



## 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. XV NO. 6

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### SUPPORT UNITS

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## DECEMBER 1997

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## PRESIDENT'S REPORT

The 385th's reunion at Tuscon was a huge success. Ken Laffoon and Ed Stern hosted the meeting with help from Sam Lyke and George Hruska. Bob Valliere's conduct of the meeting was presidential and our Chaplain Jim Vance's conduct of the memorial service left not a dry eye in the house. A more complete report appears elsewhere in this issue.

I wish to cover 2 points:

### 1. 385th Bombardment Group Monument

There was an overwhelming sentiment for the erection of an appropriate monument at the Eighth Air Force Heritage Museum in Savannah. One which we can be proud. Fifteen thousand dollars was budgeted for this purpose. Bob Valliere will chair the committee to oversee the design and construction of the monument. We hope the project can be completed in a year and a half or less. We must move promptly if we are to secure a desirable site.

The monument financing is to be accomplished by requesting contributions of \$50 from each of our members. It is recognized that some of us cannot afford that amount. Any contribution will be gratefully accepted or acknowledged. Sixteen contributions were made at the reunion alone, totaling \$850. One of the contributions was for \$100 and another member promised to send \$1,000 as soon as he returned home. Roger Feller, at our meeting from Luxembourg,

**Continued on Page 2**

### CHAPLAIN

Rev. James H. Vance  
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1077 SW 46th  
Miami, FL 33165  
305-221-3592

### HONORARY MEMBERS

M/Sgt John McKay, Jr. USAF  
LTC Raymond B. Tucker

### PAST PRESIDENTS \*DECEASED

Ruel G. Weikert  
\*Frank B. Walls  
Vincent W. Masters  
\*John C. Ford  
\*James E. Emmons  
\*Paul Schulz  
Forrest V. Poore  
William A. Nicholls  
\*Earl L. Cole  
Sam Lyke  
Sid Colthorpe  
Robert C. Smith

**Continued from President's report**

contributed \$50 and promised to secure more money from his countrymen. The support and enthusiasm for the project has been overwhelming. Please send your contributions to our new treasurer, Verne D. J. Philips PO Drawer 5970, Austin TX 78763

who will place the monies in a separate monument account.

**2. 1999 385th Reunion**

The sense of the meeting was that our next reunion, either in the Spring or the Fall of 1999, should be in the Savannah/Charleston area at which time we can unveil and Rev. Jim Vance can consecrate our monument. There being no host in that area, the membership authorized the engagement of a professional to assist in the arrangements for that meeting.

Mike Gallagher

***Chaplain Sez***

Hello and Blessings on you,

In the October 1997 issue of the "Hardlife Herald" on page 12 there was a letter and picture from "Hy" Siederer. He told of our 548th mini reunion at Dayton and the wonderful time we all had. But I had an experience while there that I want to relate to you.

Martin Bridges, who was one of our Crew Chiefs in the 548th, related some experiences he has had. He had a heart attack some years ago. David Beam, who was visiting him at the time, saved his life with CPR and calling 911. Martin then had a heart valve replaced. He has had sugar diabetes for several years which has caused him and his wife Hazel, to make many changes in their lives. The diabetes became so severe the Doctors had to remove his right leg below the knee. He now has a prosthesis which I doubt if he will ever really get used to.

In relating this to me Martin, (Moe as we have always called him), asked me to tell you about it with this emphasis. None of us can know what might happen to us. But with our Faith in the Supreme Architect of the Universe and taking one day at a time we can carry on and enjoy living.

Moe and Hazel along with the other couples that were at the Dayton, Ohio mini reunion this year joined in prayer for all of you, asking God to give you all Faith to face each day as it comes.

This "taking one day at a time" is not new but coming from Moe and him asking to pass it on in the "Chaplain Jim Says" in the Hardlife Herald, struck a pastoral cord for me. And I trust it might help you in some way.

Have a fruitful year and may your Faith grow,  
Sincerely in His Service,

Jim

**REUNION NOTES**

by co-host Ed Stern

The 16th Biennial Reunion held in Tucson, November 14-18 was another success with over 400 registered for the 4 days of reminiscing, action, eating, and occasionally drinking (down noticeable as we get more "MATURE").

The Doubletree Hotel proved to be a first-class location for all of our functions. The lobby was large enough for full-scale visiting, the rooms were very comfortable, the service and personnel most helpful.

A goodly number of registrants came in on the 13th for a head-start (even before the hospitality rooms were open). 14 golfers started the official program Friday morning but no one claimed "victory" and we assume that scores were higher than usual. Friday night's Hoe-Down featured great food, great visiting, and cooler than normal temps for Tucson, sweaters were definitely the gear of choice unless your wife had to wear her fur jacket when leaving home (mine did).

Saturday and Sunday offered a choice of 3 trips, one to Pima Air Museum and its more than 200 planes of every vintage, plus the 390th Hangar with a history that paralleled our own almost 100%. Host Ken Laffoon had arranged with Art Schaeffer to have a Square G tail for the occasion. A lot of our out-of-shape members had to struggle a little to get in the B-17 for a moment of nostalgic reminiscing.

The Sabino Canyon Tram ride with its almost 4 miles of breath-taking scenery, and the Desert Museum with its 1400 Desert plants and animals in a world class environment completed our visits.

The ladies breakfast on Monday morning featured our author Truman Smith talking about "The Wrong Stuff". "Nuff said. Our business meeting and Squadron meetings were too short, as usual, but lots was covered. See our President's Report for the major items, and we'll add some of the minor topics in our Bulletin Board.

The evening banquet, attended by 416 members and guests, was entertained by the Tucson Barber Shop Chorus, after a fascinating Slide show by Ian McLachlan that brought back those tough combat years that we remember so well. The Chorus, plus 3 Barber Shop quartets, gave an hour of enjoyment, which included "I've Got Six-Pence" as a special feature developed for our group.

Tuesday Morning's Memorial Service, arranged by Chaplain Jim Vance, honored the 82 members who died since our last reunion, 18 members who attended the Reunion and who were POW's for up to 19 months were honored with a standing ovation. We'll use our usual Bulletin Board to cover various other items from the Reunion.

# BULLETIN BOARD

## TUCSON TRIVIA

Past President's Ruel Weikert and Vince Masters were unable to attend, but sent their greetings, as did Fran Bennett, wife of Bob, who had looked forward to attending but passed away. Winnie Walls, whose Frank had been one of the founders of our Association along with Ruel and Vince, did make it and was welcomed by all.

Sam and Mary Lyke did an outstanding job (and a job it was) in handling reservations and helping at the Reunion. Jerry Donnelly did his usual good work at the raffle table, raising over \$500 with the 3 pictures and book that were offered. Sorry—we didn't get a list of the winners

Every registrant received a cute little pot planted with cactus and decorated with Southwest art along with our Group's name.

Roger Feller from Luxembourg gave a stirring invitation to visit for the memorial service as they dedicated a Monument memorializing our two crews that perished during a mid-air collision over Perle. The date—June 19-20-211998.

Bob Silver told of the wonderful memories he found when he revisited Holland and was wined and dined by the people who remembered our food-drop missions on May 1945.

Past President Bob Smith reported that our Schweinfurt picture will be hung permanently at Offut in Omaha, and reprints will be sold there, with proceeds coming to us.

Officers were elected as follows: (there were no nominations from the floor)

President	Mike Gallagher
1st Vice President	Bob Valliere
2nd Vice President	Tom Newton
Secretary	George Hruska
Treasurer	Verne Philips

Pictures of the Tucson Reunion will be printed in the next issue. Send them in.

Our British visitors, Stephen Miles and Ian McLachlan and families added a lot to our gathering, as did Roger Feller from Luxembourg.

Merry  
**CHRISTMAS**

From:

Ed and Jane Stern  
Interstate Printing Jan, Wanda and Bernie

### Miscellaneous Business Items:

Future LifeMembership income will be kept in our treasury.

Dues were raised to \$15 per year (please send your 1998 dues to the new treasurer Verne Philips, address on front page)

Approved \$500 contributions to Sally B at Duxford and \$500 to Heritage Museum at Savannah

Special weather bulletin from Fargo. 10" less snow on the ground this year when we returned from Tucson than on the same day last year.

Raines Video Productions video taped the Reunion. They'll be available for \$29.95 and you will hear from them soon.

Our Bus transportation was able to furnish handicapped Van for both days of visits to the Tucson attractions.

What will we do next time we meet in Tucson? How about the attractions we missed. Biosphere2, Colossal Cave, Titan Missile Museum, Kitt Peak Observatory, Mission San Xavier, Tombstone, Nogales, Mexico, Tibac, Chiricahua Nat'l Park, Historic Downtown Tucson Barrio, Sierra Vista-Ft. Huachuca, Tucson Greyhound Park, University of Arizona & Historical Museum, Mt. Lemmon, Old Tucson, & 8 great Golf Courses.

Interstate Printing of Fargo, our publisher sent note pads with our insigna to each of us attending the Reunion. If you didn't get yours, someone else got 2!

Mrs. Art Schaeffer donated a beautiful print of one her paintings which she donated for the Raffle. And Milton Shalinsky won the painting.

### 1998 Dues

We approved a dues raise to \$15 per year at Tucson. 1998 dues are now due—please send yours to Vcrn.

Life Membership od \$100.00 are still welcome (if you're that optimistic). Future Life Membership money will go into our treasury rather than to our Great Ashfield Church.

***\$15,000 Memorial Approved for  
8th Air Force Heritage Museum***

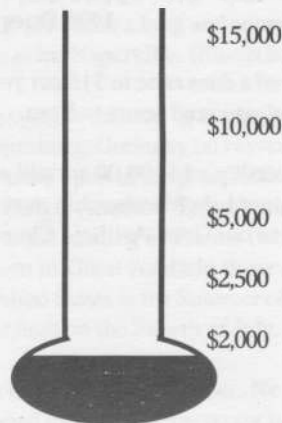
By a unanimous vote at Tucson, we approved a fund to build a significant monument memorializing our 385th Bomb Group. Past President Bob Valliere heads a committee to submit the design to the Executive Committee for approval. Funds have started to roll in, with over \$1850 in as this is written.

Discussion pointed out that 300 contributions of \$50 would bring in the needed funds. More would increase the size and impressiveness of our Memorial.

Send your contribution to Treasurer, Vem Phillips 7313 Mesa Drive, Austin, Texas 78731-2105.

**Contributions to date:**

Stanley Dentinger	\$100.00
Fred H. Nestler	50.00
Willard Hagman	50.00
John H. Stansfield	50.00
Burton Gelbman	50.00
Wayne Ziegler	50.00
Frank Moll	50.00
Don Klosterman	50.00
Martin C. Girson	50.00
Clifford Lybeck	50.00
Jeffrey L. Anderson	50.00
Henry I. Jones, Jr.	50.00
Ernest G. Baumann	50.00
John W. Mathews	50.00
Roger Felland, Luxembourg	50.00
Michael R. Gallagher	50.00
Richard D. Ryan	100.00
	<hr/>
	\$950.00
Jim Albright (THANKS!)	\$1000.00
	<hr/>
	\$1950.00



***385th BGMAS Memorial and Museum***

WHERE: In Perle Luxembourg the only Bomb Group Memorial and Museum on The Continent of Europe.

COST: Absolutely nothing.

NEEDED: The Museum will be as big and impressive as the Memorabilia sent to the Museum by the 385th BGMA members. The Memorial and Museum will be finished by June next year. The Memorial will be in Memory of the McDonald and White crews 18 who died near Perle on July 12, 1944.

COMMENT: Let's face it most of the items we have kept from WWII will be deep sixed when we are gone. The folks in Perle have the building for the Museum all is needed are items to fill it.

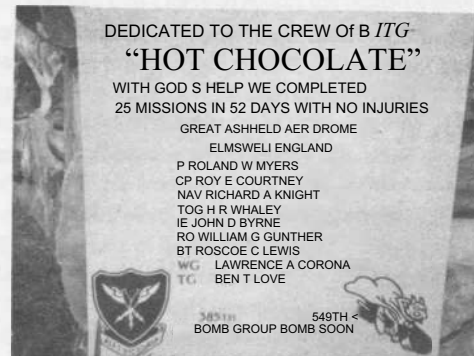
PLEASE SEND TO:

Roger Feller  
22 Rue de L'Ermitage  
L 8833 Wolwelage Luxembourg

On behalf of the people of Perle, many thanks John F. Pettenger

**EDITOR'S NOTE: We are sending Roger the books and VCRs we have in our file-about 20 in all. Hope they will be seen by lots of visitors to Perle.**

This is where our next Reunion will be.



**EDITOR'S NOTE: We didn't know of this "Reunion" - did any of you hear about it?**



ADVANCE TICKETS ONLY

## Hangar Dance

For Sth Air Force Veterans

2 August From 7.00pm until 10.00pm In Hangar 711

Re-litx WWII For An Evening With 1940's Entertainment Featuring  
The United States Air Forces In Europe Band  
"The Ambassadors"

Cash Bar & Hors d'oeuvres

For Information: Capt Matt Fomer 01638-54-2053 /  
Hq 3AF/DOI  
RAF Mildenhall, Suffolk IP28 8NS

Ticket Price: £10 or \$ 16

Dress : 1940s Dress or Lounge Suit/Summer Dress



August 20, 1997

Dear Ed and Jane,

Enclosed is a special story for the H-L-H.

Peggy and I were invited to a dance, what's special about that, this was held in hangar 711 at R.A.F Mildenhall where the U.S. Airforce is based.

This was held for the 8th Air Force Veterans, Relive world War II for an Evening with 1940's entertainment with the U States Air Force in Europe Band. "The Ambassadors" Dress 1940s or lounge suit, or summer dress.

When we booked our tickets we asked if there would be any Veterans there, as in our case this would be an extra treat for us. Yes there were some Vets from the 8th, but not what we expected there was five bus loads of guys and dolls of various groups and as they alighted from the buses they formed up ready to go into the hangar and lo and behold a Scottish Piper led them into the hangar, as everyone cheered and allowed these Veterans, special tables were laid out for them nearest the band, the commanding officer of the base spoke to and about them for about 10 minutes, but unfortunately I couldn't hear what was said, the dance continued and during this a Mustang flew over just missing the hangar roof, the music stopped again while the folks waved to the pilot and he waved back and off he went.

The music started up once again and during this one hellofa noise happened and once again the music stopped and the guests of the evening stood outside the doors, the British owned B17 "Sally B" had flown in from Duxford to be with these Vets who had been close to other B17s way back.

It was a very nostalgic evening and no one was ashamed of the tears the Vets were shedding.

Yes there were 8th Veterans there that evening and yes it made our evening EXCEPT we saw no one who we knew from the 385th or any other groups we had met before.

We made ourselves known to the Col. of the fighter sqdn. from the RAF Lakenheath and after standing talking to him and his lady, from what Peggy and I had to say about the war years and the Yanks and their Flying Fortress, we surprised him when Peggy said on the morning of the raid there would be hundreds of B17s circling around before heading for the continent, REALLY said the Col. We will have to have a get together with you folks, but when that will be we don't know, we would like to see it happen if and when it does maybe we will have another story to tell.

In telling the Col. we had met up with quite a lot of Vets, he said well if you ever have a few come over, call me and we will put on a get together for them and you.

Most other groups are organized by TAMARAC TRAVEL of FLORIDA the Boss being Richard DeDamato we have met him more times that any Vet he was at Mildenhall at the dance, he has said on various occasions he is the best, 447th Rattlesden are talking about having a different trip next time, and visiting other places as well as their base.

Was the 385th advised about this dance at Mildenhall, its rather odd that a special invitation was sent to us in handwriting Les and Peggy Gordon 39 Combs Lane, Stowmarket, including our zip code we still think someone that met up with us before wrote to us, but the mystery is who, maybe we will find out one day. It was such an exciting evening for us we forgot to have our HORS DOEUVRES, (possibly the Col.) we keep them on ice for the next time. Meanwhile our very best wishes to you both and maybe we will meet up again one day or just pop in for a slice of turkey.

Love,

Les and Peggy Gordon

We have written to JAN LOFTIS ref, your last page of June HLH in case nothing comes of it from State Side, we have told the person (man or woman) we will help in any way we can, up to that person coming over here for first hand knowledge including trip to Great Ashfield etc. We have told them to contact either you - Bob - or John to verify who we are before coming over. But we do hope to help.



27th August 1997

John C. Chatel  
3 Rue C. Dugusclin  
14450 Grandcamp-Maisy  
France

Dear Mr. Chatel,

John Pettenger of the 385th BG forwarded a letter you wrote to him some time ago about the loss of a 385th ship, 42-31762, "Crash Wagon III" on the 12th June, 1944, and I'm hoping we may be able to help one another. I'm the UK contact for the 385th and have a special interest in the group resulting from the discovery of the wreckage of one of their B-17's when I was a youngster in 1964. This story was told in my first book, "Final Flights" and since then, I've written several others including, "Eighth Air force Bomber Stories" and I'm hoping to feature the loss of, "Crash Wagon III" in a second volume.

I've been in touch with pilot, Loren Jackson, and he's been a tremendous help in giving information about events that day. I assume you have the Missing Aircrew Combat Report but Loren adds a bit more information in relating that they lost an engine some 60 miles north of Paris, feathered it but then lost another which caught fire and promoted him to ring the bail out alarm. He was captured and describes a fascinating encounter with General Gerhart Graf von Scherlin - this is used recently published history of the 385th and I have a copy I can send if you wish. Other of his crew were less fortunate, Gerald W Shaffer's chute failed to open and Frederick Martini and Sam Pennell ended up in Buchenwald Concentration Camp. Sadly, both men are now deceased but I enclosed a brief account passed on to Loren by Sam Pennell's widow. I also know that William Powell of the 385th ended up in a Concentration Camp and my intention is to relate as much as I can about what happened to them in the next volume of, "Eighth Air Force Bomber Stories" so I would be grateful for any help you can give me about what happened to other members of this crew who were the French People who helped? How and where they were captured, who betrayed them? I'd like my book to recognize the courage of those who risked their lives to help and hope your research will have answered some of the questions surround this crew.

I will copy this and your letter to Hardlife Herald on the hope that someone may have pictures of, "Crash Wagon III" or members of its crew that they can send is to get copied. I wish you well with your research and look forward to hearing from you.

Your Sincerely,  
Ian

---

John C. Chatel

8th AF Asso. #30104  
Dear Sir,

In order to complete my sadly files on US downed airplanes

during the war in my area (Roueu), I need the following information.

1. Tail Number of the A/C? 231762 Crash Wagon III
2. If crew survived the craft?

Here is what I have in hand.

8th AF - 385th BG. 5ELBS. Date June 12, 1944. Target Montdidier, time 0906. Position 49 degree 21'N - 01 degree 30'E. Belly landed in Rouen area at about 8 kris east from Les Andelys.

All was last seen with engines smoking, most probably hit by flak. Plane was a B17G with the following crew.

Pilot Loren N. Jackson	Co-Pilot Ross W. Blake
Nav. Gerald W. Shaffer	Bom. Joseph H. Haught
AG Armando Arsili	AG Ervin A. Pickerel
AG Felipe E. Aubquis	AG Theodore G. Dubsnic
AG Sam A. Pennel	AG Frederick Martini

Hoping that you could help me with those two questions.

Thanking you in advance.

Yours Sincerely,  
John C. Chatel

---

Dear Ed,

I've just had copied some pictures I borrowed off James Bond when he was over here last year and thought they might bring back some memories, unfortunately, the originals have marks on which it's been impossible to eliminate without air-brushing but I'm sure they'll be of interest just the same.



VE Day - can anyone remember the celebrations that night? It looks like quite a party.



A view over the base - where was it taken from? It looks like a late-war picture because it's so tidy and summer because it's dry, warm and the hay or grass has been harvested. I'd appreciate more base scenes if anyone else has any they can send.



Flak erupts amidst a 385th formation, the B-17 bottom left is coded "O" or "Q" but I can't make out the serial number.



Bomb's away!

I'll send the originals back - I'll be bringing my copy camera to Tuscon and some of the pictures I've already got but, be warned, I'm after more.

Best Wishes,

Ian



Anne Gordon and Bill Adams

Dear Bill,

Just to let you know that the 385th ran the picture of your work in their newsletter and I enclose a copy for you.

Thanks for the picture of you with Anne Gordon. She's certainly famous in 385th history for the magnificent nose-arts she created for the Group although having a B-17 entitled "Haybag Annie" in your honour seems a somewhat back-handed compliment but I think it was done with great affection. Sadly, "Haybag Annie" came to grief at Valley in Wales when the group were on the way home and I recently met one of the crew, Keith Stokes, who's promised to send me a picture of the B-17 on her belly in the mire. There is a nose-art photograph in recently published 385th history in case you're interested.

Best wishes,  
Ian

Dear Ed,

Am overwhelmed with mail at the moment, much of it 385th, and am struggling to cope, I thought I'd share with you a letter from Richard Molzhan who I had the pleasure of meeting during the 385th's return to England last year. He was very modest about his achievements as so many Veterans are and admitted to having forgotten much of what had gone on in those distant days. However, he had kept a diary and sent me a copy for which I've lifted a few quotes. These few brief lines can conjure into my much flak-filled skies; the glint of sunlight reflecting from the wings of incoming enemy aircraft but, in my mind, it is only imagination, an author's view from the comfortable armchair of history. For Richard, as with so many of you, it isn't simply imagination but memory of some uncomfortable realities through which you lived. For that you have any admiration and respect.

Best wishes,  
Ian

Dear Ian,

Your letter of July 30 has been received and I too wish we could have spent more time together. Maybe next time in Tuscon.

As stated before I still remember nothing about my war time experiences at Great Ashfield that would interest anyone.

So how do I know I was there? Despite all rules and regulations I kept a little notebook that listed my 31 mission with a few pertinent facts I considered important at the time. Two years ago my daughter had copies made for my grandkids. Since I still have a copy I am forwarding it to you to do with whatever you like. Maybe it is of value to your research.

I do not know how or why I got a DFC, Airmedal with 5 Oak Leaf cluster, a couple of Battle Stars but they reside in a bureau drawer along with a piece of German flak that went through my legs.

Enough of 50 years ago. How about something in the future?

I was always proud of my wings and they too have languished in the bureau drawer. They have been freed and will be given to Gayle Hodges when she goes up in the space shuttle in 98 and if all goes as projected they will spend sometime in the MIR.

Mary and I are going to be in Tuscon. We hope to see you and Sue there. If not there is always next time.

Best regards  
Richard E. Molzhan

Dear Ian,

Thank you for the return of the pictures that I let you have at the reunion last year.

After returning home and before Christmas I sent you a copy of my diary that I kept while flying missions in England and also sent gifts to all of my English friends. I never heard from any of them and now I wonder if none of you received this mail - let me know if you did not receive the diary and I will have another copy made and give it to you in Tuscon.

I am enclosing notes that Ronald Webster made about the March 18 '45 raid on Berlin which is the one that Hatfield was wounded on. He was our radio operator and only flew 4 mission. He was wounded on his third mission #261 to Dresden and after returning to flying status was wounded again on #271 to Berlin. We never found out if he lost his leg or not. He was returned to the USA after his March 18 '45 Berlin wound. I have showed the photo of Ron Webster and my helping to get Hatfield off of the plane to some other crew members and they say that it is not Webster and me. I really do not remember getting back on the ground.

I am also sending you the addresses of the other crew members of

Sherry's crew so you can contact them about recollection of our time in England.

Sincerely,  
James Bond

This is all of Sherry's crew that are still alive that I have the addresses.

Pilot Col. A.B. Sherry  
450 College Dr.  
Abilene, TX 79601

Nav. William J. Moebuis  
1360 25th Ave.  
Kenosha, WI 53140

Ronald J. Webster  
1094 Tulip Lane #3  
Rockford, IL 61107

Kelly, Poteat, Points and Wagonseller are all dead and I have never been able to find Desmond and Hatfield.

**EDITOR'S NOTE:** Notes from Ray Webster sent in by Richard Molzhan.

March 18-45

Target-Berlin  
Bomb Load - 18-500LB dp  
8-500LB Incend  
Opp-Heavy  
Hours-Nine

Details:

It seems as though we can't get away from having bad luck. Today was the closest we have ever come to being prisoners of war. We got up at 3:00 this morning and had briefing at 3:45 which gave us very little time to eat chow. All of us call Berlin "Big B" which is a good name for it. We were briefed for 100 fighters and 130 flak guns. The weather wasn't too good over the target and in fact all the way in and back. We were thankful for bad weather on the way home because for a while we were by our self and was open to fighter attacks. Four P-51's picked us up later and escorted us to the channel. Well I'd better get to what happened at the target. We saw flak before we hit the target and also after we had hit it. We could see fires raging in the Berlin area and I hoped it rained enough death on them to stop this war. We had just released the bombs when all of a sudden we had a direct hit on the radio room the radio man had just gone up to see if the bombs were gone and he got hit in the left leg. He had just got off of being grounded for being wounded on the Dresden raid and now had to get wounded again. We sure feel sorry for him. We had also been hit in all four engines and had to feather No. 2. We lost our formation and started home by ourself. We were flying along allright when all of a sudden No. 1 engine exploded on the inside and we thought for



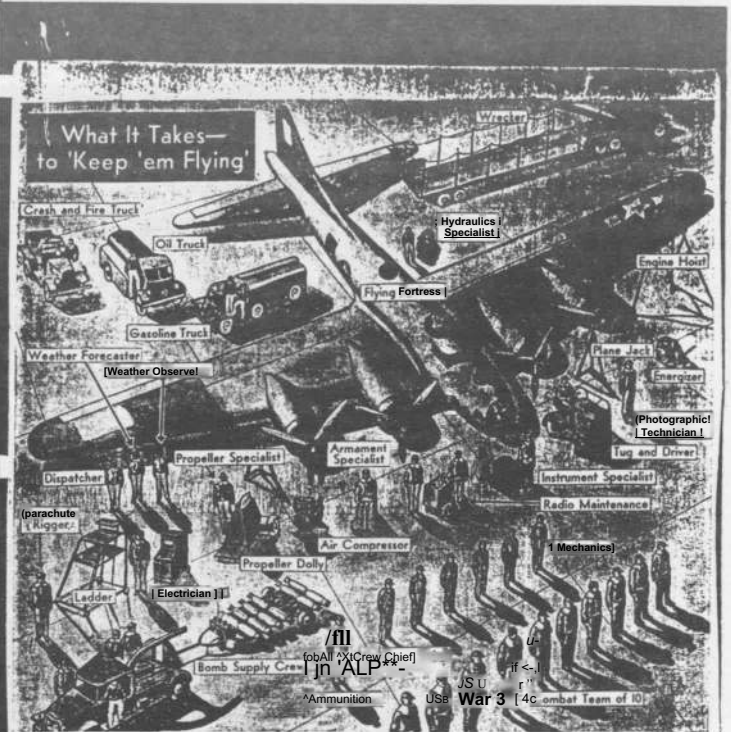
sure we were going to have to bail out. The Pilot feathered that engine real quick and told is to start throwing everything that wouldn't float out the door. We threw out everything we could get our hands on. The pilot figured we would have to ditch the plane in the middle of the channel because we figured that No. 4 engine would go any time the way it was acting up. We started to pray all the way across the channel and it sure did come in handy because the engine held up and we reached the airfield allright and they had an ambulance waiting to take Hatfield away. The big shots gave Sherry a pat on the back for bringing the plane in such a condition. Our Navigator is going to put him in for the D.F.C. tomorrow and he really deserves it. We will probably go to the rest home or get a short leave to calm our nerves. The name of the ship was "Hell's Belle's".

Dear Ed,

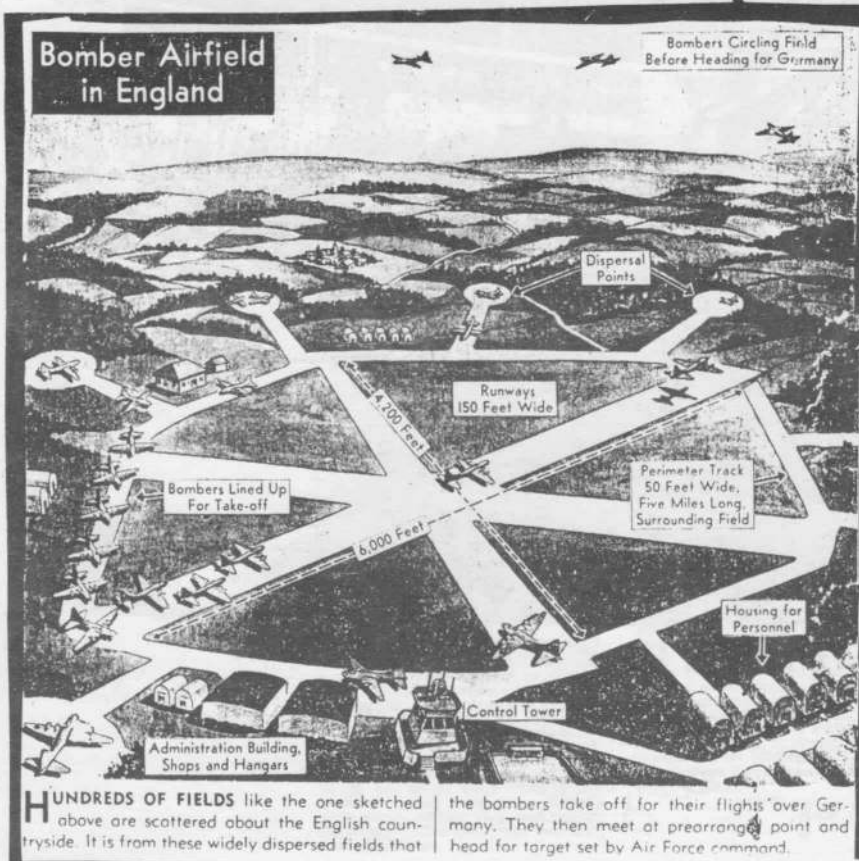
I have been assembling a Service Record Book about Charles for the boys and have these that I thought might be of some interest. If not. File 13.

That's a photo of QE that troops were brought home on - somewhere in that mess Charles was enroute. It's a wonder it didn't sink!

The airfields were from paper I had saved at sometime or others.  
Marlyn Carter

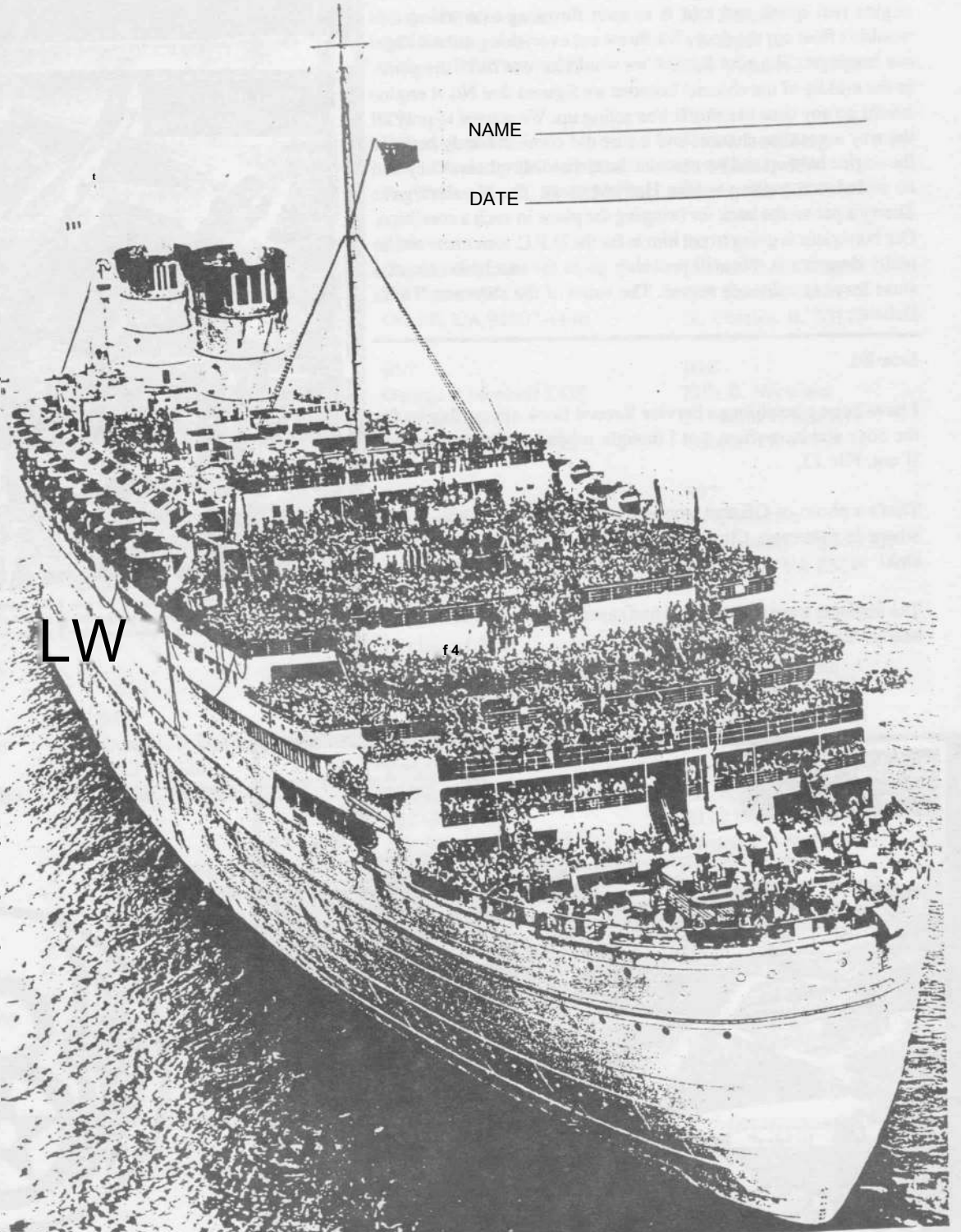


**THIS CHART** shows the vast number of men needed to get a single four-engine bomber portion of the manpower behind each of the giant planes in our growing air armada. The actual flight crew of 10 men is only a small portion of the manpower needed to service it between flights.



**HUNDREDS OF FIELDS** like the one sketched above are scattered about the English countryside. It is from these widely dispersed fields that the bombers take off for their flights over Germany. They then meet at prearranged point and head for target set by Air Force command.





NAME \_\_\_\_\_

DATE \_\_\_\_\_

LW

f4

Cunard White Star Liner 'QUEEN ELIZABETH

Pilots note: Am <sup>third deck</sup> with the cap on. <sup>'UU?r L-Ci UL-f GJeS</sup> any of you spot yourselves? <sup>7<sup>th</sup> OL</sup>

Dear Ed,

I was on this crew at the 385th Bomb Group in the 551st Bomb Squadron and have lost track of all my crew members addresses and wish to re-established contact with them again. So I'm enclosing this photo of my entire crew requesting you print same in your newsletter to see if I can hear from any of them in the near future. I started out as co-pilot and mission #14 was promoted to pilot.

We were shot down on our 29th mission. Enclosed the two sizes of pictures so you can use the one best suited.

Thanks in advance for your cooperation to this matter,  
Hector "Joe" Garza  
Major USAF "RET"  
7919 Echo Wind St.  
San Antonio, Texas 78250

**EDITOR'S NOTE: Copies of the original picture aren't clear enough to print. If we get the original picture. We'll print in the next issue.**

Dear Ed,

Last night while I was 'surfing the web' on my computer, I found a 385th Bomb Group web site. At that Web site, I found a lot of information including major awards, claims to fame, and early and subsequent history of the group. There is also information on the 548, 549, 550, & 551st Squadrons that is under construction (not yet ready for viewing). Those of your readers who have computers (with modems), who would like to visit the web site can find it at the following address:

<http://collectorsnet.com/milhist/385bg.htm>

Your Sincerely,  
Stephen Inglis  
21717 Inverness forest Blvd. #2504  
Houston, TX 77073

Dear Ed,

I received a response to my request in the August 1997 Hardlife Herald issue seeking information on current pilots who are members of the 385th Bomb Group.

The other day I received a letter from Russell Hill, 1316 Holman Street, Leavenworth, Kansas 66048, who advises that he is "still an active pilot, flight instructor and an FAA designated pilot examiner" after 46 years and some 18,000 hours in a small aircraft. He flew 13 missions with Gardinor (Buck) Rogers crew and 17 mission with the Francis McNamara crew. He and several of his crew members plan to attend the Tucson meeting. He recently sold his Bonanza for a recreational vehicle.

Ed, I do hope that there is a greater response to my request for information from the 385th Bomb Group members still active in

aviation. I'm sure there are more out there. As before, I can be reached at 45 Hopewell Trail, Chargin Falls, Ohio 44622.

It might be fun to exchange fabricated exploits more current than a half century old.

Very truly yours,  
Mike R. Gallagher

Dear Ed,

We got tired of lawn-mowing, snow shoveling, and all the other concerns of home ownership. We sold our home and on June 24th, we moved into Falcons Landing, a continuing Care Retirement Community (CCRC). It was developed and is managed by the Air force Retired Officers Community (AFROC). It is deservedly one of the top-rated CCRC's in the country with approximately 240 apartments and 80 houses, extensive recreational facilities, health center, and an excellent dining facility. We are enjoying our new life and are convinced that we made the right decision.

Our biggest problem, after 52 years of marriage, was down sizing from some 3,00 square feet to 1,300. After our son and daughter took what they wanted, we had two sales, and made some donations to the Salvation Army. At last, we're really "retired" and its a good life for us "old folks."

We won't be able to come to this year's reunion, but hope everyone has a great time, and we hope to see you all in the future.

Sincerely,  
Clem and Terry Irons  
Ourphoneis: 701-404-1749

20540 Falons Landing Cir.-4002  
Sterling, VA 20165

PS. Falcons Landing advertises frequently in "The Retired Officer" Magazine.

Dear Ed,

I appreciate your newsletter and especially the most recent one with the updated roster. I am writing to "Kelly" Melillo who was the lead BTO navigator with whom I flew several missions as deputy lead with the 551st squadron. I regret I will not be making this year's reunion at Tucson, to talk with Kelly and others who will be there. Let me know the date of the next 385th reunion.

I want to relate to the group how I felt at the briefing of my 6th mission when group navigator Paul Schultz looked at me from the 'head' and asked "Mellare-are you leading the high squadron?" At age 221 briskly replied "Yes Sir!"

I also appreciate the listing of mission. When I arrived at 385th they were short of navigators so I flew with other crews and finished 5 missions before my own crew. My final mission was on November 30, 1944, Merseburg oil refinery. And what a mission that was.

Regards to all  
Joe Mallare P.S. Major Paul Schultz was one great guy.



The "War Horse"  
B-17 "Flying Fortress"  
385th B.G. - 549th Sqdn.  
Great Ashfield, England  
D-Day, June 6, 1944



"Ball-Turret Gunner"  
Frank R. Mays  
136 Tanglewood Drive  
Madison Heights, VA 24572  
(804) 846-6438

August 29, 1997

Ed Stern  
Editor, Hardlife Herald  
P.O. Box 9466  
Fargo, ND 58106-9466

Dear Ed:

I would like to thank you and all the persons responding to your notice in the HH Bulletin Board and my letters requesting a copy of the 549th BS patch. Thanks!

I received many postcards, letters and telephone calls from some very nice people. I enjoyed the personal contacts and hopefully made some new friends as well as renewing old relationships.

Robert Silver, Miami-FLA, was the first to respond positively with a color-copy of the 549th jacket patch. Bob actually dismantled his framed patch which was an original patch. I am trying to get someone to "Silk Screen" the patch on material similar to original however the cost is estimated at several hundred dollars — still trying other sources!

Bob Douglas, Las Vegas-NV, my old First Sergeant went the extra mile and sent me a light-weight, tan, jacket with silk-screen patch of Great Ashfield on the back and two round reproduction patches on front. The jacket is snug in the waist however it will be a good reminder to cut-out some of my snacks. I am "slightly" heavier than when I flew in the ball turret but that was because there were no snacks available.

Thanks,

*Frank R. Mays*

MAYS



Mr. Ed Stern  
Hardlife Herald

AUG.12, 1997

Dear Ed:

I noted with interest Mike Gallagher's comments in the June, 1997 Hardlife Herald regarding the Nov. 30, 1944 mission to Merseburg, the first time I recall it being mentioned in our newsletter. That was my 24th mission. I was Ed McCarthy's bombardier in the 548th. My notes say our ship was leading the 385th, the low group of the wing that day. Capt. Charles Mellinger sat in our right hand seat for the mission. Our 1946 Group History lists 2 other command pilots, perhaps for the other 2 squadrons?

As I recall and noted in my mission log, we were briefed to bomb in wing formation with the wing lead killing course and the support groups, of which the 385th was one, synchronizing for rate only.

It has always been my impression that the 3rd Division bomber stream was catching unexpected high tail winds prior to the turn north at the briefed IP. The first wings and groups made the turn, although perhaps not in the best order or location, and as the later groups came along they were forced to overshoot and swing wide to avoid piling up on the preceding wings on the bomb run. I do not know what position we held in the bomber stream but we too were forced to overshoot and swing even wider, making our IP in a flak area at or near Plauen, and then proceeding over the Zeitz-Leipzig defences, making the entire lengthened run in heavy flak.

"The Mighty Eighth" by Roger Freeman mentions this mission (page 181-182) with some supplementary information and analysis that may explain the wing's less than desirable position on the bomb run. I enclose his comments.

The smokescreens at Zeitz and at Merseburg were very effective. As we proceeded farther along the bomb run, it was evident that we were too far left on course to be well centered on the Leuna complex. Perhaps the wing lead group was better positioned. Committed to the wing formation for course, the best drop point to synchronize for rate only was at the north end where we cut across the NW corner and subsequently dropped there. A run across the broad axis of the complex would have been more desirable, as Freeman points out, but this was not to be.

My notes say that the flak was "the most vicious yet", and on the bomb run it was observed that B-17s ahead of us were on fire and going down, as the flak was indeed intense and accurate. First reports said 56 bombers were lost, later cut to 40 (Freeman says 29). In the resultant confusion of smoke, flak and formation hopping, the high squadron and part of the low, reportedly dropped at Zeitz. As to this, these many years later, I cannot say.

Our crew made 3 missions to w^rseburg and the Nov.30th event was the most memorable. It was a little bit of heaven to turn off the target without having lost any of our aircraft and head back to Great Ashfield, notwithstanding the fact that some ships no doubt had wounded aboard upon return.

It has been many years now, memories are a bit dim and perhaps not completely accurate. Perhaps others have different recollections. I have often wondered if others remember that day or has it just blended into a melange of events that almost seem as though they never happened.

Best regards,

Marion E. Raper

Dear Ed,

Judy and I had long planned to be in Tucson for the reunion however as often happens to well "laid" plans, we find family obligations will prevail us from leaving Athens. We will miss being with our friends and Comrades.

Incidentally, I read with interest the saga of LuLu Belle in the HLH of August, 1997. As many of you know, Lulu Belle was my aircraft and I was the pilot with Piper as Air commander. The story by A. A. Jacobs Thumbnail Sketch was very interesting, but not the way I remember it as a participant.

We lost not only John Dewey that long afternoon and night, but three other very courageous and heroic men. One was my engineer, Eddie Sanders and two were replacement gunners. For the life of me, I can't remember their names - Perhaps someone may know who they were.

I am enclosing a copy of the Stars and Stripes about that fateful event. Guess we all have our own versions of what happened. I think Luther Daniels gets credit for saving all of us. He managed to grab the hand pump to unjeste the denghy.

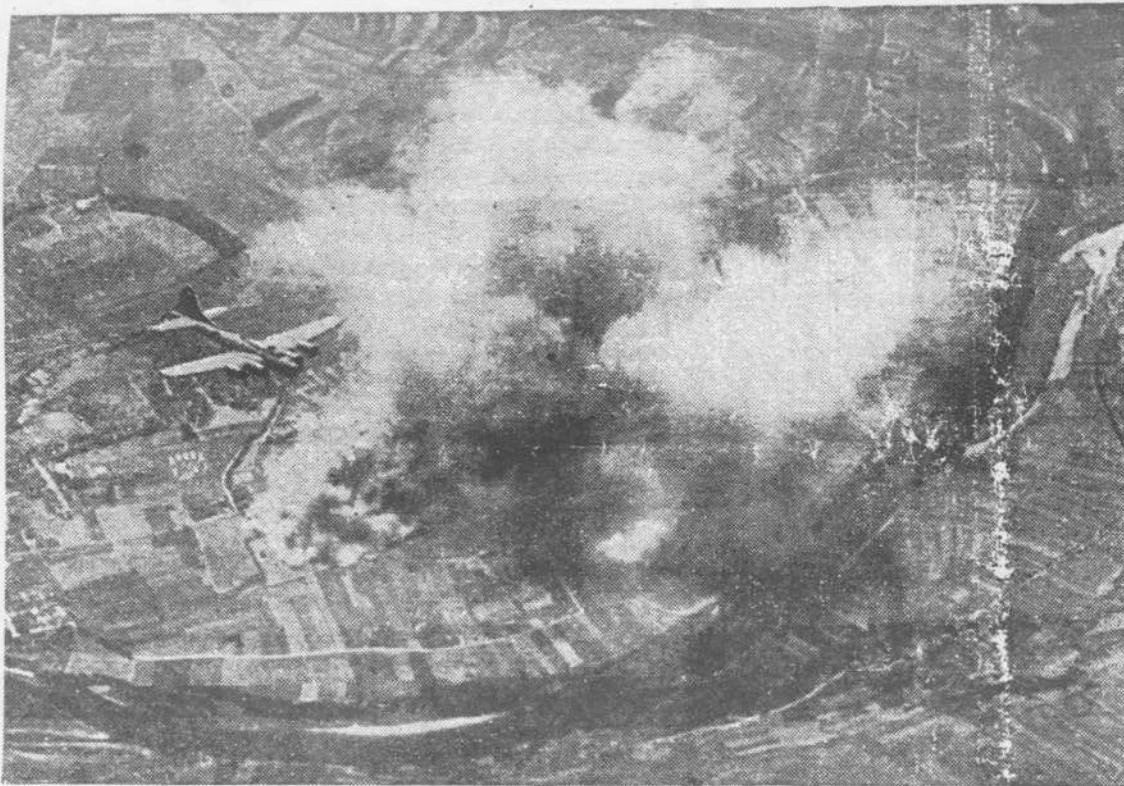
You are doing a great job with our newsletter. Keep up the good work. Take good care of yourself. We need you!

Sincerely  
Vince Masters

More pictures of the Museum in Savannah, where the next Reunion will be!



# Fire at a Bend of the Blue Danube



U.S. Army Ur Force Photo

Smoke, dust and debris blossom across the huge Messerschmitt factory at Regensburg, on the banks of the Danube, as Eighth Air Force Fortresses, their devastation done, head for the Alps and Africa on the first USAAF shuttle raid, which crippled one-third of Germany's day lighter production.

## Shuttle Fort Flew 2,800 Miles, Had To Ditch in Sight of Home

By Sgt. Norman Goldman  
Stars and Stripes Unit Correspondent

A USAAF BOMBER STATION, England, Aug. 30—T Fort Lulu Belle fought her way across Germany, attacked Regensburg and went on to Africa in the first USAAF shuttle raid. They turned her around in Africa, re-bombed her up again and started out for home. On the way back she helped blast Bordeaux.

But 30 miles from Britain, within sight of the English coastline, Lulu Belle had to ditch, and before rescue came to the men bobbing about in 30-foot swells of the Atlantic, four of Lulu Belle's crew died.

The rest of the crew is back here now, recovered from 21 hours exposure in their dinghy after the ditching, and today they told the story of the flight.

Lulu Belle led its squadron across Germany to Africa and was leading it back to England when one of its engines was knocked out by Nazi fighters above Bordeaux. They kept on going, but a storm arose and another engine went out. The crew prepared to ditch.

### Fort Goes Down in Rough Sea

The expert piloting of Maj. Preston Piper, of Santa Ana, Cal., set the Fort down in a rough sea without injury to a man. The crew scrambled out on the wing. When the only dinghy opened it was upside down and all its equipment, including the oars, floated away.

Then, before all of the crew could pile into the five-man dinghy, it was carried away from the plane by one of the 30-foot swells which were sweeping over the Fort.

When Lulu Belle began to sink, the men on the wing dove into the water and started to swim for the dinghy, now more than 100 yards away. 1/Lt. Vincent Masters, of Los Angeles, and Lt. Paul Schulz, navigator, of Detroit, held two of the men above water. Maj. Piper managed to drag 1/Sgt. Harry Jablon, radio gunner, of New York, with him to the dinghy. Then Maj. Piper went out again for others.

Two men disappeared in the 100-yard swim to the dinghy through the huge waves.

For a half hour the remaining fliers clung to hand ropes and sprawled in the almost submerged dinghy. During that

(Continued on page 4)

## Lulu Belle - -

(Continued from page 1)

time two more men disappeared into the icy waters and were not seen again.

Chilled, shocked, the crewmen one by one fell unconscious with exhaustion. When the first of them revived, they found the dinghy was drifting about, half-submerged.

They waited for help.

Finally, in the afternoon, an Air-Sea rescue plane spotted them and dropped two rafts, but the storm carried them away quickly, and they were lost.

Then came the long, miserable night. For 12 hours Lt. Schulz and Sgt. Jablon struggled with an improvised bailing system. Momentarily the raft, caught between huge breakers and swells, threatened to submerge.

The water was icy cold. The seven men, huddled together for warmth, just bailed and prayed and hoped and cursed.

At last the morning came, and the whole crowd had new hope, despite a storm which it appeared would never abate. The band of fliers had faced death before in the muzzles of Nazi machine-guns and aerial cannon. Enemy fighters hadn't ever fazed them much, but the weaving, crashing waters of the Atlantic gave them a new sinking sensation. Lt. Schulz said: "Some of us were too afraid to even hold our heads up. . . others were just too delirious and worn out to even feel fear."

Finally, towards noon, another Air-Sea rescue plane spotted them and at about 12.30 one of the RAF's small launches appeared over the horizon. Those on the dinghy who still had some strength cheered feebly. Most of them were too weak to pull themselves into the launch.

Today they all agreed on two things: That the most angelic sight imaginable is the "Air-Sea Rescue launch" of the RAF; and that not one of them will even risk a bath after this without a Mae West.

Rescued were: Maj. Piper, Santa Ana, Calif., deputy group commander; Lt. Masters, Los Angeles, Calif., pilot; Lt. Schulz, Detroit, Mich., navigator; Lt. Morgan, Crossett, Ark., co-pilot, tail gunner; 1/Sgt. Jablon, New York, radio gunner; S/Sgt. Armes, Portland, Ore., ball turret gunner, and S/Sgt. Luther M. Daniels, Luling, Tex., top turret gunner.

## ROSTER CHANGES &amp; ADDS

R97  
Mark Bloomfield  
Chimneys the Green  
Beyton Bury St. Edmunds  
Suffolk IP30-9AF England

R98  
Eliot Blass  
1200 Mountain View  
Green Valley, AZ 85614

R98  
Erving Bergman  
PO Box 209  
Ocean City, NJ 08226-0209

R95  
James Clements  
113 Peperwood Ct  
Danville, CA 94506

R99  
Rev. James N Drucker  
PO Box 2251  
Hazelton, PA 18201-0976

LM  
Dr. William E. Dickison  
PO Box 204  
Saut Ste. Marie MI 49783

R98  
Terry Devine  
2807 32nd St SW  
Fargo, ND 58103

R97  
F.W. Foltz  
4400 E Owens Space 190  
Las Vegas, NV 89110

A999  
Mrs. Connie Gromberg  
7200 NE Highland Rd  
Otis, OR 97368-9617

LM999  
John D Hite  
RD 2  
Wyalasing, PA 18853

R97  
Dominic Jordan  
5821-10 Buckingham Rd  
Ft. Myers, FL 33905

R97  
Ray Bowden  
98 W Bay Rd. Brid Port  
Dorset DT6-4AX  
England

LM999  
Harry H Bridges  
4228 Newport  
Detroit, MI 48215

R98  
John N Burch  
1190 S Mound Ave  
Covington, VA 24426-2125

R97  
Robert K Cavan  
2945 2nd Place SW  
Vero Beach, FL 32968-3284

R93  
Douglas R Dymond  
RR3 Box 241  
Dallas, PA 18612-9428

R97  
Stephen Fabeny  
14843 N El Sobrante Ave  
Fountain Hills, AZ 85233

R95  
William J Gaverick  
501 California Ave  
Harrisburg, PA 17109

R96  
Lewis E Haines  
Rt 1 Box 18  
Montpelier, OH 43543

R98  
A.J. Johnson  
632 Hamer Rd  
Alma, AR 72921

R98  
HL Kay  
110 11th St  
Mena, AZ 71953

R98  
Herbert C Kirkwood  
247 S Miller Ave  
Albany, IN 47320-1223

R96  
Robert A Krahn  
308 Miracle Strip Pkwy 29A  
Ft. Walton Beach, FL 32548

R97  
Charles C Mawer  
PO Box 1148  
Cardiff, CA 92007-1148

R97  
George B Menkoff DDS  
5819 E 64th Pl  
Tulsa, OK 74136-2132

R97  
Edward Nickels  
900 FM 495 Lot 200  
Alamo, TX 78516

R97  
Florence J Platt  
237 L St  
Chula Vista, CA 91911-1437

LM999  
Raymond Rivard  
207 Oliver St  
Fall River, MA 02724

R98  
Robert Santoro  
9 Oakview Dr  
Saylorsburg, PA 18353-9416

R97  
Robert S. Van Diver  
144 Deer Lake Circle  
Orman Beach, FL 32174

R96  
Ronald J Webster  
1094 Tulip Lane #3  
Rockford, IL 61107

R97  
AD Kneale  
4 Murpet Ln  
Bell Vista, AZ 72714

R98  
John L Lundberg  
Rt 1 Box H-609  
Jasper, GA 30143

R97  
Herbert R McGregor  
106 Elmtree Court  
St. Charles, IL 60174

R98  
Ellis B. Norwood  
3714 AM Hearst Ave  
Odessa, TX 79762

R97  
Ira O'Kennon  
2606 Simmy Winters Rd  
Richmond, VA 23235

R97  
Benjamin M Purdy  
% Claire Bickford  
50 Willis St  
Westfield, MA 01085

LM999  
George H Salkeld  
8112 N Magnolia  
Santee, CA 92071-4547

R98  
Theodore W Souza  
PO Box 229  
Gasquet, CA 95543-0229

R96  
RW Swindell  
14578 Guadalupe  
Rancho Muieta, CA 95683

## DELETES

Wesley Brashear  
Howard Director

Darren McGuire



Thanks to the 401st Newsletter for this.

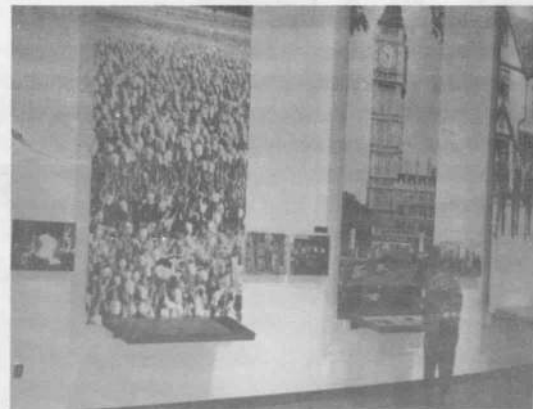
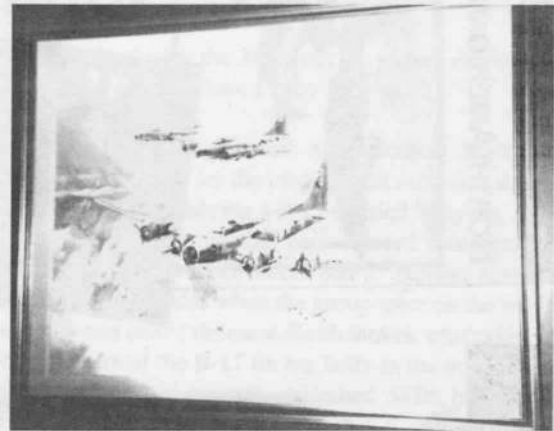
*The watch on the Rhine - The Third Infantry*  
***The Origin of Taps*** by Charles Peterson

It all began in 1862 during the Civil War when a Union Army Captain, Robert Ellicombe, was with his men near Harrison's Landing, in Virginia. The Confederate Army was on the other side of this narrow strip of land. During the night, Captain Ellicombe heard the moan of a soldier who lay mortally wounded in the field. Not knowing if it were a Union or a Confederate soldier, the captain decided to risk his life and bring the stricken soldier back for medical attention. Crawling on his stomach through the fire, the captain reached the stricken soldier and began pulling him toward his encampment. When the captain finally reached his own lines, he discovered it was actually a confederate soldier, but the soldier was dead. The captain lit his lantern. Suddenly, he caught his breath and went numb with shock. In the dim light he saw the face of the soldier. It was his own son! The boy had been studying music in the south when the war broke out. Without telling his father, he had enlisted in the Confederate army. The following morning, the heart-broken father asked permission of his superiors to give his son a full military burial despite his enemy status. His request was partially granted.

The captain had asked if he could have a group of army band members play a funeral dirge for the son at the funeral. That request was turned down since the soldier was a Confederate. Out of respect for the father, they did say they could give him only one musician. The captain chose a bugler. He asked the bugler to play a series of musical notes he had found on a piece of paper in the pocket of the dead youth's uniform.

The wish was granted. That music was the haunting bugle melody we now know as "Taps" used at all military funerals.

More pictures of Savannah:



**Editor's Note:** Another story given us by Bernie of Interstate Printing from "Aircraft of the World"

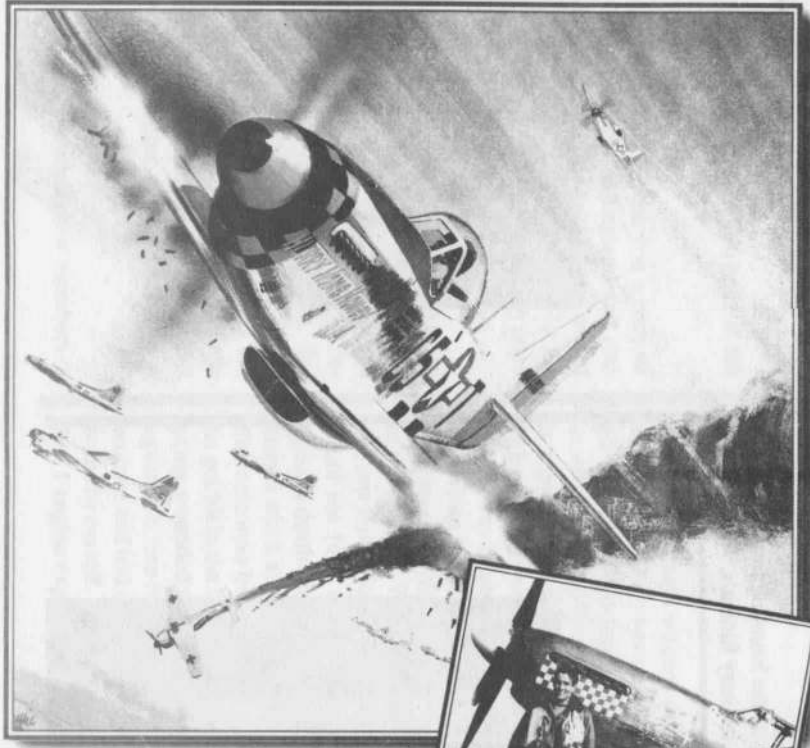
# NORTH AMERICAN



# P-51D MUSTANG

• Long-range escort fighter • Most Allied kills • 281 Mustang aces

AMERICAN AIRCRAFT OF WORLD WAR II



**A**s the bombers of the Eighth Air Force fought their way deep into Hitler's heartland, it was the Mustang that cleared the skies of Luftwaffe fighters. No other combat airplane of the war could fly as high, go as far and fight as hard as the mighty Mustang. In the skilled hands of young U.S. Air Corps pilots, it took on all comers and accounted for more kills than any other Allied airplane.

*A One of the great Mustang heroes, Major Don Gentile, with his favorite machine "Shangri-La" during 1943. He made 15 kills in Mustangs—half of them in one month.*

## PHOTO FILE

### NORTH AMERICAN P-51D MUSTANG



**◀ All the way**  
*With underwing tanks, Mustangs had enough range to be able to escort their charges 1,700 miles to the target. When they got there, they were agile enough to beat all comers.*

**▼ High flyer**  
*The Mustang's phenomenal range and performance made it ideal for escorting high-flying B-29s across the vast Pacific.*



**< Mud movers**  
*The Mustang's hard-hitting and accurate guns made it an excellent ground attack aircraft, that could also deliver air-to-ground rockets or bombs.*



**Powerpack ▶**

*The early Mustang was transformed into a superb high-level fighter by the British-designed, Packard-built Rolls-Royce Merlin engine, which could deliver 1,510 horsepower.*



**▼ Flying veterans**

*The Mustang's impeccable handling characteristics, bubble canopy and performance make it a popular rich man's toy—and many of them are still flying today. This example even carries a passenger.*



- ▶ **Ordered by the British, the prototype Mustang was proposed, designed, built and flown in an incredible 117 days.**
- ▶ **That initial aircraft was the first of 15,686 examples of the P-51 produced.**
- ▶ **The Mustang was flown by 11 Allied air forces in addition to the U.S. Air Corps.**

- ▶ **281 Allied Mustang pilots qualified as "Aces," with five or more kills.**
- ▶ **The late-model P-51 H was, at 472 m.p.h., one of the fastest piston-engine fighters.**
- ▶ **In October 1944, Mustang pilot Lieutenant Urban L. Drew managed the astonishing feat of shooting down two Me 262 jets.**

PROFILE

# Top Gun to the bomber force

Faced with invasion in 1939 and desperately short of fighters, the Royal Air Force asked North American Aviation to quickly produce the existing but obsolete P-40 Warhawk. Instead, the company designed, built and flew a new airplane in just 117 days—the Mustang.

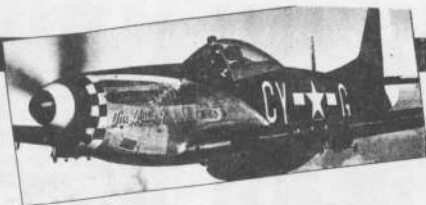
Using an existing Allison engine and the latest laminar-flow wing, the new fighter immediately went into service with the RAF. In

December 1941 the United States joined the war, and it too needed good fighters fast. So the U.S. Air Corps took the basic RAF Mustang, rearmed it with four machine guns, and added an uprated engine. It was a good performer, but couldn't operate well alongside the high-flying long-range bomber.

By 1944 the aircraft used the Rolls-Royce Merlin engine, adopted a new bubble cockpit and increased its firepower to six

*Mustangs were flown by more aces than any other Allied fighter. Their prey even included the Me 262jet.*

.50 caliber machine guns. It was now the best fighter in the war and fought superbly in all theaters, as fighter, fighter-bomber and reconnaissance platform. It was loved by its aircrews, and no fewer than 281 Mustang pilots became aces—each shooting down at least five enemy aircraft.



The low-drag laminar-flow wing was largely responsible for the Mustang's combination of agility and long-range capability; it accommodated six .50 caliber machine guns.

## P-51K MUSTANG "NOOKY BOOKY IV"

This P-51 K was flown by Major Leonard "Kit" Carson (left) of the 362nd Fighter Squadron, based at Leiston, England, as part of the 357th Fighter Group during 1944. Carson was one of the top-scoring Mustang aces, with 18 air-to-air victories.



The bubble canopy and cut-down rear fuselage of the P-51 D gave the pilot an unsurpassed all-round view.

The P-51 was transformed by incorporation of the Merlin engine. The original Allison engine delivered plenty of power low down, but was disappointing at higher altitude.

Even without optional underwing external fuel tanks, the Mustang had a good radius of action; with external tanks fitted it could escort bombers all the way to Berlin. These tanks could be jettisoned if the Mustang had to engage in maneuvering combat.

Despite having an in-line, liquid-cooled engine and a prominent and vulnerable ventral (underfuselage) radiator, the P-51 D was remarkably tolerant of battle damage.

Initially painted with olive drab camouflaged top surfaces, paint was soon stripped off to save weight, and the bare skin was highly polished to reduce drag.

## SPECIFICATIONS P-51D Mustang

**Type:** Single-seat long-range escort fighter, fighter-bomber.

**Powerplant:** One 1,510-hp. Packard V-1650-7 (U.S.-built Rolls-Royce Merlin 61) inverted-vee 12-cylinder inline water-cooled piston engine.

**Maximum speed:** 445 m.p.h. at 25,000 ft.

**Combat radius:** 325 miles on internal fuel; 750 miles with two 130-gal. tanks.

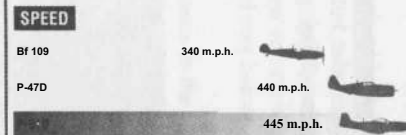
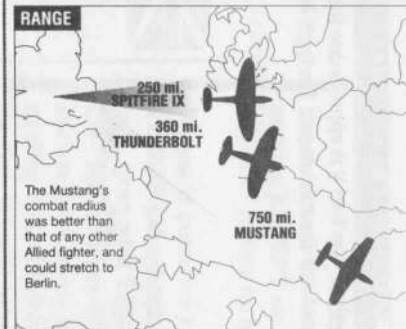
**Service ceiling:** 41,900 ft.

**Weapons:** Six .50 cal. Browning machine guns in wings; two 500-lb. bombs or eight 75-mm rockets in place of long-range drop tanks.

**Weights:** Empty 7,125 lb.; Loaded 11,600 lb.

**Dimensions:** Span 37 ft.  
Length 32 ft. 3 in.  
Height 12 ft. 2 in.  
Wing area 235 sq. ft.

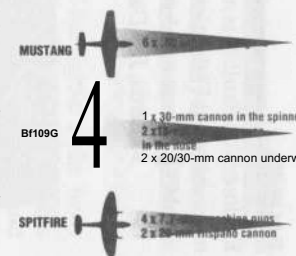
## ACTION DATA



The P-51D's clean, low-drag airframe and powerful Merlin engine endowed it with superb performance.

## WEAPONS

The P-51D packed a powerful punch, its fast-firing .50 cal. machine guns proving deadly against enemy fighter targets, although they lacked the stopping power of a 20- or 30-mm cannon.



## Mustang, the all-the-way escort fighter

■ **THE BOMBERS:** Eighth Air Corps bombers left their British bases an hour ahead of the Mustangs, escorted in the first part of the mission by shorter-ranged P-38s and P-47s.



■ **HAND OVER:** The faster Mustangs would catch the formation over the Dutch/German border, where they would relieve the P-38s and Thunderbolts high above the B-17s.



■ **ESCORT:** Some fighters flew close escort. Their nearness boosted the morale of the bomber crews, who had been so severely mauled over Germany the year before.



■ **DOGFIGHTER:** The Mustang had more than long range. It was fast and it was a ferocious dogfighter, as the pilot of this Messerschmitt Bf 109G shot down by a P-51 discovered.



■ **CONTROL OF THE SKIES:** It was the appearance of swarms of these graceful fighters in the skies over Germany that was to signal the death knell of the Luftwaffe.





Roger Feller  
22 rue de l'Ermitage  
L-8833 Wolwelange  
Luxembourg)

## Memorial 385<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group

20<sup>th</sup> -21<sup>st</sup> June 1998

PERLE

Luxembourg

Under the Auspices of the

United States Embassy

in Luxembourg

and the Municipality of Rambrouch



## All 385th Bomb Group Members

### Invitation

### Programme

#### 19<sup>th</sup> June

Arrival D-Day Group (Historical cars W.W. II)

#### 20<sup>th</sup> June

Visit to the crash sites by historical cars.

At 3 Pm ,opening ceremony of the exhibition (pictures and original parts from the two planes) by the Ryan Family

Spangdahlem Air Base Gospel Choir

At 6 Pm ,performance presented by the Country Western Dance Team U.S. Air Force Spangdahlem.

At 8 Pm Concert by Show Fanfares Ripsdorf (Glenn Miller)

#### 21<sup>st</sup> June

At 2.30 Pm requiem for the 18 members of the 385<sup>th</sup> B. Group.

After the requiem dedication of the monument

Colour Guard-Honour Guard

Flyover U.S. planes (Missing Man Formation)

Luxembourg Army Platoon

Parade by the D-Day Remembrance group

At 7 Pm concert

The Committee

W.W. Vamedoe.Jr.  
5000 Ketova Way  
Huntsville, AL 35803  
(205)881-3288  
17 November 1997

Dear Ed,

From the information Mr. Grinder sent in his letter to the Hardlife, Oct. 97, I was able to consult records and identify the serial number of his B-17. It was 42-97559, Vapor Trails. He was shot down in Barney's crew on 29 April 1944.

If others know the name of their Forts, but not the serial number, and know the day that 17 was shot down, there's a good chance that it can be found as in Grinder's case. There are still quite a few names floating, i.e. whose serial number is not known. It would be nice to pin some of these to our list of 385th B-17 serial numbers. I'll do the research if someone will give me the name of the 17, the date it was shot down and the crew name.

Yours,

Bill Vamedoe



Henry Dimmrick	October 1997
Bob Bennett	February 1997
Howard Dexter	
Elton Lewis	
Wymer Starnes	October 1997
Maurice R. Shannon	September 1997
Norman C. Wiche	July 1997

Dear Ed,

Norman C Wiche, a B-1 7 pilot with the 551st Squadron of the 385th Bomb Group, died July 3, 1997 after a long and courageous struggle with Parkinson's disease at his Naperville, Illinois home.

His crew flew their first combat mission to the Leuna synthetic oil producing plant near Meresburg, Germany on November 30, 1944. On December 23rd they were a part of the great 2,000 plane mission during the Battle of the Bulge. Another "Bulge" mission just after Christmas resulted in a crash landing in France (where their B-17 was repaired) and a return to Great Ashfield three days later. My Father returned to the United States in the Summer of 1945, landing at Bradley Field, Connecticut on the Fourth of July.

On his flight to Europe in 1944 (From Gander, Newfoundland to Valley Wales) he was forced to make an emergency landing at "Bluie

West 1" in southern Greenland, after poor weather conditions made it impossible to either re-fuel in Iceland or to return to Gander.

This August, I spent a month in the North Atlantic and made a special pilgrimage to Narsarsuaq, Greenland (the site of "Bluie West 1") to walk in my Father's footsteps. The landing strip there is the same one that was there in 1944. And there is a fine museum which chronicles the important part of "Bluie West 1" played in the Second World War. A copy of that portion on my Father's family history which includes his wartime experiences now rests in that museum, he having completed the letter of presentation just a few days before his death.

*Recalling a visit to Great Ashfield, he wrote:*

*"As we crossed the abandoned runway upon leaving, I caught myself looking in each direction. Be it luck, good fortune, or the 'Will' I had survived. Many had not. For those a purposeful interlude was mandated at the tiny ancient Great Ashfield chapel, All Saints Church. It was a brief, tranquil pause of respect to those less fortunate than I. Many of those gallant comrades, whose names are recorded on a hand embossed volume resting on the Memorial Alter, were friends of mine. Lest we forget."*

*Cordially,  
GlenN. Wiche*

Dear Ed,

It is with sadness that I have to report the death of another member of our crew.

Maurice R. Shannon, August 26, 1918-September 14, 1997. Maurice R Shannon was waist gunner on "Ruby's Raiders". He made all 35 missions. After the war, he returned to his hometown of Hiwathia, Kansas, to farm. He married June O. Ingle on Dec. 13, 1948. They had five daughters, all of whom survive. June died in 1967. Maurice worked for the State of Kansas 25 years. He retired in 1972. Maurice passed away Sept. 14, 1997.

I have cherished his friendship over the years as he was very special to me. Over Ludwigshavan, flack was thick enough to walk on. A piece of flack came into the tail section and knocked out my oxygen regulator. I managed to call for help and Maurice brought a "walk around" bottle back to me. saving my life. I told him that if I had a son, I would name him after him. Our son (only child) is Maurice C. Martin, M.D.

Maurice had grown up as a farmer. He told his daughter, Kim, before he died that "It would be sorta nice if a "feller" could be taken to the cemetery in a horse & buggy or wagon" on the day of his funeral. A farmer friend obliged and Maurice rode the last 1/2 mile in a sharp wagon pulled by two horses.

Maurice was a very easy-going, humble and caring man. We, the survivors on "Ruby's Raiders" will miss him very much.

Ed, I am sending a copy of the poem that was Shannon's favorite. They read it at his funeral. If you don't have room to publish it, please forward it to Chaplain Jim Vance. I think it would be great for all of us.

We want to send a contribution in his memory to a memorial. Do you have a suggestion.

### ***The Man in the Glass***

*When you get what you want in your struggle for self  
and the world makes you king for a day,  
just go to a mirror and look at yourself  
and see what that man has to say.*

*For it isn't your father or mother or wife  
whose judgement upon you must pass,  
the fellow whose verdict counts on most in your life  
is the one staring back from the glass.*

*You may be like Jack Homer and chisel a plum  
and think you're a wonderful guy,  
but the man in the glass says you're only a bum  
if you can't look him straight in the eye.*

*He's the fellow to please-never mind all the rest  
for he's with you clear up to the end,  
and you've passed your most dangerous, difficult test  
if the man in the glass is your friend.*

*You may fool the whole world down the pathways of years  
and get pats on the back as you pass.*

*But your final reward will be heartaches and tears  
if you've cheated the man in the glass.*

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We printed a note from Margie in the October issue — here's a little more detail from their daughter. Jim was one of our great Presidents.

August 22, 1997

I am writing on behalf of my mother, Margie Emmons, to tell you my father passed away on August 12 of a Cerebral Vascular Accident. Although we are devastated by his death we have much for which we are grateful. Dad did not have to endure suffering and both Mom and my sister Carly were with him. His passing was very quick, he woke up Tuesday morning with a headache that rapidly progressed. By nine an ambulance transported him to the hospital, he passed away before noon.

Dad always said he wished he could die on a golf course and he came close to that. He and Mom played golf the day before and had plans to play again that afternoon. We had a lovely memorial service for him yesterday and were honored that so many of his friends attended.

Throughout the years Dad spoke fondly of you and your experiences during the war.

Sincerely,  
Cathy Emmons Noble

October 14, 1997

This is to inform you that another one of our crew members passed away on October 12, 1997. Henry Dimmick, our waist gunner, lost his battle against cancer. In 1944 he flew 35 missions on George Jacobsen's crew who led the high squadron for most of the 35 missions to France, Belgium, and Germany, and was also one of the crew members on "Rum Dum's" historic 100th mission.

Henry grew up in Butler, Pennsylvania and he went back there after the war, and continued his schooling in Physics. He received his degree in Physics and, as a result of his creativity and ingenuity, he became internationally known for his inventions in instrumentation devices.

When I worked for Pullman Standard I had the pleasure of seeing him fairly regularly, since we had a manufacturing plant in Butler. He left a wife, Mary, and two children who are continuing his work at his plant in Butler.

Slowly but surely our crew is disappearing, but we certainly will miss Henry.

Sincerely,  
William P. Manos, PhDME  
705 Ridgewood Dr.  
Winnifield, LA 71483

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Dear Ed,

It is with great sadness that I report to you, my father, Robert E. Bennett, passed away on February 15, 1997 due to complications of heart bypass surgery.

As a member of the 385th BG, 548th Sq., Dad arrived at Great Ashfield in the summer of 1943. His first mission was as co-pilot on August 15th to Vitry En Artos in Northern France. His 25th and last mission was on February 28, 1944 to Grosbow. Some of the missions Dad participated in included the Marshalling Yards at St. Dizier, Kiel, Wiesbaden, Paris, and 2 missions each to Frankfurt and Munster. His seventh mission was the ever important raid on Schweinfurt on October 14, 1943. My father flew seven missions as co-pilot and eighteen as pilot. After his 25th, he was assigned as aide and pilot for General Vandenberg, where he remained for the rest of his tour of duty. Dad returned to the states after the war as the rank of Major, at his time of discharge. He was extremely proud of his experiences with the 385th and talked about all of you with pride in his heart and a smile on his face.

We, his family, miss him very much. We are very, very proud of what he, and all of you, accomplished in the name of freedom during your time with the 385th BG.

Sincerely,  
Bruce Bennett  
8607 Durango St. SW  
Tacoma, WA 98499

## 385TH BGMA

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*BOB AND BETTY BENNETT:  
 A REAL LOVE STORY 1943-1997*

*Ed: I find this story to be difficult to write and hope that our members understand.*

Bob Bennett was assigned to the 861st Chemical Company with the 401st at Deenethorpe from 1943 to 1945. Soon after his arrival in the UK he met Betty McHarg a native of Glasgow who was then residing in Corby with her parents. He was invited to the family home and soon was a regular visitor there. He and Betty became very friendly but when the time came he returned to the United States, completed his education at the University of Massachusetts and became a chemist with the Mead Paper company. He said that although he dated he remained a bachelor and recalled that "his mind kept saying Betty, Betty." In 1976 he visited England and looked up the McHarg family and found Betty was the mother of two daughters and had been widowed for 18 years. Within two days they decided to wed but the required waiting period in Betty's church resulted in the plans to marry be canceled as Bob had to return home. He said "I was heartbroken ... I was crushed." After Bob returned to Massachusetts he received a letter from Betty but he described himself as "so hurt I couldn't open it" and he put it in a strong box where it stayed for 11 years. In December 1987 Bob read the letter and found Betty had changed her mind and would marry him. He said "she had a whole change of heart and I missed the boat." He called Betty and after he explained what had happened and they both cried. They were soon to be married and made their home in Great Barrington, Mass, until 1996. For a number of reasons the Bennetts' decided to move to Corby. During that period Bob was in touch with me and wanted to be sure that the PFG would reach him after they moved. In a Christmas letter that year said they packed their cherished possessions, sold a few things and gave away the rest. The latter included 903 books, over 500 classical records and a Ford Taurus. They lived temporarily with Betty's

daughter and her husband, Tom and Gail Farley at 11 St. John's Place and soon purchased a home down the Street at 25 St. John's Place, Corby. Bob wrote me a letter with typed date April 29, 1997 which was crossed through and a handwritten date inserted of May 10, 1997. The change became more obvious when after enclosing a story for the PFG he wrote that after a 12 day trip through Germany to Austria Betty died from a brain hemorrhage on May 6. I soon heard of Betty's passing from both Graham Bratley and Paul Knight. Shortly after that I learned that Bob was hospitalized twice and was distraught over his loss of Betty. On the day I received Bob's letter of May 10th I received a call from Graham Bratley that Bob had an attack while in Church on June 1 and died shortly later that day. His letter included \$75 for a Life Membership which I donated to the UK Memorial Fund in his memory. He had written me that he and Betty planned to attend the Savannah reunion in 1998. Bob was a contributor to the PFG, contributor of stories to Roger Freeman's book "experience of War-The American Airman," and Bob and Betty's picture was included along with other at our UK Memorial on Remembrance Day 1996 in PFG #94. We miss them both.

Paul Knight wrote that he attended Bob's funeral representing the 401st Historical Society.