

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



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. XVI, NO. 5

Editor: Ed Stern
 Printed by Interstate Printing
 Fargo, North Dakota

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424th AIR SVS. GP.
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DECEMBER 1989

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Looks like winter is moving in early and I have not cleaned my garden. I was making progress until a 2 1/2 inch rain last week.

Dr. George Menkoff, our host for the Tulsa, Oklahoma reunion in 1991 is busy working, making plans for the reunion. Proposals have been received from several hotels. Reunion plans are coming along great.

The Holiday Season is coming up soon, also another decade. Kinda' dates us especially thinking back to the early forties, and those dark days I realize how much better life has become. I think all you guys are super guys and all the wives too - for putting up with us. Mary and I want to wish you and yours a very Happy Holiday Season and a great New Year.

Lets all start a crusade for a 50th Anniversary Stamp for the 8th Air Force. Lets all write to the United States Postal Service Philatelic Division, Washington, D.C. 20265-9987 and ask that they issue a 50th Anniversary honoring the 8th Air Force.

It is with great pleasure that I serve as your President and I appreciate the cooperation which I have received from the membership. Again Happy Holidays.

Sam Lyke

1990 DUES 1990

Time to send your 1990 dues payment for Treas. John Pettenger, Box 117, Laurel, FL 34272-0117. Dues are \$8 per year. Life Memberships are \$100. Check your status on the Newsletter address label. LM 999 means you're a Life Member, A000 An Associate (family) member, F999 English friend, R90 dues are paid, R00 dues delinquent. With the dues income, plus funds available from Life Memberships, we have funded memorials at Arlington National Cemetery, at Dayton, at Colorado Springs, along with our continued funding of the All Saints Church at Great Ashfield.

And they pay for the printing and mailing of The Hardlife Herald.

New Generation Members

There's interest being expressed in perpetuating the 385th Bomb Group Memorial Association. We've had lots of suggestions—from members, from Past officers, and from your present Officers.

Let's have a few letters to The Hardlife Herald offering your help in getting something started at the Tulsa Reunion. The Executive Committee would like to plan an organizational meeting. They need volunteers to get the ball rolling.

Sons and daughters—step forward and take charge.

Reunion Notice

March 24, 1990, Santa Ana Army Air Base 15th Annual Reunion and Luncheon, Orange Coast College, Costa Mesa, California S.A.A.A.B. personel, former cadets and guests. Contact: S.A.A.A.B. WING, P.O. BOX 1764, Costa Mesa, CA 92628, TEL (714) 631-5918; 24 hr. Ans. Mach., Leave name and address.

Reunion Items Still Available

1. Bound copies of all Hardlife Heralds for the last 2 years. \$5.00
2. Oxford nylon zipper garment bags with 385th Group Insignia. Red, Blue or Green \$8.00
3. Reunion Squadron pictures in full color \$6.00

Send order to Ed Stern, Box 2187, Fargo, ND 58108



It was a real pleasure to put on a display for the 385th in Fargo. Please if you didn't see an example of your original squadron insignia, wings, or photo of your nose art, let me know if you have any I could acquire.

John Grindahl
1837 16th St. S., Fargo, ND 58103

Watch for final wrap-up pictures of Fargo Reunion in the next Hardlife.

Correction on list of attendees at the Reunion.

Jack B Lucy Henshaw
Willard B Lois Hagman

Both were there — our list had their names garbled. Dick Ryan was also left off.

AFEES SEEKS EVADERS

The Air Forces Escape B Evasion Society (AFEES) is a unique and select group of American airmen who were downed behind enemy lines and either evaded capture or who escaped from captivity and returned to Allied Control.

One of the purposes of the organization, established in 1964, is to re-unite American airmen with their "underground" Resistance Helpers in all countries where conflict occurred; whether it be France, Belgium, Holland, Norway, Italy, or other countries.

It is known that "in December of 1944, 60 officers and 70 enlisted men of the 6801 M.I.S.X. Detachment started work in France. At that time, 4,000 US evaders had returned to the UK and about the same number were sheltered by "underground" forces in the countries still occupied by the Germans."

It is unknown, however, just how many of these estimated 8,000 evaders were "airmen", but AFEES must assume that its' present "found" members, numbering around 700, is but a drop in the proverbial bucket. AFEES wishes to be contacted by any airman, who qualifies as above, and who is not now a registered member - wherever you may have evaded.

Your Helper WANTS TO KNOW IF HIS SACRIFICE FOR YOU HELPED YOU TO GET BACK SAFELY! He, or she, would like to contact you. That's all . . . they only want to know if you "made it back", safely, some way.

This writer evaded for 7 months in Holland during the 1944/45 winter. In recent years I have found and contacted my 14 Helpers. Because of this association, I have recently been given a list of over 500 American airmen who are known to have evaded in Holland and who are being sought, as you read this notice, by their Dutch Helpers. Fewer than 100 of these American airmen, Holland Evaders, have been located by AFEES. THEY WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU! Please contact Claude Murray, 16810 Boswell Blvd, Sun City, AZ 85351. (Tel. 602-972-3991). Interesting sidelight: One airman told his Helper that his name was Lt. Milwaukee A. Wisconsin, USA - will Lt. Wisconsin please stand up!

Our Officers for 1989 -1991



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Vice President Charles & Peggy Smith



Secretary George Hruska & Gen



Treasurer John Pettenger

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The annual dues are Eight Dollars (\$8.00)
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Make out check to "385th BGMA" and mail to:
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Life-time memberships are used to perpetuate the memorial at All Saints Church in Creat Ashfield, Suffolk County, England.

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To: The Secretary, Bomber Command Association. I request my name be recorded in the Bomber Command Association Register.

BLOCK LETTERS PLEASE

Surname Service No Rank Qualifications Decorations and
Forenames Trade WAAF/WRAF Maiden Name
Address
Brief Description of Service or Specific Interest (Group, Sqn, Unit - Dates and Places)

I enclose £5 Annual Subscription: £25 Life Membership: For Associate Membership (please tick) Please make cheques payable to Bomber Command Association.

E3 Connect No Card expiry date

Applicants Signature Service details checked and Membership accepted Secretary

Membership No. Date Remarks.

BOMBER COMMAND ASSOCIATION

The Bomber Command Association provides the opportunity for all men and women who served in the air and on the ground in the biggest Command in the history of the RAF, to meet again in Comradeship. *It also encourages and welcomes membership from all those who have the best interests of the Bomber Command Hall and the RAF Museum at heart.*

The prime objective of the Association is to assist in the on-going development of the Bomber Command Hall in the RAF Museum, Hendon so that the commitment, service and sacrifice made by Bomber Command and the USAAF during wartime will be seen and understood by future generations. They will also be better able to understand the part played in the post-war years by both Bomber Command and by the V-Force in the defence of this country and the free world. As a charitable organisation, the Association contributes to those charities with service connections and also gives advice, support and aid to Bomber Squadron and other Associations thereby fostering a spirit of comradeship.

As a *member* you will receive your personalised Bomber Command Association Membership Card, together with a copy of our latest Newsletter which is published at regular intervals throughout the year. You will also receive details of products which are of particular interest to Association members. Activities to which you will be invited are the two Annual events—Open Day at the RAF Museum and the Bomber Command Reunion Dinner Dance, and you will be advised of forthcoming events. You are welcome to submit written articles for publication in our Newsletter and photographs and memorabilia are always appreciated for our archives. These are on open exhibition when you visit our Hospitality Suite in the RAF Museum complex. One of our most important functions is in Research for our members. This embraces aircraft and squadrons, together with air and ground crew search, where, through our comprehensive computerised register, we are able to put members in touch with old comrades.

Who can join the Bomber Command Association?

FULL MEMBERSHIP

Open to all aircrew, ground crew, ground staff, WAAF and WRAF of the Royal Air Force and Dominions Air Forces, and all those Allied Forces who served within the framework of Bomber Command during the period 1936-67 and to all who served in the V-Force. This also includes Middle and Far East Bomber Forces, and all UK OTU, HCU, HQ and MU personnel.

ASSOCIATE MEMBERSHIP

Open to all service, ex-service or civilian enthusiasts who would like to support the Bomber Command Association by helping to record and preserve with dignity, pride and honour the history of Bomber Command and the V-Force.

ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP £5

LIFE MEMBERSHIP £25

IT WOULD BE APPRECIATED IF YOU WOULD INDICATE WHERE YOU RECEIVED THIS FORM
DON'T DELAY - JOIN TODAY!

My brother sent a clipping about a B-17 that was lost in Yellowstone National Park on the night of May 23, 1943. Clipping is enclosed.

Upon reading the text of the clipping and cross-referencing same to our 385th Group History, I came to the conclusion that the subject B-17 was the one belonging to the 548th Bomb Squadron that was lost after the 1000 mile long range flight to Marysville, Calif.

I have no way of checking that the serial #42-30260 was, in fact, that of a 17 assigned to the 548th, but someone in the group that might have engineering data on the aircraft assigned to the Group prior to shipping overseas may be able to verify this.

It does not appear in Ian McLachlan's roster, but this is explained by the fact that it was no longer on the inventory when the Group arrived at Great Ashfield.

Anyway Ed, I thought the story might provide some interest for those of the "early" 548th who were at Lewistown, Montana at the time.

Thanks,

Ron McInnis
Steels Crew, 549th B.S.
2496 Minivet Ct., Pleasanton, CA 94566

SAN MATEO TIMES
SAN MATEO, CALIF.

Saturday, Dec. 10, 1988 TIEE TIMES San Mateo*-!-: I

Summer blazes reveal secrets of Yellowstone

Bones of a lost bomber were bared

YELLOWSTONE NATIONAL PARK (AP) — Old-timers with long memories knew it was there. Archivists gave it a special place in the history books. But millions of people passed by the wreckage without a clue it was there.

Then, in the summer of 1988, a woodcutter dropped a cigarette and started a 450,000-acre forest fire that laid bare the bones of a World War II-vintage B-17 bomber, 45 years after it went down on a frigid spring night carrying 10 young airmen to their deaths.

Besides blackening hundreds of thousands of acres in America's first national park and triggering an uproar over fire-fighting policy on public lands, the intense blazes in Yellowstone also revealed some of its old secrets.

"The fires exposed a lot of old road cuts, torn up culverts and bridges, and abandoned dump sites," said Tim Hudson, Yellowstone's maintenance chief and a sanitary engineer. "We vaguely knew about all that stuff, but over the years trees had grown up around it and it became hard to get to, too expensive to remove, or people forgot about it.

"Our rehabilitation efforts following the fires have also given us an opportunity to do some monumental cleanup of old junk because we have the helicopters here to help us do it."

Besides rebuilding burned-out bridges, repairing bulldozed and hand-cut firelines and fixing trails and public facilities, park crews also raced the winter to remove all debris from the crash of the B-17, tail No. 42-30260.

Ground teams carefully collected the shattered, rusted pieces of .50-caliber machine guns, splinters of practice bombs once filled with sand and dozens of bullets.

Much of the aluminum and steel already twisted by the crash was charrred from the North Fork fire. The weathered metal was loaded into helicopter slings and hauled four miles north to a sorting area inside the park near West Yellowstone, Mont.

The main wreckage and the 20-foot crater created by the massive bomber when it plowed into the ground around midnight May



REMAINS REVEALED BY FIRE

Tim Hudson, maintenance chief for Yellowstone National Park, and landscape architect Lore Williams, right, pose beside the remains

of a World War II B-17 bomber which were hauled to this site near West Yellowstone, Mont.

23, 1943, had been covered over by initial rescue crews, so Hudson's cleanup team left it undisturbed.

"The stuff we pulled out totals about 25,000 pounds," said Hudson. "We flew all the bullets out

first, then dumped and burned their powder. The biggest piece we recovered was a wing tip. We also found the vertical and horizontal stabilizer on the tail section a mile from the main crash site."

Even the archivists had missed that one on their maps and charts because, in the past half century, the forests of Yellowstone had grown up around the site to create a living green shroud.

Hardly any wreckage was

recognizable. Park records indicate that a few years after the crash a Yellowstone ranger salvaged enough aluminum to make a snow plane, forerunner of the snowmobile. The area also showed signs of earlier scaveng-

ing and looting. Nothing recovered this fall was deemed usable, so the park service, with Department of Defense approval, will sell it as scrap to the highest bidder.

Poking through the forest fire's ashes, park employees also found small reminders of the airmen who died.

"We found part of a leather jacket, a shoe, some pieces of belts and rings off of parachute harnesses," said Dick Bahr, Yellowstone's air operations supervisor. "There was no identifying markings on any of the personal gear so we sent it to a mortuary to be incinerated."

It was precious little to commemorate the burial ground of an airplane once hailed as "The Queen of the Skies" and singled out by the Smithsonian Air and Space Museum as the most powerful weapon in the war against Hitler's Germany.

In 1983, park service historical archivist Andy Beck collected every scrap of information he could find about aircraft Not 42-30260 and compiled it in a plastic ringbinder now kept at Yellowstone headquarters.

The plane, with 11 men on board, was flying from Marysville, Yuba County, to its home base at Lewistown, Mont. According to an Army Air Corps investigation, the pilot climbed to 15,000 feet above Reno and soon hit rough air. He was flying by instruments.

Next to the line citing "Nature of Accident" was this notation: "Airplane encountered icing conditions. No definite knowledge of what happened."

Retired Yellowstone Park Ranger Tom Ela never knew the cause, but he remembers the crash well.

"My wife, Betty, and I'd been to a birthday party and had just gotten home when we heard the plane go over. I went to the window because I knew it wasn't sounding right. We could hear it go into a scream as it went down."

Ela rushed to a nearby observation plateau and saw the sky alight with flame. The plane carrying live ammunition, burned on impact.

There was confusion about the number of men aboard, so Ela was among searchers looking for survivors. On the third day, when he climbed a tree and hollered "Hallooooo" for the hundredth time, an answering call came back.

The official investigation concludes that 2,000 square feet of Yellowstone were damaged.

The Jinkers

by Tom Helman

The name may not ring a bell to anyone, even those of the 549th Squadron from whence they came. Or those of the Site 7 barracks where we lived the summer and the fall and winter and spring of 1943-44. And maybe not even the three originals themselves. But Jinkers? Or Jinker?

Actually, a Jinker was a B-17 pilot, a First Pilot make sure, THE number one four engine jock, yes he flew the big ones. But much more, a very most special brand, he was a Combat Bomber Pilot. A super wartime secret, this guy was a Granny Goose, made up down at Pinetree, painfully the cross of a weeney and a Missouri mule.

Simply, a Jinker was one that jinked. Or practiced the art of jinking. And an art it was. An art for survival. One like, now you see it now you don't, or keep it moving Clyde you will hurt if you don't. And as far as I know, made up for the most part, even dreamed up, by an artist. His name was Bill Gregg



L. to r. - Bill Gregg, John Richey receiving their DFC's Jan. '44

It's Cappen Grayuug, suh, Willyuug Grayuug, he'd draw a twang straight from the swamps of Florida, and you'd know he had to be the father of something. But jinking?

And survival, his (and ours), was good reason he wore railroad tracks. Starting out a squadron leader, he earned dem bars by doing it right just twenty-five times. On the ground he worked from bed number one, the first cot on the right, and did well what he thought his job, guarding the front door, and passing out wise sayings and the secrets of old hat tricks. And expounding his thoughts on jinking.

Next, but not necessarily, was Jerry Mudge. I guess you'd call him a Flight Leader inasmuch as he led flights from the

beginning back in Spokane. And undoubtedly he was mid-wife to the birth of, 549th style and according to Cap'n Gregg, classic jinking.



L. to R.; Col. Van, Jerry Mudge and Bill Clark.

Jerry was the quiet type. Unlike Gregg, who'd run everything by you twice, he'd put out no more than an aw shucks or so, unless he'd get excited over what's fer din or what's the movie for tonight or maybe he could talk of swapping his tail gunner for a rocket in his airplane's rump.

This man was organized, and he drilled his crew to be the same. He had a plan for every thing. There were small tools all taped on and safety wired in areas he thought they might be needed, like pliers or dykes next to a servo to cut them loose in the event of funny business taking place in that department. And he actually held ditching drills and bail out practices so real the real thing would be anticlimax.

And last, as they say, not least, was John Richey. Last because he was a couple month latecomer to the Group, not an original. And not least, as he learned fast. He had to. It was a long time before Richey began a mission from more than tail end Charlie. But as a jinker, there was none better, he had experience, yes gads of it.

Making these three the heroes, heads and shoulders of the Jinkers you might say, is in no way to disparage the remaining First Johns of the billet; Dick Whitlow, Clarence Moats and Bob Vandiver.

Whitlow didn't get a chance to qualify a Jinker. It was flak that did him in, dispatching one ball turret before scads of honkers feathered three of his engines as they shot him off Mudge's right wing over Munster the tenth of October.

And then Moats, who was Whitlow's replacement, became confirmed a Jinker, but would be embarrassed to be included with those three lead honches.

Finally but not last was Vandiver. From his position of back door guard, the last bed on the right, he appreciated little, very little, the shenanigans of the barrack's front end. For

him, no toasted cheese on bread, or even eggs toasted on toast, freshly stolen fresh from the messhall by his own co-pilot, pantry raid specialist Lou des Cognat. Why Van wouldn't even sip a toast from Gregg's pocket flask.



Lou Des Cognat, the Fox in the Henhouse. His career ended when a mess Sgt. crunched his 2 egg loaded pockets.



Bob Vandiver - the roof-shooter to Helman, 549th Sqdn.

And who could forget his, Vandiver's bringing to an end late one night, say suddenly, a hangar flying bull session, or maybe it was the midnight penny ante, with a couple 45 shots sent straight up. Poor guy, for awhile until the holes were fixed, he wet the bed all the way from the roof. No boy messed with Van. Not even the Jinkers.

You couldn't say that Gregg ran the barracks, like the boss, no way. He may have been head Jinker, but he was no god-papa. His style was more rube goldberg, he fixed things. I'll bet he teethed on an erector set.

It wasn't unusual to see Bill, hunkered abroad his motorbike, a real live limey hog, on his way from the flight line from where he had redeemed any kind of junk or other valuables, so he called, he meant to fashion into his latest excuse for a thing. It was from there, too, it can now be told, he kyped aromatics for his rig. He did get around. And he was a thinker. Was he ever. On and about anything. It one needed help athinking, there was all kinds of help from Bill. It takes a thinker to make a Jinker, for sure.

It was he who made the limey coal stove at our end of the joint, also called the cook stove, into an oil burner. First, the brick lined one, which was one cold mama, and then the imported from America sheet metal job our requisition squad took in on trade, in a very neat operation, from the new community washroom, the bloody ablutory.

He had fashioneci this gem by perching a twenty gallon glycol can atop the blackout entrance porch, simply gravity feeding through a bendy copper tube, dripping dirty drops of old engine oil (not glycol) direct to the flame.

It was hot. Dirty but hot. And, for our end of the barracks at least, there was now no need to -hmm- filch (that's the word) the neighbor's coal ration each week. And the taste tradeoff onto the toasted cheese sans? from burnt coal smell to the perfume of crankcase oil? Only a point for discussion. But who cared?

The important talk came in spite of taste and smell and smoke tainted with hot oil and burnt cheese and bread, outranked only by the (temporary) stench of bombardier Ace's (that's Winnerman) bedside relief tube (the temporary part cancelled permanently when Captain Kuhn made a health inspection).

More momentous, too, than the all wins no losses truth stretches of our cheerful girl maker bombardiers, (in alphabetical order: Bedpan Winnerman, Ladysman DiSalvo and Motoron Watzke) the heavy talk was on the plight of the one we had been told the girl of our dreams, the belle of the ball, the sweetheart we figured Cinderella, but really the old broad we'd brought to the dance, none other than the glorious dear old B-17 (F-model in those days), the over-named over-manned over-rated and so-called Flying Fortress.

On this, coach Gregg could/would rev up rpm's matched by nobody. One big peeve he had (it had nothing to do with jinking) was the eleven or thirteen trusty, when thawed, fif-tys we packed, our only defense.

My Golly, that's what he'd say, they only point in eight general directions, no more than three maybe in any one, (and my two waist guns would saw my tail off if I hadn't hung those brackets on each window), and when any of them guns go off, nobody really knows except the guy that's hit.

What I want is something big to happen when we shoot, like great balls of fire, bad awful belches of slimey green smoke, and streams the colors of Old Glory streaking every which way; something ugly, something gory, something, anything, to scare hell out of those looney birds when they stick their nose our way. Make those bastards go on instruments to get through the mess, he'd say.

And when he heard the rumor there was a stash of cannon somewhere around, presumably for nose mount on B-17's, he proclaimed, bleep bleep, nose mount hell, I'll have two of em, side by side, right on top the cowl. I'll look right down both barrels and blast the whole chivaree, and there'll be no more headons I tell you, they'll all be hors de combat!

But not often did Bill get going like that, waving his arms as he flew about, like on a broom. And when he'd light, he'd say, hey what am I saying, we bombers are the ball carriers, we're the offense, we make the moves so that they miss, every time. And so then he'd say, he'd even wink, let's talk jinkin'.

A familiar barracks sight was the figure of one Bill Gregg, standing tall and lank, his left hand held palm down about a foot or so in front of his belt buckle (that would be his own sweet and noble A-17, either Round Trip Ticket I or II or II), and his right (hand) cocked high and curved out from his right ear, (a 109 about to begin the swoop in for a headon).

First thing, he'd say, is that that kraut and weeney guy out there is an idiot or he wouldn't be there, just a girl chasin' fighter pilot, hot with a stick and rudder, and a nervous trigger finger, with fifty sortie boots and a shawl to match. Practicing coordination exercises in his sleep, which is all the time. His plane the platform for all his guns which are bored in to come together somewhere out front, but he don't know where.

His room for error is zip, and his time to think is likewise. He didn't slip or skid mush, not even some. And he'll always come at you from out of a turn, from no matter where, planning to roll out as close to his firing point as he can and on target. This is the critical point, the CP, the one you look for, don't forget it, the one precise moment, THE time you get your ass in gear. You move it. And right now!

There was a rumored secret that breezed about, not to be heard by any of the higher powers of course, that Wild Bill, nobody called him that, had on more than one occasion led a one or two ship formation on a "practice" mission, somewhere high over the UK, in rendezvous with an old flying school classmate who also was a Jug pilot.

It was there and then that the ways and moves of jinking were made up. It took some practice but it wasn't long before Bill had his buddy tearing hair as they say, or maybe, ha, sipping the leetle brown jug; as time after time, from any direction, headon, tailon or sideways, he'd guess the CP right and move just wee enough for the Jug to lose him.

If it was a high headon, maybe he'd ease the Fort's nose up a bit, just a bit, touch a rudder and cross control the wheel, and presto, out o'luck mister fighter man. And by the time his buddy'd yaw the Jug's nose around trying to find the rabbit, he was out of gear and his guns would be aiming at a slapshot, and the 400 mile closing (about 200 yards a second) had him on the way to another dry run.

For the most part, and for good reason, headons against a formation were made by the SE's 109 and 190, coming quick and downhill, doing their damndest to fling shells and slugs through windshields. It was when, be he SE or TE, he caught you alone though, with no friends around big or little, look out, it was milkin' time.

This is when jinking became something else, more like cut and run, inside outside spank the backside, I'm gene autrey

which way did he go. You can sit and stink, chugging chugging and chugging, as they cut you up from all ways and no time. Or you can do as Richey did on the October 10, 1943 Munster mission.

It was immediately after bombs away when through a fast happening series of events he suddenly found himself out of formation, painfully all alone, and in the company of an uncountable large and angry hornet nest of SE's, along with a smattering of anything else fat Hermann had.

Did he panic? Yes he did. He didn't even shift gears as he laid the Fort over on a wing and headed downhill, steep, which is another word for straight down. But not for long, as the heavy bird, the throttles untouched, ran up speed like mama's charge card, and Richey had to pull out and head back up hill.

But not for long again, as the surprised jerry boys, able to make taiions only, were pressing close, even closer, so Richey ended the climb by laying over a wing again, still at runaway, to head back downhill. But oh eureka, with all that speed the old girl wanted to play, so Richey helped her out, and for the first time since flying school, he did the first of several that afternoon, whatta you know, the barrell roll (and as Richey said, twas too fast for a slow roll).

Meanwhile, from the start of all this, the crew, (except the cockpit) not hearing the alarm bell (because Richey never rang it), could do nothing but hang on, and that to the only thing they had to hang to, their guns. Everything loose went every which way, hard, much out the windows, including the ball gunner's parachute and, at one time, even the butt end of the radioman.

The emotions of the jerry boys had to be wild, running from surprise, to frustration of the constipating kind, back to surprise. In the time it took to twist and turn and dive and roll from 26,000 feet to the deck, who knows how long in time, the whole mess of them never put a hole in Richey's olive green sweetheart.

And it had to be surprise in a big order to at least twenty (12 confirmed) of them, as ever chasing their CP, they each in turn, if getting by the tail guns, overran so badly and came so close they could have been clubbed with a broom, only to get their purple heart post humous; a hosing from the likes of, surprise, a waist gun maybe, or the radio gun, or even a nose gun. And the turrets, both top and bottom, were at times both top or bottom or side guns, described by whatever part of the roll Richey had his four engine fighter into.

The Richey crew were confirmed fire baptised jinker believers. They did their best shooting when a whole lot of jinking was going on. Movement was their security, and far better armament than plexiglass or sheet aluminum or just plain air.

Successful jinking took a share of crew cooperation and discipline. For TE rocket side attacks, the top turret was the best CP watcher. And for the tail rocket attacks, the tail gunner was the rearview mirror.

It is sad to say, that jinking was but narrowly used, probably not by many outside our barracks walls, even in the 549th. It was certainly not ess o pee, to say least. But if Bill Gregg would have had his way, everybody would have been a jinker, first order. And if that could have been, if only so, there are those who will say, along with Bill, there would have been far fewer losses of Flying Forts to jerry built fighter planes. END

About the author: Tom Helman flew 25 missions, 22 as John Richey's co-pilot.

Letters to the Editor:

Dear Ed,

Thanks for you letter of July 12th.

I'm glad you liked "Final Flights" and would be grateful for a favourable review in "Hardlife Herald". Hopefully, there'll soon be an American distribution outlet which will make buying it easier in America.

At time of writing, I haven't seen the latest edition of HH with the serial listing but I've had several queries relating to it. I'll send copies of anything interesting.

Enclosed is a clipping from the Buffalo News mentioning a 385th guy I can't see in the roster, maybe a new recruit?

Give the fondest regards from Julie and I to all at the reunion. Bethan and Rowan send their love as well.

Take care,

Ian
"Tasdale"
1 Joy Avenue, Newton Flotman, Norwich,
Norfolk NR151 RD

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ LIFE MEMBERS ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

- 202 - Phillip I Cook
- 203 — Brian Wm. Darling
- 204 — Roy E. Courtney
- 205 — Stanley F. Dentinger
- 206 — Don J. Hunter
- 207 — Frank X. McCawley
- 208 — Donald Klosterman
- 209 — Francis R. Fuller
- 210 — Robert W. Wilson

Dear Ed:

It's been some time since I last wrote to you so here I am back again to report on the 548th Engineering Section Mini Reunion.

This year we had our meeting in Gatlinburg, Tennessee on September 21 st and we departed on the 24th. Our activities were curtailed a bit because of a heavy rainfall and some flooding thanks to Hurrican Hugo. However, we did have a great get-together. Also, we did pick up a new member whom we had not seen for 44 years (Joe Harvey, and he should be joining the 385th BGMA shortly).

This year 14 of us were able to make the trip. I am enclosing a picture which you may include in a future newsletter along with this report. Following are the names of those pictured.



Left to right:Gentile, Girson; 2nd Row (seated)?: Harvey, Granger, Bridges, Huber, Ragone. 3rd Row (standing): Detwiler, Thomas, Beam, Alcock, Leggett, Siederer. No. 14 not pictured: Bielle.

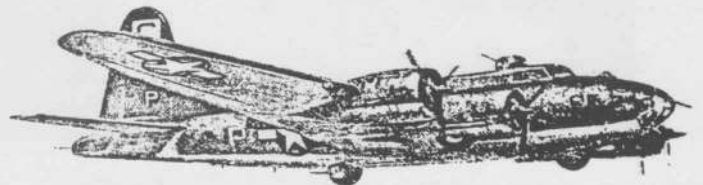
We also had along as guests the Huber's in-laws from England as well as their niece and nephew and their son.

I was glad to hear that the 385th reunion was a big success as we had a first hand report from Detwiler, Huber and Girson who made it to Fargo.

I want to commend you and the rest of the people who take care of all the work involved in running the 385th BGMA (a job well done!).

Sincerely,

Anthony Ragone
6 Wood Lane, Valley Stream, NY 11581



Letters to the Editor con't.

Dear Mr. Cook,

I read with interest your letter in the April 1989, "Hard Life Herald", concerning your 4/22/44 mission to Hamm during which you were shot down.

The plane you mentioned, that was off your right wing was the "Golden Goose" piloted by Bob Bash. I was the tail-gunner.

At the Fargo 385th reunion, I met my radioman, Reg Fuller, and our navigator, Willis Tulare, after 45 years! I mentioned your letter and Willis confirmed to me it was Cornwell's crew off our left wing in "coffin corner".

From your letter, I gather you were hit in a frontal attack. I was wondering if you realized, the FW-190 that came at you at 12 o'clock, chased by the P-47, also attacked you from above and behind!

I was alerted in the tail by "Fighters at 12 o'clock", over the intercom. I poised for a shot, and in a split second, the FW-190 appeared with the P-47 in hot pursuit. No chance for a burst. As they flashed by, the FW-190 whipped into a picture-book Immelman turn-half loop and roll upright-, firing as he nosed down toward you from behind. No way the P-47 could follow. I could see the 20mm shells ripping into you. It all happened in seconds or less!

As you fell back, we could see you were in trouble. You couldn't hear, but I kept urging, "Bail out you guys, bail out!"

You were drifting quite away back when I finally saw some chutes start to come out. I counted about four or five. The ship was nosing down, racked by explosions when I lost sight of it.

I never found out if you all made it out, so I was glad to read, after 45 years, that you did! It's an awful empty feeling to watch one of your own go down, and you can't do a thing about it.

I can still picture it in my mind. The Luftwaffe pilot must have been one of their top aces. However, when he broke off the attack, he nosed up and seemed to mush. I couldn't see, but I was hoping some gunner in the formation would nail him at the moment he hung there, so vulnerable.

I think you enlisted men were billeted in our barracks, in the 551 st. We never really got to know each other, but Irwin Ganzen's name and picture seem familiar, though.

Thought you might appreciate a tail-gunner's view of what happened that day.

Sincerely,

Charles Flynn
275 East Drive, Copiague, NY 11726

Dear Ed Stern,

Let me introduce myself. I am Gilbert Haworth, newly elected Press Officer of the Bomber Command Association, Royal Air Force. Our Secretary, Douglas Radcliffe recently had a cordial message from your worthy President... Earl L. Cole. Earl is a Life Member of our Association and said how much he is looking forward to attending our next annual reunion in London on Saturday 28th, April 1990.

Now Earl thinks that many more of you MIGHTY EIGHTH REUNION GROUP who were stationed in England, would probably also like to become members.

I remember fraternizing with crews from the "EIGHTH" in the Nottingham area around the years 1943 to 1944. The BLACK BOY Hotel was a popular rendezvous, the FLYING HORSE was another one and we all got on well.

The bomber Command Association is based at the Royal Air Force Museum, Hendon near London. We do our best to support the Museum and we are proud of the collection of famous and historic aircraft. We are especially proud of our Bl 7. The members of our Association were honored to be allowed to arrange the installation of a USAAF Memorial Stone underneath it. Shortly we shall be installing a P51 Mustang, right alongside the Fortress. What wonderful kites they were! Incidentally, over here, there is currently being made a movie about the 'Memphis Belle' (Director is David Puttnam). It will be featuring five Fortresses . . . plus P51 escorts.

You might like to know that as recently at 8th August, 100 veterans of the 352nd Fighter Group were guests at Hendon and it would seem that they all thoroughly enjoyed themselves.

In conclusion, may I say that we all hope that your 46th Anniversary celebration went off very successfully.

Yours sincerely,

Gilbert Haworth

Dear John:

Here enclosed is a check for associate lifetime membership in the 385th BGMA for Brian Wm. Oakley born March 28, 1989.

John, I think he is the youngest enrolled to date. In the squadron meeting I issued a challenge to the members to enroll their grandchildren and beat this age. We could put it in the newsletter and challenge the other squadrons in the group to beat this age by enrolling their grandchildren so as to perpetuate the 385th BGMA.

It was great seeing and being with you at the reunion.

Sincerely

Floyd

Letters to the Editor con't.

Dear Ed,

I am putting together 2 articles I hope can run in the Air Historian Publication.

One is on Joe Jones experience and I can go directly to him for data.

The one I need help on is an article on Carlton Browning. I am in touch with his widow Dolly and she has given me permission to publish it. They have a son who is a BG on USAF active duty.

I need interviews with crew members who had Carlton aboard or who have observed him outside on his fuselage perch taking photos. I also can use and return to the owner a few photos, especially of condensation, trails and formations.

I will furnish blank cassette tapes or conduct phone interviews for any who can contact me.

Joy Dunlap Lt. Col. USAF Ret.
385th Pilot Dec. 44 - Apr. 45
415 Flamingo Dr.
Destin, Florida 32541
Phone: 904-837-8401

Thanks and Regards,

J. Dunlap

Dear Ed,

Thank you for all that you do to put out the consistently interesting Newsletter.

The picture on page 13 of the April issue was of special interest to me. Although the photo was obviously not a very clear one, it was still easy for me to identify two members of our crew. . . Arnold Willingham (properly named in the photo) who was ball-turret gunner and Jim Dacy (improperly named as "Wacy") who was tail-gunner. I recall that picture as one that I have seen in years past and, in spite of the fuz-ziness of the picture, I can still recognize the stance/appearance of both individuals.

Willingham passed away some years ago ... he did attend a reunion in Cleveland with other members of our crew in approximately 1974 (&). We have never had any contact with Jim Dacy since 1945.

I was unable to locate any text in any of the letters in the April issue which referred to that photo so I was curious as to how the picture happened to be used.

Sincerely,

Bob M. Silver
4510 Southwest 62nd Ave, Miami, Florida 33155

Editors note/ The picture came from Will Richards — and we DO need more pictures than we get.

Dear Ed,

This letter is to every last man, of every rank, who served in any capacity at Great Ashfield with the 385th Bomb Group and the 550th Bomb Squadron, and all supporting units during the days of "RUM DUM".

When I saw the picture on page 15 of the June 89 Newsletter of "RUM DUM" it was a real gut wrencher for me.

"RUM DUM" should have been saved from the scrap heap, brought home and preserved for posterity. The record of this plane, and all those who saw to it, is beyond comprehension, and will never be matched. I liken "RUM DUM" to the U.S.S. Constitution (Old Ironsides) in all her glory, sitting in Boston Harbor.

The 385th video "Wings From the Past" credits "RUM DUM" 106 missions without abortions. Thats 106 times Hermann Goering's Avveyville Kids", the rest of the Luftwaffa, the German 88s all over Europe, failed to put "RUM DUM" away.

"RUM DUM" had a multitude of battle scars from enemy machine guns and 88 flak. You had to look hard to find any area that wasn't patched. I feel so very, very proud to have made a few missions in "RUM DUM". All of us had a part in making the total miracle of "RUM DUMS" record.

The 385th Bm. Gp. and 550th Bm. Sqd. have a platinum record in all the annals of aerial combat worldwide, forever thanks to all of you.

Respectfully,

Gene Silberberg, T/Sgt. Radio
and our crew (550 Bm Sqd.)

Capt Robert Pokorny-Pilot, 1st Lt Donald Caplinger-Bombardier, 1st Lt. Paul Gelman-Navigator, T/SGT Raymond Ruck - Engineer, S/Sgt. Jay Hunter - Ball Turret, S/Sgt Gene Ruhno - Waist Gunner, S/Sgt Donald Burgess - Tail Gunner.

P.S. Does anyone know of any casualties aboard "RUM DUMS" 106 missions? If so when, and who were they?



Original Crew of Rum Dum (part) — 45 years later.
Charles Guffey, Ball Turret; Jim Staber, Pilot; David Framer,
Top Turret.

Letters to the Editor con't

Dear Ed,

Just received "Hardlife Herald". Was fascinated by the roster, and to do our bit to fill it out here goes ...

I was a tailgunner on Jerry Steils crew of the 549th. We were relative latecomers to the 385th and came in as replacements for the crews of the 549th who had gone down over Berlin 10-6-44. Coming into those empty huts was a pretty sobering experience for the replacement crews of the 549th.

We flew our first four missions in "Back to the Sack". I don't recall the serial number, but she was a veteran with a lot of time on her. It was said that only one man had ever been wounded in her (flak in the butt) so she was considered a "lucky" B-17 to fly in. We put the 84th mission on "Raggedy Ann" (our 5th) and then were almost permanently assigned to #338118 of the 549th. M/Sgt. Tucker was crew chief. He had been Chief on "Piccadilly Queen" before #118. Our hardstand was very near the control tower. Rumor had it that #118 was the only survivor of the fatal 10-6-44 mission to Berlin (11 downed out of 12 for the 549th). #118 had a large painting of a leggy gal jumping out of the sky with a three pronged pitchfork, but no name painted on. This was over the nose hatch on the left side. We agreed on the name "Miss Fortune" but never got around to painting the name on.

Our Co-pilot, Mort Feingold, was hit by flak over Cologne on return from our 23rd mission and we had to land at A89 (Florennes) in Belgium to get him medical attention, but in spite of all efforts of the medics, he died. We had flak damage and had to leave #118 in Belgium while we hitched a ride from a 94th BI 7 back to base in the U.K.

A brand new B-17 was assigned to us. . #48762. We flew her to the end of our tour and never did name her. Till the end she was known simply as "762". She got us through the "company front" attack by 190s and 109s on Mar. 2, '45 when again the 549th lost 4 out of 12 B-17s. This was our 32nd and needless to say we sweated bullets.

Am curious about what happened to "Back to the Sack", "Miss Fortune #338118, and good old #48762. Probably pots and pans a long time ago. Oh, to have been in Kingman with a camera in 1946!

"Back to the Sack" - Ser. # *Unknown, Ident. Letter unknown, G. Steil Pilot - 4 missions. Disposition unknown, Sqdn. 549 BS.*
 #338118 "Miss Fortune", Ident. Letter K, G. Steil Pilot, Disposition unknown, 549 BS Sqdri.
 #48762, "762", Ident. Letter Q, G. Steil pilot. Disposition unknown 549 BS Sqdn.

Ed, this is a good time to give thanks to all the ground men for their hard work during WWII. They were all so essential and never seemed to get enough credit for their hard work in the cold, dark rain, but if it wasn't for them, not one of the

aircrews would have made it off the ground, much less through the war.....

Thanks Ed, See you in Fargo!!!

Ron Me Innis Tailgunner, Lt. Gerald O. Steils Crew, 549th B.S.
 2496 Minivet Ct., Pleasanton, CA 94566



Crew No. 6111 - 385th BG, 549th BS USA 8th Air Force.
 Standing, left to right; William C. Murphy, Bomb.; Natal V. D'Andrea, Nav.; Carl D. Petersen, Pilot; Gennaro V. DeFrancisco. Co-pilot. Kneeling left to right; John P. Capp, radio Op.; Edmund Rubach, Gun.; Willis E. Wohnhas, Gun.; James C. McAnally, Eng.; John J. Jermaine, Gun.; Wallace E. Baker, BT Gun.

Tour of Duty, Sept. 1944 - April 1945.

Dear Ed,

Reference Newsletter, June 1989, page 5 lower left hand corner B-17G 42-37952, was assigned to the 551 st either the latter part of 1943, or the early part of 1944, and I was assigned as Crew Chief along with Bob Kimball my asst, and a Meeh, called Slim. I can't remember his name.

This A/C completed over 100 missions without a mechanical abort, and she saw three crews complete their missions. The last crew being Lt. Striemers.

I named the airplane "Babe", but never got around to painting the name on her. At the end of the way, she was declared "War Weary" and taken away, but not before I took the manufacturers "I.D." plate from the lower left of the instrument panel, the cockpit clock, and the Boeing insignia from the center of the wheel on the control column.

That would **not** be the last time I would see her again. I was assigned a brand new A/C number unknown to fly the Spam Missions, and to fly home in. During our stop over in the Azores, I again saw old 952 sporting a new paint job. She was one of the last of the painted B-17's.

I attribute the success of this aircraft to the skill, and diligence of the crews assigned her, and the long hours put

Letters to the Editor con't

in by my crew, and last but not least, the service squadron people who were assigned to our group, and who are very seldom if ever mentioned in your newsletters.

Sincerely,

Harry W. Loring

P.S. I still have the "I.D." plate, the clock and the center of the control column wheel. The manufactures serial no. was 8738, manufactured by Douglas A/C Co. Long Beach Cal.



ENCLOSED PHOTO - HARE'S BREADTH

Crew had completed 19 combat missions in various BI 7 Aircraft following which crew was assigned to BI 7 Aircraft No. 46464. The crew decided to name the new plane, "HARE'S BREADTH" and paint the symbolic Rabbit (HARE) on the nose. The name was chosen because of some close calls on missions, one of which resulted in a forced landing in Belgium without anyone being hurt. The rabbit design came from a Valentine card received by Engineer McAnally and was transferred and painted on the aircraft by RO John Capp sometime in mid-Feb. '44. The crew completed the remaining missions in "HARE'S BREADTH, as far as I can recall on or about March 24, 1945. The enclosed drawing is a sketch I made in Feb. '44 for approval by the crew prior to painting on aircraft.



HARE'S BREADTH appears on the mast head of HARD LIFE next to the word HERALD but is misspelled. On page 6 of the June Newsletter Aircraft No. 339199 has a similar name, "Hairs Breath" and is listed MIA. I do not know the final fate of HARE'S BREADTH".

John Capp
600 Schnebley rd, Sedona, AZ 86336

Dear Ed,

In May, my wife, Nancy, and I were visiting in Wales and took a trip us to Monmouth, England to see John and Lucy Ellis. We spent a delightful afternoon having tea and talking about the 385th, Great Ashfield, and the time that John and Lucy joined us for a reunion here in the States. The photo was taken at their home and shows the gentle hills of Monmouth in the background. They are fine and wish to be remembered to all their friends in the group.

It was nice to see them again and, hopefully, we will see them soon again.

With best regards, I am

Bob Valliere
18 Whiting Farm Road, Branford, CT 06405



Left to Right: Lucy, John Ellis - Bob and Nancy Valliere, Monmouth England

Ed,

I have an original copy of the Iwickaw Citation May 12th 1944 385 B.G. ONLY. Mr. Ramader is welcome to it if he so wishes. Found it among some old papers I have kept all of these years.

Should I forward it to you or on to Hawaii? Let me know.

Sincerely,

Albert "Pappy" Riggle
610 Allison Ave., Washington, PA 15301

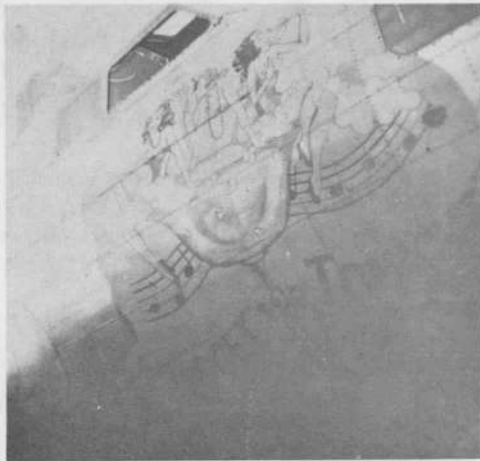
Letters to the Editor con't.

Editor, Hard Life Herald

Attn: Ian McLachlan

I would like to add a B-17G to your list published in the latest issue of the 385th newsletter.

Serial #43-38851, Name - Target for Tonight, Sqdn 549 returned to U.S. at end of war. Crew: Pilot - Capt. Byron D. Allen, Co-Pilot - 1st Lt. William Hoyt, Nav. - 1st Lt. William Goldberg, Bomb. - Wilmer John 1st Lt., Radar - 1st Lt. Goldstein, Fit. Eng. - Robert A. Garner T/Sgt, Radio Op. - T/Sgt. Robert Heddington (killed in action) WG-S/Sgt. Virgil Fallon, BTG - S/Sgt Samuel Graham, TG - S/Sgt. Eddie Seville.



Nose art from this plane is in the Confederate Air Force Museum in Harlingen, Texas. I am enclosing a picture of plane and crew. Pictured in order is Allen, Hoyt, Goldberg, Goldstein, John, Garner, Graham, Seville, Fallon, Replacement Harry Keyer and ground crew chief.

Plane was flown back to Bradley Field at end of war by crew that flew its 16 missions.

Would like to know what the letter after Sqd. # is.

And the following loss symbols

ENOPS
SWE
MISS
EAGR
RFC
DEL
RZI

Sincerely,

Robert A. Garner
986 Bluebonnet, Harlingen, TX 78550

Dear Paul and Ed;

Received a copy of the "Hard Life Herald" our 385th Bomb Group newsletter and noted your roster of B-17's of the 385th.

I was the last pilot of "Sleepytime Gal" - #21-2636 assigned to the 550th Sqdn. of the 385th. Hard to believe forty-four years ago, we flew that bird from Great Ashfield to Bradley Field Conn, in June '45.

I had a great crew and a superior crew chief.

As a replacement crew, we were assigned "Sleepytime Gal" and we flew almost all our missions in the Gal.

As far as I can recall, that total missions flown combat for this plane were 114.

Best regards,

Sid Harris
Tons River, N.J.

Dear Ed,

Received- my latest newsletter yesterday, listing all of the 385th's aircraft. One airplane that wasn't there was one that went down on 13 Sept. 44. I know not her name or number, if indeed she had a name. She was flown by Capt. J.T. McErlane and heard that the crew became P.O.W.s on that date. I was with another crew that day and we bailed out over England after having been hit by flak over Stuttgart. I didn't know the plane we bailed out of had a name, it was dark when I boarded her. Has anybody out there bailed out over England on 13 Sept. 44? (called Half and Half)

Now for the shocker, I read the print off this newsletter and lo and behold I ran across Capt. J.T. McErlane being MIA on

Letters to the Editor:

Jan. 24, 1945 while flying a B-17 called Honey Child. Does anybody out there remember Capt. McErlane? He was an army officer who transferred to air corps and took pilot training. Any help will be appreciated. Also Ed, I can't make this reunion as I will be retiring on 18th Aug. Just not enough lead time, but rest assured if I'm still kicking, we'll make the next one. That all mama and I plan to do is travel so we are looking forward to 91.

Can't tell you how much we enjoy this newsletter. We read every word, lots of times more than once.

Thanks

George Barnett
704 Ross Ave., La Marque, TX 77568

Dear Ed:

On my recent trip to the RAF Manna Reunion at Cambridge, England, I placed a wreath at the Flagstaff Plinth at Madingley Cemetery in remembrance of the 385th members buried there.



Standing is Ken Wright of Cambridge, a member of RAF Manna Association, who is known to many Americans. A most helpful "guy" as attested by many veterans and their families who use his assistance when visiting the cemetery.

In addition, during that Sunday at the cemetery, wreaths were laid by the three Americans at the graves of the two airmen of the 95th Bomb Group who were in the plane which went down in the Channel after dropping food over Holland on May 7th. Eleven of the thirteen men perished when that plane ditched. The photo is at the grave of John Keller, one of the two men buried at Madingley. And immediately following we went over to the grave of Bob Korber who also lost his life on that ill-fated plane and is buried near by, and also placed a wreath at his grave.

I enjoyed the visit and reunion to Cambridge and hope to see you soon, Ed.



With best regards, I am

Bob Valliere
18 Whiting Farm Road, Branford, CT 06405

Dear Ed,

Just got the June '89 *Hard/ife Herald*. What a magnificent job, the full listing of the 385th's B-17s!!

Here are a couple of minor additions I can add:

339123 **550 x 'Possible Straight' Lt. George Crow**

2102684 **550 'Sweet Chariot' Lt Donald E. Black To USA June '45.**

'Possible Straight' was our 17. Pilot: Crow. Black was co-pilot, I was Navigator. We were given 'Sweet Chariot' to fly back to the states because it had a LOR AN. Black was the pilot then because Crow was in the hospital. (He came home by boat.) We never flew a mission in 'Sweet Chariot' which was so named because it was "Cornin' for to carry us home". We never knew who flew 'Possible Straight' back.

339199 or 339259 (I can't make out which) had a V on the "red checkered" tail. Info from a picture I have. The no. really looks like it ended in a 6 (or 8), but it must have been a 9 since your list has no 339xxx aircraft ending in a 6 (or 8). It IS an old picture!

If its any clue, there's a tail (red checkered) Q on a 17 that has a radar dome in place of the ball turret. It is flying in April '45 in one of my pictures.

To Ian's comments on 'Rum Dum'. I was in 'Possible Straight' on the raid when it was disabled. It was 10 April 1945 on the way home from Nurippen when we got some rather accurate flack. 'Rum Dum' dropped out of the squadron and, I suppose, came back on its own.

Yours,

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

Letters to the Editor cont.

Dear Mr. Ed,

Here are some thoughts for your editing pencil...hope it is not to far gone.

After 13 months at Camp Forrest (TN), 9 months at Tullahoma/William Northern Army Air Field (TN), 3 months at Kellogg Air Field (MICH), and a week at Camp Shanks (NY), I am on the HMS Aquitania headed for the 385th Bombardment Squadron at Station 155, Great Ashfield, Suffolk, where I stayed the final two years of my service.

The day after I got to England, I met a fellow named Sergeant Stankey who I accompanied to Aintree Park, Liverpool, to bring a couple of 45 and 65-foot trailers back. We had a time with those two trailers—people wouldn't move, the bicycle wouldn't get out of the way, the buildings wouldn't move over just a bit. Man, I picked up some stuff the hard way.

We lived in "Tent City", set up behind the Colonel's house (if I remember correctly). About two weeks after I got there, "Roundtrip Jack" (I think) caught fire and blew up. Man, you should have seen us scurrying around in the dark with one shoe on, our gas mask upside down, our helmets on backwards, trying to find a hole in the ground. And we knew our boys (ACK-ACK) were letting them have it. We found out later that the supposedly ACK-ACK fire was our .50 caliber going off in all that heat of the burning aircraft.

I was in charge of the cleaning of the drain lines for our sewer lines at one time. One used to find "YANK" and "STAR AND STRIPES", shorts and undershirts, towell and wash cloths, etc. in the pipes and drains. Perhaps the people enjoyed seeing that GI bicycle making its rounds.

Captain Cooper kept his fellows busy. There was one time when he had 14 Quonset/Nissen foundations for a crew of three to put some buildings on. I was in charge of the operations there, as well as doing repair work along our roads, hardstands, runways, etc.

In March of 1944, I put in for gunnery on our base. The instructor was a Lt. McDermott. After 3 missions in "Raggedy Anne", I washed out and was assigned to other duties. That's where I met the second Sergeant Gormley. It was his job to go around waking up people when it was time for them to go to work. That gave me a little extra time, so I opened up a little shop doing dry cleaning, alterations, chevron and patch work, etc. That's when a Jerry came over our base and made a direct hit on our hangar. I looked up and saw the underside of the German fighter that laid the eggs.

I remember there was an old British bus there at one time. Yours truly was the only driver (that I can recall). We would load up and leave at 1400 hours, driving northwest of the base. I say "We" because there would be an MP to go with me. The two of us would pull out of the base and go up toward Thetford. We would be back to the base in time to get those going on the 1700 Liberty Run. There would be a

call at 2300 hours to load up and get back to the base. After we dropped our load at the post, we would go back over our 1400 hours trip, getting back to our base around 1600 hours. There was an officer who would ride in the cab with me. He would get out right outside of Ipswich, and I would look out for him on my way back to the base.

Mr. Stern has some pictures that made at various places. He has some of Station Defense HQ that Barbara Pleasance gave me, as well as some more. Did you ever go to sleep while on guard duty? Well, I almost did. This officer came out of nowhere and caught me sitting down. He asked me if I were asleep, to which I answered I was thinking about home. After some chewing (on his part), he went his way.

One of my brothers was in the Signal Corps in Bury, St. Edmonds and Plymouth before D-Day. While he was in Paris, he came over to Great Ashfield and stayed a week. My first sergeant heard about it and gave me a three-day pass and we headed for Norwich...had a good time. While he was there, I bummed us a ride on a practice mission in "Sleepy Time Gal". He was tickled to ride in a bomber.

While I was in Base Transportation, I was late getting back to the Base on the eve of the 200 mission party. When I walked in, cigarette smoke was so thick that I had to feel myself (with the lights on). There was a smell of smoke, steak, bread, eggs, beer. Several barrels of beer had "misplaced" by the drivers of our trucks. I would like to know if its possible for several barrels of beer to be "misplaced".

I recall a Mrs. Cornish who washed and ironed some clothes for us. She lived just outside the back entrance to the base (Wetherden) from us. Her family plus her mother lived there.

I will never forget the day the war against Germany was over. I left from Southampton on the USS West Point, and landed at Hampton/Newport News (VA). After a short stay there, we (some of us) boarded trains and headed for Camp (Fort) Gordon (GA). As we were given furloughs, we were told we would report to Sioux Falls, SD for Pacific training when our furloughs were over. This being the month of August 1945, things happened which made us eligible for discharge. I remember I was in Clinton, SC visiting my cousin when all of a sudden, the town's siren started blowing, people started blowing their car's horn, factory whistles sounded off, everything that would make a noise made it. When I stopped and asked a fellow what was happening, he said, "The war is over!!!!!!!"

When I got back to Camp Gordon, GA, everybody was called into a room and asked who wanted out.

I never had any line that I could follow when I joined up. But I did what I was told. Maybe that meant something.

Robert C. Cribb
104 Granger Road, Spartanburg, SC 29301

Letters to the Editor con't.

Dear Ed,

In the last issue of the "Hard Life Herald", no information was included adjacent to our aircraft number, 2323008, Bostow T Tear, named "Lil' Audrey". I presume that since no information was listed beside it, that none was available. Since I flew almost all of my missions in that aircraft, the following information is submitted. That aircraft was assigned to the E.N. White crew in early March 1944. It was named by the pilot after his wife, Audrey. It was a brand new B-17 G, and as I remember, it was one of the first B-17's to have "power assist" for the elevators. Our crew flew at least two or three or possibly five missions in other aircraft before this one was assigned to us. A list of the crew, to the best of my recollection, is as follows: (Some of the spelling will be incorrect inasmuch as I have never been able to find any of my crew members in the roster of the members of the Memorial Association)

Lt. E.N. White - Pilot, Lt. Frank B. Crawford, Co-Pilot, Lt. _____ (nickname - Magellan - from Pennsylvania) - navigator, Lt. Terry _____ (Bombadier - first bombardier, Lt. Weaver, was wounded in hand by ricocheting 50 cal. over North Sea when gunners test-fired guns), Staff Sgt. Schrimmer (sp.). Crew-chief and top turret gunner, Sgt. Hamiln - Ball turret gunner, Sgt. Moody - Radio operator (he quit after five missions and refused to fly anymore. Don't remember his replacement.), Sgt. "Stardust" Gantz - right waist gunner, Sgt. Berry - left waist gunner, Sgt. Guido - tail gunner, Sgt. John _____ - Ground crew chief - he kept us going I think we had one abort.

Lt. White was promoted to Captain, and became squadron leader before he finished his missions. On his way home with him very good friend, Capt. Spencer, I believe the 548th squadron, the airplane crashed and both were killed. This tragic event spawned a book entitled "The Letter" written by Fred Ihlenberg. After reading that book, he and I have had a very pleasant and continuing correspondence. (Incidentally, if you haven't read it, you should secure a copy and do so. It is very good. You will probably have to secure it from Fred).

At any rate, our crew finished all of its mission in 008. After the pilot finished his missions, I was promoted to First Lieutenant and finished my last five missions as first pilot on the aircraft.

Following the completion of my missions, 008 Bostow T Tear was assigned to another crew, the name of which escapes me, although I have met the pilot at the 1985 Los Angeles meeting. At the present, his name escapes me and I hope he will write further about the ultimate fate of Lil' Audrey.

We had many close calls in 008 and came back a number of times with one engine out and alot of flak holes. The ball turret suffered a scalp laceration as a result of flak.

I was a good airplane and served us well, and we, as a crew, never wanted to fly any other airplane but Lil Audrey when we made our missions.

I hope that the crew that was subsequently assigned to the aircraft will continue this letter and describe the ultimate fate of this aircraft. I heard through the grapevine that it was sent to the Smithsonian Institute, but I am not sure that this is true.

Sincerely yours,

Frank B. Crawford, Jr., M.D.
Broadway Professional Bldg.
2421 Broadway, Paducah, Kentucky 42001

P.S. In the January 1988 issue of our newsletter is a piece about Lil' Audrey by John DeBerg, the ground crew chief. The date of the article was not given. However, he states that Lt. Peterson was the current pilot and he and his crew must have been assigned to the 008 Bostow T Tear after we finished our missions on or about June 7-8, 1944. I wrote a letter to John DeBerg but received no answer. (Utilizing the address in the current roster.) I would like to exchange photographs with his before mine get browner and browner. If he reads this, I hope he will write me. I remember he was from North Dakota or Idaho, and was a tractor mechanic before entry into service. John — if you are out there, write me please.

Dear Ed,

In the Hardlife Herald on Page 17 of the June issue, they speak of a picture taken of a John Richey, pointing to swastikas painted on the side of a B-17 named Ohio Air Force.

I certainly would like a copy of this picture as my crew and I were the last to fly her, as we were shot down on March 16, 1944. The target was Augsburg. Lt. Krause was the pilot, I was the engineer.

To this day, I could not remember the name of this B-17. I have some old records sent to me many years ago, and the tail numbers matched. I had talked with the previous engineer, and he told me that a burst of flak had turned them completely over (on a barrel roll) ammunition and men flew every where.

I hope some one out there remembers this famous airplane with the 14 swastikas.

Ronald C. Hanauer
1821 W. Lake, Peoria, Illinois 61614

Dear Ed,

Thanks so much for the Newsletters from the 385th B.G. I really enjoy reading them.

I was the Top T.T.G. Turret on the crew with Oscar Heintz as Captain. I flew my first mission 30 Oct. 44 and the last 31 Mar. 45. Our longest mission was to Swinemerndo, 9 hrs. 50 min.

Letters to the Editor con't.

In the June Newsletter about the crew of planes, I don't remember all of the planes we flew in but I think "Shark & Lady" was one of them. If I remember correctly, she was flown back to the states and salvaged with others in Lubbock, Texas. Karl Stubenazy has a note in one Newsletter about flying the "Wandering Duchess". I remember that plane too. Capt. Amberson, the line officer for 548th was transferred to Lubbock about the same time I was.

I have watched the Legion magazine for several years about a reunion for the 385th B.G. Our crew decided to meet at the Dayton Reunion but my wife and I were unable to make it because of other commitments. But we're looking forward to it this year. Thanks for newsletters & making camping reservations. See you.

Best regards.

H.L. Twyman
Triplett, MO 65286



Oscar- Pilot, Bud - Co-pilot, Fred - Navigator, Red - Ball Turret, Twy - T.T.G Turret, Bernie - Radio Operator, Stub. - Ball Turret, Tony - WG, De! - WG and White - TG.

Dear Mr. Hruska,

I come to you with hopes you will help Ian McLachlan and me on the book we are preparing for publication.

I am seeking addresses of the following crew members who were aboard B17G-42031764 that caught fire and exploded in mid-air after crew bailed out safely. Unfortunately the pilot did not survive. This incident happened on 11 November 1944.

The crew composed of the following;

Abdella, Francis, J., Cunningham, Carl L., Pahten, Lloyd C., Patejko, Steven J., Ruben, Robert S., Slaton, Carl R., Stumberg, Henry E., Tachaberry, Wayne S.

I am also seeking names and addresses of the crew aboard B17G-42-39912 that crash landed in the woods one mile east of Woodbridge on 15 July 1944.

Anything you can do will be greatly appreciated.

Yours truly,

Russell J. Zorn
1561 Meadow Dr., Alden, NY 14004

Francis A. Abdella
P.O. Box 193
Chauncey, OH 45719-0193

Dear Ed,

First I want to thank you for informing Tom Hellman of my request for a picture of "Ohio Air Force", the B-17 that had all the swastikas painted on it's nose.

I received a very nice letter and picture from him. Sorry to say, it wasn't the picture I was looking for. Maybe some one out there has a picture of the famous bomber.

I wrote a letter to Tom Hellman explaining the demise of his and Richey's famous war horse. In my letter to you, I believe I gave you the details of the mission, if not let me know and I will give you the story of our experience of going down and becoming prisoners of war.

Thanks again.

Sincerely,

Ronald C. Hanover

Dear Ed,

Thank you for the packet of "Hard Life Heralds" and the other information. The reading sure stirred memories. Our crew-8021 -finished our "30" on the very last strategic bombing mission of WWII and were quickly sent home. All survived.

A letter on page seven of February 1989 issue from Homer Groening wanted to compete with someone for the fastest finish to missions. My diary states #1 as Heilbron 1/20/45 and Roudice 4/17/45. A quick count says 82 days...one every 2.7 days. But the last month we flew 13 at a rate of 2.3. All it got me was a loss of 25 pounds and a case of flight fatigue.

Enclosed is a picture of our crew. Front row l-r...Claude Jenkins, waist; Walter Yates, top; Millard Roberts, tail; Charles McElroy, radio; Wilber Garr, nose; top row...George Molstad, ball; Edward Wilson, Nav.; Frank Gibbons, pilot; Charles Page, co-pilot.



We were late getting into combat. I think a couple other members of the crew, along with myself, were part of the "shaftee" 40,000 cancelled out of cadets for the convenience of the Gov't, who got delayed in gunnery school. To top off that, on Gibs first mission (without us) he followed another plane (in the dark) into some sort of crane and chewed off a wing tip. He flew all his missions as a 2nd LT., as did Charlie and Ed, and the crew flew as bucks. Finally got our rates after finishing up. I guess we paid for the wing.

The biggest surprise of all the issues was the picture of Don Williams crew in the February 89 issue. He didn't have any contact with his crew either. I really didn't expect to see any familiar faces since none of my crew are members but there was John "Muzzleblast" Hirschler in the front row with Darrel Clark and the name John Paybody. Hirschler was a good buddy. Our crew lived in a pyramidal across the boardwalk from their barracks. If John wasn't due to fly on a particular mission, he made it a point to get up early to convince me to leave my box of candy with him because he knew 'you're not commin back'...I did the same for him. He tagged me "Boltstud". What a bunch of kids we were.



The second picture is of our "adopted" crew member. I do not recall his name but he had been shot (thru the ankles, I think)...his crew scattered...and he had several missions to finish. He flew several with us.

Most likely the most unforgettable person I met in the ETO had to be a fellow named Kenneth E. Smith and most every one else there at the time should remember him too. He played guitar and sang for every occasion going. I don't remember his MOS but he could play and sing for hours without repeating a song and he had a voice somewhere between Frank Sinatra and Vic Damone. He kept America, girl friends, parties, and all the good things alive for me. I hope he's still singing.

All the pictures of nose paintings were great. I think we may have flown in Lil Audrey...and some others too but we didn't really have our own plane. We named the plane we flew most "The Patch" for our Lucky Bastard cards. And speaking of nose painting, there was a painter who lived in Hirschlers barracks. I don't know now if he had painted noses or not but I used to watch him paint and wish I could do it too. He was probably an inspiration because after discharge I went to commercial art school in Los Angeles and have been doing advertising design, illustration and fine art for lo these 44 years. Retired now in the Black Hills of South Dakota.....I paint.

Ed, it's great to know there is someone caring enough about those years to keep the ball rolling the way you are doing.

I will be joining and writing to John Pettenger in hopes to find a copy of the Group History. Any help I could get would be appreciated. Enclosed also will be a check for the Reunion book.

Thanks much,

George Molstad
3901 Doral Dr., Rapid City, SD 57702

Dear Ed:

Hope the reunion in Fargo was a huge success.'Since last contacting you I have been happy to have been in contact with Walt Shulte and 'Doc' Livingston, plus 'Whitey' Wallace and Bruce Ey of the old 385/549 Lt. Kaplan's crew. They had a mini reunion at Kansas City, MO around Memorial Day along with wives. Statia and I couldn't attend there either due to moving into new home and arthritis problem.

Won't bore you any further but since the April, '89 edition, I found a gentleman waiting for me at a shopping center lot who had a brother in the 8th AF (he had noticed the license plate), plus three young men (two of whom collected photos, etc...books...of WWII airplanes)...who had relatives in the service in WWII (they had noticed the license plate, etc.)

Still hot here. Today was the 133 or 132 day this year so far with temperature over 100. Even the cactus are looking for shade.

Keep well. Kindest regards.

Sincerely,

Ed Conrow
13541 Whitewood Drive, Sun City West, AZ 85375



- William M. Shephard — Aug. 1987
- Samuel D. St. Clair — Aug. 1989
- George Purkiss — Oct. 1989

George was stricken with a circulatory problem while on vacation in October and died of heart failure a few hours after surgery.



George and Gladys Purkiss Aug. 1989 at Fargo, ND.

385 BGM A

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