



# HARD LIFE



# HERALD

## NEWSLETTER OF THE

## 385th BOMBARDMENT GROUP MEMORIAL ASSOCIATION



### COMBAT UNITS

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549th BOMB SQ.  
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### VOL. XVII NO. 4

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

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424th AIR SVS. GP.  
877th CHEM. CO. (AO)  
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## December 2000

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*Come to the  
"Land of  
Enchantment"  
and register now  
for our 18th Bi-  
ennial 385th BG  
Reunion,  
April 3-8, 2001.  
Don't miss it!*



*Former Chief of Chaplains, USAF, speaking at 385th BG Reunion.*

Featured speaker of our 18th Biennial Reunion is retired Major General J Harlin former Chief of Chaplains, USAF, where he led 2,200 chaplains and enlisted support personal.

General Harlin will share some of the experiences from 14 tours of duty, which included assignments in Korea, Okinawa, Vietnam, Arlington National Cemetery, Commandant of the Air Force Chaplain School, and Command Chaplain of the Air Training Command, and the Tactical Air Command.

General Harlin is a member of the Reserve Officers Association, national Chaplain for the Air Force Officers Association, Albuquerque Armed Forces Advisory Association, Military Chaplain's Association and the New Mexico Chapter, 8th Air Force Historical Society.

Chaplain Harlin and wife, Carol, are residents of Albuquerque. They have two sons, Mathew and Timothy.

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\*Bob Valliere  
\*Mike Gallagher

# Chaplain Sez President's Report

Hi,

I am quoting from the New Testament, Galatians 6:1-10. Hope these words, which I feel make sense, will help you all.

"My friends, you are spiritual. So if someone is trapped in sin, you should gently lead that person back to the right path. But watch out, and don't be tempted yourself. You obey the law of God when you offer each other a helping hand.

If you think you are better than others, when you really aren't, you are wrong. Do your own work well, and then you will have something to be proud of. But don't compare yourself with others. We each must carry our own load.

Share every good thing you have with anyone who teaches you what God has said.

You cannot fool God, so don't make a fool of yourself! You will harvest what you plant. If you follow your selfish desires, you will harvest destruction, but if you follow the Spirit, you will harvest eternal life. Don't get tired of helping others. You will be rewarded when the time is right, if you don't give up. We should help people whenever we can, especially if they are followers of the Lord."

These are not my words 'per se" but I feel the truth is contained in them so I am repeating them for my article.

Love,

Jim Vance

P.S. Hope to see you all in Albuquerque.

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## Editor Sez

I'm getting old, forgetful, and ready to retire. We'll have to elect, appoint or draft a replacement editor at Albuquerque.

Not a big job — just gather info, send it to our very capable publisher, proof-read the result, and sit back and enjoy.

Be ready to volunteer!!!

Ed Stern

Albuquerque Reunion, April 3rd to 8th, 2001, will be occurring quicker than you may realize. Now is the time to make your plans to attend this fun filled event. In this issue and the September issue of the Hardlife Herald you will find the reunion itinerary, reunion and hotel registration forms. I urge you to send in your registration forms as soon as possible. The hotel reservation must be made by March 12, 2001, to receive the group rate. Hotel deposits are refundable if canceled 24 hours in advance. Hal Goetsch, our Albuquerque host, has done a great job on setting up the reunion.

You can pick and choose the activities that interest you. You can set your own pace, be it fast, medium or a leisurely pace. Congratulations are in order to Hal, he was recently elected to the board of directors of the 8th Air Force Historical Society.

Nomination of 385th officers. All 385th officers are elected at our reunion for a two year term. It has been a pleasure working with the present group of officers, and a very learning experience. It has brought several of us into the electronic age. All of the officers and executive committee members now have computers and e-mail which simplified communication. All of the present officers are willing to move up which I think is great for the group to have the continuing continuity of leadership. However, keeping with the same officers structure, we would need two new PV candidates. If you wish to nominate a member for an office, contact Mike Gallagher, chairman of the nominating committee.

2003 Reunion. We are still looking for a member that will submit a location and serve as host for the 2003 reunion. I have appointed our 1st Vice President, Leo LaCasse as chairman of the 2003 reunion. If you have a location you would like to present or you are willing to work on the reunion committee, please contact Leo. His address is on the Hardlife Herald front cover.

European Friends. I am very happy to report that our good friends Roy and Di Barker of Great Ashfield, England, Roger and Jeanny Feller, Mayor Ferdinand Unsen and his wife Maisy of Luxembourg are planning to attend our Albuquerque reunion. These people were all very instrumental in making our June tour to Europe so enjoyable. It will be great to visit with them.

WW2 Combat Experiences. I was most interested in Foster Falkenstein speech outline of combat experiences in the September issue of the Hardlife Herald. I do not know if at our age, the book, The Greatest Generation, movies, Saving Private Ryan, or TV shows like those on History Channel has generated so much attention to the WW2 veterans. Recently I have been asked to speak to the Oregon Pilot's Assn, Civil Air Patrol, Rotary, and at our local Historical Society, about my combat flying experiences with the 8th Air force. This is probably happening to many of you, if so are you willing to exchange speech outlines?

Tom Newton



# BULLETIN BOARD

## DUES NOTICE

To keep the 385th expenses to a minimum, it has been the Group's policy not to send out dues statements. We request the members to look at their Hardlife Herald address label to determine if their dues are due. When you examine your address label you will find a letter R and two numbers that indicate the year your dues are paid through. If you have a 99, 98, 97, 96, etc your dues are past due. Life members have a LM999 after their name. Due to our current financial position it was voted at our last reunion to increase our dues to \$20.00 per year and to request the life members to donate another \$100.00 or if they prefer make annual donations of \$20.00. We do appreciate and wish to thank the members that are current.

## SEND YOUR E-MAILS

It's been suggested that we start a page with member's e-mail addresses. Please send yours and we'll have it in the next issue.

## CAN YOU HELP?????

Dear Mr. Hruska,

A friend got me your address from the internet so I'm writing to ask if you can help me in my research of a member of the 385th BG.

He said you were the Editor of the Group Newsletter Hardlife Herald. I'd like to ask if you can run a notice from me asking for anyone who flew with him or knew him to contact me. I'd also like to have a copy of a photo of him and his crew if one is out there. Here are his details as I have them.

S/Sgt Stanley Podworny, serial # 11011447 385th BG. On February 4th, 1945, he was awarded an Oak Leaf Cluster for his Air Medal, so he was flying combat missions before that date. As far as I know, he was never shot down or wounded. He did survive the war. He passed away in 1994 in ILL. If you would like one for the Group records, I will send you a copy of his boituary. He was listed as a member of the 8th AF Reunion Association so I don't know if he was a member of the 385th Association.

Yours Sincerely,  
R.C. Rogers, Jr.  
PO Box 354, Clarkston GA 30021-0354

Dear Mr. Hurksa:

I am attempting to reconstruct the mission of a B-17F 42-5895 "Souise Family" of the 385th Bomb Group that ditched in the North Sea on 26 July '43. S/Sgt George J Hrubovcak, my wife's uncle, was lost on this flight.

While I am aware of the current disposition of some of the crew and have interviewed one, I cannot locate the following; the addresses as listed was from 1943.

Pilot - Thro R. Harris, Kansas City, MO  
Bombardier - Lst Lt. Jack W. Mills, Chicago (May Be Jack M. Mills)  
Gunners -T/Sgt Warren J. Dinardi, NYC  
Sgt. Alvin A. Wrobel, Gilmanton, WI.

I would appreciate any information you may have concerning these men, since the family never really knew what happened other than that George was buried at sea.

Thank you for both your time and assistance.

Sincerely,  
William J. Sproule  
528 Wild Mint Lane  
Allentown, PA 18104  
(610) 398-1451  
[Bsroule@epix.net](mailto:Bsroule@epix.net)

EDITOR'S NOTE: Anyone who can help, please write Bill direct

## NO CHRISTMAS THIS YEAR???

I suppose not - since Old St. Nick and his gifts got splattered across the nose of an airplane!!!



## Schweinfurt



Wilbur 'Bud' Klint & Georg Schafer at Monument  
Photo by H. Higgins

To tell you I really enjoyed the trip to Schweinfurt more this time than I did in October, 1943 would be the understatement of the century. No flak, no fighters, and no rockets but just the open arms of friendship the like of which you have not seen before. I don't know when I have felt more welcome than with the first contact with our German counterparts, *The Luftwaffenhe/fers der Schweinfurter Flakbatterien*. These were the same people who 55 years ago were zeroing in on us with their 88mm flak guns with the intention of driving us away from their area. This time, June 15 - 18, 1998, I was made to feel so much at home that I hated to leave!

But let me start at the beginning. In Frankfurt we were to meet at the air terminal building where a bus was to pick us up at 1100 and take us to Schweinfurt. Those of us who were arriving the morning of the 15th (our plane landed at 0940 after 19 hours of travel) were met as we cleared customs by Otto and/or Heike Gruber and escorted to the International Meeting Place in Terminal 2. Slowly the crowd came together. Some had arrived a day or two early and some of us were just coming into the area. Anyway, when it was finally determined that we had all the people either with us or accounted for, we boarded the bus and off we went toward Schweinfurt. Visiting with old friends (SSMA) that we had not seen since Omaha last October and the beautiful scenery of the Frankonian countryside made the two and one half hour ride pass hurriedly. We arrived in Schweinfurt and were taken immediately to the Panorama Hotel in the downtown area. Georg Schafer was there to greet us and welcome us to his home town of Schweinfurt. Since he had already pre-registered us and had rooms assigned, we had only to get our keys and go to our rooms to rest and clean up. When we entered our room, Bebe and I, there were two bottles of Frankonian wine and two large German Chocolates awaiting our pleasure compliments of one of Georg's 'Flakhelfer' friends. We saved them for later.

After a l-o-n-g one hour rest and then getting into some passable clothes, we assembled in the hotel lobby and walked the 300 yards up to the *Flathaus* (City Hall) to have dinner with the 'Flakhelfer' group in the *Flatskelle* (below City Hall). There we participated in a buffet dinner with our German hosts. There were three former Luftwaffe pilots in attendance and the rest (40 to 50) were members of the Luftwaffenhe/fers of Schweinfurt - those who were conscripted out of high school and assigned to the flak batteries around their city. This chance to interface with our German counter-parts brought about warm and friendly discussions - even though the language barrier was there, it was solved by innovation - hand signals and facial expressions. So an evening of good food, good German beer, good Frankonian wine, and good fellowship was the icebreaker needed to make a cohesive unit of two separate groups dedicated to a common goal - The Schweinfurt Memorial Monument. The revelry lasted for me until about 2100 hours! After over 24 hours awake and most of it travelling, I had to take this child to the hotel and put him to bed.



L to R: Mayor of Schweinfurt Gudrun Grieser,  
Georg Schafer and Ginny Dumond

Photo by H. Higgins

An early morning breakfast, buffet style, was enjoyed by all of us before we prepared ourselves for a full day. At 0930 hours we all gathered at the St. Johannes Lutheran Cathedral for a Memorial Service. This was an ecumenical service conducted by the Lutheran Minister Christhild Grate, Catholic Bishop of Wurzburg Heribert Brander (a former 'Flakhelfer'), and U. S. Army Chaplain in Schweinfurt John S. Parker. The addresses of each along with the music furnished by the Cathedral Pipe Organ and a brass quintette was a tribute to those we were memorializing. Hymns were sung with each verse presented first in German then repeated in English. The Lord's Prayer was recited in each person's own language to end the service.

Immediately after the memorial service it began to rain - HARD. Everyone got wet during the five to six block walk to the monument site. It was decided that it was too wet to conduct the dedication in front of the monument, but Lord Mayor Frau Gudrun Grieser arranged to have the city theater, which is right across the street, opened and the ceremony was conducted inside to escape the rain. A Welcome Address was given by

the Lord Mayor followed by addresses by Walter Hillgärtner (Representative of the government of Lower Frankonia) and George A. Glass (U. S. Consul General, Munich). Then Wilbur 'Bud' Klint for SSMA and Herr Georg Schäfer for the 'Luftwaffenhelfers' made their presentations for "Remembering the Dead". Music was furnished by the Big Band of Alexander-von-Humbolt-Highschool conducted by Rudolf Oti playing 'Dona Nobis Pacem' (Give Us Peace). 'Taps' was played followed by the national anthems of America and Germany to end the ceremony.



L to R: Walter Hillgärtner, Georg Schäfer, Lord Mayor Gudrun Grieser, Consular Aide, Bud Klint, and U. S. Consul General George A. Glass observing Monument.

*Photo by H. Higgins*

By this time the rain had stopped so everyone went back over to the monument for a picture taking session. When there were no more shutters clicking, the group walked the 5 or 6 blocks back to the City Hall (Rathaus) for a reception where we were hosted by the Lord Mayor and other dignitaries of Schweinfurt. The artist who designed the Monument, G. Hubert Neidhart - a former 'Flakhelfer', was introduced to the crowd and toasted. A few more short speeches and the party migrated toward visitations and new friendships made.

That was the end of the dedication proceedings and from this point on it was strictly the 'Flakhelfers' showing us their city and the surrounding area. Tuesday afternoon was spent with half of our group touring SKF and the other half the FAG ball bearing factories. After the tours, we were loaded into two buses and driven along the Mein River toward the town of Nordheim, a small wine village. There we were treated to a very good German dinner accompanied by a great POLKA BAND with plenty of their local wine and beer - both were very good. The name of the restaurant was Zehnthof's in case you get a chance to try it out. There must have been well over a hundred of us seated in this one room and with all the talking and the music it was hard to hear yourself think. Much laughter and talking to new friends made with our hosts from the Flakhelfers Association. It looked as if everyone had a great time. But, as the old jet lag settled in again, we boarded the buses for the return trip to Schweinfurt and beddie-bye.

At 1000 hours on Wednesday we set off in the buses again for a tour of the city of Schweinfurt. It was really interesting to see how the city had been restored after WW II. New buildings were constructed and old, damaged ones have been restored or are in the process of restoration - the population has climbed back up to about 55,000 from a low of about thirty to thirty-five thousand right after the war. A very progressive city that is gaining in stature each day.

The tour ended at the A. von Humboldt High School where we held discussions with the graduate students and teachers. The questions asked were of a nature to require in-depth answers and sometimes by more than one individual associated with the SSMA. A very good and satisfying session that was terminated when we were invited to have lunch at the school cafeteria - good food, well prepared and presented.

We left the high school and proceeded to Abram's Club on Richard Wagner Strasse to again have discussions - but this time with the officers of the 2nd Brigade, 1st US Infantry Division. They were very attentive and seemed to be very interested in anything our members had to say. This discussion went on for about a short one and one half hours and came to a close with each side wanting more time for visiting. However, we were due at the Conn Barracks Community Club for a Farewell Dinner with our friends - the Luftwaffenhelfers der Schweinfurter Flakbatterien. We met our new friends at the Club and participated in the enjoyment of both the food and the fellowship throughout the evening. Home addresses were traded - an invitation to the whole Flakhelfers group to attend our reunion in October - and heartfelt goodbyes were exchanged. All too soon we were told that it was time for our buses to depart.



## WORK FROM KABITZKE "THIS IS THE ARMY"

After being in England for a few months, I received a letter from my brother Bill, telling me that he was "Somewhere in England." I went to our CO, Major Henry Todd and asked if I could have a furlough to visit him. He told me he would make arrangements for me. He asked me if I knew where he was located and I told him no. He told me to give him his name, and what organization he was in as he was going to London the next day to Supreme HQ and would find the answer and I should come to his room that evening and he would give it to me. He gave me two weeks and a 24 hours pass and I was on my way. I had the address, phone and telegraph number he was at in Liverpool.

I rode on US Army trains across England. In Liverpool I signed in at the Red Cross Club. It was large, fine rooms and an excellent kitchen. I called my brother, and found that he was across the river in Birkenhead, the CONEY ISLAND of England in peacetime. He was located in a huge building where they repaired trucks and Jeeps. While on a visit there I noticed many men and women civilians coming and going and asked Bill who they were. He told me that there were 300 who worked in the basement repairing small arms which were sent to the underground all over the continent.

A day or so later, a large group of men came to the club. They turned out to be the smaller European version of the cast of the "THIS IS THE ARMY", which had toured the United States. They came from all branches in the army. We got to know a cameraman from Hollywood quite well and spent a few evenings with Mel Blanc, the man famous for the "WHAT'S UP DOC" saying and the voice in many of Hollywood's cartoons. He was an easy person to get to know. We kidded our friend about having special treatment and he quickly told us that was not true. Their first night in England, they had to sleep on a concrete floor and many in the cast suffered with colds. That meant that they would miss performances which they could ill afford as it threw off their timing of the precision parts of their show.

Each morning the cast went outside at 7:00 and marched for an hour. Then those who needed medical help met with a Captain who was a doctor. I got the impression that he was the leader of the group. The cast liked him. They were given no special treatment. They ate standard Army rations. Our friend told us that his only fringe benefit they had was meeting famous people. They had met the King and Queen, Eisenhower and other top brass at Supreme HQ, and other officers as they traveled around the island.

Bill and I took in the show one evening. After it was over we went to the club. While we were in the sitting and writing room, the Captain came in and invited us to join the cast in their late meal. It was a real treat, weiners and sauerkraut. The cast put on a special performance for hundreds of kids in the city. After the show they were treated to ice cream and candy, probably the only they would see for the duration of the war. Irving Berlin was the host, wearing his World War I

Uniform and sang. The crowd loved him.

When they finished their tour of England they returned to the States and their old outfits. They had provided first class entertainment and we appreciated their doing so.

Don Kabitzke

## 11 OF OUR BOMBERS ARE MISSING

In the spring of 1943 I belonged to the 88th Service Squadron. The men were trained on how to maintain and repair B-26 Bombers. Our training was complete and we boarded a train for New York. Here we boarded the Queen Elizabeth with a total of 17, 500 Air Force personnel. Our next stop was Grenock, Scotland. Here we were taken to the dock on ferry boats. Before we boarded a train which was waiting, a bag-pipe group serenaded us and the Scottish Red Cross gave us tea, coffee and crumpets. As we moved through Glasgow, children lined the railroad tracks and the men threw off their American coins they had in their pockets.

On the way to England we stopped at a small railway station where we were served cold meat pies. We finally arrived at our new home. It was a former RAF airbase. We were the only ones there. There were no planes or any type equipment. The only good thing we found was a local pub where we got our first taste of English beer. I got to like it. We were there only a few days when we were told we could not leave the base under any circumstances. There was no explanation given. We finally were told the reason why.

13 b-26s had taken off from another base in England. One landed shortly after taking off with engine trouble. Another returned from over the English Channel for the same reason. The other 11 kept on going, never to be heard from again. The top brass thought it was because of a security leak and the Germans shot them down. We listened to the late German news broadcasts at ten o'clock in the evening. Not one word was said about the planes. Had the Germans shot down that many planes at one time, they would have flooded the airways claiming a big victory. Our officials were sure they had been shot down. They had no other explanation.

We were to be in for round the clock lectures by all of the Allied Military Organization Intelligence Services. The Army, Navy and Air Forces sent men to talk to us about secrecy. Some of them really were interesting. One British Naval Officer told a story about a young British naval intelligence officer who stopped off at a pub for a glass of beer. He was sitting alone. He looked around the room when he came upon a group of British Naval Officers gathered around a map on the wall. To test his powers of observation, he made notes of what he saw. He then went home and sat down a wrote a letter to the Head of British Naval Intelli-

gence. What he wrote was the upcoming invasion fiasco of Dieppe.

British Army officer told of a British officer in France during World War I. While using a slit trench to relieve himself, the Germans started to shell the area he was in. He dove into an empty slit trench nearby. As he looked out, he saw a piece of paper which had been used by a German soldier for toilet purposes. He got curious and unraveled it. He understood German and was shocked at what he read. He hurried to headquarters and turned it over to their intelligence. It was a letter to the soldier from his wife back in southern Germany. She listed in detail what she saw. Funny looking soldiers on horses went by their home and she put down what she saw. British intelligence knew who those troops were. It was the Turks and they were on the way to the Western Front on the German side. From the date on the letter, they were able to estimate the arrival of those men at the front. It turned out they were correct.

A RAF officer put on display equipment they took from German Pilots who were shot down or parachuted. It all was on a huge desk. He picked up a surgical steel knife used to cut a parachute harness in one move, a compass that was the finest he had seen and surgical steel, surgical scissors, all made in Czechoslovakia. He showed a parachute made of Japanese silk, a sample of aviation gasoline. Nothing eszats about that, an aviators map case made of the finest Moroccan leather. Some of the world's best, and many other items. What he wanted to impress on us was to debunk the idea that the war would be over soon. He was correct. I always enjoyed listening to British speakers. They knew what they were talking about. We also had a man from the British Home Office.

A short time later we still had no airplanes nor other Americans. We were told to get ready to move out. Trucks came and we boarded them. Our next destination was Elmswell, the home of the Great Ashfield bomber Base. Irish brick layers were still erecting quonset huts, mess halls, hangars and shop buildings. We got quite a kick out of the Irish when it was TAY TIME. They would stop working and wait until the truck arrived with hot tea. This also happened in the afternoon.

The next to arrive was Colonel Vandevanter and his staff by air. The rest of the air and ground crews also came over on the Queen. Planes were ferried in and soon the first flights over France were made. It was all business from then on.

After the war I got the volumes of the history of the war in Europe from my local library. I searched until I found the story about the 11 missing planes. They finally came to the conclusion the planes were down somewhere in the Atlantic. In those early flights, the pilots followed the leader who had all of the information. There was only one answer, he had a faulty compass. This was a mistake that happened on the ill fated raid on Ploesti. The lead navigators plane went into a tailspin and went straight down into the Mediterranean Sea. Later on I was to see a B-24 coming in for an emergency landing at a RAF base staffed by ladies to guide in emer-

gency planes. We talked to the pilot and he told us he was headed for Scotland. All of a sudden German 88s shot holes all over the plane. He made a quick turn and went back the way he came and contacted the emergency services who guided him to the base we were on. When they checked the instruments, they found a faulty compass.

Don Kabitzke

## HOWARD HUGHES "SPRUCE GOOSE"

During the construction of the plane, he filled excess space for gas filled balloons. Most of them were taken as souvenirs. They were a safety precaution should the plane have an accident over water. When the plane was ready to be tested, Hughes took over the controls himself. After taxiing for a short way, he opened the throttles and was amazed how quick the plane responded. He took the plane up about 25 feet and left it settle back in the water, and taxied back to its dock. He had fulfilled his part of the agreement with the government by taking it off planet earth and bringing it back down.

It was too late in the war to be of use. It was finally sold and taken to Los Angeles and put on an island with the British liner, Queen Mary. They both were great tourist attractions. It was a short walk between them. I finally had the opportunity to walk the decks of the last of the three greatest passenger liners in history. I was able to do so on the decks of all three, The Mary, The Elizabeth and the Europa.

The Spruce Goose was sold to a company who took it in three pieces by boat up to Oregon where it is on display. It required a special quarters to protect the plane from deteriorating influences.

Hughes surrounded himself with many members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter -Day Saints (Mormon). They took care of all of his businesses. He was a devout watcher of western movies and asked a local television studio to feature them after midnight. They refused. He bought their station and fired the staff. When the hotel he was living in ordered him to move, he bought the hotel and fired the management. One by one he bought most of the casinos in Las Vegas to eliminate the influence of organized crime. He did all of his business with his staff by phone. Some never met him in person.

His health deteriorated fast. He had taken drugs to ease the pain suffered due to the accident on the test flight. He neglected his health, gave up on himself and would not accept any advice. He was flown to Mexico for a short period. He was rushed back to the states where he passed away shortly thereafter.

Hughes accomplished a lot during his lifetime. He was a loner and did not have time to get married and raise a family. His work was his life. He made the world a better place to live in. His only fault was that he was a genius.

Don Kabitzke

## ONE MEMBER'S FLIGHT DURING THE WAR

### The 2 March 1945 Mission to Dresden

By Bill Varnedoe

Although this mission took place in the air war over Europe at a time when the war was essentially won, it is clear that the Luftwaffe did not roll over and play dead. This incident was just as deadly as any one during the tumult of 1944. Being especially well researched, it offers an insight as to what the 8th Air force bomber missions were like in world War II.

On the 2nd of March 1945, the 385th Bomb Group, based out of Great Ashfield, England, flying B-17s, went on its 261st mission. I was a Navigator on Crow's crew, 550th Squadron. I was awakened and scrambled out from under the seven wool blankets I routinely slept under, then dressed in my "combat" uniform. Since the Germans were rank conscious, we officers wore a uniform. Now this uniform was never washed or pressed, and was not the one I wore on leave, but superstitiously, if it got me through one more mission, I was not about to change it! A 6 x 6 truck took us to breakfast. It consisted of lumpy powdered milk on cereal and cardboard tasting powdered eggs, but we ate, since on mission we missed the noon meal. (And on non-mission days, I, for one, slept through breakfast.) The 6 x 6's next dumped us at the briefing room.

The 385th, was leading the 93rd Wing, and the entire 3rd Division on that day. Our Group was led by the 551st Squadron, called the A or Lead Squadron, the with radio call, "Clambake George Leader." The 548th was B or High Squadron, "Clambake George High," while the 549th was High Flight and the 550th was Low Flight making up the C or Low Squadron, "Clambake George Low." The primary target was to be a Ruhland oil refinery, unless 10/10 (complete coverage) clouds diverted the Group to the secondary target, a railroad marshaling yard on the outskirts of Dresden. The bomb load was 20, 2501b General Purpose bombs in each fort. Intervalometer setting was minimum. Bombing altitude was to be 23,000 feet. The red tape on the briefing map showed that the route lead in over the flack gap at the Zuider Zee in Holland. This gap in the flack coverage might have been left open so that the Germans could be reasonable sure that would be where we would go - and indeed we usually did, an odd arrangement that both sides found helpful. The return leg was further south and lead out near Ostend. We were told that we would be flying over fighter fields of the German Air Force. If weather were bad, it would keep the Luftwaffe away from the ground fighting, then the fighters might be expected to attack the bombers. The weather turned out to be bad.

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gence. What he wrote was the upcoming invasion fiasco of Dieppe.

British Army officer told of a British officer in France during World War I. While using a slit trench to relieve himself, the Germans started to shell the area he was in. He dove into an empty slit trench nearby. As he looked out, he saw a piece of paper which had been used by a German soldier for toilet purposes. He got curious and unraveled it. He understood German and was shocked at what he read. He hurried to headquarters and turned it over to their intelligence. It was a letter to the soldier from his wife back in southern Germany. She listed in detail what she saw. Funny looking soldiers on horses went by their home and she put down what she saw. British intelligence knew who those troops were. It was the Turks and they were on the way to the Western Front on the German side. From the date on the letter, they were able to estimate the arrival of those men at the front. It turned out they were correct.

A RAF officer put on display equipment they took from German Pilots who were shot down or parachuted. It all was on a huge desk. He picked up a surgical steel knife used to cut a parachute harness in one move, a compass that was the finest he had seen and surgical steel, surgical scissors, all made in Czechoslovakia. He showed a parachute made of Japanese silk, a sample of aviation gasoline. Nothing eszats about that, an aviators map case made of the finest Moroccan leather. Some of the world's best, and many other items. What he wanted to impress on us was to debunk the idea that the war would be over soon. He was correct. I always enjoyed listening to British speakers. They knew what they were talking about. We also had a man from the British Home Office.

A short time later we still had no airplanes nor other Americans. We were told to get ready to move out. Trucks came and we boarded them. Our next destination was Elmswell, the home of the Great Ashfield bomber Base. Irish brick layers were still erecting quonset huts, mess halls, hangars and shop buildings. We got quite a kick out of the Irish when it was TAY TIME. They would stop working and wait until the truck arrived with hot tea. This also happened in the afternoon.

The next to arrive was Colonel Vandevanter and his staff by air. The rest of the air and ground crews also came over on the Queen. Planes were ferried in and soon the first flights over France were made. It was all business from then on.

After the war I got the volumes of the history of the war in Europe from my local library. I searched until I found the story about the 11 missing planes. They finally came to the conclusion the planes were down somewhere in the Atlantic. In those early flights, the pilots followed the leader who had all of the information. There was only one answer, he had a faulty compass. This was a mistake that happened on the ill fated raid on Ploesti. The lead navigators plane went into a tailspin and went straight down into the Mediterranean Sea. Later on I was to see a B-24 coming in for an emergency landing at a RAF base staffed by ladies to guide in emer-

gency planes. We talked to the pilot and he told us he was headed for Scotland. All of a sudden German 88s shot holes all over the plane. He made a quick turn and went back the way he came and contacted the emergency services who guided him to the base we were on. When they checked the instruments, they found a faulty compass.

Don Kabitzke

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## HOWARD HUGHES "SPRUCE GOOSE"

During the construction of the plane, he filled excess space for gas filled balloons. Most of them were taken as souvenirs. They were a safety precaution should the plane have an accident over water. When the plane was ready to be tested, Hughes took over the controls himself. After taxiing for a short way, he opened the throttles and was amazed how quick the plane responded. He took the plane up about 25 feet and left it settle back in the water, and taxied back to its dock. He had fulfilled his part of the agreement with the government by taking it off planet earth and bringing it back down.

It was too late in the war to be of use. It was finally sold and taken to Los Angeles and put on an island with the British liner, Queen Mary. They both were great tourist attractions. It was a short walk between them. I finally had the opportunity to walk the decks of the last of the three greatest passenger liners in history. I was able to do so on the decks of all three, The Mary, The Elizabeth and the Europa.

The Spruce Goose was sold to a company who took it in three pieces by boat up to Oregon where it is on display. It required a special quarters to protect the plane from deteriorating influences.

Hughes surrounded himself with many members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter -Day Saints (Mormon). They took care of all of his businesses. He was a devout watcher of western movies and asked a local television studio to feature them after midnight. They refused. He bought their station and fired the staff. When the hotel he was living in ordered him to move, he bought the hotel and fired the management. One by one he bought most of the casinos in Las Vegas to eliminate the influence of organized crime. He did all of his business with his staff by phone. Some never met him in person.

His health deteriorated fast. He had taken drugs to ease the pain suffered due to the accident on the test flight. He neglected his health, gave up on himself and would not accept any advice. He was flown to Mexico for a short period. He was rushed back to the states where he passed away shortly thereafter.

Hughes accomplished a lot during his lifetime. He was a loner and did not have time to get married and raise a family. His work was his life. He made the world a better place to live in. His only fault was that he was a genius.

Don Kabitzke

## ONE MEMBER'S FLIGHT DURING THE WAR

### The 2 March 1945 Mission to Dresden

By Bill Varnedoe

Although this mission took place in the air war over Europe at a time when the war was essentially won, it is clear that the Luftwaffe did not roll over and play dead. This incident was just as deadly as any one during the tumult of 1944. Being especially well researched, it offers an insight as to what the 8th Air force bomber missions were like in world War II.

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On Audrain's right wing was Tipton in No. 44-8417. Tipton was on his 3rd mission, his first with his crew. Tipton's crew and Crow's crew had trained together at Avon Park, FL; both flew over the Atlantic at the same time and were both assigned to the 385th and 550th on the same orders.

Tipton's crew was: Pilot Kenneth G. Tipton, Co-Pilot Edward M. Craig, Navigator Jack M. Waller, Bombardier Glenn W. King (Assigned today, not a regular crew mem.), Engineer Roger C. Maul, Radio Op. Frank E. Mang, Ball Gun Glenn R. Childress, Waist Gun Charles c. Eckert, Tail Gun John Nostin.

Left wing off Audrain was filled by Dunlap in No. 41-02636, Sleepytime Gal. This made a total of 13 assigned planes for the Low Squadron, 12 over the IP (Initial Point, where the bomb run began). The Group had 38 aircraft assigned, 37 over the IP, 4 of which were PFF (radar) equipped.

The 385th Group formation was briefed.

The Low Flight of the Low Squadron as Attacked on the Bomb Run Fortresses shot down are Xed.

After briefing, we checked out our flying gear. Over my "uniform," I put on my "bunny suit," the electrically heated coveralls, which also had attachments for heated gloves and socks. This was a great improvement over the earlier days, since where we were flying the temperature was routinely 40 below, fahrenheit. Over this suit came the flight coveralls, then a "Mae West," life jacket. This was topped off with the parachute harness. I carried my briefcase with the flight log, maps, Weems plotter, E6B computer and I also had earphones, an oxygen mask and the chest pack parachute, itself. Most of us did not wear the chest chute all the time, which clipped to the harness, but just placed it somewhere to be handy. Over enemy territory there was also a flack jacket and "tin" hat to wear. When I plugged in my earphones, throat mike, heated suit pigtail and oxygen supply line, I felt almost trapped, and had to be careful not to unplug something when I moved about.

The Group assembly, climb to altitude and channel crossing was routine, but then Dunlap developed engine problems, aborted and dropped out of formation before getting to the IP. However, he bombed a target of opportunity, an airfield at Diepholz and made it back to Great Ashfield OK with his faulty engine. As soon as Dunlap left the formation, Tripp pulled out of his Tail-End-Charlie spot in the Lead Flight and came in on the now vacant left wing of Audrain in the Low flight.

The lead Navigator, R.E. Pittis, reported a wind shift near Hanover and the loss of his flux gate compass. However, all of the Group made the IP.

Although not at the head of the bomber stream, our IP differed from the Group ahead, since we had a different target. I believe the Lead Squadron and the High Squadron turned slightly short of the IP, but the Low Squadron went on to the

Exact, briefed IP over Oschatz. This left a gap between the Low Squadron and the rest of the Group. The official report says that the Low Squadron was "straggling" 2 to 3 miles back of the group. Whatever the reason for this isolation, Jerry was quick to take advantage of the break in the Fortress' covering firepower, and attacked the Low Squadron 30 seconds before reaching the IP.

On the bomb run, the Group bombardier, E.J. Maloney, reported that the Mickey (radar) Operator picked up the target and the rate checks were made from 14 to 5 miles. Bombs away at 1027 hours with results believed good by him.

Although the Low Squadron Radar Navigator, R.W. Law, also picked up the target 40 miles away, he then had difficulty with his Mickey set with no returns obtainable. The C Squadron bombed on the B Squadron's smoke bombs. When the lead fort dropped its bombs it also dropped two smoke bombs, leaving smoke trails. However, the Squadron Leader had already ordered Group bombing when the fighters attacked.

On the bomb run, I noticed what I thought was unusual flack bursts close by. Normal flack was a black smoke, elongated vertically. These were light gray, rather small, and elongated horizontally. I had just started to describe them in the log when someone started firing his guns and I realized that there was an attack by fighters. By then, numerous gunners were firing, but no one had ever called out, "bandits," on the intercom. Neil Duell in Vaadi's crew also reported no one in his crew had called out bandits either. Those "odd flack" bursts were actually 20 mm cannon shells fired by the fighters and fuse-timed to go off in the formation.

The first attack was by 12 FW's and 3 ME 109's coming in abreast and level from our rear (6 o'clock). They fired those fused 20 mm shells. Ground crews later reported flack damage to some of the Forts, but this was, no doubt, shrapnel from these cannon shells. The Germans called this tactic their "Strumm" formation, we called it a "company front" attack. They then made another similar pass from the front (12 o'clock). Several then made pursuit curve passes, while others concentrated on the forts dropping out of formation or on other Squadrons. Several crewmen sighted one of the new German jets, but it didn't join in the fight. During this fight, an ME 109 seemed to pull up and stall at about 2 o'clock high. I lined up the right cheek gun, remembering the correct angle to aim, and pushed the firing lever. Nothing. I recharged (cocked) the gun and tried again. Again nothing happened. I opened up the 50 cal. Machine Gun and found a crooked link in the ammo chain, took it out and once more charged the gun - but, by now they were gone and the fight over. Sometime during all of this, probably after everyone else had dropped their bombs, Audrain ordered the bombs salvoed, and I reached over and pulled the salvo lever, because the Bombardier, Lewis, was quite occupied at the time with the left cheek gun. His chin turret had jammed and he was firing the left cheek gun because I was fooling with the right gun. We have no idea where the bombs landed. The official report states that most bombs fell in the middle of town and it



Says that everyone, including Audrain, released at 1027 hours, but I'm sure those from Kentucky Winner were late.

The escorting P-51's had also engaged the enemy and accounted for several shot down.

On the bomb run, Tipton's B-17 was knocked out during the first attack. The Co-Pilot, Ed Craig, recalls that they were hit in the radio room and the tail section, then sustained a burst in the main fuel tank. No's 1 and 4 were on fire, the turbos out and the controls were half shot away. They began a spilt-S, but the auto pilot held them level enough for all to jump. The Tail gunner, John, was killed on impact with the ground, but all the others were captured and sent to a prisoner camp. On the way to interrogation, Jack, the navigator, was hit in the mouth with a brick thrown by a civilian and had a tooth knocked out. Craig, the co-Pilot, and Glenn, the Bombardier were captured near Oschatz, then sent to Frankfort for interrogation before being sent to a POW camp. At the time, none of the rest of us saw any parachutes, but many of us reported that the plane had exploded.

Vaadi's aircraft was hit in the left wing tank at No. 2. Neil, the Chin Gunner, remembers the incident this way:

"After we were on fire, I remember checking the waist and ball turret. Tony, the Engineer, and I both checked out the fire. The Navigator had already left and we could see we were burning too bad to do anything about it. Tony motioned me to go, but I shook my head and motioned for him to go first. About then we were racked by more bullets. Tony climbed back into the upper turret and took our a FW that was riding on our wing. After this, Tony jumped and I followed. I free fell for what I guessed would take me to 10,000 ft., by then Leading Lady had already blown up. I landed right on the fighter field while the fighters were landing. The terrific wind caused me to be hurt when I hit the ground. I was completely paralyzed for about a month. And today, I walk with a limp. The Gestapo questioned me for about two days before sending me to Oschatz. Our gunners were especially nervous that day, (after two of the 385ths B-17s had collided the day before,) and so when they heard bail out, they didn't tarry....."

"(At Oschatz) We had quite a few fellows that had some bad infections and we could get nothing done, so a fellow from Kansas and an Englishman and I got some wire cutters and cut a hole through all the barb wire and fences and took off one night....(After contacting Americans) the fellow from Kansas put on a German uniform and with a driver drove right into the POW camp, loaded up those in a really bad way, and brought them back to the (American) hospital."

All had jumped OK before the Leading Lady blew up, but at the time only 5 parachutes were seen by the rest of us. Jino broke an ankle on landing. Oddly enough, this same Oschatz was the IP for the mission.

After the turn off the target and the Germans had left, I looked about to see who was left. In addition to Vaadi, up ahead, and Tipton, on our right wing, Tripp, was also miss-

ing from our left wing. In Tripp's crew both of the Leon's and Ed, Dan, Francis Henry and Robert were killed. Only Ed Batz and Richard were listed as missing. Since both of our wing men were gone, we were left as Tail-End-Charlie, so Audrain pulled up into Vaadi's vacant left wing spot to finish the mission.

Francis Aires, navigator from Platt's crew, but in the Low flight Lead on this raid, was shot four times, and badly wounded, yet continued to fire his guns and navigate back to Great Ashfield. He was awarded the Silver Star.

Up above, in the Lead Squadron, Krahn, on his 30th mission, was shot down on the second attack. He was right wing of the Low Element of the Low Flight Lead in No. 43-37871. His crew was: Pilot Robert A. Krahn, Co-Pilot Oris E. Lundy, Navigator Glynn D. Hull, Bombardier Russel W. Fritzing, Engineer Flem E. Williams, Radio Op. Paul G. Klimko, Ball Gun Doyle Green, Wasit Gun Lester R. Brown, Tail Gun Roy O. Werner.

Lt. Fritzing was shortly liberated from a German POW camp and reported that Williams, also a POW, had shot down a German fighter during the attack. All crew members survived. Krahn remembers it this way: "We heard radio reports that the low Squadron, still in its spacing turn, had come under fighter attack. The next thing I noticed was that all the P-51s of our Forward High cover had turned back to chase the enemy aircraft, leaving us exposed. The first indication of trouble came shortly thereafter when top turret, Flem Williams, started firing almost directly into the sun. Within seconds, fifteen FW-190's, three rows of 5-abreast, dived through the High Squadron and did a real number on us. One FW-190 passed just off my left wing tip. The pilot saluted me in passing and I returned his salute automatically. I thought his action was passing strange until I returned my attention to the cockpit to find my co-pilot, Oris Lundy, about to go into orbit, yelling, "We're on fire!" After a measure of calm returned to the cockpit, I was able to establish that we were dealing with a fire in #3 rather than a wing fire. Two 20mm shells in the accessory section had apparently ruptured all fluid lines and started a fierce fire which had already burned off the lower inside quadrant of the nacelle.

"Three or four more 20mm shells had penetrated the wing area aft of #3 while 13mm bullets had made an absolute shambles of the right wing root and bomb bay area. Thank God we were not carrying RDX that day. Because of the hits in the wing root and bomb bay, our electrical power began to go immediately, so we were unable to activate the fluid shutoff valves to #3. Probably for lack of any better ideas, I elected to stay in formation. At bombs away, I again surveyed the situation and found the fire about to eat its way through the fire wall and into the main wing area, which was surely swimming in fuel. I then decided to try for the Russian lines which were not too far away. From our bombing altitude, I pulled out of formation and headed east in a diving side-slip which I hoped would keep the fire out of the wing. At that time, our landing gear and partial flaps came

down because of electrical faults, and no action on our part was helpful. I realized our position was hopeless, I then leveled and trimmed the aircraft and ordered a bail-out. There were no objections! There are, however, a few minor points in which my aging memory differs from the official account of the time. The fifteen FW-190s which hit the High Squadron were not the usual blue/gray color. Some, if not all, and particularly the FW-190 that passed off my wing tip, were still in desert tan and sported bright red engine cowls. Although our encounter was brief, I have sufficient reason to remember those birds vividly."

Sherry in No. 48415, left wing of Lead Element of the High Flight of the High Squadron had his controls damaged in the second attack and had to drop out of formation. He nursed his B-17 to B-53, an emergency airfield in Meville, France and landed OK.

After the target, the Low Squadron was even further behind and therefore it headed for a different Rendezvous Point, cutting a corner, and joined another Group, the 34th. But all then made it back to Great Ashfield without further losses. The only incident being that Bensing of the Lead (548th) Squadron in No. 44-8415, also had to land at B-53 in France, but just to refuel.

The British had bombed Dresden the night before and this might have been the raid that started the well-known firestorm in Dresden, although the dates don't match the official date for that incident. Despite the bombs falling mainly in the city, itself, the target was meant to be the railroad south of town. This story accounts for why some of them unintentionally went astray this time.

It is well to conclude by quoting the entire "Narrative" paragraph from the official "Special Intelligence Report of Air Opposition" by Capt. John R. Murray, Assistant 385th Group S-2, written immediately after the mission, summarizing the enemy attack. It is quoted verbatim, including abbreviations:

"The 93A group was composed of the 385A, 385B, 385C squadrons and was leading the entire 3rd Air Division.

"At about 1015 hours as the group was in the vicinity of its IP (approximately 51 18 - 13 07) the first attack was made. As no information had been received that e/a were in the area, the group was about to make their bomb run in squadron formation. They had spread out, however. The 385A and 385B were quite close together but the 385C was about 2 to 3 miles to the rear.

"The first attack came as a surprise and was made on the 385C by 12 FW 190s and 3 MEI 09s attacking "Company Front" formation in 3 waves of 6 FW 190s, 6 FW190s, and 3 ME 109s in that order. Each came in from about 6 o'clock level, the first 6 peeling off to 9 o'clock low, the second 6 to 9 o'clock level and the third 3 to 9 o'clock high. This attack resulted in the loss of 3 b-17s from the rear of this squadron in numbers 3, 5 and 6 positions.

"The e/a rallied together again, appeared to start an attack on the 385A and 385B squadrons, who were by this time together and flying quite a tight formation, from 12 o'clock in groups of 3 or 4 but at about 600 to 700 yards away, turned to their left, and all but 2 went around and above the 385A and 385B, 2 going below this formation, without pressing an attack however. The e/a then attacked the 385C from 11 to 1 o'clock in groups of 3 or 4 but each e/a peeling off to make individual attacks in a pursuit curve. This attack resulted in some damage, but no losses, other than one B-17. (Krahn or the straggler? Ed.)

"After the second attack apparently the e/a attempted to rally again, but were engaged by P51s escorting the formation and a few other single attacks were made but in most cases at a straggling unidentified B-17 to the left side of the 385B and in some cases they came into or near the formation. This straggler did not come from our group and no one can explain why it was there. It was destroyed by the e/a.

"These single sporadic attacks were over at about 1040 in the vicinity of the RP (approximately 50 10 - 14 00) and by this time the remainder of the 385C had dropped back and joined the bomber group to the rear, the 34th.

"A few crews reported seeing a t/e jet e/a and one crew reported seeing 2 toward the end of the attack however they apparently did not attack. One of our gunners claimed to have fired at and damaged 1 jet e/a while it was making a tail attack on a straggling B-17, 700-800 yards to the rear of 385A squadron.

"There was also a report of 1 Ju 88 being seen several thousand feet below the formation and made no attempt to attack or approach the formation.

"On one of the individual attacks 1 rocket was fired from e/a. Also fused 20mm ammunition was apparently used by the e/a and the shells were seen to burst in front of the formation on the nose attack. (Actually on the 1st or tail attack. Ed.) Some crew members said that they when they first saw it thought it was very light flack (Me! Ed.)

"The e/a were reported to be gray-green or light blue in color. "Second tour crew members claimed that these enemy pilots displayed all the ability and fearlessness of the pilots who engaged our formations several months back when attacks were common.

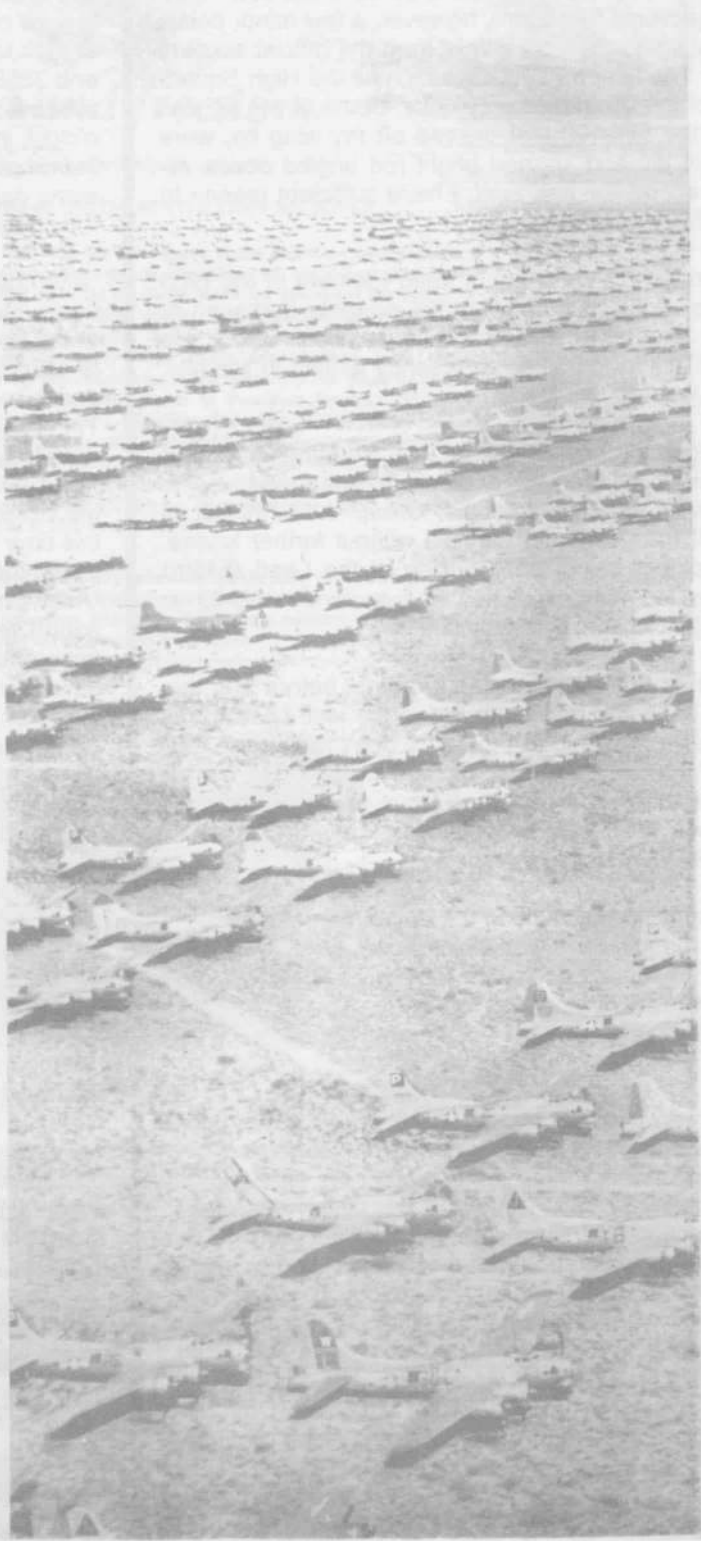
"We have heard rumors to the effect that 1 P51 was shot down by B-17 gunners. None of our gunners or other crew members report any such incident.



OFFICERS do the «>!. From h.I p. -  
own planes al Columbus. MS1 •  
shortage of mechanics wotM keep 'hens iiiel< hint- I-



ALL THAT ARE LEFT of %02ml T.s< tical Control Group  
which operates an air l>one ar.- six men («««>. The m.rma!  
complement: 1,300. Below: officers tuns their own propellers.





From: The Milwaukee Journal  
Thursday, 8 February 1945

1.000 BOMBERS HIT FOE CLOSE  
TO ALLIED LINES

Paris, France-(U.P.)- More than 1.000 Allied medium and fighter bombers struck through murky weather Thursday at German positions directly in front of Marshal Sir Bernard L. Montgomery's Dutch salient aimed around the Siegfried line toward the open plain of northwest Germany. From Montgomery's 21st army group area a front dispatch said American and British bombers flew through clouds and occasional drizzles all day to hammer German communications and troop concentrations in the area east of Nijmegen. Headquarters correspondents were able to report that the bombing - the scope and weight of which was revealed only by the front line dispatch - was dangerously close to the Allied lines - a tactical operation carried out despite unfavorable weather. SHAEF sources also revealed that the Germans, apparently on edge, kept the Nijmegen salient aglow Wednesday night with flares in large numbers, presumably to veal any Allied activity.

## U. S. Armada Hit Nazi Oil, Rail Centers

London, England-(/P)-An estimated 700 heavy bombers of the United States 8th air force Friday loosed one of the heaviest air blows ever dealt to western Germany, blasting industrial and rail targets at Gelsenkirchen and Muenster in the wake of a similar assault Wednesday on Wilhelmshaven, it was disclosed Saturday.

The armada, totaling upward of 1,000 planes with fighter escort, bored through antiaircraft fire which one Fortress division colonel said was "as intense as hell and as thick as raindrops." In the day's operations, which included attacks on northern France and Belgium, losses were 10 heavy bombers, two medium ones and five fighters as against 38 enemy fighters shot down. Five heavy bombers were lost in the Wilhelmshaven raid.

The assault on Gelsenkirchen, where synthetic oil works make that city a target almost as important as the Ploesti oil fields in Rumania, evidently was aimed at wiping out the Nazis' fuel sources. Gelsenkirchen, on the Dortmund-Hamm railway, about 20 miles west of Dortmund, has been bombed 45 times since the start of the war.

Muenster, which has been hit 23 times, is an important railway cen-

ter about 60 miles northeast of Duesseldorf, which was pounded by the RAF Wednesday night.

British Mosquito bombers, in a quick followup to the American daylight raids, attacked targets, not immediately named, in western Germany Friday night, the air ministry said Saturday.

As London experienced its fourth consecutive night alert Friday, Air Minister Sir Archibald Sinclair

### Rome Raided, Claim

London, England-(7P)^The German high command, repeating earlier broadcasts of the Berlin and Rome radios, asserted Saturday that "enemy aircraft last night attacked Vatican City in Rome." There was no confirmation from any Allied source that any such attack had occurred.

gave the first official description of the new "secret plane" used by the Germans in recent attacks on London. He said it was the Messerschmitt-410, a twin engined fighter-bomber which at its fastest speed flashes across the sky "like a scalded cat."

Stockholm, Sweden-(/P)-The Rome correspondent of the Stockholm Tidningen, returning to Sweden, said Friday that Allied bombings had left a ring of destruction around Rome, virtually isolating the city, but that the interior of the city was untouched by the explosives. On the way home he passed through Milan, which he said was "utterly destroyed."

Milwaukee Sentinel Saturday 6-11-1943

EDITOR'S NOTE: Vince Masters sent this earlier version of the Hardlife Herald. It welcomes members to the Cleveland Reunion in 1972! We're printing a few pages. Note the price of drinks. Cost of registration doesn't seem to be listed.



*I think we should continue as long  
As we get a good turnout 100 people???*

**385<sup>TH</sup>**

**BOMBARDMENT GROUP HEAVY**

385th BOMB GROUP

REUNION OFFICERS

President - Ruel G. Weikert  
6306 Green Leaves Road  
Indianapolis, Indiana 46220

Secretary - Frank B. Walls  
RD #1, Westwind Hill  
Reynoldsville, Pennsylvania 15851

Treasurer - James L. Cooper  
9616 David Drive  
Garfield Heights, Ohio 44125

Saturday Evening, July 22, 1972

7:00 PM - 1:00 AM GREAT HALLS - Parlor 1 and 2

7:00 - 8:00 PM Cocktail Hour

Cocktails at our "Cash Bar", same as Friday night, with canapes and hors d'oeuvres. The Bar will be closed during dinner but will open again from about 9 till 1 AM.

8:00 PM Hot Buffet Dinner

Eat as much as you like. You may return to the serving table as often as you like as long as the buffet remains out.

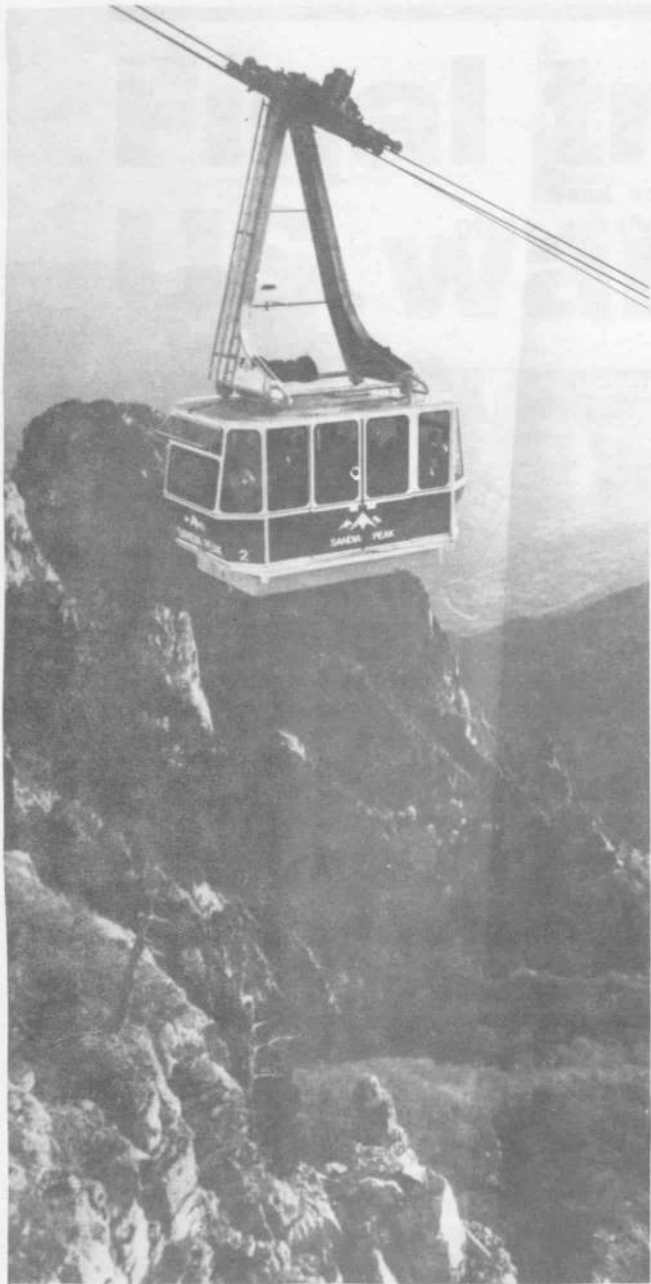
9:00 PM Program furnished by Frank B. Walls.

9:30 PM - 1:00 AM Dancing and fun time.

Music provided by the Dave Stacy Orchestra.



**ALBUQUERQUE, NEW MEXICO  
THE  
“LAND OF ENCHANTMENT”**



**Sandia Peak Tram:** The longest tramway in North American whisks visitors to the top of 10,378-foot High Sandia Peak.



**Albuquerque's Old Town Plaza:** The serene village which has been the focal point of community life since 1706.



**Balloons:** Colorful hot air balloons dot Albuquerque's clear blue skies throughout the year and have been a great source of identity and attraction for our city. Albuquerque's climate and terrain make it ideal for this colorful sport. Every October, Albuquerque is the site of the International Balloon Fiesta.

**DOUBLETREE HOTEL ALBUQUERQUE**

201 Marquette NW  
Albuquerque, NM 87102  
Phone: (505) 247-3344 Fax: (505) 247-7025

**Welcome to the 385<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group Memorial April 3 - April 8, 2001**

Please fill in the requested information and send to the address listed above.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Names of additional guests staying in room: \_\_\_\_\_

Street Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_

State: Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Daytime Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Arrival Day and Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Departure Day and Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Please check the type of accommodations desired. **All accommodations are not guaranteed and are subject to availability at check in.** Confirmation will be sent after receipt of reservation.

- one person; one bed \$87.00 plus current tax (10.8125%)
- two persons; one bed \$87.00 plus current tax (10.8125%)
- two persons; two beds \$87.00 plus current tax (10.8125%)
- smoking  non-smoking

**Reservations must be received by March 12, 2001. After this date rooms will be based on the hotel's prevailing rate and availability.**

We are providing one complimentary parking pass per room per night to be received at check - in.

Reservations must be accompanied by a guarantee for the first night's lodging via check or Credit Card.

American Express  Diners Club  Visa  Mastercard  Carte Blanche  Discover

Card Number Expiration Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Card Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Check Enclosed Amount: \_\_\_\_\_  
Deposits are refundable if canceled 24 hours in advance

Please call in any special requests to (505) 247-3344.

**Checkin Time is 3PM.** Accommodations prior to that time will be handled on a space available basis.  
Luggage storage is available.

**Checkout Time is 12PM.** Luggage storage is available.

**We at the DoubleTree Hotel welcome you and look forward to having you with us!**

GREAT YARMou-TH MfgCUR'

JUNE 23 2000

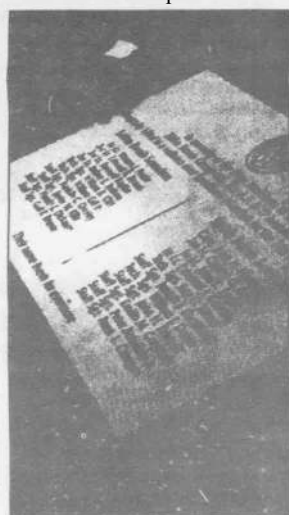
## News

# Final tribute to US war heroes

**AROUND 70 American air force veterans paid tribute to the 21 men who died in a wartime mid-air collision over Reedham marshes more than 50 years ago.**

The veterans were joined by family and around 100 villagers at the Reedham war memorial for a service of remembrance and the dedication of a new commemorative plaque carrying the names of the men who lost their lives in the 1944 crash between two American B17G Flying Fortress bombers.

The service was organised by Worlingham aviation writer Ian McLachlan who has studied the crash site at the marshes since the 1960s. He said the afternoon was like "the end of a chapter".



**LOST LIVES:** The war memorial plaque.



**IN REMEMBRANCE:** American Guards at the dedication of Reedham's war memorial plaque.

Pictures: SUPPLIED by JAMES BASS

"I've been working on this for over 35 years," said Mr McLachlan, 53. "This service fulfils a dream for me. I felt the men who died in the crash should be honoured now because security measures during the war prevented anything being done for them at the time."

Two coaches brought the veterans to the site where their former colleagues were remembered as part of a weekend reunion for those who served at Great Ashfield, in Suffolk, during the war.

Members of the American Armed Guard from Mildenhall attended together with those from the Acle, Brundall and Reedham and district branches of the Royal British Legion.

The two bombers, part of the 385th bomb group, collided on the afternoon of February 21 1944. All 21 crew were killed, including a crew who had just completed their 25th and final mission. Led by Capt John Hutchison, they would have returned home if fate not intervened.

Both were returning from a raid on an aircraft depot in northern Germany and were preparing to land at Great Ashfield when engine failure took hold of the plane flown by Lt Warren Pease. With visibility hindered by cloudy and icy skies, the crippled Fortress veered off course and collided with Capt John Hutchison's bomber, sending both planes plummeting into Reedham marshes.

Over the last 30 years, the wreckage of the planes has gradually been recovered. Channel Four's Time Team visited the site last year to help shed light on the history of the crash with most of the recovered wreckage placed in storage.

A light aircraft flew over the village half-way through the service as a mark of respect.

American veteran Albert Audette, who served with the 385th bomb group as a radio gunner, said Saturday's service had made the trip across the Atlantic well worth it.

The 78-year-old said: "I thought it was a tremendous service, and I'm looking forward to coming back here again."



This poem was written by a Marine stationed in Okinawa Japan. Following is his request. I think it is reasonable....  
PLEASE, Would you do me the kind favor of sending this to as many people as you can? Christmas will be coming soon and some credit is due to our U.S. service men and women for our being able to celebrate these festivities.

Let's try in this small way to pay a tiny bit of what we owe. Make people stop and think of our heroes, living and dead, who sacrificed themselves for us. Please, do your small part to plant this small seed.

'Twas the night before Christmas,  
He lived all alone,  
In a one bedroom house made of  
Plaster and stone.

I had come down the chimney  
With present to give,  
And to see just who  
In this home did live.

I looked all about, A strange sight I did see,  
No tinsel, Nor presents,  
Not even a tree.

No stocking by mantle,  
Just boots filled with sand,  
On the wall hung pictures  
Of far distant lands.

With medals and badges,  
Awards of all kinds,  
A sober thought  
Came through my mind.

For this house was different,  
It was dark and dreary,  
I found the home of a soldier,  
Once I could see clearly.

The soldier lay sleeping,  
Silent, alone,  
Curled up on the floor  
In this one bedroom home.

The face was so gentle,  
The room in such disorder,  
Not how I pictured  
A United States soldier.

Was this the hero  
Of whom I'd just read?  
Curled up on a poncho,  
The floor for a bed?

I realized the families  
That I saw this night,  
Owed their lives to these soldiers  
Who are willing to fight.

Soon round the world,  
The children would play,  
And grownups would celebrate  
A bright Christmas Day.

They all enjoyed freedom  
Each month of the year,  
Because of the soldiers, Like the one lying here.

I couldn't help wonder  
How many lay alone,  
On a cold Christmas Eve  
In a land far from home.

The very thought  
Brought a tear to my eye  
I dropped to my knees  
And started to cry.

The soldier awakened  
And I heard a rough voice,  
"Santa don't cry,  
This life is my choice;

I fight for freedom,  
I don't ask for more,  
My life is my God,  
My country, my corps."

The soldier rolled over  
And drifted to sleep,  
I couldn't control it,  
I continued to weep.

I kept watch for hours,  
So silent and still  
And we both shivered  
From the cold night's chill.

I didn't want to leave  
On that cold, dark, night,  
This guardian of honor  
So willing to fight.

Then the soldier rolled over,  
With a voice soft and pure,  
Whispered, "Carry on Santa,  
It's Christmas Day, all is secure."

One look at my watch,  
And I knew he was right.  
"Merry Christmas my friend,  
And to all a good night."

# LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dear Ed,

Received your note yesterday and I've been thinking of one more thing that Sgt. Ray Baer had told me.

What he said was that just before the end of the war, the Russians were grouping GIs and they were not being heard from again. Rumor spread quickly that they were being made prisoners of the USSR and would be used for trade bait at a later date.

Upon being released Sgt. Baer said that he got out of Russia very quickly, I think he said a B-17 from the Russian sector he was back in England.

I hope I've shed some light on 385th involvement with the Russian Detachment. I wish that I had remembered this harder since now, five years after his death, it is important.

I suppose that I could write to the AF Historical Research Agency at Maxwell AFB but since I am retired now, their reply usually takes one year.

As a Cardinal fan with one win under our belt, we are happy here in St. Louis but all of us know one win does not make a series.

Hope this finds you and the better half well,

Blue skies,  
Allen P. Holtman MSgt, USAF Ret  
705 Mendocina Ct #12  
Florissant, MO 63031-6093

Dear Ed,

Just another one of my short notes to you, it seems that I may be setting a precedence here as this will be the second time in a row that I answer a question from the Bulletin Board. On page 4 you ask "Is this an early model B-17?" No, I believe this to be the XB-19 which was produced, if I am not mistaken by Douglas. The one thing that I remember is that it was pathetically under powered but it was an experiment and lead to aeronautical research for later bombers and transports. The photo is printed just a little too lightly for me to make a positive identification but but I feel sure enough to say XB-19.

Since Douglas was absorbed by McDonnell and McDonnell-Douglas by Boeing, inform Jan, our printer, to write for

the information she wants to:

Michael J. Lombardi  
Historian, The Boeing Company  
Historical Archives M/S 4H-02  
PO Box 3707  
Seattle, WA 98124-2207

Thanks for running my submission of the 385th BG Russian Involvement. Like I said I wish I had remembered more but all of my contact with Sgt Baer came in late '94 and early 1995 before he died and no one, until you, asked me anything about it, so I might have mixed two or more different stories that I heard.

Incidentally, I met a man from Fargo that knows you, he was attending the 92nd reunion here at the time the Cardinals were doing well. It did not last long, anyhow he said that they amended their charter to include anyone ever serving with the 92nd, from WWII to present, so they want me to join. Also they want me to write articles for the Newsletter. That's a trip!

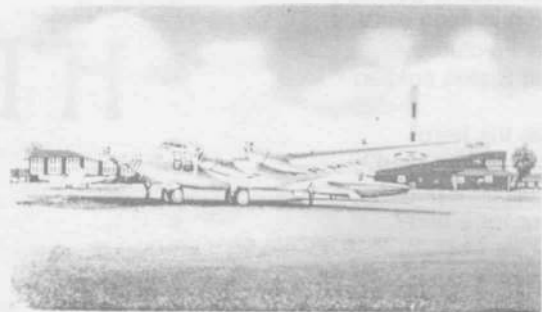
Blue skies,  
Allen Holtman, MSgt, USAF Ret  
705 Mendocina Ct #12  
Florissant, MO 63031-6093

Ed,

Noted the shot of the B-15 "Old 89" on the bottom right of page 4 of the latest "Herald". Long before wartime bond tours, the AAF (then Army Air corp) sent her around to let the public know where their depression tax dollars were going.

Clip one of the attached is a photo (could not be reproduced) that a friend's aunt took while the ship was in the Great Lakes region. The photo is dated 1939.

Clip two is from a post card study which appeared in the summer of 1995 "Friends Journal" an Air Force Museum Foundation periodical.



As far as I know, only one B-15 was built (35-277). It's lackluster performance regulated it to a wartime cargo carrying role but many of it's innovative features became standardized in later fortress and Superfortress airplanes.

Adrian Narducci  
[Narducci@velocity.net](mailto:Narducci@velocity.net)

Dear Ed:

Noticed the item "Can Anyone Recall" in the September issue of the Hardlife Herald. As you can see from the enclosed , the people of the Netherlands do remember!

Unfortunately the photo copy does not do justice to the colors in the original; especially, the Red and White Checkered Tails of the 385th.

Anyone interested in the Manna/Chowhound Brotherhood should contact the US chairman, Bob Cooperman. His address is on the enclosed letter which I received in September

Appreciate your continued efforts as Editor!


Sincerely,  
Bob Reeve



## INTERNATIONAL MANNA/CHOWHOUND BROTHERHOOD



H.R.H. PRINCE BERNHARD  
OF THE NETHERLANDS  
HONORARY PRESIDENT



BOB COOPERMAN, CHAIRMAN U.S.A.  
17 ALDEN AVE., SYOSSET, NY 11791

CLYDE COLE, DIRECTOR  
BOB VALLIERE, DIRECTOR

REESE MARTIN, DIRECTOR  
IN MEMORIAM


SEPTEMBER 18, 2000

Dear Chowhounder:

The enclosed proclamation is an exact, though smaller, replica of the one which was presented to the 8th Air Force Museum in Georgia. You had asked for a personal copy which I thought would have been sent earlier than this, but better late than never. Peter Groenveld made these for us and he told me that he was quite busy with photographic work in Holland. I hope you frame it for your own satisfaction and enjoy it in the knowlegde that the Dutch people appreciate, to this day, everything you did for their freedom.

The cost has been absorbed by our organization's treasury and need not concern you.

Best Wishes ,



Bob Cooperman





490 BG



# food and freedom



452 BG

OPERATION CHOWHOUND hi. - 8th MAY 1945

A TRIBUTE TO THE 8th UNITED STATES ARMY AIR FORCE

After the fierce winter of 1944-1945 the inhabitants of the still German-occupied Western part of the Netherlands were at the brim of starvation. Having supported the Allies by going on strike the Dutch Railways prevented the enemy from sending troops to the battle zone during Operation Market-Garden in September 1944. in retaliation the Germans denied the people of the Netherlands the same means of transportation to carry badly needed food from the agricultural east to the densely populated west of the country. After pleas by Her Majesty Queen Wilhelmina of the Netherlands to President Franklin Delano Roosevelt and Prime-Minister Sir Winston Churchill General Dwight D Eisenhower, Supreme Commander Allied Expeditionary Forces was ordered to arrange for relief. Bomber Command, Royal Air Force and the 8th American Army Air Force were detailed to carry out missions of mercy to save the Dutch. Between 1st and 8th May Boeing B17 Flying Fortresses flew 2189 missions, dropping 4,155.8 tons of food at nine drop zones.



385 BG

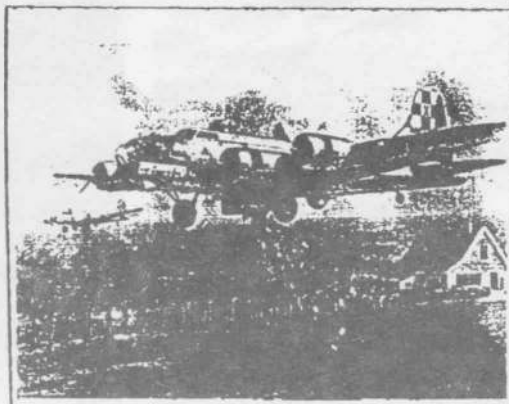


95 BG

The people of the Netherlands gratefully acknowledge the help provided by the men who fought to free mankind and who finished their war by bringing salvation rather than destruction. Thanks to their efforts millions of people survived in freedom once again.



100 BG



3 SF



388 BG

## we will never forget.

Bernhard, Prince of the Netherlands  
President, International Manna/Chowhound Brotherhood

*Bernhard*  
On behalf of the Food and Freedom Foundation

Ave de Jong (chairman) Hans Oudemyster (secretary) Piet Souwer (treasurer)

Fraas-Cayana (member) Raaij Gesteira (member) Ho de Jong (member)

*[Signatures of Ave de Jong, Hans Oudemyster, Piet Souwer, Fraas-Cayana, Raaij Gesteira, Ho de Jong]*



'77 IX



34 BG



390 BG



96 BG

Dear Verne,

Enclosed is \$100.00 for membership dues. Let me know if you need more.

Had a wonderful chat with Ed Stern this AM.

On May 2nd, the lead plane of the 549th (with me in the left seat and the chaplain in the engineer's spot) was fired on and sustained damage from a German ground crew, which we could see clearly from our altitude of 400', just high enough to clear the church steeple in Hiversum.

We got credit for a mission - our 22nd.

Yours,

Milt Semer  
1200 18th St NW, Fourth floor  
Washington, D.C. 20036-2506

Ed,

In the September, 2000 Hardlife Herald, Bulletin Board, you wondered whether we were the last group hit by enemy fire in WW II. You are right - we were. And, I believe you mentioned it in an edition of the Hardlife Herald about three years ago.

It took place on May 2, 1945. Even though a temporary armistice had been declared, our group, the 385th BG was fired on by anti-aircraft gunners. We were in the 549th Squadron, as part of the food drop mission, flying over Schiphol airfield, at a height of about 100 feet. I believe the plane behind us received some slight damage. I am sure that others will be filling you in with the same information.

A sidelight, which may be of interest to you. That day for the food drop, the bomb bays were jury rigged with plywood to contain, and drop, the sacks of food. Well, after the drop, I tried to close the bomb bay doors. The idiot light told me that the doors had not been closed, so I made my way back to the bomb bay area to see what was wrong. To my horror, I saw our Flight Engineer, Gerald Schaul, hanging head down in the open bomb bay doors! Two crew members were, each holding on to one leg, while he was busily trying to cut some snagged ropes, which were part of the jury rigged system. By that time, we were up to about 5,000 feet, and there was nothing between Schaul and Holland, except 5,000 feet of air! I signaled, frantically, to the two crew members who were hanging on to his legs, to pull him up out of there. They did, and I went back up front, and, somehow got the doors closed, kind of crunching them in the process.

As part of this rather long story, our pilot, Lee Marcussen, who was the only member of the crew who was older than I was, let his hair down and buzzed Holland. He was quite conservative, and would not do anything of that type ordi-

narily. At any rate, it was the only time I have seen cows gallop - headlong into canals, at that!

All I really wanted to tell you was that you were right - we were the last group to be fired on in WW II. Take care.

Oscar Sinibaldi  
Capt. US Army  
(2nd Lt US Army Air Corps, at that time.)

Dear Ed:

Enclosed my dues for the current year as per news letter XVII No. 3. I also am recommending a book on WW II in Europe.

The Mighty Eighth in WW II. Author - BG J. Kemp McLaughlin. The book covers the operations of the 92nd Bomb Group which was in the I division, Triangle "B" on the vertical stab, (would soon change to 482 Bomb Group). It is one of the better books concerning the heavy bombing and bombers of the 8th AF.

Sincerely,

Lamar Peebles, Maj USAF Ret  
PO Box 1773  
Coos Bay, OR 97420

Dear Ed,

I have been corresponding with Jacques Leroux in France for more than a year as a result of a letter he had in the Hardlife Herald requesting information on lost aircrew members.

Perhaps you can help me with some information. Jacques has been collecting data about B-17s and other Allied Planes that were shot down over Europe and France.

Jacques has asked about the December 31, 1943 mission to Bordeaux/Cognac. His question is: Was the bombing done by sight or Radar H2X or H2S. Perhaps in your records you have some information or there is a bombardier out there somewhere who was on the mission and he will remember the details of the bomb run.

Any information can be sent to me or to Jacques via e-mail or to my address.

Elmer Snow [snowwelmer@juno.com](mailto:snowwelmer@juno.com)  
Jacques Leroux [jac.leroux@wanadoo.fr](mailto:jac.leroux@wanadoo.fr)

We still have fond memories of the reunion in Fargo in 1989. Jean and I think it was the best one we attended.

Warmest regards,  
Elmer Snow  
27 Reinert Dr  
Topton PA 19562-16

Ed,

I hope that all is well with you folks in Fargo.

A picture of the museum addition being built in Perle. The first floor and basement will be the museum and the upper floor a music room. When it is finished, the cost will be close to one million dollars.

Also a picture of a small service at the 385th memorial when Ruth and I visited there during October.

While the group was in Perle during June, a Mr. Gilbert Schmit played the organ two evenings during dinner hours 304 hours each night. He also will play for any Americans who visit Luxembourg. I talked to him when we visited Perle and he would like a copy of our newsletter that features the group trip to Perle. A one shot mailout.

Please send to:  
Gilbert Schmit  
12 Rue Batty Weber  
Differdange  
Luxembourg

Thank, Ed.

Sincerely,



Dear Ed,

Many thanks for the May and July issues of HH received yesterday.

You may have already had some feedback from those on the European trip that the Memorial to the Hutchison and Pease crews was dedicated while they were here and I enclose a picture of the Guard of Honor plus one of the memorial itself. It was a magnificent day and the Service went splendidly. Tom Newton spoke on behalf of the 385th and I enclose a copy of my own contribution to the Service - I've also enclosed a newspaper cutting for inclusion in HH. Please credit the Great Yarmouth Mercury.

The Dedication Service was only possible thanks to the generosity of Redingham Parish Council who underwrote the financing. From donations received since the appeal in the May 2000 HH plus the generosity of those on the Tour, I now have 436.00 pounds - some \$640.00 - to go towards the cost. Through HH, I'd like to express my deepest thanks to those who have contributed.

Best Wishes, Ian







Oktober 4, 2000

Henny Kwik  
A. Dubcekplaats 7  
2332 HX Leiden  
Holland

TO:

Mr. Ed Stern  
Editor "Hardlife Herald"  
P. O. Box 9466  
Fargo, North Dakota 58106-9466  
USA.

Dear Ed,

1. Thank you very much for your letter of September 12. I was surprised to receive this letter. To say the truth: Bob Silver is a very enthusiastic man, because he wrote me a very long letter. I wrote him back and in a time of two weeks I hope to send him more details about airwar and (of course) the food missions as took place in April/May 1945. I can do this, because I am interested in air war subjects since 1945. In 1963 I was the founder of "The Documentation Group 1939-1945", was Editor of the Newsletter for about 10 years.

Then, in February 1975 I left this Group, because I felt there were many documentalists who had specialised in only air war. So I was the founder in February 1975 of a new Group, born as "The Air War Study Group 1939-1945". It has many members in for instance England, Australia, Germany, Belgium and of course in Holland.

I was Secretary/treasurer from 1975 to 1999. Then after so many years I decided to stop these activities and all the time I was Editor also of "Bulletin air war" of the same Group. My wife Tiny stood always beside me when we had to produce our Newsletter every month with 28 to 30 pages. I was very lucky a younger member in our Group was willing to take over the work. And you as Editor knows what it means to produce Newsletters.

2. My hobbies on air war subjects are:

The 8th Air Force (England) - The Food Missions - Lots of Video Documentaries WWII, specially Airwar over Europe. Beside these I am very interested in the Jeep. I love that little car since I saw them for the first time when I as 16-year old boy on May 8, 1945, when Canadian Troops entered my hometown Leiden as Liberators.

Through my work as Editor of "Bulletin Air war" for many years I made many friends in England and USA, for instance Editors from Associations etc.

I visited almost 8 or 9 times former USAAF-bases in England, I own many documents and photographs and I was also 2 times at Great Ashfield. I never before saw your Newsletter, I even did not know until three weeks ago that there was a 385th News Bulletin

On Sunday 28 May 2000, my wife Tiny and I were at the ceremonies at US Military Cemetery Margraten in the South of Holland; we were invited there by the 492 Bomb Group Association. We are mostly 2 or 3 times a year at Margraten. Then, in the silence we remember that many years ago young American soldiers gave their lives to let us live in freedom!

I own all complete files of the Margraten Cemetery in parts of every Bomb- and Fighter Groups from the 8th Air Force, buried there. I find in my documents that at Margraten are buried 13 members of the 385th and on the Wall of Missing 50 names of 385th members.

In the US Military Cemetery Henri-Chappelle (about 40 miles from Margaten in Belgium) there are 6 385th members buried and 6 names on the Wall of Missing.

3. By the way: About the Jeep hobby of mine: If you find even magazine-photographs etc. on which is a Jeep: think of me in Holland, please!

4. About the Food Missions: Since I saw Lancasters and B-17s saw dropping food on the Valkenburg Air Base (two miles of my home) I was interested in the Food Missions. I own now many documents and photographs etc.

One of the photographs made from another B-17 on May 1, 1945 shows a B-17 dropping food over Valkenburg. This photograph became a very famous one. In 1993 I thought: "Who flew this plane, who were the members?".

I went on writing letters etc and after more letter and more letters to England and USA I at last knew from three members their addresses in the States and I knew than also they were alive!

I of course wrote them letters and the end of the story??

On May 5, 1995 we celebrated our Liberation Day (as liberated from Nazi-Germany) and I was a member of the Committee organising the big Parade through the streets of our town.... and the three members of the Valkenburg B-17 plane were also in our town and sitting in an original 1944 Jeep were in front of the Parade. And thousands of citizens waved to them very emotionally. They saw them as "their heroes"....To say the truth: I that day was also very emotionally.

5. If you want, I can send you now and then an article or something else, that you maybe can use in your "Hardlife Herald". In this letter you'll find some of it.


Well, to return to your letter my question: On what day you was at the food drop mission over Holland and on what Airfield the dropping took place?

And this question: I know ground personnel was 'invited' to go with the food missions, but how were they chosen. Officially or as friends of the flying members of the bombers?

That is all for now, hope to hear from you again, all the best and if you want to know more, please let me know!

Your (new) friend from Holland,

Henny Kwik



EDITOR'S NOTE: More about Ruby's Raiders.

Dear Ian,

What a nice surprise to receive your kind letter. I really appreciate you taking the time to correspond.

First of all, thank you very much for your response for Ruby Newell. I believe that you are correct in saying that Ms. Newell did indeed pass away a few years ago. In fact, now that you mention it, I think that her passing was announced in a past 8th Air force Journal. I'm going to go through some of my back issues and see what I can find.

The reason for my interest in Ruby Newell was to complete a project that I started last Spring at the 385th BG Reunion in Savannah, Georgia. I commissioned an artist friend of mine by the name of John Vaio to paint a profile rendering of "Ruby's Raiders" for me. I took the painting to the Reunion and had all the Great Ashfield lads sign it for me. I wanted to cap off the project by locating Ms. Newell to sign it as well. A nice touch. But alas, a bit too late

The good news is that I have been sending my painting off to some of the original crew members for signature. They have been delighted to sign it for me. I think that they are excited that someone of my generation cares about them. In regards to your kind offer about photographs, the answer is, yes!!!! I would love to get anything I can on the ship!!! Of course I will be happy to compensate any costs to you. Can you clue me in on one thing about "Ruby's Raiders???" Did she ever carry the red-checked tail that was the Group's marking at the end of the war???

I am currently working on a project for the 356th FG Association. I am going to write a full-blown unit history on them over the next couple of years. Do you have any material or photos on the 356th???

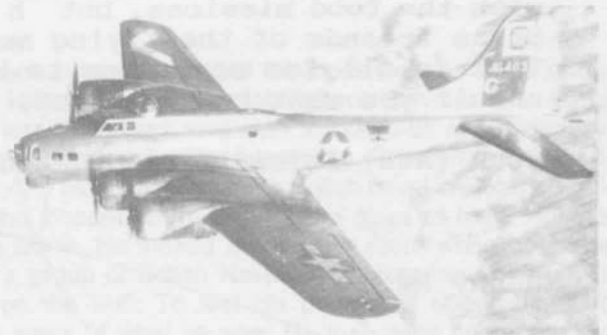
Thank you very much for your kind words regarding the 8th AFHS PX. We have a lot of fun doing it. Tons of work, but ample rewards. We enjoy a great deal of success with your two books (8th AF Bomber/Fighter Stories). You have a superb storytelling ability and a great sense of historical knowledge. There are a lot of "hacks" out there, but you shine above the rest, Ian. I will take consideration on your "Final Flights" book. Motorbooks/Zenith carries it here in the States

Hope we can meet one day, in fact I am coming over to England in a few weeks to visit with Roger Freeman and some of the local 356th FG historians. It's going to be a quick trip, but would love to plan a visit some other time. I work as a Flight Control Dispatcher for Northwest Airlines here in Minnesota, so traveling is pretty easy.

Again my thanks to you, Ian, for taking the time to drop me a note. Keep 'em flyin' over there and drop me a note when you get a chance. If you do the e-mail thing, my address is [monica\\_cronin@corvel.com](mailto:monica_cronin@corvel.com)

Cheers,

Mark S. Copeland  
16264 Goodview Trail  
Lakeville, MN 55044  
(612) 953-0121





Hello Ian:

Another 2 E & E reports from Lt. Newcooper's crew. Could you send me the mission report, because I'm still not too sure which was the target. The B.T.G. Davis says on his E & E: airfield in the North of France. (Mery sur Oise) and the radio operator M.T. Church on his E & E says target: fuel dumps. So which is it? Can you help? Plane serial number was #42-31598.

I'm hoping you will find a picture of the A/C and maybe even one of the crew (or some of the crew). It would be very helpful for my research because as soon as I received the letter of Le Nichot with his details of the crash, I will get in touch with the town hall of that locality. Their archives office might have details as well on the fall of the A/C and who knows maybe a photo or two. And if not, I would ask them to place an appeal in the local bulletin. It always brings results. You can't imagine the "treasures" folks keep from the war years. And they are very generous in sharing those "treasures". And of course, maybe the wishes of the crew through their contacts with their helpers in France, have received photos of their crashed A/C. But alas so far the bombardier O'Day and the ROG haven't answered my letter. But Ian, C'est la vie!!

Take good care and hoping to hear from you soon.

Rene' Psarolis  
24 Cragston Ave  
Ayr, ayrshire

From Ian McLachlan

Dear Rene,

I've been away this week and picked up your phone message when I got back.

Since we spoke on the phone this evening, I've searched my files for more information on the 2nd August 1944 mission to Paris (Gennevilliers) and, as mentioned, enclose a copy of the Intelligence Report submitted to the Public relations Office which describes the results of the raid as "Generally Poor".

The mission narrative relates that the 385th put up 12 aircraft in "A" Group, 13 in "B" with 4 in a composite with the 94th and 447th. There were no problems for "A" Group during assembly nor en-route to target although the let down to bombing altitude occurred 7 minutes earlier than briefed and the course was altered 20 miles to the west to get below cloud. The 385th "A" were first over target, Gennevilliers, Paris, and the run in from IP to target was 1500 feet below the briefed altitude because of cloud. Although "A" Group were first over they didn't release and went around again becoming the last to release. Records for the "B" Group complain about formation keeping with the high group having trouble with airspeed and finding it difficult to

stay behind the lead group while the low group faced a reverse situation and had trouble keeping up. The course in was at 1900 with only a little flak encountered. Plan over target was lead, low high but this got messed up for reasons given earlier and the low group fell behind near the IP and the high group went over with a 40 second interval. The rally became confused by second runs and the "B" Group went over the target again so element leaders could gather their flock. Bombing results weren't brilliant - the "A" Group hit a bridge but lost Newcooper's ship. "B" Group's bombs fell in fields and on unidentified buildings. The load carried was 250 lb GP. Nine ships took minor flak damage and 2 were seriously hit. Newcooper was apparently #6 in "A" Group and seems to have been hit by flak on the bomb run and salvoed 1 minute before target which possibly caused others to release early and their bombs to fall short.

In a brief note to me dated January, 1986, Edward F O'Day, Bombardier on the Newcooper crew, described the account as "erroneous" but he didn't go into detail although he specifically mentioned the courage of 2/Lt Russell J. Katz, the co-pilot. I hope others who flew that mission might be able to offer their recollections so will copy this to Ed Stern, Editor of Hardlife Herald. You mentioned you'd been in touch with the Newcooper family and that Luther is too ill to offer his own recollections. Like you, I wish him well but won't make further contact and hope that others will be able to provide a picture of his aircraft and crew.

My thanks for the copies of the E & E reports submitted by Jack Davis (Ball Turret) and James Lindquist (Navigator) plus the account from Marion Church (Radio). If we can get pictures and further information, it may be a story I can use in another volume of "Eighth Air Force bomber Stories" but, at the very least, it will add to the history of the 385th.

Best wishes, Ian

Greetings: (From Regensburg)

We'd received a much better reception than we did in 1943-44!

Interesting town nevertheless. I think the ME 109 plant makes BMWs now and they saved the stained glass windows in cathedrals from bombs.

Charlie Price  
Cassopolis, Michigan





Dear Mr. Stern,

As you know, my father died on December 17, 1999 after a long illness of about 3 years. To the end, dad maintained an avid interest in the 385th Bomb Group and would talk at length of the good times he had at the reunions. He missed not being able to be more active in the last few years of his life.

I am enclosing a copy of the eulogy that was read at Dad's funeral. Along with the eulogy we also read a poem called High Flight that was written by an American flyer in 1941. If you would like to print these in an upcoming copy of the Hardlife Herald, please feel free to do so.

The 385th was very important to Dad. I know he would be pleased to have this included in the Hardlife Herald if space allows

Sincerely,

Lindley R. Weikert

### Eulogy

We'd like to start with a poem that was written by a young American aviator who enlisted in the Royal Canadian Air Force very early in World War II. He included this poem in a letter to his parents not long before he died in the line of duty in 1941.

#### *High Flight*

*By John Gillespie Magee, Jr.*

Oh, I have slipped the surly bonds of earth  
 And danced the skies on laughter-silvered wings;  
 Sunward I've climbed, and joined the tumbling mirth  
 Of sun-split clouds...and done a hundred things  
 You have not dreamed of...wheeled and soared and swung  
 High in the sunlit silence. Hov'ring there,  
 I've chased the shouting wind along, and flung  
 My eager craft through footless halls of air.  
 Up, up the long, delirious, burning blue  
 I've topped the windswept heights with easy grace  
 Where never lark, or even eagle flew.  
 And, while with silent, lifting mind I've trod  
 The high untrespassed sanctity of space  
 Put out my hand, and touched the face of God.

We are here today to remember and celebrate the life and final homecoming of Ruel Gerber Weikert.

Ruel was a gentleman in every sense of that courtly word. He was gracious, and generous, and kind, and upright, and honorable.

Ruel was not only a gentleman but also a GENTLE MAN. When he needed to evict some small burrowing pest from

the yard, he used a live trap and released the animal elsewhere. In spite of his gentle nature, when the demands of righteousness and his country required it, he went to war. He did his duty and then went beyond, serving with courage, valor, and great skill as the pilot of the Mary Pat, a B-17 named for his wife, Mary, and the wife of his co-pilot. Through some of the nastiest and most dangerous flying of the war, he took care of his objective, his crew, and his plane. He was not willing to come home after flying his tour of 25 missions over Germany, but re-upped for a second tour, making 17 more flights before the war ended, for a total of 42 missions. Doing what was required wasn't enough. He answered to the standards of his conscience and his sense of honor, and would not leave the job partially done, even though he had done his share. That was a great example to set for his son.

When he did come home, with a box full of medals to mark his accomplishments and a lot of tales to tell his son and grandkids, he not only focused on getting on with his life, but also on preserving the best of those war years: the deep friendships that are forged by depending on each other under the direst danger. To that end he and a group of his friends founded the 385th Bomb Group Memorial Association, both to keep the memories alive of those comrades who had made the ultimate sacrifice, and to ensure that the men who had been through so much together, and their families, would not lose touch. He gave many hours to the 385th, not only in forming it, but also serving as its first President for 15 years, and helping to organize reunions. He got a lot of satisfaction from seeing it thrive, and had a ball at the reunions, celebrating with old friends, in better times than when those friendships formed, and remembering those who could not be there. Through it all he glorified the victory of good over evil, skill and dedication over potential disaster, and friendship over hardship, not the unavoidable violence that war entails. That was the lemonade he made out of the lemons of war. That was a great example to set for his son.

Ruel joined the Masons in 1946. He eventually became a 32nd degree Mason, and supported their service and charity work. He and Mary often could be found at fund-raisers such as dinners for St. Vincent Hospital. He gave back to his community. That was a great example to set for his son.

He worked very hard to support his wife, and later his son. He believed that hard work, putting first things first, and honest dealing were the keys to success. This led to a lot of travel and many nights away on the road, but it also led to a comfortable lifestyle, a lot of good times, and a deep sense of a job well done. He found success, not only in the monetary sense, but also in the respect and regard of the people he knew. He never confused success with money, but preferred the riches of home, family, and friends. In all those areas he was truly wealthy. That was a great example to set for his son.

Ruel loved life and lived it to the fullest. He loved to travel,

to see and experience new places and to revisit those dear to his heart. He loved good food, especially the wonderful dishes Mary made, but also dining out at restaurants, whether fancy or plain. He loved to get together with friends; enjoying simple cookouts, grand parties, and everything in between. He and Mary could make people stop to watch when they took to the dance floor. He was blessed to have his brother, Bob, and sister-in-law, Gladys, as friends as well as family. Perhaps being on the road so much made his home that much more precious to him. He enjoyed his yard, gardening, watching birds, and sitting on his porch reading or watching TV. He enjoyed maintaining and improving his home, doing as much of it as he could himself. He continued to love to fly, doing most of it in commercial airliners, but also taking a memorable early morning trip in a hot air balloon. He was enthusiastic but not foolhardy, willing to try new adventures large or small, but content in his own back yard. That was a great example to set for his son.

As I said, Ruel was a "gentle" man. He loved his grandkids and always had a smile and a hug and a good time for them. They all loved the time they spent making Sunday breakfast together while watching old cartoons or the Three Stooges or The Little Rascals on TV while Mary, Lindley, and Patti went to Mass. NO ONE could make waffles like Grampy. He often initiated trips to the zoo, or the Children's Museum, or the circus. Or they just curled up together in his chair to talk or read. He made the most of the time they had together. Although his career kept him away from home a lot, he always created special times to share with Lindley, making breakfast before school and work, or spending time showing a green kid how to do repairs that would have been much simpler and quicker to do alone. Lindley got into his share of mischief, and maybe more than his share, but his Dad was always there to steer him straight again. Ruel was a caring and involved father and grandfather. That was a great example to set for his son.

Ruel gave Lindley many gifts, but probably the biggest was the most important gift any father can give his son: He loved Lindley's Mother. He loved her deeply and enduringly through 57 years of marriage. He loved her through the long separation and uncertainty of the War. He loved her through the lean getting-started years that followed. He loved her through the successes and prosperity that he attained. He loved working with her, dancing with her, loved just being with her. He loved her in good times and in bad, in sickness and in health. Recently when Mary said to Ruel "I miss you", he responded in just "Well, I would think you would". We know he loves her now from Heaven. Because Lindley witnessed the depth and constancy of their love, he knew that lasting love and commitment were possible, in spite of what the cynics and popular opinion say.

Our lives have all been immeasurable richer because Ruel was in them, as husband, father, grandfather, brother, friend, colleague. His physical life may end here, but his earthly presence does not end here. It will continue on in the memories of those who knew him and loved him. It will

continue on in the memories of those who knew him and loved him. It will continue on as Lindley lives the values Ruel gave him, and as Lindley's children live them as he passed them on, and in their children in turn.

Dear Ed,

Just a note to let you know Paul passed away September 23rd. He had surgery February 18th, had a stroke and couldn't talk. Was sad to see him that way. He loved to mix with people and talk. I brought him home from the nursing home April 14th. Took care of him as he was in a wheel chair. Did have help with him. He just gave up. This year was the first time he missed the reunion in April. He always looked forward to coming and seeing the guys and talking over old times.

I have lots of things to do now that Paul isn't here. I sure miss him. He was a good husband to me.

Hope you and your family is doing OK.

Take Care  
Sincerely,

Jean Ryan  
6218 S Joliet St  
Wilmington, IL 60481

## Paul W. Ryan

WILMINGTON--Paul W. Ryan, 79, of Wilmington, died Saturday, Sept. 23, 2000, at Provena Saint Joseph Medical Center, Joliet, IL.

Mr. Ryan was born April 28, 1921 to James and Agnes Ryan. He was employed by Pipe Fitters Local 597 for 50 years. Mr. Ryan was a member of Wilmington Masonic Lodge A.F.&A.M., Stone City Post and First Presbyterian Church of Wilmington. He was a United States Airforce veteran of World War II having served as an aerial gunner and radio operator with the 550th bomb squad.

Surviving are his wife of 50 years, Jean (nee Whyde) of Wilmington; one sister-in-law, Joan Ryan of Coal City; one brother-in-law, William Kahler of Coal City; four nephews; and five nieces.

He was preceded in death by his parents; two brothers, Harold and James Ryan; and two sisters, Eloise Kahler and Veronica Philbin.

Visitation was Monday, Sept. 25, from 4 to 8 p.m., with Masonic services at 7 p.m., at Reeves Funeral Home in Wilmington. Services were held Tuesday, Sept. 26, at 10 a.m. at the funeral home with the Reverend Frank Berman officiating. Interment was in Woodlawn Memorial Cemetery in Joliet.

Memorials may be made in his name to First Presbyterian Church of Wilmington.

ED STERN  
PO BOX 9466  
FARGO, ND 58106-9466

NON-PROFIT ORG.  
U.S. POSTAGE  
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FARGO, NORTH DAKOTA  
PERMIT NO. 1761

Sir,

At Ann's request, I am forwarding Milton's obituary to you.

Her address is:

Mrs. Milton Shalinsky  
5513 W 86th  
Overland Park, KS 66207

My address is:

Leo Shalinsky  
4717 W 81st  
Prairie Village, KS 55208

Phone & fax: (913) 642-8588

E-mail: leoarlene@yahoo.com.

**MILTON SHALINSKY**

Milton Shalinsky, 80, of Overland Park, KS, passed away Saturday, October 14, 2000, at Shawnee Mission Medical Center. Funeral services will be Tuesday, October 17, at Louis Memorial Chapel. Time will be announced in Tuesday's Star. Burial at Sheffield Cemetery. Kindly omit flowers, family suggests contributions to charity of one's choice.

The third of eight children of Herman and Freda Shalinsky, Milton was born on July 14, 1920. He attended Lowell Grade School and Wyandotte High School in Kansas City, KS, and then graduated from the Kansas City College of Pharmacy in 1943. Milton joined the Army Air Corps in 1943, and became a navigator of a B-17 in the European theatre. Shot down during a bombing mission over Germany, he spent the last 11 months of

World War II as a prisoner of war. Upon his return to the U.S., he joined the Air Force Reserves and served for 27 years, achieving the rank of Lieutenant Colonel. In 1947, Milton married Anne Shabason, with whom he had three children. They enjoyed over 53 years of marriage. Together with his brothers, from 1954-1989, Milton owned pharmacies in Wyandotte and Johnson Counties, serving primarily in the downtown Overland Park location. He was active in the American Stroke Foundation, the American Ex-Prisoners of War, the Eighth Air Force Historical Society, and the Jewish War Veterans. He supported Chabad House and the Torah Learning Center. Milton was preceded in death by his parents and two brothers, Lester and Marvin Shalinsky. He is survived by his wife, Anne, of the home; daughters, Audrey Shalinsky of Laramie, WY, and Devorah Leah Shalinsky of Brooklyn, NY; a son, Barry Shalinsky of St. Louis, MO; brothers and sis-

ters-in-law, Joseph and Charlotte Shalinsky and Leo and Arlene Shalinsky, all of Prairie Village, KS; sisters and brothers-in-law, Zelda and Goodman Tasman, Louisville, KY, Eleanor Rutlader, Kansas City, MO, and Harriet Waldman, Louisville, KY; also surviving are sisters-in-law Ruth Newberg and Helen Shalinsky, both of Overland Park, KS. *(over)*

**MILTON SHALINSKY**

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Paul W. Ryan  
Ruel Weikert  
Milton Shalinsky  
Quentin A. Swartz  
John Campanlia

September 2000  
December 1999  
October 2000  
October 2000