


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

NEWSLETTER OF THE

385th BOMBARDMENT GROUP MEMORIAL ASSOCIATION



COMBAT UNITS

HQ. SQUADRON
 548th BOMB SQ.
 549th BOMB SQ.
 550th BOMB SQ.
 551st BOMB SQ.

VOL. XVII, NO. 1

Editor: Ed Stern
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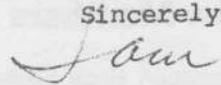
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Prez Sez:

Things have quieted down after the holidays. Thanks for all the holiday greetings from members. Happy New Year to all.

Now is the time to make plans for the Tulsa, Oklahoma reunion. An agreement has been reached with the Doubletree Hotel, Downtown Tulsa to house the 1991 reunion in June.

Of interest to our members: Forrest Poore and Beatrice Kauffman were married January 6th. Elaine Schulz and Martin Olsen were married December 29th. Best wishes to both couples.

Sincerely,

 Sam Lyke

Editorial:

The many wonderful comments that we've received about the Reunion have made your Committee feel handsomely rewarded for our efforts. Thanks to all of you who have written—thanks for your letters and for your Christmas greetings.

All of us should recognize the fact that Reunions get better the older we get—and that it's the people we see, rather than the activities and the food, that make each one better than the last.

The more of us who show up at Tulsa, the better the Reunion will be. See you there!

13TH REUNION - 48TH ANNIVERSARY
TULSA, OK — JUNE 5-9, 1991

50TH ANNIVERSARY REUNION — SPOKANE, WA - 1993

NOTICE

1. At previous Reunions, we have had a Reunion Book which had copies of all of the Newsletter since the previous Reunion. This is being discontinued — we'll save \$1800 in printing costs. If you want to save the future copies, put them in a ring-binder and save the copy you get!
2. Also, we do NOT have undelivered mail returned—if you move, let us know your new address. If you don't get a Hardlife Herald about every 3 months (we printed 5 in 1989), let-your Editor know.
3. If you send pictures for the Hardlife and want them returned, please put your name on back of the picture with "Please return". We miss once in awhile if you don't.

NOTICE — Overseas Readers

We find that we need to correct our mailing list for overseas addresses. If you wish to continue receiving Hardlife Herald, please fill in your complete name and address and mail to Ed Stern, Box 2187, Fargo, ND 58108.

Name

Address _____

We will send two more letters on the old addresses.

New Members

If you joined the Association since September 1987, you may be interested in a copy of the Reunion book, which includes copies of all the Newsletters between September 1987 and June 1989, plus a brief History of the 385th Bomb Group, a complete list of Missions flown, membership roster with addresses, and complete list of B-17's assigned to the 385th.

We have about 50 copies left. Send \$5 to Ed Stern, Box 2187, Fargo, ND 58108.

Dear Ed,

Enclosed are a couple of pictures taken at the Reunion.

While at the airport waiting for the B-1, I was talking to the news reporter and I asked her about the history of Fargo. I asked her how they ever decided to start a city way out here that seemed to be in the middle of nowhere. She told me.

She said that many fur trappers came out that way and somebody started a trading post. (Probably one of your for-bearers). Anyway, that little Trading Post grew into the fine city of Fargo.

Edie and I enjoyed our trip to Fargo so much that we decided to take your advice to see Fargo in February. We tried to get reservations at the Holiday Inn, but we were told that February is the height of the Tourist Season and they were sorry that they were all booked up. They said all the Motels in town were that way, and if we wanted to see Fargo in February we had to book at least a year in advance.

Can you help us out?

Regards,

Marty Girson

Editor's Note:

#1. That news reporter didn't know her history. For a complete history of how Fargo started, send a self-addressed envelope, but don't hold your breath.

#2. The Motels are always booked solid on weekends, in February, what with all the attractions—swimming, gambling, drinking, dancing, socializing, eating, shopping. You should have told them that you could come on a Tuesday—they always have rooms available on Tuesday after they get time to clean up after the week-end crowd.

#3. If you come on Tuesday, you can take advantage of the City Ordinance that forbids evictions when the temperature is below minus 10 degrees. So, if you get in on a Tuesday, you can probably stay for several weeks if you are lucky enough to hit that kind of weather. There will be lots to do, unless it should turn cold during your stay, but as long as it remains a mild minus 10, you are in good shape.

#4. Do not bring cross-country skis, snow shoes, skates or long johns. You can borrow ours and you can rent snowmobiles.

#5. If you want to borrow our car during your stay, see one of my son's at Straus. And I forgot—bring your sunglasses. The sun always shines in February, and you will need them.

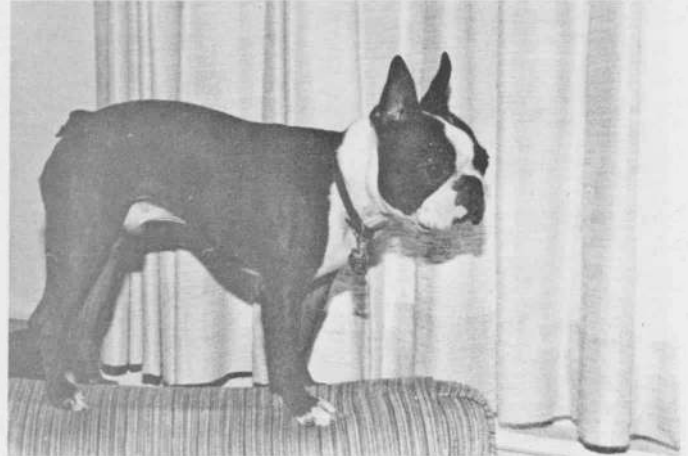
#6. Jane and I will be sorry to miss seeing you. We will be in Arizona during your visit.



Pictures From the Fargo Reunion



L. to R.: Elmer Snow and Jerome B. Harmon, Jr.



Elmer Snow's new Boston Terrier named "Great Ashfield Winston". Winston Churchill would be proud!



A reporter getting the story from one who was there.



L. to R.: Jerome B. Harmon, Jr. and Elmer Snow in front of Fargo's Air Terminal & London Bus.



Ron and Mary Nolan (sitting), Charles C. Smith (standing).

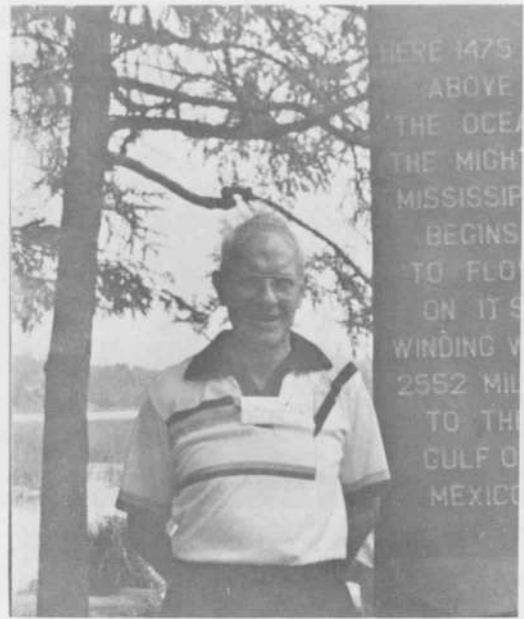


1st Vice President Sid Colthorpe and Lee.

Pictures From the Fargo Reunion



People wading across the Mississippi River at its source.



Charles C. Smith at marker for head of the Mississippi River.



Vintage Fashion Show at Ladies Saturday morning breakfast.



Pictures From the Fargo Reunion



Sweet Adelines entertaining ladies.



Flight crew - B-1 Bomber with Ed McElroy.



Sam Lyke, Mary Lyke, son Bill. Side view of Jerry Howard - son of Pat Howard. Mary had just received a birthday card signed by the group at Fargo, N.D.



Sam Lyke, George Salvadore, Septine Richard and Bill Nicholls.



Lee & Sid Colthorpe, Vice-president.



George Menkoff - host for Tulsa, OK, 1991 — Charles Smith - vice-president.

Pictures From the Fargo Reunion



Forrest Poore, Elaine Schultz, Doris Nichols, Beatrice Kaufman, and Bill Nichols.



The door of this church is still open at Bonanzaville



Waiting for the B-1 to land in Fargo.



The old and the new age and youth.



385th Gang to meet the B-1 in Fargo.



B-1 coming into the parking apron "Hector Field" in Fargo.

Pictures From the Fargo Reunion



L. to R.: Lyle Fryer, Ralph Smith, Art Wohl, and Art Weigand, old 550th buddies.



A terrible two men who picked up 2 nice ladies - ? L. to R.: Jerry and Jane Ramaker and Doris and Bill Nicholls. Wonder if the girls had a good time?



Fain H. Pool on the London Bus with someone's wife? (His navigator I'm told) going to see the B-1.



Only a mother could love this face - Arkey "I can get it for you wholesale" Huber in his PX at Fargo.



Bob Douglas (bartender) with his helper in the Hospitality Room.



John Pettinger on Rt. has a very attentive listener for his story - Hospitality room - Fargo.

Pictures From the Fargo Reunion



Man on left is pointing to man on right saying - is that really your wife helping Bob Douglas at the bar?



Ed Stern is getting an explanation of something.

Were you involved in food drops to Holland in May 1945? Here's a request of interest.

Dear Mr. Donnelly:

The address of your Bomb Group, which was directly involved in the early May, 1945, food droppings over Holland, and in particular over Schiphol and Alkmaar, en also Vogelenzang, Hilversum and Utrecht, was given to us by the AIRFORCE Magazine of the AIR FORCE Association, in Arlington, Virginia.

Mr. Ben Mulder, Chairman "HOLLAND LIBERATION 45 COMMITTEE", c/o 700 Front Street, Lynden, WA 98264 (206-354-2161 - 9000 to 1700 (PST) Monday to Friday), would like to receive letters from any person, who was directly involved in the Food Dropping Missions, and if their

original uniforms still fit, plus if they have any photographs available of the actual food drops, which we might include in the planned brightly colored brochures.

The majority of the citizens of Lynden are former Hollanders, and each year, in the month of May, the HOLLAND DAYS FESTIVAL is held. In 1990, the citizens wanted to do something special, and that is where your group can be of assistance, as, in the plans is also a "simulated food dropping over an empty meadow near Lynden" with aircraft of that period, if they are still available.

We thank you for your assist and would like to be advised, whether you would wish to attend the festivities.

Sincerest regards,
FLFM NEWS SERVICES,
Ferdinand Louis Joosten, General Manager
703-2888-273rd Street, Aldergrove, B.C., VOX 1 Ao, Canada

Dear Mr. Zorn:

On page 15 of the April 1989 issue of the 385th BGMA's *Hard Life Herald* there is a letter from you to Ed Stern, the editor. The letter asks for help in locating crew members of 385th BG B-17's which crashed in England during World War II.

As a brand-new subscriber to *Hard Life Herald* I was amazed, after 44 years, to find my own name listed in your letter along with four of my fellow crew members. You are correct in showing me as navigator of BI 7G-42-102431 which crashed and exploded near Bradwell and Coggleshall in Essex, about 5 miles from Braintree, on January 21, 1945. Also, I can give you the names of all nine crew members that day and some details of the incident. This is what happened.

It was to be our crew's first mission. We were part of the 549th Squadron, and our plane was named "Slick Chick". The target was Mannheim. We were ground spares, and about an hour after the planes from our group took off we got a call to join them over Colchester because someone had aborted during assembly.

We took off in lousy weather and climbed through thick clouds, finally breaking out at about 23,000 feet. Unfortunately, we broke out directly into the path of several B-17's coming at us from about one o'clock. Pilot Alf Jacobsen and co-pilot Ken Rieke pulled our plane up violently and to the left and were just barely able to avoid a collision. We stalled out, then dropped lik^a rock and plunged back into the clouds.

We pulled out of that dive, but I guess we nosed up too far because we stalled out a second time and went into another steep dive and a slow spin. It wasn't long before it became clear that the plane was completely out of control. (One thing I'll never forget is how fast the altimeter needle

was spinning.) Then came the bail-out signal. We heard it clearly in the nose but it couldn't be heard back in the waist, probably because of engine noise and rushing air. Thus, while the five of us up front were able with some difficulty to reach the nose hatch and jump, back in the rear of the plane there was near-disaster as the tail gunner, waist gunner and ball turret gunner wondered what the hell was going on.

Radio operator Bob Warden, closed up in the radio room, could of course open the bomb bay door, look up front and see no one thbre. He may also have heard the alarm bell. In any event, when he clambered through the waist, hammered on the ball turret, motioned to the waist gunner, jet-tisoned the door, and bailed out, it became obvious that it was time for everyone to leave.

Tail gunner Harold Prinkey (later killed in a post-war mid-air collision of B-29's over California) managed to crawl forward to the waist door and jump. But ball turret gunner Gerald Stutts was still in the turret and still unsure that the plane was being abandoned. Waist gunner Gordon Ellingson worked frantically to help Stutts out of the turret, then the two of them parachuted to safety just moments before the plane crashed.

All of us had bailed out within the cloud mass, and as we drifted down through the solid overcast our main concern was whether we were over land or over water. When we broke out of the clouds near the surface, what a relief it was to see plowed fields below instead of the frigid sea, which would have spelled curtains for us. It turned out we were just a very few miles inland.

The nine of us were scattered over a considerable area but were gradually rounded up and taken to the RAF base at Earls Colne. By 10 p.m. we were safely back at Great Ashfield. There were no serious injuries, just Warden's head wound and concussion, Prinkey's loss of front teeth when shroud lines hit him in the face, an assortment of sprained ankles, and some frostbite. The Slick Chick was totaled, of course, and the only personal items recovered and returned to us were my hat and half of the pilot's hat - how or why, we don't know.

Anyway, it was an interesting and unusual way to start our tour of duty. We didn't get credit for a mission, of course, since we never left England. Most of the crew went on to fly 20-25 missions before the war ended. However, chin turret gunner George Mason was knocked out of the war on our second mission when he got a nasty leg wound from heavy flak which hit the nose section over Stuttgart, and I was pulled off the crew after 7 missions and sent to mickey school at Alconbury.

I returned to Great Ashfield a short time before the war ended and flew several practice missions as group lead mickey operator. However, my only "real" mission in the group lead plane was to Amsterdam on May 7th when we dropped food to the Dutch from an altitude of 200 feet. My diary shows that the pilot was a Colonel Shankie.

Crew members on the ill-fated Slick Chick on January 21, 1945 were as follows:

2nd Lt. Alf M. Jacobsen - Pilot; 2nd Lt. Kenneth L. Rieke - Co-Pilot; 2nd Lt. Edgar G. Baugh - Navigator; Sgt. Robert A. Warden* - Radio Operator; Cpl. Robert G. Klostermeier - Top Turret Gunner/Engineer; Cpl. Harold E. Prinkey - Tail Gunner; Cpl. Gerald O. Stutts - Ball Turret Gunner; Cpl. Gordon S. Ellingson - Waist Gunner; Cpl. George W. Mason - Chin Turret Gunner.

*Filling in for Cpl. William W. Wells, our regular radio operator. Warden was the only combat veteran on the crew that day, having already flown 12 missions.

Three of the above (Jacobsen, Ellingson and Prinkey) are no longer living. Three others (Stutts, Klostermeier and Warden) are listed in the January 1, 1989 roster of 385th BGMA members. Ken Rieke lives in Austin, Texas. I don't know the whereabouts of George Mason.

If you have any questions, or would like to discuss this incident with me, I can be reached at 203-655-0624.

Sincerely,

Edgar G. (Jack) Baugh
76 Arrowhead Way, Darien, CT 06820

cc: Mr. Ed Stern, P.O. Box 2187, Fargo, ND 58108

Dear George,

My wife, Gloria, and I as well as Jerry had a great time at the reunion. Enjoyed talking with you and the many others there. It was a super reunion. On our way up there, we stayed overnight at the Offutt AFB FamCamp, and then toured the SAC museum, that was super. I saw the first operational B-52 there that was accepted into the Air Force inventory. I accepted that plane, along with Brig. Gen Bill Eubank, our Wing CG, on June 25, 1955, and flew it back to Castle AFB, CA as the first of about 35 B-52's used in training B-29 crews into jet bombers. That was a good moment for me to see that old bird sitting there among all the other "greats" of the SAC hey-day.

Best regards,

Pat Howard

LIFE MEMBERS

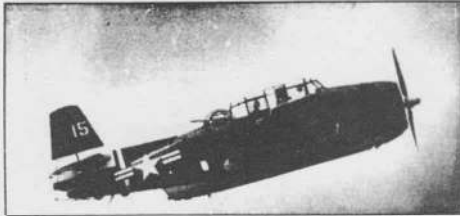
- 211 — Homer F. Howe
- 212 — Theodore V. Carlson
- 213-William E. Lyke
- 214 — Harry E. Peltzer
- 215 — Gladys I. Purkiss

C THE BULLETIN Community-

• Assessment backlog cure. Page B-2
• Mammograms essential. Page B-4

B

Monday, July 24, 198



Avenger performed in air show

Tora! Tora! Tora! heard over Madras

**By Scott Maben
Bulletin Staff Writer**
MADRAS — "It's nice to see the old airplanes flying again. It reminds me of when I was up there."

That was 45 years ago, when Retired Air Force Col. Rex T. Barber piloted the graceful P-38 fighter in World War II missions against the Japanese.

Over the weekend, Barber left the flying to Marvin L. "Lefty" Gardner, a WW II bomber pilot who now barnstorms his way across the nation in his authentic Lockheed P-38, "White Lightning."

The action drew a few thousand to the Madras-Jefferson County Airport Saturday and Sunday as the Confederate Air Force paraded vintage war planes and staged simulated air raids as part of a three-week tour of Oregon.

With a small bronze P-38 pinned to his shirt, Barber, who lives on a ranch west of Terrebonne, stood among colleagues Sunday and watched Gardner impress a sun-burned crowd with his well-rehearsed aerobatics.

With the quiet volcanoes of the Cascades as a backdrop, Gardner executed a dozen swift passes, performing rolls and loops and Cuban 8s — and the photo-perfect knife edge, when the P-38 glides by on its side.

Barber, 72, has a few tales of his own. The most notable is his role in the demise of Isoroku Yamamoto, the Japanese admiral who planned the attack on Pearl Harbor.

It's been a point of controversy: Who actually shot down Yamamoto on the April 18, 1943, mission over the South Pacific?

Thirty years after the attack, in which 16 P-38s from Guadalcanal snuck up on and downed Yamamoto's bomber, the Office of Air History decided Barber should share laurels with the pilot originally credited for striking the target, Thomas G. Lanphier Jr., who died in 1987.

Fans were eager to hear Barber talk about the mission, one of 128 that he flew Before retiring from the Air Force in 1961.

"I don't mind the attention," Barber said.

He added that his favorite part of the show, which he also caught on Saturday, was the Tora! Tora! Tora! group of Japanese T-6 "Zeros" that simulated the Dec. 7, 1941, attack on Pearl Harbor.

For Gardner, a founder of the Confederate Air Force, the dozen or more air shows he's a part of each year let him be historian as well as flying ace.

"It's the gratification of helping teach a history lesson to younger generations," he said.

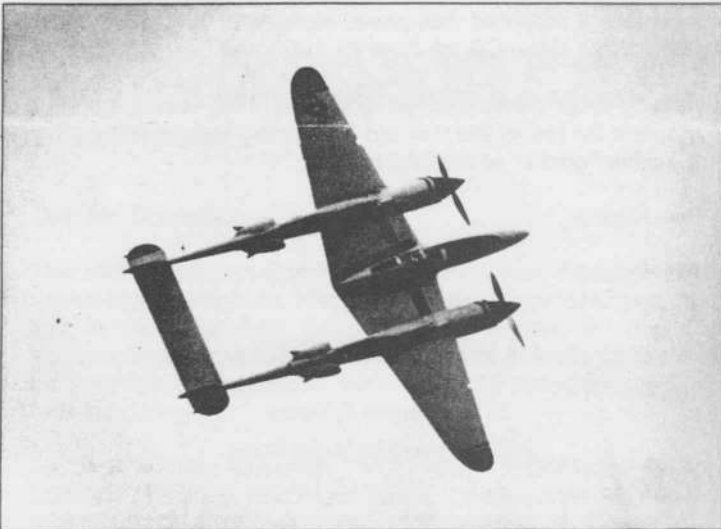
But once on the ground, most questions and comments center on him and his polished white fighter trimmed in red and blue — the only vintage P-38 flown in air shows today.

"Anybody that got to fly a P-38 in the war was lucky," Gardner tells a bystander. "It's the Cadillac of the fighter fleet."



Mount Jefferson provided majestic backdrop for the flyby of a B-17, part of the Confederate Air Force

Bulletin Photos/Lyle Cox



To crowd's delight, Gardner performed aerobatics in his Lockheed P-38



Earthbound spectators kept eyes on the sky



Dear Ian,

Enclosed is a copy of a note I've sent to Ed Stern on A/C 230094, "The Belle of the Blue".

Your handwritten notation "548th" is correct.

In his letter to you in the June, 1989, newsletter, Tom Helman says "I wish I could help identify the Swope crew". I assume that refers to the 29/11/43 notation when A/C 23784 was MIA when ditched. Lt. Swope was flying a relative new crew which was being checked out for a lead position, as far as I can recall.

Otherwise, the original Crew 7 was Swope, pilot; Billy Ruby, co-pilot; Herb Behr, bombardier; Elmer Baird, navigator; Joe McLavish, engineer-top turret; John Richardson, radio-gunner; John D. (Jack) Safford, right waist gunner; Robert Lopiano, left waist gunner; Ed Sykes, ball-turret, and Aldo Tarini, tail gunner.

Ed Roddy and Howard Anderson were replacement waist gunners when Safford went back to the States for aviation cadet training and Tarini was grounded. Lopiano moved to the tail position. Safford and Tarini had six or seven missions in when they left the crew.

When Lt. Ruby was piloting A/C 240004, which exploded and crash landed near Tuttington on 20/02/44, with Tom Helman's friend, Ed Kergulec as co-pilot, the crew in the rear of the plane bailed out successfully. Ed Roddy and Howard Anderson were the waist gunners and Henry Parker the radio operator.

I believe I had mentioned this to you in an earlier letter, recalling that I had by happenstance run into Parker in London as he was returning from a "flak house" leave after the bailout.

On the 29/11/43 mission, I flew in Henry Parker's place on his crew (Rummans I believe) and I didn't know that Lt. Swope was even flying that day until we got back to Great Ashfield and found he was MIA.

Thanks so much for putting the serial history of the 385th A/C together. As Tom Helman said in his letter to you, we all remember the names from the formation board.

Sincerely yours,

John A. Richardson
Crew 7, 548th Bomb' Sqd.
1517 Capitol Wy #605, Olympia, WA 98501 -2246



Raymond G. Shattenkirk — July 1989

Letters to the Editor:

Dear Ed,

For me, the reunion would have been better if more of my old flight crew had come, and more of our barracks crowd as well. Nevertheless, the absences were more than made up for by the many smiling faces and glad to see ya handshakes of the downright friendly everybody everywhere. There wasn't a grump in the bunch. Even Tex Taylor.

But of special importance to me, and pleasure, was the attendance of my old tail gunner Jack Gesser and radio operator Milton Lane, and not to forget Milt's attendant nursemaid and wife and once an English War Bride from London town, name of Ivy. This trip was real therapy for both those two gunners (and "me and Ivy" too) as they each are recovering from some very serious physical malfunctions.

It was a distinction for me to serve as their co-pilot on 22 of my 25 missions a whole lifetime ago, and the bond made then, has yet to break. We were on John Richey's crew of the Ohio Air Force, and had more than our share of crazy rides together.

Out of the old barracks crowd of my time in the 549th, there were but five (that I saw) out of the twenty we had when we had a full house. They were pilot Jerry Mudge, and his one-time co-pilot Bill Clark (we called him Willy), and then their navigator Verne Phillips. And then besides myself, there was pilot Bob Vandiver.

I mention Bob last, after me, both because he slept in the last bed on the right in our domicile, and, on him, I have a story to tell.

As I remember, Bob was a quiet, stay to himself, not unfriendly southern boy from Alabama. And what I remember most about him was what had to be one man's reaction to the awful days we were going through.

One night, about midnight (we must have been on stand down because the poker games was still going loud) and Bob had been in the sack maybe a couple hours or so. Maybe he called out for quiet, loudly or softly, who knows, but if anyone heard, so what, doesn't majority rule? Nineteen to one's the odds.

But he got sudden attention when, from out of the darkness of his corner of the hut, he put a couple 45 slugs straight up, making a roar that contradicted like a precipice the sudden silence that followed, and also a couple holes in the roof you couldn't plug with a trigger finger. End of story.

It was upon boarding my flight to Fargo in Minneapolis that Thursday evening that I encountered this distinguishingly dapper individual, sitting quietly on the aisle seat on the same row as my window seat, obviously waiting patiently for things to happen.

Letters to the Editor con't

My my, I couldn't help to think, here is the real southern gentleman. Put a mint julep in his hand and run him for judge. All he needs is a beautiful belle (and he does, her name is Jinny) and you'd have all the blossoms of magnolia.

As it turned out, his seat ended up right next to mine, and he asked, very softly (even in my good ear it was soft) "Are you from Fargo?"

"Not me", I replied. "I'm from Oregon. Are you from Fargo?"

"No sur", he said, "A'hm from Florida and A'hm going to a Bomb Group reunion."

Hmm, I thought. Maybe he isn't a judge. A colonel? But I thought they came from Kentucky. So I said, "What squadron?"

When he said he was a 549th pilot and his name was what sounded to me like Vandee'veer, I thought holy smog, this guy aint Colonel Van no way, and could anybody in the 549th be anything but a judge of women and wine?

Whatta ya know, this guy was/is Bob Vandiver, and he's no judge. But he is/was a Colonel, retired Air Force. And later, from my old log, I see that he flew his twenty-fifth mission on 21 January, 1944, on a mission to Dieppe, the same day I flew my 13th. End of this story.

Did I say, the end? Well, not really. You will remember Ed last month when you wrote to say my little story called The Jinkers I had submitted arrived too late for the last Hardlife issue and would have to wait for the November one because you wanted the issue immediately after the convention to so themed (to the convention), with hopefully lots of picture and all.

With your permission I will quote a couple paragraphs that you wrote:

"You know, as Exec of the 550th, I always knew it was your guys who were shooting holes in the roofs—Robinson (MP Capt) would come roaring down to our site, accuse us of all the nefarious goings-on that you guys did, huff and puff, demand that we get our flyers under control, complain up at Hq. You, or your successors, were probably even responsible for the hay stack that burned down on VE Day, even though it was in our backyard.

I think I should ask your guys to pay the 550th the 100 lbs. we were forced to raise to repay that farmer for his loss." (end your quote)

Well now. Indeed!

I had no idea who the 549th Exec was, but I did better, I dropped an airmail to our old head Archie Benner in El Paso, telling him I thought it would be a lovely gesture if only we yellow noses are capable, that we offer to pay our share, a fourth, of the 100 lbs. you claim you paid the farmer.

That would be 25 pounds, right? But you didn't say pounds of what? It might even have been hay (you've heard people say, and that aint hay?)

So payment in hay it would be. But 25 pounds? That's a lot of hay. So we'd process the stuff, pooped straight from a west of the Pecos benner longhorn, tamped and parched in the west Texas sun, and wrapped, all six ounces, in a yellow ribbon of the old 549th.

And that is the end of the story. And Arch ended it.

"No way", he said, "I never heard about a hay burning. And besides, we Texans never wrap that stuff, we just throw it!"

Tom Helman

Dear Ed,

This letter is in reference to the list of Aircraft in the Hard Life Herald. I have some information about a couple of Aircraft in which I flew from December 11, 1943 until May 1, 1944.

The first Aircraft was the HIT PARADE a/c 230121 code letter E this was a B-17-F belonging to the 549th bomber squadron. It was piloted by CAPT. C.S. Moats, co-pilot LT. B.J. Booker. The rest of the crew was as follows: Bomb. Franz, Nav. Kappir, Right waist Dymond, Ball Smith, Tail Dickerson, Left Waist Hartnett, Radio Baily, and Top Turret Java.

On our fourth mission we flew to Munster (December 22, 1943). We spent 5 hours 15 min. in the air. The target was the city and the railroad yards. On our way to the target and back we encountered heavy flak and fighters. We also lost our #3 engine. When we returned to the base they tried to patch the plane back together, then decided to scrap her on December 30, 1943.

Our second ship was the HIT PARADE JR. a/c 238031 code letter M this was a B-17-G piloted by CAPT. Moats and same crew. We finished our missions in this air craft on May , 1944. The mission was to Noball France we spent 6 hours and 30 min. in the air. This was our last mission as a crew.

I highlighted and filled in the information in the 385th BGMA newsletter and enclosed it also.

Sincerely,

Harry M. Java, Sr.
253 LaRue Drive, Coraopolis, PA 15108

Dear Ed,

I enjoyed George Menkoff's article on Ordnance and accept his invitation to add a bit about bombs-n-things.

Letters to the Editor con't

I was flying copilot with E.G. Baumann at the time. What that time was is not on my list of missions, perhaps because we didn't drop our bombs on Brussels as intended and brought them back, but it was in the spring of 1944. Well, we didn't get back to base with our bombs. In fact, I can't recall that anything happened as intended.

Even before that day things had gotten screwed up when we had gone to Brussels to bomb the marshalling yard. We were in the Deputy Lead slot — without a bombsight or bombardier, because the idea was that the armorour could toggle the bombs. Our armorour was T/Sgt. Carmen. As we started the bomb-run on Brussels from West to East our ship jumped up customarily like it did when we dropped our load and Carmen commenced to yell on the intercom, "I didn't do it! I didn't do it!". The fact was he had salvoed the bombs by pushing the lever too far when he opened the bombay doors. Since we were the Deputy Lead, others in the Group started dropping on us, assuming that — we had a bombardier with a bombsight and the Lead had been unable to drop. And since it was too early and nobody was prepared for the drop, bombs rained down randomly for about ten miles on the way to the target plowing up many Brussel sprouts no doubt. Then ironically, when we did get to the target our Leader, whom I understand was leading his first mission, did not drop. So to do it properly he started a gigantic 360 circle to the right to have another go at it. Upon turning the Group back into the flak over the target someone on the radio asked "Where in the hell you goin'?" He replied with his intentions of bombing the target, but was bombarded with verbal protests, that nobody had any bombs left and that he was going to get somebody hurt by repeating our course and altitude, which the anti-aircraft had already rehearsed. Thank God he broke it off and altered course for home; returning with *HIS* bombs.

Well, as I understand, this upset the powers that be - the ones who made such decisions/as eliminating bombardiers and bombsights — so we were told that we were not to drop our bombs unless we were sure they would hit the target and they sent us back to do it right. It turned out that the weather obscured the target on our return mission so we brought the bombs back to base. At least that was the intent.

Now comes the Ordnance part and clarification for Menkoff...Ordnance safetied the fuses with cotter pins. The bombardier would go to the bombay enroute to the target and "arm" the bombs by removing the cotter pins and the arming wire kept the little propeller (arming vane) from turning until the bombs were dropped; the wire stayed in the ship and pulled loose from the vane, which allowed the propeller to unscrew itself and expose the fuse. Bump the exposed fuse and BOOOOM!

As we approached the friendly coast of England our bombardier, Bob Eutrich, went aft to resafety the bombs, he quickly appeared in the cockpit whitefaced and excited to tell us that we had to salvo the bombs over the Channel immediately. I asked why and he told me that one of the ar

ming vanes had come unscrewed and that we had an exposed fuse. When I told him, "Well, screw it back on" he replied, "SCREW YOU!!! Drop these goddamned bombs!"

We pulled out of formation to shuck our load without explaining it to anyone, because the transmitting mode on our radios had been safetied to prevent us from giving instructions to our Leader about not returning to the target at the same altitude, speed and direction; along with opinions.

What we didn't know at the time was that almost every gun in the Group put us in their sights, because we were thought to be a German B-17, peeling off to head back to Germany. This might have been the start of the rumor that the Germans were sending up captured B-17's to fly with us and to call off our altitude, airspeed and course. An idea totally lacking in logic and unnecessary.

Anyhow, we pooped around by ourselves, dropping our bombs and attempting a Split "S" to try and see them hit the water. With the sky clear of other aircraft we then headed for the English coast. Upon reaching the shoreline Carmen reported, "Flak, three o'clock low", and sure enough volleys of black puffs were working their way down the coastline toward us and up ahead a Beaufighter was climbing to intercept us. That's when Baumann reached for the IFF (Identification Friend or Foe) switch and took hold of my fingers already on it.

All of which just goes to prove, George Menkoff, that you didn't have to be loading bombs in the dark to not know what you were doing, because you sure weren't alone over there.

Ed — would you believe that I don't ever remember how to spell altitude, if I ever did.

Truman J. Smith.

Dear Ed Stern;

In the list of names of airplanes, it should be Slo Jo, not Slo Joe. The plane was named after C.O. Tesla's wife Josephine. Her air speed was as good as any plane, but there was a slight lag in answer to controls that amused Major Tesla, hence the name.

George Menkoff's article on Ordnance was interesting. They installed that 20 millimeter gun on Crew Chief Gerald Tempesta's plane. If anyone wants to find him, check with Macy's in New York.

One of Crew Chief Callahan's planes landed behind the Russian lines and was destroyed, but I don't know the name or number.

John Hite

Wyalusing, PA

Letters to the Editor con't.

Dear Ed,

We were both very pleased indeed to have you say your reunion was a complete success. We were with you in mind if nothing else.

We, including Ray Goodwin the artist, were "over the moon" at the outcome of the raffle of the painting. Peggy & I kept saying what prices we thought the picture would bring but nowhere as close as what you've told us.

I have passed on a photograph to Ray and also Stephen Miles at Ashfield and no doubt Stephen is going to be very pleased when he hears of the total amount you have to send.

As far as the trees are concerned I wonder if anyone else has ever thought what else was as significant as those trees, possibly every flier and also Harry Montford. But the thing I mean a long time ago there were three guys who came to an inn, these three had something to help them arrive OK, it was the Star of Bethlehem, possible. I'm too sentimental as you guys are over those trees.

Our warmest thanks to you Ed and we would like to say thanks to all who participated in the raffle and we're sorry that there was not more paintings, one for everybody, but the lucky guy I hope has as much pleasure out of winning the picture as we have had getting it organized.

Stephen Miles told me when Ray and I visited him prior to the painting that one of the trees is dying but he has put another tree in to take its place when that day comes, so it just goes to show that there are a lot of people have kind thoughts for you guys over there.

Our very best wishes to you all

Les & ■ Peggy Gordon
39 Combs Lane, Stowmarket Ipl4 2DD
Suffolk, England

Dear Ed,

Would like to let you know how much my wife and I enjoyed the Reunion in Fargo. A special thanks to Ralph and Gladys Smith for friendliness and cordiality unexcelled. Your crew did a fine job. As this was our first attendance at a reunion and none of our crew was able to attend but me, I recognized no one but you, Ed. (Pictures in "Hard Life Herald" helped me in that regard.) Everyone in the group was very friendly and made the reunion a time to remember and enjoy. We will sure strive to attend future reunions.

Flew with 550th in Ron Lehman's crew as tail gunner, (from 9-44 to 2-45). After about ten missions "Haybag Annie" was assigned to our crew. Some other planes our crew flew

with were "Mr. Lucky", Kentucky Winner", "The Purple Shaft", "Rum Dum", (88th mission for Rum Dum) and "Lenora Linda" among others.

Enclosed find a photo of crew - (John Homes missing) and plane. Data and names on back.

Sincerely,

Donald Klosterman
R.R.1, Sibley, Iowa 51249



Top Row: Ronald Lehman - pilot, * Harvey Branch - co-pilot, Horace (Mac) McKee - bomb., Gerald Thacher - navigator. Bottom Row: Victor Peterson - waist gunner, Donald Klosterman - tail gunner, Daniel Geyer - eng. gunner, *John Nepsa - baill t. gunner, John Holmes - radio operator (not present). (Was wounded and could be in hospital when picture was taken)

Branch and Nepsa are deceased.



Harvey Branch co-pilot

Letters to the Editor:

Dear Gerry Donnelly,

I am a member of the Eighth Air Force Historical Society #17829 and a member of the 385th Bombardment Group Memorial Assn. Have attended 1987 Reunion in Akron, Ohio and 385th Reunion Group Tour of Great Britain and Ireland last Aug. 16 - Sept. 6, 1988. Didn't find a single person who was at Great Ashfield when I was March 15, 1945 until June 1945. Am trying to locate my crew.

I would greatly appreciate a list of those who were in attendance at the Boeing 50th Anniversary as I need their present addresses.

My crew is listed below:

Siefert, Martin H. - 1 st Lt. 0824270 - Pilot -1091
Pittsburgh, PA - now- new Snuyrua Beach, Fla.
Sherwood, Earl - T.O. - T792 - Co-pilot -1091
North Blvd, Oregon
Hillmon, Charles J. - T.O. - T136403 - Nav. -1034
Muskegon, Mich.
Knopf, Allen J. - 1 st Lt. - 02068207 - Bomb. -1035
Brooklyn, N.Y.
Stacey, laird C. - Sgt. - 35236348 - Eng. - 748
East Liverpool, Ohio
Taylor, Beverly D. - Sgt. - 24686215 - R.O. - 757
Atlanta, GA
Holmes, Glenn H. Jr. - Sgt. - 35537984 - R.T.G. - 612
Findley, Ohio
Meyers, Darrell E. - Sgt. - 3969800A6 - W.G. - 611
North Platt, Neb.
Mohr, Raymond J. - Sgt. - 36680750 - W.G. - 612
Chicago, Ill.

Have enclosed a stamped, self-addressed envelope for your use. Thank you for your time & patient work in researching.

Sincerely yours,

Martin H. Siefert
1203 Live Oak St., New Smyrna Beach, FL 32069

Dear Ed:

Judy and I were so sorry to have missed the reunion in Fargo this August, but we had more than our share of problems. Judy's, elderly parents have had numerous health problems and were in and out of the hospital all summer.

Please fill me in on all of the activities. We know that it must have been most enjoyable. Judy and I look forward to the next reunion and barring any unforeseen problems, we will be there.

Sincerely,

Vince Masters
389 Westview Drive, Athens, Georgia 30606

Dear Sir;

I'm writing you to see if you would have or know someone who has information on the crew the 385th lost on May 8, 1944.

On this date the 385th bombed Berlin and according to the Sth Air Diary the 385th lost only one plane that day. All I know is the pilots names was Drobisch or something like that and one of the other crew members name was Hudson.

Would you have any information on this crew or know someone else who served with this crew? Hope to hear from you soon.

Thank you for your help and time.

Sincerely yours,

Steve Knauff
183/2 Elm St., Peebles, Ohio 45660

Dear Ed,

Elmer and I want to say this was the best reunion of the 3 we've attended. We also attended the reunion at Colorado Springs and Dayton.

Part of the reason was because we've located several more of Elmers B-17 crew. Their ship was the "This Is It". Two more of the crew attended for the first time. They were "Doc" Kurlis from Alamogordo, NM and Dick Ryan from Syracuse, NY. "Doc" was the co-pilot and Dick was the navigator. Elmer was the ball turret gunner. We've also located John Akern who lives in Foxboro, MA and we all hope he'll be able to join us in Tulsa in '91. Steve Zaputil found Elmer's name on the registration roster and they saw each other for the first time since 1944. Steve was on Elmer's original crew in the states. He lives in Citrus Heights, CA.

Thanks to you and your committee and the great job you all did, all of us had a wonderful time.

Sincerely,

Elmer & Betty Dickason

Dear Ed,

The enclosed notice of Sam St. Clair's funeral is self-explanatory.

Sam, who was my crew commander, and I kept in touch after the war. We became even closer friends after he and his family moved to California.

Letters to the Editor con't.

His eldest son, Sam St. Clair Jr., asked me to request a copy of the BGMA that contains Sam Sr's obituary. It is to be kept with the photos, medals and other memorabilia, they have collected about their father's life. Sam is survived by: Josephine, his wife, three sons, Sam Jr., Robin and J.B., a daughter Patricia and several grandchildren.

We have seen a lot of 'nose art' over the years in BGMA; but, never ours - nor does it appear around the Banner Line. Enclosed, please, find a photo of 'SUGAR JO' (taken by my wife) as she appears on the back of my original summer flying jacket, and did appear on our ship. It was painted by Annie. The ship was named after Sam's wife.

Sincerely yours.

Jack Pullio
Life Member, 550th Bomb Sq.
3465 N. Feather Ave., Baldwin Park, CA 91706



"Sugar Jo" painted by Annie Haywood



Sam St. Clair's A-2

Ed Stern,

Tom Helman wrote me some time back about an article he was writing on "Jinking" (Evasive Action). The dodging of enemy fire when forced out of formation by combat damage to our B-17's. My first experience with Jinking happened on our fifth (5th) mission one to Vickey, France. We lost two engines shot out by 109's. As we couldn't keep up with the formation and the enemy fighters were lined up making passes at us, I flew the B-17 more like a fighter turning which way to confuse and dodge the German pilots fire.

As a youth growing up on a farm we spent as much time as possible hunting. I learned how hard it was to hit a bird that dodged, like quail or grouse but pheasant or ducks that flew in a straight line were easy to lead and shoot down.

Whenever I was assigned to an orientation with a new crew to the 385th I would demonstrate Jinking.

I am enclosing three pictures as Tom requested me to do. There is only one of me alone but the other two, one with Bill Clark (co-pilot) and Ralph our ground crew chief and one with Joe DeGiacomo our waist gunner and Schaumburg, ball turret gunner. Also enclosed is a picture taken at Fargo Reunion of five of the original crew #17, we were on the mission to Vicky, France our fifth.

The best to you and thanks for the wonderful reunion at Fargo, ND.

Jerry Mudge
850 Alder St., Edmonds, WA 98020



'left to right: Verne Philips and Lavonne (nav.), Jerome Mudge and Vera (pilot), Bill Clark and Geri (co-pilot), Burnell Cook (top turret gunner), Joe DeGracomo and Sue (waist gunner). We were all on original Crew #17 on the mission to Vickg, France.

Letters to the Editor co n't.



Left to right: Schaumburg, Jerome Mudge, pilot and Joe DeGiacomo, waist gunner.



Left to right: Jerome Mudge, Ralph - crew chief, and Bill Clark - co-pilot.



Jerome H Mudge - Pilot Crew #17



SAC Museum Wall - Omaha. 385th Plane landing with wounded.

Dear Ed,

The first plane to have the chin turret, that the 549th Squadron received, was assigned to Robert S. Vandiver. It was immediately named "Latest Rumor", and painted with a girl talking on the phone. It also had shark's teeth painted on the turret.

This crew finished their tour in record time, but lost their navigator, Phil Vockerath on October 14, 1943, which was known as the "Black Thursday over Schwienfurt".

Incidentally, the co-pilot, Lou Descognets, came back for another tour near the end of the war. He participated in the "Holland Food Drop" and also picked up prisoners of war from Germany. He writes, "that beats dodging bullets and flak!!!".

Attending the Fargo, formerly assigned to Latest Rumore, were Bob Vandiver, Pilot; Lester Crawford, engineering crew chief. Bill Koon and Jim Child, of the armament. Much reminiscing took place.

Best regards.

Bill Koon
104 Wedgewood Dr., Lafayette, LA 70503

P.S. In the June 89 newsletter was an incomplete list of all 385th planes. I can furnish some information on three of these planes.

I. On page 4 of this newsletter, in the middle of the page, in the left hand column is:

'3547 549Q "Latest Rumor" Sal 11-4-44
The pilot was **Capt. Robert S. Vandiver**

Letters to the Editor con't.

2. On page 4, in the right hand column, in the middle of the page down is:

230598 (had no name) flak 15-8-43 1st Lt. E.S. Stone
(original crew came over with our group)

This plane was shot down before it could be named.

3. One page 6 in the right hand column about 3/4 of the way down was:

46483G 549 sq G "Ruby's Raiders" MIA 24-3-45

The original pilot was **Lt. Blackwell**

I was assigned to each of these planes as ground crew ar-
morer.



Note: The patch on the side of the plane was where flak
came through to kill the navigator.



Front row l. to r.: Jennie Vandiver, Irene Eckardt, Helen
Child, Jim Child. 2nd Row l to r.: Bob Vandiver, Reuben
Eckardt, Bill Koon at the Fargo Reunion Aug. 1989.



"Latest Rumor" Robert S. Vandiver (pilot)



"Latest Rumor"

Pilot Robert S. Vandiver; Co-pilot Raunchy Lon Descognets;
Navigator - Phil Vockerath (not in this picture, killed over
Schwienfurt) Bombardier - Winston C. Homes; Engineer
Gunner - Joe Balcerzek, Jack Summers, Robert C Hack,
James Davis, A.R. Milligan, James Dreary

Ed:

Here are a few pictures you may be able to use in next
newsletter. Can you return them? Also below is a profile of
me if you wish for the newsletter.

Sam Lyke joined the 385th in early October of 1944. I was
inducted into the service in Ft. Sill, Ok. in 1942. Sent to
Amarillo, Texas for basic training. Then to Denver, Colorado
for gunner training. Armour. Went to Ft. Myers, Fla.
(Buckingham) for gunnery school, where I received my gun-
ners wings. Transferred to Plant Park, (Tampa) Florida, then
shipped to Drew Field, Fla., where I received combat
training. Was assigned to a B-17 as a left waist gunner.
Arrived in England Oct. 8, 1944. I was a waist gunner of the
551st Bomb Sqd. I flew 20 missions. Was discharged in late
1945.

I was married to Mary in 1940. In 1990 we will celebrate our
50th Anniversary. We have two sons. Bill, a home builder in
Tulsa, Okla., Richard, retired (20 years) from the Marine
Corps. Five beautiful grandchildren. Hobbies are making
Mary ahppy repairing antique furniture, gardening, travel
and loving and enjoying our grandchildren. One of the
highlights of my life has been being a part of the 385th
BGMA, great bunch.

Sam Lyke (our new President)

Letters to the Editor con't.

Dear Ed,

I am enclosing these cuttings out of our local paper. I thought they might be of interest to you. I have watched the B17's flying overhead, and heard the machine-gunning, and it was like war time was back again.

I thank you so much for sending me the newsletters, I do appreciate it very much.

I hope everyone enjoys the reunion at Fargo. I would love to be there.

I have got myself a new car, and I sold my old car. Unfortunately, my car stickers went with it, so if anyone has any BI 7 or 385th car stickers, I would very much appreciate any, thank you.

Would you say hello to Dyton and Katherine Matthews at the reunion if you meet up with them. I met them at Gt. Ashfield last year, a very lovely couple.

Thanks for everything.

Best wishes,

Kathleen Sapey
6 Ashwell Road, Bury St. Edmunds, Suffolk IP33 3LU

Flying Fortress crashes on take-off

Passengers and crew's escape 'miraculous'

TEN people were taken to hospital yesterday after a Second World War Flying Fortress bomber crashed in flames in a field during the making of a film.

The French owned American B17 aircraft was taking off from the disused RAF base at Binbrook, Lincolnshire, when it hit a tree, crashed through a fence and came to rest in a cornfield.

An RAF spokesman said the aircraft broke up, but "miraculously ten people got out alive".

The casualties were taken to hospital at Grimsby. One was believed to have a broken leg and some suffered shock, but no serious injuries were reported.

The Flying Fortress was ~~AWC~~ ~~no~~ ~~WO~~ taking off from the type as part of filming for producer David Puttnam's picture about the legendary B17 Memphis Belle, which flew a record 25 bombing missions.

RAF Binbrook is used as a relief landing base for traffic

from RAF Scampton, but was made available to Enigma Films for the filming. An Enigma spokesman said all ten people escaped serious injury.

"The plane slid off the runway and take-off was aborted. Some people were in shock and there was a suspected broken leg but otherwise everyone was all right," said the spokesman.

The bomber was piloted by Frenchman Jean Pierre Gatignon, who escaped with cuts and bruises.

Two of the injured were flown to Grimsby on stretchers by an RAF helicopter and three others were able to walk to a civilian helicopter to be taken to the same hospital?



The wreckage of the B17 after yesterday's crash in Lincolnshire.

Dear Ed,

WHAT A WONDERFUL REUNION!

It was my first, but hopefully, not the last. It was great to see the navigator—Willis Tulare, and the tail gunner—Chuck Flynn, their wives and Geraldine Bash—the widow of our pilot Robert Bash. I had not seen Willis or Chuck since July of 1944, so we had many things to reminisce about. The tours, cocktail party, dinner dance and Smorgasbord breakfast were just super, as was the Hospitality Room. The many people that we met were very friendly and, all in all, it was just too wonderful for words.

We were the original crew of the "Golden Goose" and flew with the 551 st squadron from March 16, 1944 to June 22, 1944. Our original crew consisted of:

Pilot - Robert Bash (deceased); Co-pilot - C.E. Gittins (deceased); Bombardier - Rod L. Berry; Navigator - Willis Tulare; Tail Gunner - Chuck Flynn; Ball Turret - R. Collins; Radio Operator - F.R. Fuller; Left Waist - Lawrence Jones; Right Waist - Ed Dallas; 1 st Engineer - Norm Pohl.

I have the addresses of Collins, Tulare, and Flynn, but have never had any contact with Rod Berry (Oklahoma), Norman Pohl (Wisconsin), Lawrence Jones (Mississippi), or Ed Dallas (Kentucky). If anyone knows these people or their whereabouts, I would really appreciate the information.

Incidentally, my wife and I stayed on after the reunion and with my daughter, Joyce had a most enjoyable ten days touring North & South Dakota, Wyoming, and Montana. Back to Fargo on September 5th and home to Keene, N.H. on September 6th.

Sincerely yours,

Reggie Fuller
98 Valley Street, Keene, New Hampshire 03431

Letters to the Editor con't.

Dear Ed:

Although I have been a member of the 385th BGMA for several years and have been quite interested in the Hard Life Herald, I have never before seen a name that I have recognized in any of your publications.

I feel sure that this is due to the fact that my crew and I were in the group at Great Ashfield for only about 3 months. We arrived about March of 1945 and flew a B-17 back to the states (via Valley, Wales; the Azorews; Gander, Nfld., and Windsor Locks, CT) in June.

But now that I have read your most recent 20 page issue and have found all those "war stories" so interesting, I felt maybe you would like to print the enclosed picture of my crew with the only names I can recall. Standing from the left they are: Clancy, navigator from Miles City, MT; Arthur Lawson, pilot from Boston, MA; Clark, co-pilot, and Irving Garfinkle, bombardier from San Antonio, TX now from Baltimore, MD.

In your latest issue I finally recognized a name; Wilmer John, who trained with me and was from Athol, PA, as I recall.



I would like to hear from any of the above or anyone else who might remember us.

Thanks for your help, and keep up the good work.

Irving L. Garfinkle
4100 N. Charles St., Apt. 807, Baltimore, MD 21218

385TMBGMA

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