

385th BOMBARDMENT GROUP (H) REUNION NEWSLETTER



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GREAT ASHFIELD RAF STATION 155
SUFFOLK, ENGLAND. JUNE 1943 - JUNE 1945

Pres: Dr. Vincent Masters V.P: Frank Marano
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MERRY CHRISTMAS-32 YEARS LATER

CHRISTMAS MESSAGE

On this Christmas Day of 1943 I should like to extend to you, the officers and men of Great Ashfield, my heartiest Season's Greetings. Today, we are observing our greatest of all holidays, usually associated with home and peace, in a foreign land of a world at war. Let us unite in prayer that the sacrifices of our comrades who have gone before and the efforts we are now exerting will only hasten the day of final victory. Let us pray that 1944 will indeed be a Happy New Year - a year of Victory. Next Christmas of 1944 will find us again at home with those we love and for whom we fight, celebrating this joyous occasion in a peace world at peace.

E. VANDSWATER, JR.
Lt. Col., Air Corps,
Commanding.

Merry Christmas
AAF 155
ENGLAND

MENU

Tomato Juice Cocktail	Celery
Potage de Legumes	
Roast Maryland Turkey	W/Dressing
Giblet Gravy	
Cranberry Jelly	
Pomme Puree	Les Petits Pois
Creamed Corn	
Sweet Pickles	
(Spice) Cake a la E.T.O.	
Pumpkin Pie	Ice Cream
Bon Bons	Cafe

Line

1943

FLASHBACK.....25 DECEMBER 1943...

Today we were handed the two pieces of mimeographed paper reproduced above. The highlight of the day was to introduce our English War Orphan guests to a typical American Christmas - despite their desire to call their red suited benefactor "Father Christmas" instead of "Santa Claus". Standing in line between the Aero Club and the Consolidated Mess, it was wet and bone-chilling, but there was quite a bit of horseplay and bantering going on. The "Me-n-u" was the primary target of most of the wisecracks. "Hey, get a load of this! Potage de Legumes, Pomme Puree, Les Petits pois and Spice Cake a la ETO. Ain't we gonna get nothing to eat? If I can't pronounce it, I ain't gonna eat it! And it says here we're gonna get

FLASHBACK 1943 ... (Con'td)...

Maryland turkey. What the hell's wrong with Texas turkey? And O La La, we all get Bon Bons". In the back of the line someone started the chant of "Open up the doors and let's get dinner started." Soon the doors opened for the early dinner and the men and their young guests filed into the comparative warmth of the Mess Hall. There was a shortage of coke that year and although it was only about 50 degrees inside, the cooking food and the jammed bodies helped to increase the heat in the place. Perhaps nostalgia makes one remember the food smell as super-delicious - which is really going overboard! But the young English orphans * eyes were really popping at the vast amount of food. Pulling KP that day, and also many other extra duties around the base, were our Jewish buddies. We of Christian persuasion would reciprocate on their Holydays and holidays. Our cooks were doing a great job. Not many cooks are able to make delicious turkey gravy in a 55 gallon oil drum, using canoe paddles for mixers. But



ORIGINAL USAAF MIXMASTERS

all kidding aside, it was an excellent meal for most, and an inspiring one for those of us who shared both meal and conversation with our English pals. First Sergeant Joe McLavish of the

548th Squadron organized the festivities for the war orphans.

DATELINE..... 25 DECEMBER 1975 ---

It is ironic that 32 years later, the last six words of Colonel Vandevanter's Christmas Message still haunt us. He wrote "That Christmas of 1944 will find us at home with those we love, and for whom we fight, celebrating this joyous occasion in a sane world at peace". We do not live in a sane world. All of us have sons, daughters, or friends stationed all around the worlds - ever vigilant. The Middle East, Portugal and Angola are potential holocausts; civil strife racks Argentina and Lebanon. But Christmas time is a time of new beginnings. A time of Joy and Hope and we better not run out of that last commodity. The 385th was known as the Group that would go around twice to hit the target. Let's go around and around and around our Target of Peace - bombing it with our prayers. And while we are praying for peace, don't you be lulled into a false sense of security by the philosophical trash tossed at you daily by the glib political commentators. The price of the peace we pray for is still eternal vigilance and readiness. Vote this coming year for the person of your choice for President and Congress. VOTING, AFTER ALL, IS JUST ANOTHER FORM OF PRAYER THAT MANY AMERICANS SEEM TO NEGLECT!

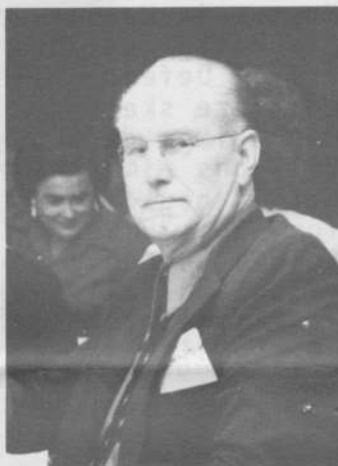
GREETINGS

Your 1977 Reunion Committee extends their best wishes for a Merry Christmas to every member of the 385th Bombardment Group (H) and to members of Support Squadrons assigned or attached to our Group during our service in the ETO. It is requested you join us in prayer for those members incapacitated by illness or injury. May you be inspired with faith, hope and charity during the New Year of 1976.

CITIZENSHIP REQUEST REQUIRES "PULL"



1943



1975

Aubrey "Bart" Bartholomew was a young Canadian gunner in the ball turret of a 551st Bomb Squadron B-17F named "Raunchy Wolf". He was flying over a Messerschmitt factory in Regensburg, Germany, and the date was 17 August 1943. Back home in Maine, the Federal Court was evaluating Bart's petition for US citizenship. Bart was flying high - approximately 19000 feet in fact - and being treated to some spectacular fireworks by the Luftwaffe as "Raunchy Wolf" was on the bomb run. Suddenly, the door on his ball turret blew off, the result of a malfunctioning door hinge. Out of the ball turret popped Bart, streamlined into the wind, but with the toe of his left flying boot hooked under the range pedal of his guns. Oxygen and communication lines were severed and he was cut off from contact with his crew. Hanging there, with enemy fighters fire coming from all angles and without a parachute, he literally pulled himself up his left leg and back into the turret, from where he was able to attract the attention of a crewman who cranked him back into the aircraft fuselage. With bombs away on the target, "Raunchy Wolf" flew on to North Africa. The aircraft were checked for 20mm, missile and flak damage and after eight hectic days of maintenance performed by the flight crews, enough aircraft were flyable to bomb a

target in France. The aircraft flew on back to the base at Great Ashfield. There a letter from the Federal Court in Maine awaited Bart. It was notification that his four year quest for citizenship had been approved. And so it is, that today, as Bart and his wife Ardis go strolling from their home at 3 Spring Street, Bucksport, Maine, they know that no one has ever used more "pull" than Bart did to achieve his goal of "Citizen USA".

PASSENGER LIST REQUIRED FOR TRIP TO ENGLAND

As indicated in the last Newsletter, the flight to England is scheduled to depart JFK Airport in New York 5 September 1976 and return 18 September. Many inquiries have been received as to who is eligible for the trip. The answer is ANYONE nominated by a member. It can be WYEST CHILDREN, RELATIVES AND FRIENDS. Members must send the names and addresses of those making trip to John Ford, Secretary, 7204 Easy Street, Camp Springs, MD, 20031, not later than 15 January 1976. Brochures will be sent by the Travel Agent with all details of the trip. Get your names in early and don't forget to process your passport request if you do not have one.

DEPOSIT REQUIRED FOR 385th HISTORY

The best bid for reproduction of the 385th Bombardment Group (H) History was issued by the Newsfoto Publishing Co., San Angelo, Texas. The price of \$20.00 includes taxes, packaging, handling and postage. Those wishing to purchase a copy of the history must send a 75% deposit (\$15.00) to our Treasurer, James L. Cooper, 9616 David Road, Cleveland, Ohio, 44125. We must order a minimum of 100 copies and the deposit will not be used unless we receive 100 requests. At the present time I have over 60 requests, but only one was accompanied by a \$15.00 deposit. Make your checks payable to the 385th Reunion Group and print "385th History Deposit" on the check. On hand is a request from an English Book Dealer asking about purchasing some copies of the history. Send deposits soon.

GREAT ASHFIELD WW 1 RFC AERODROME

Great Ashfield was the site of a WW 1 Royal Flying Corps unit. It was known as Elmswell RFC Station with a postal address of Bury St. Edmunds, Suffolk. Located there were 22 single seater night fighter aircraft. It was active from September 1917 to May 1919, as a Home Defence unit of No. 75 Squadron, (Night Fighter), RFC, (later RAF). Its original equipment was Bristol BE2b's, but later it had AVRO 504K's. Night patrol extended from Colchester, Essex, in the South; the English Channel in

the East; North approximately 10 miles from Elmswell and to Newmarket, Suffolk, in the West. According to Mr. J. R. Bruce, Keeper of Aircraft and Aviation Records at the Royal Air Force Museum in Hendon, and Mr. F.W. Coles, Air Historical Branch 5 (RAF), Ministry of Defence, the records for this unit are sketchy. Its pilots ascended many times during night airship raids. Only one time was a Zeppelin sighted, but it could not be brought into action. No. 75 Squadron was formed at Goldington on 1 October 1916; was part of London's Air Defence Area, with Hqs at Elmswell. Flight "A" was at Hadleigh, with "B" and "C" at Elmswell.



The Freedom Train Stop.

Photo by John Archer, England

1977 REUNION COMMITTEE NEWSLETTER
385TH BOMBARDMENT GROUP (H)
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FIRST CLASS MAIL

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ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED