

Hardlife



Herald



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The Saga of the *Raunchy Wolves*

By Bill Varnedoe

It had been believed that there were two B-17s named *Raunchy Wolf* in the 385th Bomb Group. Examining some pictures and reports, I came to believe there was only one, and have written many people giving my reasons. Now, however, after doing some research and digging deeper into the conflicting records, I am back to believing there were indeed **two** aircraft named *Raunchy Wolf*. Clearly, there were two nose arts, one with a wolf's head and another without. But the records are all mixed up. Let me list what has been recorded then give what I believe will explain what happened. The source for each statement follows in [brackets.] (Mission numbers are 385th missions, not crew missions.)

Records show:

2. Frank crew flew 42-3290 overseas as part of the original crews. June 43. [Loading list]
3. 42-3290 had no nose art when flown overseas [Snider, crew member]
4. 42-3290 was named *Raunchy Wolf* and a name only (no wolf's head) was painted on. [Snyder]
5. Frank crew flew 42-3290 on Missions Nos. 1,2,3,5,8,10,13,15,18,19 through 16 Sept 43. [Loading Lists]
6. 42-3290 was reported salvaged 28 Aug 43 after crashing in Bulphan, Exeter, England. [Freeman] {obvious error.}
7. 42-3290 was salvaged 10 Oct 43 [Snider]
8. 42-3290 had a midair collision on the mission 21- 25 Sept 43, and went down in England with the Keely crew. [Freeman & Loading list.]
9. 42-3290 does not appear in any loading lists after 25 Sept. [Loading Lists]
10. No loading list had Frye crew flying in 42-3290 [Loading Lists]
11. Some A/C was renamed *El Lobo* and was so painted on the nose with the 551st Squadron wolf's head.

[AF Photo]

Cont. on page 3...

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Hardlife Herald

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REUNION BIDS FOR 2005

I note there is some interest in having annual reunions. This reunion in VA On the 22 October is the time to make your bid for the next, even the next two, reunions. I have been asked to collect the proposals and make a presentation to the Board and the membership at the reunion. Send your bid to: Bill Varnedoe, 5000 Ketova Way, Huntsville, AL 35803 or billvar@comcast.net.

Your proposal MUST include:

- 'Dates proposed,
- 'Location, and
- 'Host (name).

And possibly could include reasons for each and estimated cost, both to each attendee and to the 385th BGMA.

Most importantly, please note: the Host will be expected to be in charge and to make ALL the arrangements, schedules, hotel contacts, tours, etc. and carry them to completion. This should not be the job of any member of the board (who would like to attend like any other member.)

There is no format necessary if the essentials are included. The reunion, itself, can consist of whatever the Host pleases. It does NOT have to be patterned after former reunions. It can be: one week, two weeks, two day, short, long, many tours, none, speakers, presentations, or none of these but just bull sessions, etc. Leave time for a board meeting and a general membership meeting, otherwise its up to you. Be innovative!!

After I compile the bids, you will have a chance to make a brief pitch for your plan to the membership before a vote is taken.

-Bill Varnedoe, 1st VP

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

by Leo A. LaCasse, Col., USAF, Ret.

Isn't it strange after fifty-eight years only eighteen missions have been flown? Here we are about to take off on the nineteenth in less than sixty days. If you thought 25 missions was hard to get through back then just think of what it will take to finish our goal of twenty-five now. At our age the aborts and MIAs will be taking their toll. So, let's all try and muscle up enough energy to take off for Hampton in October.

Many members have been asking about the airports in Hampton. From past experience members flying from the West Coast have flown into Washington, D.C. and taken a commuter flight from Washington to either Newportnews/Williamsburg Airport or Norfolk Airport. The Holiday Inn will provide transportation from either of these two airports to the Hotel if requested at time of reservation.

Both of these airports are approximately fifteen miles from the Hotel. Please make your hotel reservations as early as possible if you wish to have transportation available upon arrival.

It is my understanding that seven members of the 385th have written books and had them published. If any of you authors would like to bring your books to be autographed and sold tables will be made available for you to hawk your books at or close to the registration desk on October 25th. If you wish to have more exposure I'm sure we can accommodate you additional space in our hospitality room throughout the five days of the reunion.

These last few days I have designed and assembled a flag I believe would be appropriate to designate as the 385th Official Colors. Some of the Board members have encouraged me to

undertake the task where others have had misgiving about the cost to produce a Ceremonial Flag we could call our own. The flag will be unfurled before the members at our first meeting October 26th. This flag has been a labor of love for me and I would like all the members to vote on the approval of the flag and the adoption of the flag as the Official 385th Honor Flag. If approved it will henceforth be known as Our Flag and I will donate the Flag to the Group to become part of the archives and the legend of the 385th. I have no illusions that everyone will jump up with joy and vote unanimously in favor of adopting this flag. We have gone 60 years without our Colors and I think it high Let's hope we all agree on this point.

See you all in October.
Keep'em Flying.

...Cont. from page 1

12. *El Lobo* was painted out sometime after it had flown 11 missions and *Raunchy Wolf* was painted on. This art kept the wolf's head, remaining from the *El Lobo* nose art. [Photos, showing matching flack patches and the faint outline of the old name.]

13. 42-30249 was Riva (385th BG) crew's B-17 in the U.S. on 11 June 43, and he flew it overseas. [Loading lists]

14. 42-30249 was assigned to 385th 26 Jun 43. [Freeman.]

15. Yanello Crew flew 42-30249 on missions 2,3,5,8,9,10,13,15,16,17,20, (Yanello was lost on mission 21 in 42-30264.) [Loading lists]

16. Poore crew flew 42-30249 on mission 22-27 Sept 43. [Loading list]

17. Frank crew flew 42-30249 on missions 25,26,27- 8 Oct to 10 Oct 43 (Munster.) [Loading list]

18. There is a gap between 10 Oct and 16 Dec., (Missions 27 and 42) where 42-30249 does not appear on any loading list. [Loading Lists]

19. Frye crew took over *Raunchy Wolf* from Frank crew when they finished their missions. [Snider & Hollingsworth.]

20. Frye crew flew in 42-30249 on missions 42,43,44,46 between 13 Dec and 21 Dec. [Loading List]

21. Frye crew, on mission 47, were shot down in France on 30 Dec 43 in 42-30249. [loading lists]

22. Frye crew, on mission 47, was shot down in France on 30 Dec 43 in 42-30294, *Raunchy Wolf* [Hollingsworth-crew member]

23. Frye crew, on mission 47, was shot down in France on 30 Dec 43 in 42-30249, *El Sabo*. [MACR 1899]

24. 42-30249 was named *El Sabo* and crashed in Ludwigshafen 30 Dec 43. [Freeman]
25. 42-30249 does not appear on any loading list after 30 Dec 43. [Loading Lists]
26. A photo shows a B-17 with the same wolf's head being cut up for scrap, [photo]
27. This photo came from Luxembourg. [Snider]
28. A photograph reportedly taken in Africa mission 10, shows a B-17 with the name *Raunchy Wolf*, but no wolf's head, and the nose armament is different from the other *Raunchy Wolf*, [photo]
29. The 94th Bomb Group had a B-17 named *Raunchy Wolf* [Andrews]
30. 42-30294 was named *Raunchy Wolf* and assigned to the 385th, but was written off 29 July 43. [Freeman]
31. 42-30294 does not appear on any loading list for any mission. [Loading lists.]

Obviously, some of these "facts" are mutually exclusive!! The photographs are excellent proof of what they show. Many Loading Lists have been known to contain typing errors, usually by mistyping a number. This type of error is not repeated in multiple loading lists, however. Freeman, Andrews, Forman and myself tend to copy each other, so that multiple sources are not independent.

I believe: 1. Photos, 2 Loading lists, 3 Andrews and Freeman, 4. personal memories, 5. Newspaper accounts -are reliable in that order.



I see the following as a most likely probability:

- The 385th had no B-17 named *Raunchy Wolf* serial no. 42-30294. If this A/C was ever assigned, it flew no missions.
- 42-3290 was first named *Raunchy Wolf* (nose art w/o wolf's head) by the Frank crew who flew it until 16 Sept 43, mission 19, to Ch. Benhard.
- 42-3209, the first *Raunchy Wolf*, was lost on 25 Aug 43 with the Keeley crew.
- The Frank crew was assigned 42-30249 and named it *Raunchy Wolf*, painting out an existing name, *El Lobo* on 8 Oct 43. They left the wolf's head on the nose art.
- The Frank crew flew in 42-30249, the second *Raunchy Wolf* (with wolf's head), on missions 25 thru 27-- 8 Oct to 10 Oct. and on to 16 Nov. 43 when the Frank crew finished their missions.
- Frye crew took over 42-30249 (as *Raunchy Wolf*) sometime after 16 Nov. 43.
- Frye crew flew missions 42 thru 46 in 42-302 49, *Raunchy Wolf*, then crashed in France on mission 47-30 Dec 43 in 42-30249, *Raunchy Wolf* (with wolf's head).

It seems unlikely that both the MACR and many Loading Lists have the serial number of 42-30249 in error. But the name, *El Sabo*, on the MACR is probably a typo for *El Lobo* by someone who didn't know it had been renamed to *Raunchy Wolf* and the nose repainted months earlier.

16. 42-30294 does not appear on any loading list for any mission. [Loading lists.]

Obviously, many of these "facts" are mutually exclusive!! The photographs are excellent proof of what they show. I think the Loading Lists have more validity than Freeman's book. However, many Loading Lists have been known to contain typing errors, usually by mistyping ONE number. This type of error is not repeated in multiple loading lists, however.

I see the following as a most likely probability:

- 42-3290 was first named *El Lobo* by the Frank crew, who sometime after August 43 renamed and repainted it *Raunchy Wolf*. It was lost on 26 Aug 43 with the Keeley crew. [Photos and Loading lists]
- 42-30294 was probably not named *Raunchy Wolf* and was written off on 29 July 43 and never flew missions. [Loading lists] (The similarity of the numbers may have mixed it with 42-30249)
- The Frye crew in 42-30249, *El Sabo*, crashed in France on 30 Dec 43. [It seems unlikely that both the MACR and many Loading Lists have the same error repeatedly.]
- The *Raunchy Wolf* picture without a wolf's head belonged to another Group, and was simply photographed in Africa by one of our Guys. [Lack of data.]
- The 385th had no other B-17 named *Raunchy Wolf*, unless 42-30294 was so named for its brief existence, but no picture or loading list survives.

The above scenario fits the most reliable facts. Those contrary to this explanation are explainable by faulty memories or simple typos.

Colonel Elliot S. Van Deventer Jr.

by Donald J. Kabitzke

I wonder how many members of the 385th know that Colonel VanDeventer was one of the United States Air Corps first heroes. He was a graduate from West Point and went into flight training. The first I learned of him was in the book section of Readers Digest. In the back they usually had a review of some book. This issue had one named. "QUEENS DIE PROUDLY". was the story how the Air Corps got kicked out of the Phillipines by the Japanese. The Colonel was a Second Lieutenant in the story.

It told how the crew that the Colonel was in had flown south of the Phillipines before the Japanese attack on the Islands air fields. When the two Japanese diplomats left Manila headed for Washington, General MacArthur ordered the Air Corps to have planes above the islands 24 hours a day, he told his aids "We now are at War". The Colonels bomber circled south of the islands during the Japs bombing attacks. When they left the bomber returned to Manila, was refueled and took some additional personnel on the way to Australia. From there the bombers started attacking Japanese shipping and the oil wells in that area. The Colonels crew was credited with sinking 3 Jap ships.

The next I saw or heard of him was at Great Ashfield. He had flown over from the States with part of his Staff, while the balance of the group travelled on

the Queen Mary to Scotland. We were ordered to attend a meeting with him in the Enlisted mens messhall at 7 one evening. His Adjutant lectured to us for about 20 minutes on the fact that the Colonel was a graduate from West Point and how he demanded discipline at all times. When he entered the room you could hear the proverbial pin drop. He told us we would work some days as long as 48 hours in order to keep bombers in the air. He also told us that when time allowed, we would be able to go on passes. He lived up to his word.

VanDeventer was the youngest Commander in the Eighth Air force bomber command. One of the most famous raid made by bombers during the war in Europe was the fighter plant factory at Marienburg Germany. The Germans had surrounded it with British, French and Polish prisoners of war on all sides so that they would provide protection from a bombing raid. The Colonel was given the assignment to knock it out and not kill any prisoners. He conducted trial runs on a dummy of the factory on northern England. Bombardiers used special mockups of the area so as to eliminate any mistakes. When he felt they were ready, they were ordered to destroy the factory. Not a single bomb fell outside of the target area. General Arnold called it the most complete destruction of a target during the war.

The Colonel was a stickler when it came to training his crews. He was a personal friend of General Curtis E Le May the CO of the 8th before going back to the States to organize the B-29 Squadrons for the Pacific. He had issued an order that all commanders train their men how to fly through rain and fog when assembling for a mission. The Colonel did just that. It all paid off on the darkest day in Air Force history when 100 bombers were lost to the German Fighters. B-17's were ordered to bomb Schweinfert and B-24's go to Regensburg at the same time so as to have a two prong drive at the fighters attacks.

The Fortresses took off successfully and were on their way on schedule. The B-24's took off three hours later due to the fog in their areas. This was to prove to be disastrous. This mission was planned by General LeMay, and he led the Schweinfert raid. They suffered huge losses due to fact that the Germans were able to concentrate all of their fighters on this group. He wanted it so that the two flights would reduce the German fighter groups.

When the B-24's made their trip, the Germans were rested and able to concentrate on them causing huge losses. These results would have not happened if the other bombers had been trained properly and taken to the air as planned. VanDeventer was a personal friend of LeMay. When he left to

go back to the States, he gave the Colonel 6 8 by 10 photos of himself with the ever present cigar jutting out the side of his mouth. We in the woodwork were given the job of making, staining and varnishing frames for them.

The only time I was able to say hello to the Colonel was one day I was mounting clip boards for the stories of the bomber crews by the Public Relations officer of the group. The Colonel came in and read some of the press releases, written by Lieutenant Earl Mazo. As he was getting ready to leave he asked Mazo, to soft peddle his name on those releases before some dam congressman comes over and wants to know who the hell "I am".

Van Deventer was an excellent Commander. Shortly after he was relieved of command of the 385th, he was promoted to Brigadier General. He deserved it.

Soft Life Side

Darla is still soft and still alive, but I ran out of space. However, she can out talk me anytime. Thanks to Marian for her column in last issue.

Tom

The Day We Used the Aldis Lamp

by Maurice Nysether

Briefing on June 25th, 1944 started like many other missions. Up at 0300, into the 6x6, dining on green eggs and hard English bread. Missions on the preceding days had been long and hard, Berlin on the 22nd, Paris on the 23rd, and Wesermunde on the 24th. So what was the Special French Operation (as it was referred to) on the 25th? As it turned out it, it was a "piece of cake" as the Brits say.

We were to supply the French resistance group, the Maquis with 300 lb. containers of arms and munitions. As stated in the orders, the mission was to be of utmost secrecy. The primary target was an open field in Southeastern France, near Macon.

Our crew of "Sleepytime Gal" consisted of Fred Borns, pilot, Ed Lowe, co-pilot, Bill Skelly, navigator, Maurice Nysether, bombardier, Marion Jindra, top turret, Lou Young, radio man, Louy, ball turret, Buell Martin, tail gunner and Bergeron and Schmaeling waist gunners. We crossed over central France at altitude and started letting down to 500ft as we neared Macon. About that time a lone BI 7 joined us on our left wing. Repeated efforts to contact the stray BI 7 on the radio failed. The obvious problem was, that

in all likelihood the stray BI 7 was carrying bombs. A more remote possibility was that it may have been a captured BI7 flown by the Luftwaffe.

In either case, there was a potential for disaster if communications could not be established. Orders were given to shoot the BI 7 down if we could not reach him or if they opened his bomb bay doors.

This is when we brought out the Aldis Lamp. Lou Young repeatedly signalled the BI7 with no response.

Finally, as we neared the target, the stray BI7 got on the radio and reported that he had lost his formation and had found our group. One can wonder if he had enough fuel to return to base.

After that, the actual drop was almost an anti-climax. We made a pass over the target at 500 ft., signal fires were started, made the second pass with the drop and a third pass as the Maquis were carrying the munitions into the woods. A complete success.

Only then did we have time to view the surroundings from low altitude. A beautiful scene, the chateaus and castles in the hills above us. It would be a long trip back, but compared to the earlier missions it was almost like a Sunday outing.



Air Stories [385BG] "Off The Record (19)"

By Frank Fl. Mays, Author of "And No Purple Heart"

Slipping off a glove, pushing up the left sleeve cuff of the heavy flight jacket, Frank gets a peek at his wrist watch. Time has passed quickly this mission. "Almost five-hours since take-off. Another hour or so and we'll be back at base. If they were all this easy it wouldn't be so bad," he thought to himself "I sure could use a smoke. Just a little longer."

His view through the round sight-glass between spread feet lets Frank see the rolling landscape has begun to fatten. Fields of green growth are smaller than back an hour ago. He recognizes this area as one seen several times before. The group has used this route in and out of Germany knowing there are no flak battery installations. Without German fighters attacking it should be a "Cake-Walk" getting to the English Channel.

With the thought of fighters, Frank quickly swings the turret up and rotates to scan the skies. His sudden move is followed by a number of flak bursts directly under the belly of the bomber. A shell bursts in front of his eyes just feet away. Flak rattles through the metal body of the bomber and ricochets off the ball turret. He sees smoke and flames come from under the No. 3 engine. "No. 3 on fire," he yell's over the intercom.

The propeller begins to rotate slower and flatten out as the co-pilot kills the engine and feathers the prop. The smoke from the engine stops as suddenly as it started and Frank realized flak had caused an engine cylinder to disintegrate.

Turning the turret down for a look at the ground Frank see flashes of fire he knows to be anti-

aircraft guns firing. There was not supposed to be any gun batteries around here and curiosity forces him to stare closer at the flashes of light. He is surprised to see the flashes are coming from what appears to be a railroad. There is a train down there with guns mounted on flat-cars heading in the same direction as the formation. The train is slowly being left behind as the bombers continue toward the West. The bursts of shells fall behind the group and finally stop.

"The dirty Bastards," Frank thought, "They figured out we used this path and decided to put a stop to it."

What he had not noticed was the War Horse was gradually losing altitude and falling behind the group of bombers. Now with two engines at maximum power, and two hanging dead, the pilot would be required to use his every expertise to get them back to base. It was a critical time for the crew. Without protection of the gunners in the group the War Horse was vulnerable to attack by German fighters. Adrenaline surged through the veins of every gunner with a heightened sense of urgency.

Finally, Frank saw the coast of the Channel's murky waters as they left the Continent behind. The expected German fighters had not appeared. Lady Luck was with them this day.

Looking down, Frank saw the Channel being left behind as the War Horse flew over English soil. The slower moving bomber had been left behind by the formation which was nowhere to be seen. Far behind the War Horse could be seen another B-17 strug-

gling to make it home. At a much lower altitude it was questionable if the other bomber would stretch it's flight all the way back to base. Odds were, it would not make it and hopefully be able to set down on some close base.

With permission granted by the pilot Frank crawls from the ball turret into the fuselage waist. The turret is stored for landing. A cigarette is lit as he sits with the two waist gunners. The tail gunner reports he can no longer spot the other trailing bomber. Time seems to drag as the increased vibrations from two maxed engines fly the bomber home.

The landing is smooth - probably smoother than normal without the usual bounces with all four engines running - the pilots have once again brought the crew and War Horse home.

Frank



THE ROLL OF TOILET TISSUE

by Sterling Rogers

Author of *Hunkered Down*

I had forgotten it completely. And then I read **The Last Escape*** and it popped into my mind again, triggered by the mention of the shortage of toilet tissue at Nuremburg. In March of 1945 Col. Darr Alkire, as the Senior American Officer, made a formal written complaint to the German authorities and the Swiss (the Protective Power) which the authors included as an appendix to the book. In his litany of grievances was "Fifty (50) rolls for 5,000 men for over one month has been the issue of toilet paper."

I read that statement and was instantly transported back to the raw March day in 1945 when I felt an overpowering need to visit the vermin-ridden and drafty outhouse we called an "abort." That's German for latrine.

The only functioning one in our compound was hardly more than a slit trench. Most of its siding had been stolen for firewood. The boards forming the toilet seats were splintered and loose so that you were in danger of falling into the cesspit each time. Painful pinches were almost inevitable.

Dysentery was a recurring problem. Had been ever since we walked out of Zagan on a frigid night in January. I had to go to the *abort* and that was all there was to it. I grabbed the tiny roll of paper we had available for those of us in my "combine" and

hurried out.

There were twelve of us in that combine. We shared everything: our food (what little we had), our blankets (yes, we slept together to share the warmth of our bodies), our cigarettes (when we had them), and even our toilet tissue.

While I perched precariously on the railing which formed the front of what had once been a line of wooden toilet seats I carefully tore and folded a few sheets of tissue so that I would use the minimum amount. It was much too precious to waste.

There was a cold wind blowing. It whistled through the cracks and open spaces where the siding had been pulled off. It swirled through the opening where a door had once been. It would have been uncomfortable if I had been fully clothed. With my pants around my ankles it was misery. I didn't waste any time.

As I pulled my pants up I was struck by the sight of a roll of tissue on the crossbracing of the wall at the end of the room. It wasn't a full roll - maybe half. But that was more toilet paper than we had seen in weeks. I tucked it under my coat and hurried through the cold to the block (barracks) and the rest of my combine.

"Look what I found," I said triumphantly to my mates.

"Damn! What have you

done? Raided the supply room?" somebody asked. Stealing anything from the supply room would have been highly unethical as well as completely impossible. It was located outside the compound.

"No," I said. "It was in the abort. I guess somebody left it by mistake. I couldn't just go away and leave it there."

We held a council then about what to do with that roll of tissue. In the end, although each of us wanted desperately to keep it for ourselves, we decided the only right thing to do was to turn it in to the Senior Officer in the block. And that is what we did.

But only after we had wound off several lengths of it for our own use.

*Sterling Rogers,
550th Sqdn, was
bombardier on Sexton's
crew and a POW*

***The Last Escape,**
Nichol & Rennell, Publ. by
Viking/Penguin. 2001



Book Review - The Last Escape

Nichol & Rennell, 520 pgs., Viking/Penguin, 2001, \$29.95

Review by Sterling Rogers

The Last Escape is subtitled "The Untold Story of Allied Prisoners of War in Europe 1944-45." Neither of the two authors is from the World War II generation, although Nichol was a fighter pilot in Gulf War I and a POW for some time during that brief conflict. Their not being involved in the events they wrote about made it easier, I believe, to evaluate the reams of written and oral evidence they sifted to come at the truth of that time in Germany. They could, and often did, discount the rumors passed on as fact by many of the survivors. But they were meticulous in digging out the reality; comparing the testimony of first one, then another, to the actual records available in various offices of the British government, the U S government, and the files available from the German government. And, when multiple sources told the same story, they accepted it as probable fact.

Their story necessarily leans heavily on the accounts of British survivors. There were, after all, far more Brit POWs than American. The writers give very little attention to POWs held in Austria. That may be because the numbers were comparatively smaller than those in Germany and Poland, or it may be there is simply less data on those men. In any case, they have painted a horrifying picture of the many forced marches, harsh treatments, desperate hunger and filthy living conditions endured by thousands in those last months of the collapse of the Third Reich. I suppose it would have been impossible to describe each and every camp evacuation and its attendant hor-

rors but the conditions described clearly merit the use of the term 'survivors' for those who experienced them.

The book is not easy reading. In the first place, it is printed in a small type font with even smaller footnote numbers. That makes it very difficult for us older readers. The subject matter was never intended to entertain - it is history. But it is a book that should be read - by high school students, by college students, by working adults and retired people, by everyone whose life has been affected by the outcome of World War II. And that means all of us.

The story begins with Stalag Luft VI at Hydekrug in East Prussia and moves west as the camps are evacuated ahead of the advancing front lines. Marienburg, Gross Tychow. Sagan, Colditz, Fallingbostel, Nuremberg. These and many others are emptied onto the back roads of Germany in what became a river of humanity struggling against the cold, hunger, exhaustion, and even Allied air raids. In the end, most found themselves either in Moosburg, or on the Luneburg Heath. George Patton's Third Army liberated those at Moosburg and Montgomery's forces those on Luneburg Heath.

Along the way there were examples of inordinate cruelty by the German guardsmen shot for the simple crime of not being able to continue to march, men left to die beside the road in sub-zero cold and wet, men who slept by leaning against one another crowded into such confined spaces they were unable to sit or lie down. Dysentery

was a recurring problem.

Perhaps the most difficult part of the book for me to read dealt with the disgusting things the men ate. It was not their choice. It was that or starve to death. They ate horse meat cut from a carcass left by the roadside. They ate a dog and tried diligently to attract a cat. The thin soup sometimes supplied by the Germans often contained worms. Red Cross supplied food packages were sporadic and seldom issued in the quantity intended to sustain good health. The senior American officer at Nuremberg filed a complaint in which he estimated the available calories per man per day to be 1218.

Personal hygiene was non-existent. Washing and bathing facilities didn't exist on the march and, when in one camp or another, were often not operational. The issue of toilet paper at Nuremberg was 50 rolls for one month for 5000 men. Lice, bedbugs, and fleas infested the buildings.

Liberation, when it came, was not an unalloyed joy. The bureaucrats took over and many men, disillusioned with their chances for a quick return home, simply walked away and found their own transport. Many felt misunderstood by the civilian population, unable to talk about the privations they had been through and so considered to have been slackers in a sense in that they were "well out of it all" as POWs.

I found this book very difficult reading. But I should have. I was one of those who marched from Sagan to Spremburg and from Nuremberg to Moosburg.

This is a touching e-mail I received from Jan Wilde from the Netherlands, and it shows how much it still is appreciated by those taken out of harms way-as you know, they were starving in Holland. Jan's Grandfather was liberated from Concentration Camp by our forces. Please read it all.

George Menkoff

Hello George;

Many thanks for your emails and your reaction about our adoption off the grave of 2nd Lt. Flanagan and our search to locate his relatives also thanks for passing me on the addresses that you received from Roger, I will try to contact and inform them about the adoption. I had a lot of reactions on my request for information, I'm now busy to reply all those nice people.

I also received the photos you mail to me, it was the best I could hope for because most of the time it's very difficult to get a photo of a hero from WW2.

I surely will follow your advise to visit the museum at Perlé as soon as possible.

You wrote me about your visit to Holland last year and to Luxembourg, you offer me to email me the itinerary of your trip, I will appreciate it very much if you will do so, I will also appreciate it very much to get on the 385th group e-mail, so please tell me what to do.

You asked me to tell something about us and our hometown, well there is a lot to tell but I will try to keep it short.

My name is Jan de Wilde, I'm 34 years old, my parents are both 54 years of age just like my father I'm interested in military history, I think since I was born, my granddad was a POW in WW 2 till he was liberated by the US Forces, my uncle David de Wilde is a retired USAF pilot and Vietnam Veteran, he was a 0,1 Bird Dog Observation pilot during the Vietnam War, my dad served in the Dutch Army, unfortunately I did not.

Our family had also lost dear ones in WW 2, so my parents are raised just like they raised us with the message never to forget the men and woman who gave so much to make this world a better place to live, it's only sad that it seems some countries didn't learned nothing since WW 2.

We have a lot of friends in the Dutch Forces and among British WW 2 Veterans I correspond more then 10 years with British Veterans and do a lot of research for them, for example to find people or places where they stayed in Holland during WW 2, unfortunately also that group of brave men become every year smaller cause of their age, but in the most cases I have still good contact with their relatives.

Like you will know there are a lot of British War Cemeterys in our country, and we tried to adopt some of those graves but that's not possible, but then we get the opportunity to adopt graves of US soldiers and to care for them, so until this moment we have adopted eight graves of US soldiers in Belgium and Holland. Once a month we lay fresh flowers on their graves and are we present at the Memorial Day Service each year, we know it will never be enough, but it's the least we can do in honor and respect for all those men and all Veterans.

We are now busy to locate relatives of those soldiers to inform them about the adoption, in two cases we already succeeded and we have a good and pretty contact with those relatives, we have the experience that it's not easy to find relatives or information but we won't give up, because they have the right to know.

Two of the graves we have adopted are the graves of airmen, besides 2nd Lt. Flanagan we also adopted the grave of Capt. Donald Emerson at US Cemetery Margraten (Holland), maybe you know about the story of Capt. Emerson, he was a fighter ace in the 4th Fighter Group/336th Fighter Squadron, if you will find his story [at: http://www.fourthfightergroup.com/resource/emerson.html](http://www.fourthfightergroup.com/resource/emerson.html)

On this moment some of my friends by the Dutch Military are now in Iraq together with a part of the US

Forces which were stationed at Nato Hq in Brunssum just a few km from my home town, we hope they all will return soon and save. We have on our car a bumpersticker who says Freedom is not Free support our armed forces and veterans, so for now this short impression of what kind of people we are, I hope you still like us, cause Germans in our neighbourhood are not so enthusiastic, do you know why?

Our hometown is a medium large city, the German border is at the end of our street, just about 15km across that border is the Nato Airbase of the 965th Awacs, Margraten and Henri-Chapelle Cemetery are about 20 and 30 km from our home, the Belgium Ardennes which we visit a lot are just a few km further. In this town there is not much accommodation, in fact it's a sad town with too much criminality, our town was the last town which was liberated by the US Forces in WW 2, before the moved on towards Aachen (Germany), in the villages across the border are also a large number US soldiers k.i.a and m.i.a but in our city archives you find all kind of information about those soldiers cause they have a register of those fightings. My brother and I are born in this town, my parents are born in Amsterdam and moved to this town in 1965.

Dear George I hope that I have informed you a little about us and our town but off course I will give you every information if you have more questions, I will also share with you every information about Lt. Flanagan if I get any, but you will understand that on this moment we know less than you.

By this email I will send you a photo of Lt. Flanagan's gravesite and a copy of the adoption certificate.

Please let us know if we can do anything further for you or other Veterans, it will be a honor for us to do so, I hope to hear from you and send you our best regards from Holland.

Jan

Branford Legionnaire on last plane hit in WWII in Europe

By Nicholas D. Palermo

Special for the Review

Former Lt. and Navigator Robert Valliere of American Legion Post 83 remembers all to well of what took place on a day his B-17 Flying Fortress Bomber was given a specific assignment.

Instead of bombs, the plane's mission was a food drop for the starving Dutch people in the town of Hilversum, Holland, which was occupied by the German Army. To accomplish this task, the plane had to come in very low at an altitude of 175 feet, with wheels and flaps down and Bombay doors opened.

The German Army Command was pre-notified that a food drop was to take place and should refrain

from antiaircraft firing. However, for some unknown reason, one anti-aircraft battery began firing at the plane and the flak from the bursting shells hit the plane.

Nevertheless, the mission was accomplished and the plane made it back to the airfield. It was then discovered that the flak hitting the wing missed the fuel tank by six inches. Pilot Mike Swana was, as thankful as the rest of the crew for returning safely and, realizing what could have happened, stated "God, is that my CoPilot?" which he wrote on a photo that was taken off the wing damaged by the flak.



Examining the damaged wing on the B-17 flown by Lt. Robert Valliere is the co-pilot Wallace McCafferty. Pilot Mike Swana signed the photo with his quote, "God, is that my co-pilot?"

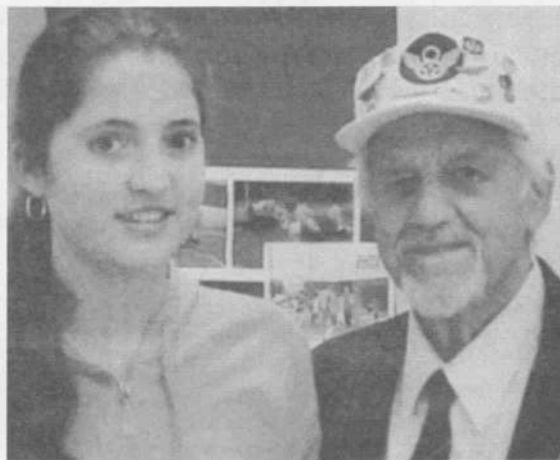
The mission took place on May 2, 1945. It was known later that Mr. Valliere's plane was the last one to be hit in World War II in Europe. He has a piece of the skin from the damaged wing that reminds him how lucky he was and God was the Co-Pilot that day.

Valliere flew with the 385th Bomb Group of the 8th Air Force.

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 12, 2003 • BRANFORD REVIEW

Across the Generations

World War II veteran Robert Valliere, shown here with his granddaughter, Chelsea Wisnioski, recently spoke to students in Team 7-1 at Adams Middle School. Valliere, a navigator aboard a B-17 flying Fortress during World War II, shared his experience in Holland. He told tales of humane food missions where the U.S. dropped much needed food to the dutch. In addition to telling stories of the war, Valliere shared photographs, his A-2 jackets, tags from food that was dropped and a tim remnant from the plane he flew on.



Robert E. Bennett

By Bruce Bennett

In February of 1997, my father, Robert E. Bennett died of complications of Heart Bypass surgery. He had served with the 385th BG (H) in the 549th Sq. His tour of duty, in the completion of his 25 missions lasted from July of 1943 to March of 1944. Among the decoration he received were the Air Medal and the DFC with Oak Clusters. After completing his 25, he served as aide and pilot for General Vandenberg until coming home in 1946 to return to civilian life. My father had done his duty, like all of you, and came home. In his eyes, it was just something that needed to be done.

I am not just writing this as an obituary, but rather to explain I never knew of much of my fathers wartime experiences until after his death. Sure he talked a little about ti, but kept most of it to himself. It was only after I started exploring his pictures and written material, given to me by my mother, that I began to get an appreciation for what the 385th accomplished.

Due to the support of my wife and my mother, I had the unique opportunity to visit station 155 in May of 2003. Ian and

Sue McLachlan agreed to be our guides on the extraordinary voyage of discovery. I shall never be able to thank them enough for what they did.

After picking my wife and I up at the Stowmarket Train Station, Ian and Sue took us to the Memorial Cemetery at Cambridge. What a beautiful and reverent cemetery and chapel. From there we were escorted to the Elmswell Fox to tip a pint or two. Our next stop was the Airfield at Great Ashfield. I was amazed at what was actually left of the Station 155. The partial runway, the taxiways, the three trees. As I stood where the control tower was once located, I could feel my fathers hand on my shoulder. In my minds eye, I saw the ground crews milling around, listening and watching. I saw the aircrews returning circling the field, some with the aircrews returning, circling the field, some with red flares dropping. The aircraft landing, taxing, and being followed by ambulances. My emotions ran wild until the tears came. Dear God, how did these men do these jobs?

The final stop on this voy-

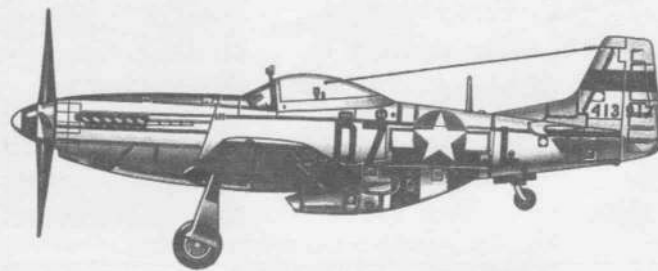
age was the Church at Great Ashfield. We were met by a number of church members and greeted as friends. The window was a beautiful sight as was the memorial plaque presented by Colonel Van. How beautiful it is.

As a second generation member of the 385th BGMA, I can only say how in awe I am of the accomplishments of the 385th BG. Also, I am proud to be the son of one of the airmen who came to East Anglia, did this remarkable job, and then came home without the fanfare due heroes.

To all the sons and daughters and grandsons and granddaughters of these airmen: Do Not wait until it is too late to find out about your father or grandfather. Talk to him now. Have him tell you about the 385th. Listen to his unselfish words of the exploits of these men of Station 155.

Lastly, to Ian and Sue McLachlan, our many thanks for taking the time to help us understand with your stories and dedication.

Respectfully,
Bruce Bennett



LETTERS

Southern Heritage Press

FINE BOOK PUBLISHERS
POST OFFICE BOX 10937
ST. PETERSBURG, FLORIDA 33733

1-800-282-2823

EMAIL SOHERPRESS@AOL.COM

June 6, 2003

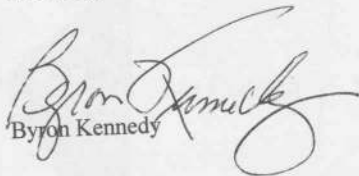
Mr. Tom Newton, Editor
Hardlife Herald
P O Box 34,
Dallas OR 97338-0034

Dear Mr. Newton,

We recently published a softbound book for Mr. Stephen Inglis. The book is entitled "Help from Above" and features his father and other member of your unit. The book sells for \$12.95 plus S and H of \$3.95.

We would appreciate it if in your next issue of the Hardlife Herald this could be mentioned. We have a toll free number 1-800-282-2823 and can accept Visa or Master card. I think you will find this book very enjoyable reading.

Sincerely,


Byron Kennedy



The Eighth Air Force Historical Society Iowa Chapter

Reference 385th BG

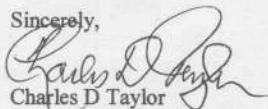
Dear Sir:

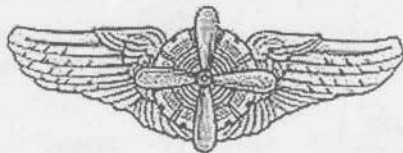
As Iowa Chapter President of the Eighth Air Force Historical Society I am dedicated to preserving the legacy and history of the Mighty Eighth. I am in the process of writing a book on Iowans of the Eighth. I am interviewing each of our members to obtain biographical information, their World War II experiences and pictures of them. I have been successful in obtaining pictures and basic information on the deceased.

I realize there are other 8th veterans that do not belong to the Society, many have passed on since the end of World War II, some never returned to their home state and many were killed in action. I inquired of the 8th Air Force if a listing of all Iowans by hometown at time of entry into military service could be obtained. In this way I could pass on to future generations the magnitude and sacrifice of the Eighth, not just those living now.

I was told no record existed of all members of the 8th but I should inquire of individual bomb, fighter or support Groups. A test inquiry of a fighter and a bomb group was successful. Could you or your unit historian provide a listing of all Iowans stationed in your Group between 1942-45 including those KIA. Any information you can provide would be greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,


Charles D Taylor
Iowa Chapter President
Eighth Air Force Historical Society



LETTERS

Mr Tom Newton,

Sir, I found your address on the 8th Air Force Historical Society web page. I notice yours was a contact concerning the 385BG and thought that you might be able to help me. I am a Harwell/Harvell family history buff and have been researching the family for some years. I was recently contacted by a gentleman in the Netherlands who is searching for a member of the 385th.

Here is his email to me:

Dear Mr. Harwell,

After reading your excellent genealogy-site on the Internet, I wondered if you can help me finding the descendants of a certain Mr Francis M. Harwell. He was born in Texarkana-Arkansas on January 9, 1923 and deceased in the state of Virginia on November 5, 1987.

In the Second World War sgt. Harwell served as an air-gunner on a B-17 bomber (nr 42-3488), belonging to the 548 Bomb Squadron of the 385 Bomb Group. His plane, among others, took part in an air-raid on Emden on December 11, 1943. During the return-flight to a British air-base, the heavy bomber was shot down by German fighter-planes and crashed near by the vil- lage of Offingawier in the northern part of the Netherlands.

Two of the ten crew-members were killed, the others used their para- chutes and survived their frightening encounter with the Luftwaffe. Among them was Francis Harwell, who landed close to a sluice and pumping-engine on the shores of a lake near by the village of Gauw.

The Hallema-family, inmates of a house in the immediate surroundings, helped him and furthermore hid him from the German police. After one day however, it appeared that the severe injuries of Sgt. Harwell required intensive medical care, this left the Hallema-family no other choice than to call up the police for removing their guest to a nearby hospital. Their he fell into German hands and was brought to the airfield in Leeuwarden as a prisoner of war.

As a historian and archivist by profession and - above all - as a great- grandson of Mr Hallema, I would appreciate it to get in touch with the (possi- ble) children of Francis M. Harwell. I wonder, for instance, if they ever heard the above-mentioned story and if they have supplementary data regarding their fathers enlistment in the US-airforce. It should be emphasized that it is not my purpose to offend against anyone's personal sphere of life.

In conclusion, I hope that you can help me any further with my search for the addresses of the children of Mr Harwell or that you can give me some infor- mation about the way of obtaining these data in the United States.

Yours sincerely,
Alexander Tuinhout

Mr. Newton, I would like very much to help this man if possible. Do you know if Francis M Harwell, as a veteran of the 385BG was associated with your group after the war. And if so, could you assist me in contacting his survivors? I hope to hear from you. Thanks.

Sincerely,
Roger Harvell
rogerh48@bellsouth.net

When in England at a fairly large conference, Colin Powell was asked by the Archbishop of Canterbury if our plans for Iraq were just an example of empire building by George Bush.

He answered by saying that, "Over the years, the United States has sent many of its fine young men and women into great peril to fight for freedom beyond our borders. The only amount of land we have ever asked for in return is enough to bury those that did not return."



LETTERS

Tom,

Vern Philips sent me an excerpt from a book he has. It filled in a story on one of my missions.

On Mission No. 285 on 7 April 1945, target, Gustrow, we were attacked by several ME 109s.

My tail gunner, Leroy Lancaster, and Charles Stewardt on the Burich crew fired at one coming in at 6 o'clock. The 109 kept on coming and rammed Burich. Both Burich and the 109 went down. We had long thought that the tail gunners had killed the German pilot. We didn't believe they were suicidal.

Now, however, in this book, a German pilot, Walter Otto, tells of deliberately ramming a B-17 on 7 April 1945!!! Somehow he was able to bail out and survived. This changes the ending to a story I have been telling.

Bill Varnedoe

Today at the 390th museum, I was asked a question that I did know the answer.

1. How many men were in the ENTIRE 8th air force? That would include all the fighter personnel as well.

Ratio of ground crews to flight crews.

Deaths in the 8th

POW's in the 8th

It seems I get asked a question once in awhile that throws me for loop.

If you can help me out I would thank you very much.

Ken Laffoon 385th, 548th Sqd.

laffoon1@mindspring.com

MICHAEL R. GALLAGHER
45 Hopewell Trail
Chagrin Falls, OH 44022
440 247 6271
mgalla9509@aol.com

August 4, 2003

Editor
The Plain Dealer
1801 Superior Ave.
Cleveland, Ohio 44114

Dear Sir:

Over the past two months I have heard constantly of the American war casualties in Iraq. A recent count was reported as close to 160 since the war began and 52 since it was declared won. The implication in most newspaper, TV and radio reports is that these casualties are heavy and, according to a majority of talking heads, if continued, will not be tolerated by the American public.

It occurred to me that these loss reports should be placed in context and while no context is perfect I have drawn on my experience as a B-17 pilot with 30 combat missions over Germany in World War II in an effort to do so.

On Oct. 14, 1943 the 8th Air Force lost 60 B-17s on one mission to Schweifurt, Germany. Flying 10 man crews, this meant the loss of 600 men.

On Oct. 6, 1944, on a mission to Berlin, my group, the 385th Bomb Group, lost an entire high squadron consisting of 11 aircraft and 110 men.

On those days there were losses as well to our ground troops and the British forces, both ground and air. How many casualties in total, I can only guess.

Each death is a tragedy and should be lamented. This is true of those incurred in World War II and the Iraqi War. But the distortion of losses in the present struggle seems to me to be deliberately misleading to achieve an ulterior purpose---perhaps to snatch political defeat from the jaws of an overwhelming military victory.

Very truly yours,

Michael R. Gallagher

Gentlemen,

I am looking for information about my father S/Sgt Norman N. Hockler. He was with the 385 BG in the 548th Sqdn. It is my understanding he was a floater and flew as right waist gunner most of the time. I understand he was called Pop Hockler because he was older than most of the guys.

I have been able to identify 16 missions that he flew through "Ray Bowden" <ray@usaaf-noseart.co.uk>

I have full crew names for the 16 missions and will provide them to anyone who thinks they will help in identifying anyone who knew him. On these 16 missions he flew with the following pilots-

1 Lt D J Messinger
1 Lt G G Czerwinski
1 Lt Billy N. Horstman
1 Lt H Bennett
1 Lt B E Ruby

I am sure he flew with others on many more missions. I would appreciate help in locating any one who knew him and would be THRILLED to find a crew picture with him in it.

Any help you can provide will be very appreciated.

Yours truly,
Norman N. Hockler Jr.
norsan@bright.net

Three Daughters

There once was a B-17 crew that was assembled at Ardmore, Oklahoma in March 1944. They thought that they were special because their leader was from Luxembourg. His name was Charles Bech and he was related to the Grand Duchess of Luxembourg. It therefore followed that his crew would be known as "The Duchess" crew.

Hailing from all points of the compass, the following members of the crew were:

Co-Pilot: R.F. Alheim,
Rochester, NY;
Navigator: C. Bahmeir,
Minneapolis, MN
Bombardier: Edward F. O'Day,
San Francisco, CA
Engineer: W. Griffith,
Paris, TX
Radio: R. Swanda,
Bohemia, NY
BTO: Richard Wallace,
Malden, MA
Gunner: C. Lubicic,
Bronx, NY
Gunner: H. Wilkerson,
Lexington, KY
Gunner: T. Conway,
NY, NY

During the next few months, the crew completed a vigorous training program. When they were declared combat ready, they left Ardmore in a brand new B-17 on a many stop flight to Preswick, Scotland. Then they proceeded by train to Great Ashfield, England.

Upon arrival at the base, Lieutenant Bech was astounded to hear that he was not to fly with the 385th Bomb Group. Higher-ups at the Pentagon had

Dear Tom,

Upon reading "A Daughter in Loving Memory to her Father" which appeared in the May 2003 issue of the HH, I was emotionally compelled to write and submit the enclosed article.

For the past few years, I have enjoyed corresponding with each of the three daughters. And I believe that their continued interest in their fathers early lives merits a mention in our Newsletter.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for producing your wonderful Hardlife Herald.

Sincerely,

Charles Lubicic

Charles Lubicic
54 Masconomo St.
Manchester, MA 01944
clubicic@myrealbox.com
551st Squadron

assigned him to fly reconnaissance missions to gather intelligence for the 8th and 9th Air Forces. The "Duchess of Luxembourg" crew was disbanded.

One of the men reassigned to another crew was Edward O'Day. On one of his missions, his plane was shot down over Paris. He bailed out and was helped by French partisans to walk to the freedom of the allied lines.

Richard H. Wallace was also transferred to another crew. On one of his missions, his ball turret was peppered with shrapnel. He suffered many wounds over his body. While in the hospital, a piece of flak was extracted from his eyeball with a magnet.

Fast forward fifty nine years. We now have Ms Sabine-Augustin Bech, daughter of Charles Bech; Ms Diane Cantor, daughter of Ed O'Day and Ms Diane Paglia, daughter of Richard H. Wallace who still continue to harbor the desire to know more about their deceased fathers wartime experiences. Clearly, this speaks to the close and loving relationship that has always existed between many fathers and daughters.

The daughters have made many inquires to Air Force records and have called upon the memories of 551st Squadron members. However, as time goes by, there are simply fewer people to question. Over the long haul, the candles of remembrance have flickered a little, but are still alive.

Charles Lubicic, 551st Squadron

Ssgt. Jack Cecil Davis

by Jimmy Davis

Mr. Newton, My name is Jimmy Davis, son of Jack C. Davis, 385 BG, 551st Squadron, Elmswell and Great Ashfield, March, 1944-August, 1944. I am writing in the memory of my father and his dedicated service to the Army Air Corps. Daddy (my father) was a ball-turret gunner on a B-17, 385BG, 551st Squadron from March, 1944-August, 1944. He flew 32 missions, and was shot down on his 32nd mission over France, near Paris.

Daddy never talked about his experiences during WWII or Korea until one night during a fishing trip in 1980. We had just turned in and I asked him if he could tell me about his war experience. He finally opened up. He arrived in England and began his missions in March, 1944 flying missions over France and Germany. At first the crews would fly 25 missions then go home. But close to his 25th mission the number was increased to 35. Daddy had the option to go home for 30 days then come back and fly 25 more missions, or remain and fly ten more for 35 then go home for good. He opted to stay and finish 35 missions.

He went around daily to find missions to fly, and completed 31 missions until that fatal 32nd one. I'm not sure whether they had completed their bombing assignment prior to being hit. Close to Paris they were hit and on fire in the bomb-bay. Daddy, without a parachute, went down onto the catwalk in the bomb-bay and sprayed the fire with 7 or 8 fire extinguishers as fast as the other members could throw them to him. The fire was uncontrollable, and they had to bail out. The pilot's name was Newcomer. Daddy was a hero, but there is no one to confirm his actions that day. The crew bailed out and was separated. Daddy was either hit by gunfire or shrapnel on the way down. He freefell for many thousands of feet before he pulled the ripcord. French farmers got him when he landed, stripped him of his flight suit and hid him in a grain field until dark. For the next 21 days he was missing in action. He was repatriated when Paris was liberated.

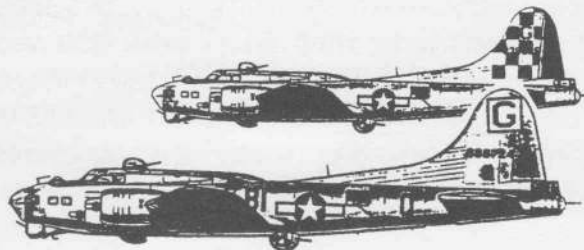
He received the Air Medal, Distinguished Flying Cross with 3 Oak Leaf Clusters, and a Purple Heart. He shot down 1 ME-109 and 1 probable.

After WWII Daddy joined the Army Reserves and was commissioned as a 2nd Lt. He was activated in 1950 and we went to the Rocky Mountain Arsenal in Denver, Colorado. In March-April 1952 he was assigned to Mercury, Nevada to work on the testing of 8 atomic bomb blasts. His team was positioned 1 mile from each blast.

Immediately after each blast they would leave their trenches and walk directly to Ground Zero collecting RAD readings. In August, 1952 he was sent to Korea as Company Exec/Co Commander of a heavy mortar company. During that year his company repulsed several large-scale Chinese attacks. He was wounded and, again received a Purple Heart.

Daddy died in 1989 from complications associated with his atomic bomb experiences. He is my one-and-only hero in life. I love him, miss him, and pray for him daily. Thank you. I wanted to tell his story. Jimmy Davis. 176 Sunset Drive, North Little Rock, Arkansas, 72118. 501-758-3140.

Post script: Daddy remained in the Army Reserves and retired a full Colonel.



Books Authored by 385th Members

| | |
|---------------------------|------------------------|
| The Diary of a Serviceman | Robert R. Hartman ** |
| My Teen Years | Ronald Webster ** |
| Letters to Hardlife | Thomas A. Helman ** |
| And No Purple Heart | Frank R. Mays |
| The Three Trees | Charles W. McCauley ** |
| Forever Yours | Howard A. Muchow ** |
| Fear Faith and Courage | Willard Richards |
| Hunkered Down | Sterling Rogers |
| The Wrong Stuff | Truman Smith |

Books by Associate 385th Members

| | |
|----------------------------------|-------------------|
| The Munster Raid: Before & After | Ian L. Hawkins ** |
| Help from Above | Stephen Ingles |
| Final Flights | Ian McLachlan |

The authors with the astricks (**) following their name have most generously donated one of their books to be given at the 2003 reunion of the 385th. Support your association by your purchase of raffle tickets and win one of these fine books.

Greetings from the 392nd BGMA www.b24.net/ I want to call your attention to a roundtable discussion which is scheduled to be held at the 8TH AFHS Reunion in Colorado Springs, CO, 10/14 to 10/19/2003. This roundtable discussion is to be held at 3:00 pm Wednesday Oct 16 - will be a discussion on Web Page development for 8TH AFHS Units/Chapters for those who have already built web sites and for those who might be interested in getting started. We feel that it would be profitable for your Group to have your web master, or someone else attend and participate in this discussion. Vital information will be shared at this roundtable. Some Groups have recently lost ownership of their domain name due to their server going out of business without any notice.

Thank you for your time and consideration. Blessings

Tom Perry
392nd Bomb Group
576th Bomb Squadron veteran

385th Bomb Group Memorial Assoc.

Balance Sheet

JUNE 30, 2003
(Unaudited)

ASSETS

CURRENT ASSETS:

| | |
|----------------------------|------------------|
| CASH | |
| United Heritage - mmkt ckg | 21,054.07 |
| United Heritage - Svg | 9,303.86 |
| TOTAL ASSETS | 30,357.93 |

LIABILITIES AND CAPITAL

CAPITAL:

| | |
|--------------------------------------|------------------|
| Retained Earnings | 29,712.76 |
| Profit (loss) for period | 645.17 |
| TOTAL LIABILITIES AND CAPITAL | 30,357.93 |

385th Bomb Group Memorial Assoc.

Statement of Earnings

6 MONTHS ENDED JUNE 30, 2003
(Unaudited)

REVENUE:

INCOME

| | | |
|--------------------------|---------------|-----------------|
| Income - dues | 725.00 | 4,845.00 |
| Interest - mmkt checking | 6.11 | 41.50 |
| interest - savings | 31.21 | 65.38 |
| Total Income | 762.32 | 4,951.88 |

EXPENSES:

| | | |
|------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Expenses - Newsletters | 1,777.66 | 4,175.26 |
| Research Expenses | 0.00 | 106.86 |
| Expenses - Postage | 24.59 | 24.59 |
| Total Expenses | 1,802.25 | 4,306.71 |

| | | |
|--------------------------------|------------|--------|
| Net earnings (loss) for period | (1,039.93) | 645.17 |
|--------------------------------|------------|--------|

Taps

Frank P. Marano

Frank Peter Marano, age 91, died at his home on April 18, 2003. He is survived by his wife Kathleen, three daughter and one son.

During World War Two he was a Major in the Army Air Corps serving as executive officer of the 549th Bomb Squadron of the 385th Bombardment Group stationed at Great Ashfield, Suffolk, England. He was also trial judge advocate for the base and in 1945 closed the base and returned it to the RAF. He later became assistant judge advocate of the 3rd Air Division until his discharge in 1946 and was the recipient of the Bronze Star.

Mr. Marano earned his law degree from George Washington University, Washington, D. C. He was an attorney for 55 years in Newark and East Orange before retiring from his Montclair office in 1991.

Charles "Bucky" Austin

Charlie Austin, former Sgt. in the 385th stationed at Great Ashfield (exact dates unknown). Dad was born Aug. 1922 in West Haven, Connecticut and enlisted with his friend Bob Frank, who went on to become a pilot in another squadron and has since also passed away. Dad passed away Dec. 22nd, 2002 at the age of 80.

Charlie, or Bucky as he was known by some friends, was the Sgt. in charge of communications at Great Ashfield, for what I believe was approximately 16-20 months.

If any of you wanted to call back home, he was the one to see, even if it was during a time of limited calls back to the states (it was "who you knew" even back then!).

He had sent several photos of aircraft he had taken while stationed there and the "Hardlife" had published them in past issues.

Ever since I was a young boy, I had always heard my dad talk of his adventures in the US and England during the war. This had also encouraged my own enlistment during the Vietnam War as well.

Thank you for all the great memories you provided my dad and the great stories it prompted him to tell me. Without the "Hardlife Herald" those stories would have been locked away forever.

Signed, a Grateful Sergeant's son, Jay Austin, USN (Ret.)

DECEASED

| | |
|------------------------|------------|
| Charles "Bucky" Austin | Dec. 2002 |
| Charles J. DuShane | May 2002 |
| Frank P. Marano | April 2002 |

Bulletin Board

Notice of Proposed By-Law Change

Amend Article IV, Executive Board. Section 3 and Section 5 to read as follows:

Section 3. The Executive Board shall meet at each regular meeting of the members, and at such other times as may be called by the Chairman or by a majority of the Executive Board members. Meetings may be conducted by teleconferencing or by email.

Section 5. A quorum at any meeting shall consist of a majority of the members of the Board, then elected and/or appointed, and serving, who have not advised that they are unable to attend the meeting, either in person, by teleconferencing or by email. A majority of such quorum may decide any question that may come before Board. For teleconferencing, no answer shall be construed to mean, "unable to attend," and for email questions, no reply within two weeks of posting of the question shall be construed to mean, "unable to attend."

Notice of Biennial Meeting

The biennial meeting of the 385th Bombardment Group Memorial Association will be held October 22 - 27, 2003 at the Holiday Inn, Hampton VA to elect officers and transact other business that may take place.

Wanted Volunteer for Hardlife Herald Editor

Being Hardlife Editor has been a most enjoyable job. The great memories and stories that have been submitted have really increased my deeply felt appreciation of just what it was all about those many years ago.

My heartfelt thanks to all of you. Now I ask for some one to step forward & volunteer to be editor. I am certain you will find being editor an enjoyable experience as it was for me. Please submit your name and willingness to serve as editor to President Leo or to me. The groups Executive Committee will choose a new editor at the Hampton reunion.

Again my thanks and appreciation. Tom Newton

2003 dues are due if your mailing code does not read LM999 or A03. Please remit to Verne Philips, treasurer at address below.

385th BGMA

Verne D. Philips, Treasurer
P.O. Drawer 5970
Austin, TX 78763 USA

Address Service Requested

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