larsen - ? - ?
- Robert L. Williams - ? Navigator (Killed)

I have received a letter from the widow of Mr. Liening, and have requested certain details of his time with the 385th in general, and his flight on 16 March 1944 in particular.

Any information about the whereabouts of surviving crew members would be greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

Randall F. Volpe
 rue de la plaine 30
 1400 Yverdon-les-Bains
 Vaud, Switzerland



Ed Stern:

I have all my medals, DFC, PHAM, I don't have the Presidential Citation. I remember wearing it in London on the right breast, but I'm writing cause I can't remember no more. I never see anything published in the HLH about the R & D and the Isle of Wight, when we encountered the Abbeyville Kids or Goering's Yellow Noses. What I need is someone who knew me over there. I went over in early Nov., Dec., Jan. & Part of Feb. that I flew with. I also had a best friend, Sgt. Jack Popp who I lost contact with 30 years ago, my good friend. Please, if someone knows. I don't need no accolades, just help please. Some of the officers and men are on the list I started out with, Chuck Erickson as tail gunner and I don't even remember the crew. Try to locate them -- most are deceased.

Please put some questions in the HLH. I'll try to get to Spokane. Health reasons may keep me back.

God Bless all,

Wally Wejtkowski

Here are the names of Wally's Crew:

2nd Lt. Nyle G. Myers
 2nd Lt. George J. Bradley
 Sgt. Gabriel V. Kushner
 Sgt. Jack W. Popp
 Sgt. Franklin C Owsley
 S/Sgt Wallace L. Wejtkowski
 Sgt. Clifford E. Owen



Standing L to R: Jack Popp (My best friend), Dick Harris (Nav.), Chuck Erickson (Pilot), Myers (Co-Pilot), Geo. Bradley (Bombardier), Gabe Kushner (Top Turret Engineer), Kneeling: Wally Wejtkowski (me) (Tail), Clifford E. Owens, (Gunner), I don't remember him (Radio), Franklyn Owsley (Ball Turret).

Dear 385th Members,

I am a proud new member of your group (first newsletter was February) and maybe I don't belong (I'm only 29) but I had a dear friend who let me read his newsletters, book and actual stories he had lived. I am so thankful because I love the B-17 and I understand more about your experience.

It is an honor for me to be part of your group. In this newsletter I wanted to thank Lou Lonsway to show him how much I appreciated his getting me into the group. And I know he will read it.

But I lost a man I admired in April upon an unexpected death, but I wrote it anyway for his wife, Ruth.

He may be gone in this life, but he and his stories will live in my heart forever.

God Bless,
 Keep'em flying
 Curtis Harrell

P.S. Can you send me some 549th Sq patches please so I can wear them with pride.

Dear Ed,

We, in Connecticut, have finally started a State Chapter of the Eighth Air Force Historical Society. Our first meeting was last April, at which I was made the treasurer. At this first meeting, I met Nello Mallavasi, who was a member of the 385th until he was shot down over Holland.

Bob Valliere
 18 Whiting Road
 Branford, CT 06405



L-R: Bob Valliere, Ed McElroy, Bev McElroy
 Nancy Valliere

At Cape Coral "Winter." of 1993.

EDITOR'S NOTE: Here's a Look at the Intelligence "debriefing" that gives an interesting picture of a mission. Hope it is as interesting to you fly boys as it is to a padlefoot.

4th "B" CBV ASSEMBLY

Splasher #7	0-43
Saffron Walcon	0-37
Cambridge	0-31

This was a PFF Mission. Bombing to be done at 12000 ft. 4 Gps 10 x 500, 1/10 x 1/100. 2 Gps 10 x 117. Gps were not to lose 1000 ft after lbombing.. If overcast, Wings were to climb to 18000 ft. No fighter Escort. Smoke candles were burned between Cambridge and Buncher 12. Due to weather conditions the secondard (Rostock) was bombed l by both 4 "A" and 4 "B" Wings.

Col. Harris, 4th "A" Leader: We made a standard bad weather assembly. Left the coast 3/2 minutes early. Visibility was excellent, however, later on we ran into a solid overcast. Coming into the IP and target we had this solid overcast. Our "Mickey" operator was briefed to pick up the course and take up the run, and he did a very good job. We flew within 2 miles of briefed course all the way through. As the primary was completely obscured, we climbed to 18000 ft and dropped our bombs on the secondard (Rostock). Bombs fell right through a balloon barrage. After bombs were away we ran into flak. We let down to 12000 and proceeded on back making land-fall on the English Coast 15 minutes early. We experienced only a few fighter attacks. We burnt smoke candles between Cambridge and Buncher 7.

Col Wilson: - "How was your assembly and wg formation?"

Col. Harris: - "We had no trouble at all on the assembly and our Wg formation was fair. We did have a little trouble with the high Sq. in the Lead Gp."

Col. Wilson: - "From some of the photographs we got on this formation it did not look like we had a very good Wg formation."

Capt. Brown, 447th "B" Gp: - "Had no trouble at all - joined Col. Harris over Splasher #7 and followed him all the way through.

Capt. Westerfield, 94th "B" Leader: - "I did not see the smoke pots which Col. Harris released."

Capt. Brown: - "I didn't see the first one very well, and when I did see it, it was only a thin trail. I got a better look at the second one as I was watching for it."

Maj. Tesla, 385th "B" 4th "B" Gp Leader: - "We used normal assembly over the field. The 90th was not with us at Splasher #7, so I called them and told them to meet us at the second control point. Coming up to Cambridge I called the 96th again and they said they would be there about 2 minutes early. We fired flares and met the 96th without any trouble. We were echclooned to the right of the 4th "A"

Gp. Our Wing formation was sort of loose before hitting the coast, however, upon hitting the coast we pulled up into tight defensive formation. We could see the Wing up front hit ajittle flak when they hit the enemy coast. The IP and target was completely under cast. We proceeded to the secondary climbing to 18000 ft as specified in the FO. About this time, we ran into enemy fighters and they pick-ed off our #9 man and our deputy leader got hit and had to fall out of formation. He dropped on PFF, the bombs fall-ing on flak and barrage balloons over Rostock. Results were unobserved due to weather conditions. The fighters finish-ed off the Deputy Leader. The smoke pots I saw lasted on-ly about 4 seconds. You have to be looking for them or else you will never see them."

Maj. Kinney, 385th "A" Leader: - "We flew low Group in the second Wing. After we left the coast our formation was excellent. The 96th jseemedlto have trouble keeping up due to the position of the sun. Because of the sun over the target, we had to wait a little for the 96th to get into position. As already stated 10/10 undercast prevented visual bombing of primary which made it necessary to bomb the secondard on PFF which we did. The exhibition of gunnery on this mission in my Group was very poor. The gunners just couldn't seem to hit a thing. We encountered approx-imately 25 - 30 e/a and they came in very close. I think we should have tracers back again and maybe we could at least scare the e/a away."

Maj. Kinney: - "All the old gunners seem to want the tracers back and some of them are actually afraid to fly with these new gunners i.e., the old time gunners who have about 20 missions in.

Col. Wilson: - "We must leave the tracers out for the time being. Other Wing commanders are very much opposed to the use of tracers. I want them kept out until you know for sure that the gunners are using the correct zone system of sighting."

Col. Wilson: - "What was your course on your bombing run?"

Maj. Kinney: - "Approximately 260°."

Col Harris' Navigator: - "We were able to get a few pilotage winds and were in agreement with the "Mickey" all the time. I was in the lead to the target until we gave the signal to the "Mickey" and he pulled out ahead and took over."

Col. Wilson: - "When did you turn the lead over?"

Navigator: - "Just as we passed over the primary."

Col. Castle: - "One of the difficulties on this mission was that Gen. LeMay wanted us to cross the coast as low as possible. 20 Minutes before take-off they called down from Div. and said go lower than the altitude previously given. I sent out word to try and cross the coast at 4000 ft and make all times good."

Col. Castle: - "Another point involved was that PFF was to be used only for navigation and bombing was to be visual. PFF was to be used for bombing only if we were forced

to bomb the secondary."

Col. Wilson: - "How was the flak damage in the Groups?"

Col. Castle: - "There was quite a bit of flak damage in my Group."

Maj. Kinney: - "There seemed to be a lot of flak but it seemed to miss us due to inaccuracy."

Nav. for Maj. Tesla: ■ "I could clearly see the balloon barrage and also want to back up Maj. Kinney in saying that the gunnery was very poor."

Maj. Riva expressed the opinion that zone sighting was good only for attacks on you.

Col. Castle: - "I think the zone system of firing is the only system. Trouble is the average gunner hasn't had enough experience. Some of these boys have been on quite a few missions without even seeing an e/a."

Col. Martin suggesting getting some of the pursuit pilots over and have them discuss their problems in hitting their targets, and maybe we could get a better understanding of this problem.

Col. Wilson: - "I have no more comments on this mission other than photos taken on this mission reveal that the formations were very poor - no defensive formation whatsoever. Div. has said that C.W. formations all over are getting poor and we will have to watch that and tighten up our formations. Also, this PFF deal on this mission was not very good, however, I don't think we will have very many of these PFF deals such as this one."

Dear Ed,

3 of the 4 surviving members of Crow's crew of the 550th Squadron met at my place over the 4th of July for a mini reunion. As well as George and Bonnie Lentz and Leroy Lancaster, a total of 5 grandkids came along too. We toured the Space and Rocket Museum and the Marshall Space Flight center where while catching up on each others families.

We had a picnic at a nearby park and a couple of guys from the Bloody 100th joined us for a few air stories.

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



L-R: Joe Walters-100th, Bill Varnedoe-385th, Leroy Lancaster-385th, DeLome Cumbau-100th, George Lentz-385th.

385 BGMA

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

FORWARD & ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

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