

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

HARD LIFE



HERALD

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. XVIII, NO. 1

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

SUPPORT UNITS

424th AIR SVS. GP.
 877th CHEM. CO. (AO)
 DET. 155, 18th AWS
 31st STATION COMPLEMENT SQ.*

FEBRUARY 1991



ASSOCIATION OFFICERS

PRESIDENT

Sam Lyke
 4992 SE Princeton Dr.
 Bartlesville, OK 74006

1ST VICE PRESIDENT

Sid Colthorpe
 316 Woodside Dr.
 Hampton, VA 23669

2ND VICE PRESIDENTS

Charles Smith
 1025 Oakhaven Dr.
 Rosewell, GA 30075

Mary Lyke
 4992 SE Princeton Dr.
 Bartlesville, OK 74006

SECRETARY

George S. Hruska
 7442 Ontario St.
 Omaha, NE 68124

TREASURER

John F. Pettenger
 Box 117
 Laurel, FL 34272-0117

EDITOR, BGMA NEWSLETTER

Ed Stern
 P.O. Box 2187
 Fargo, ND 58108

8th AF HISTORICAL UNIT CONTACT

Gerry Donnelly
 10770 SW 46th
 Miami, FL 33165

HONORARY MEMBERS

Gen. James Doolittle
 Gen. Curtis LeMay
 Gen. E.P. Partridge
 L/Gen. Ira C. Eaker
 B/Gen. Elliott Vandevanter, Jr.
 Col. George Y. Jumper
 Ronald C. Nolan
 M/Sgt. John McKay, Jr. USAF

PAST PRESIDENTS

Ruel G. Weikert
 Frank B. Walls
 Vincent W. Masters
 John C. Ford
 James H. Emmons
 Paul Schulz
 Forrest V. Poore
 William A. Nicholls
 Earl L. Cole

Prez Sez:

New Years greetings to our 385th members. Here is wishing you a Healthy and Happy New Year.

The registrations are slow, slow, slow. Have heard from a lot of you that you plan on attending so lets make George Menkoff happy and get those registrations in. Tulsa is a beautiful city with so much to see and do. Located in Green Country amid several beautiful lakes and pretty scenery.

The Hruskas, Menkoffs and Lykes had a committee meeting Jan. 2nd in Tulsa. Snow and ice was everywhere but we had a good meeting, next day we saw the Hruskas off to Omaha, Neb. They arrived safe and sound.

Every member should put the following in their newspapers. Most newspapers will put it free under Reunion Notices. Ask them to run it as a news item.

ARMY AIR FORCE REUNION: 385th Bombardment Group Memorial Association, 8th Air Force, will have their 13th Reunion, 48th Anniversary in Tulsa, Oklahoma on June 5-9, 1991. We are looking for former airmen. We were located at Great Ashfield, England. Contact Sam Lyke, President-4992 SE Princeton Dr., Bartlesville, OK. 74006 - Tele. 918-333-4939.

If you wish you can put your name in place of mine and then forward to me and I will send Hardlife Herald and information on to them for the reunion.

Best wishes for the New Year,

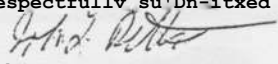
Sam Lyke

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

50TH ANNIVERSARY REUNION — SPOKANE, WA - 1993

TREASURERS REPORT

	12/31/89	12/31/90	Expenses		9.3P3-97
Balance Sheet			Newsletter	7,631.56	.....
ASSETS			President	207.15	.....
CD'S	8,000.00	8,000.00	Secretary	29.09	.....
Checking Account	<u>11,370.97</u>	<u>8,060.64</u>	treasurer	248.50	142.10
Total Assets	19,370.97	16,060.64	^reat Ashfield Church	1,122.50	.....
Profit and Loss Statement			^reat Ashfield Trust Fund	1,763.98	I! 575'.76
INCOME			Sally B	962.16	.....
Dues & Donations	7,000.00	5,000.00	Reunion Loss	1,809.18	.....
Life Members	3,000.00	1,000.00	Trust Fund	<u>2,399.00</u>	.....
Interest	1,000.00	1,000.00	Total Expenses	16,029.12	11,101.83
Group History Sales	1,000.00	1,000.00			
Video Sales	1,000.00	1,000.00	Ret Gain or Loss	(2,818.39)	(3,310.33) (
Dther Sales	.....	.....	Note (1)		
total BKKKK Income	<u>13,210.73</u>	<u>7,791.50</u>	Due to a late cues reminder mail out		
			About 82,300.00 will show up on		
			next years dues income.		

Respectfully submitted

 John F Pettenger
 treasurer



Santa Ana Army Air Base Wing
 A Branch of the Costa Mesa Historical Society
 P. O. Box 1764 Costa Mesa, CA 92628

SANTA ANA ARMY AIR BASE WING
 A BRANCH OF THE COSTA MESA, CALIFORNIA, HISTORICAL SOCIETY

NEWS RELEASE

COSTA MESA, CA... APRIL 20, 1991 COME CELEBRATE THE 50th ANNIVERSARY OF GROUND BREAKING FOR THE SANTA ANA ARMY AIR BASE. Orange Coast College. All former Cadets, Military, Civilian Personnel and Guests are invited. Contact: S.A.A.A.B. Wing, P. O. Box 1764, Costa Mesa, CA 92628, Tel, (714) 631-5918, Thurs 10 AM-3 PM or 24 Ans. Mach. Please provide name and address.

The following have not received the December Hardlife Herald because they have moved or we have the wrong address. WE are DROPPING them from our mailing list. If anyone can give us corrected information, please do so.

Francis A. Abdella - PO Box 193, Chauncey, OH 45719-0193
 Sam Mooney -122 N. Cascade St. New Castle, PA 16101
 Wm. Hottes -175 45th St., Pittsburgh, PA 15201
 Edward Leach -111 Hillside Ave, Attleboro, MA 02703-2426
 Mrs. Winifred Knight - 2807 Harrison Ave-3, Parkersburg, WV, 26101 (LM)
 Russell W. Firtzinger - 7433 E. Inverness Rd. Mesa AZ, 85208 (LM)

Joseph Tocco -15630 Park Lane, Lavonia, MI 48154
 Paul W. Van Boven - Box 309, Depot Hill Rd., Marshfield VT 05658
 Gilbert Chandler -1630 W. Monroe, Tallahassee, FL 32301
 Chas. T. Swarwood - 215 E. Elm St., Monroe, MI 48161
 Winfred L. Walls - PO box 196, Mereville, PA 17231-0196
 A E. Martin-8614 Oakford, Houston, TX 77024

Dear Ed,

Enclosed is a copy of a narrative published by our local Van Wert, Ohio, newspaper referring to the award of the Purple Heart I received at the 8th Air Force Historical Society reunion at Las Vegas in early October 1990.

The article is rather long, so if you do print it, I am sure you must cut it extensively to accommodate it in our "Hardlife Herald."

The photo of the "Barbara B" as shown in the newspaper article was taken by a gunner in the lead plane and given to me, I think an afterthought, sometime after the mission was flown—probably in December 1944. This was after I had left Sam St. Clair's crew and about two months after the 9 October 1944 mission when I was wounded.

I wish to thank you for your efforts in my behalf resulting in this award and I especially extend my appreciation to the late Sam D. St. Clair for initiating the action and to Jack Pullio, a gunner on Sam's crew, for having the good sense to record, in writing, events of that particular mission of 9 October 1944. I'm sure that without written documentation that I had indeed been wounded that day, the officials comprising the Purple Heart board at Randolph may not have reached a conclusion in my favor.

A very belated but sincere thank you for the wonderful North Dakota hospitality shown the 385th in 1989 and we hope to see you in Tulsa next June.

Sincerely,

Bob Wilson
550th Bomb Squadron
385th Bomb Group



PRESENTATION CEREMONY — Robert W. Wilson, on the left, receives his Purple Heart medal from Major General Lewis Lyle, right, 46 years after being wounded. He received a standing ovation from the 2,000 attending the 1990 Eighth Air Force Reunion in Las Vegas, Nev. where the medal was presented.

Purple Heart given 46 years late

By **DONNAHORN**

Times-Bulletin Staff Writer

Robert W. Wilson of Van Wert recently received a Purple Heart Medal, forty-six years after he was wounded while flying as a bomber pilot during World War II.

At the time, Wilson was a 24 year old second lieutenant, a B-17 Flying Fortress pilot, assigned to the 385th Bombardment Group, 8th Air Force in England. He was on a bombing mission to Mainz, Germany on Oct. 9, 1944 when he received leg wounds from anti-aircraft fire that penetrated the cockpit.

Not wishing to be removed from flying status, even temporarily, as this would cause him to miss scheduled, upcoming missions, Wilson decided to treat the wounds himself upon returning to his base at Great Ashfield. Accepting the gibes and good-natured taunts of his barracks mates, he treated the wounds himself, and very successfully. So well, in fact, that medical personnel never learned of his injury, and, of course, his opportunity for the Purple Heart at that time vanished.

WILSON COMPLETED over 30 years of United States Air Force service in 1971 and never brought up the subject to authorities during that time. However, in 1987, during a reunion of the 385th Bomb Group, a flying comrad of Wilson's, Sam D. St. Clair,

brought up the subject of Wilson's wounds to a group of ex-flyers who flew with both St. Clair and Wilson. From this casual conversation, and St. Clair's persistence in pursuing the matter for his wartime buddy, the story finally reached U.S. Air Force authorities at Randolph AFB, Texas. After a thorough investigation over a two-year period, the award of the Purple Heart to Wilson received official approval.

Of the 46 year wait, Wilson said, "the Air Force can't be blamed for the delay; they were never aware of the incident until Sam St. Clair got the ball rolling."

IN ADDITION to his recently presented Purple Heart, Wilson, as a World War II aircraft commander and in subsequent service, has been awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross, the Air Medal with five Oak Leaf Clusters, the Meritorious Service Medal, the Air Force Commendation Medal with three Oak Leaf Clusters, the European Theater of Operations Ribbon with two bronze battle stars and various other awards and decorations.

Wilson was presented the Purple Heart medal at the 1990 8th Air Force reunion in Las Vegas, Nevada by Major General Lewis Lyle before 2,000 attendees, and received a standing ovation.



WILSON IN THE AIR — Second Lt. Robert Wilson was actually flying the B-17 Flying Fortress when a pilot in Another plane took this picture. This is the same type of plane featured in "Memphis Belle," a fictionalized, but according to Wilson, an accurate motion picture showing what it was like flying these planes during World War II

Review of the Feature Motion Picture "MEMPHIS BELLE"

Lee Marvin the actor, some friends of mine and myself were making small talk in our quarters on an Eighth Air Force base in England in the spring of 1944 between combat missions when I had the urge to go pee. I had to go, but I didn't want to, because it was very cold and wet outside and the latrine was a long walk through the Squadron compound. Yet, I HAD to go badly!

I awoke on my way to the bathroom and noticed the illuminated clock showing a bit after 5 a.m.. Hmmm? I was running a hour later than usual; probably from being so involved in my dream — and my dream having come about from having taken my wife to see the movie "MEMPHIS BELLE".

We had stayed up late discussing the picture; Margot, from her perspective of having been bombed from her home in Berlin, and from mine as a bomber pilot. So even having talked it out, the movie was still with me in my sleep. It had not been a nightmare. The nightmares had already happened over forty years ago while wide awake in the combat arena over enemy occupied Europe.

Anyhow, I was wide awake with questions in my mind, like, why am I wide awake? Had the picture brought something to me, or was it what I had brought to the picture? Did anyone really care?

Several people, both young and old, had asked if I'd seen the picture, wanting my reaction from having actually been a B-17 pilot. Oddly enough I'd been going through a time warp a week before when I was privileged to fly the "TEXAS RAIDERS" B-17 of the Confederate Air Force. Therefore, I was qualified and current to give an opinion and, yes, there were some who evidently did care enough to ask for my opinion. However, does this qualify me as a film critic?

Since I have a disdain for film critics, who seem to know what's wrong with a movie, but couldn't make one themselves, I am reluctant to criticize any film, so I suggest that anyone interested in a movie should go see for themselves and do their own criticizing. My attitude, therefore, disqualifies me as a professional who gets paid for pleasure, since I give it away for the fun of it... So here it is—

David Putnam should be commended for attempting to produce a representation of a highly dramatic but most complicated subject in the form of the motion picture "MEMPHIS BELLE". As a result, a young man told me that having seen it, he now feels closer to his father who had been a waist gunner during the Big War. Such a response has to gratify David Putnam for his efforts and good work, as well as justifying the production of this motion picture.

It is my opinion that few films these days are justified as motion pictures. The difference being that most films can be seen on a TV screen, while a motion picture is made to be shown in a theatre on a large enough screen that allows the audience to become involved.

So before "MEMPHIS BELLE" is rushed in the small-screen market, it is best to rush to a theatre near you and get a seat close to the screen. Even so, it can never be more than a representation of the real thing. Which is not to say, don't go see it, because it is a worthy experience for both the inexperienced and for those with first-hand experience.

There are limitations to art. Even the art of cinema, which is the most total art form. For there is not a mirror large enough to hold up to nature that can begin to convey the enormity of the air war in Europe... So let me try to explain the unexplainable.

The average person might have seen as many as ten or even twenty aircraft in the air at one time during a rush period at a large airport. But being personally involved in an air armada of over two-thousand airplanes — for as far as you can see — in all directions — is indescribable. The word awesome is inadequate. More impressive than the Seven Wonders of the World, it is UN-worldly.

"Did you see the atmosphere chatter?" asked a pilot friend who had shared the experience of having been on the ground when the Eighth Air Force filled the sky. I had, after my combat tour, having flown supplies to the Battle of the Bulge I witnessed from the ground what I had been a part of in the sky. A hundred and fifty million explosions a minute driving two and a half million horsepower for hours and hours setting up sound waves that effect the optic nerve, giving the illusion that the air is crystal — chattering as if the entire world is about to shatter. Yes, I had experienced that effect of the world about to come to an end before my eyes.

How do you impart such an effect on a movie screen? It would take more than a wraparound screen with wraparound sound in hi-fi stereo. So it is that first hand experiences do get in the way of understanding "MEMPHIS BELLE" as a movie. Yet, it should be seen for what it is: a movie. But remember, try and see it on a big screen — as close as you can stand it.

In addition to SPACE another missing element is that of TIME, for it is not possible to condense a combat tour of several hundred hours into a couple of hours of screentime. It is true that much of the real time could be called blanktime, since not much is apparently happening, but there must at least be the illusion that action presented is only one part of the whole, thus, making the whole more than the sum of its parts. And even though we are shown only one part, there should be a suggestion of the whole.

Combat has been described as endless hours of boredom, shattered by moments of sheer terror. Expressing it in an artful term of space, it is those essential blank areas on a painted canvas that separate the focal points of interest, contributing contrast and perspective to the whole representation.

Many of today's war films are most graphic, but are unrealistic in the presentation of concentrated physical action and pyrotechnics to the point of immunizing the senses

of the audience. Where are the blank spaces? "Blanktime" does not mean there is no action taking place. This is when the REAL war is taking place and the real PLACE is in the mind of the combatants.

Putnam does an artful job of working within the confines of his limited canvas and he should not be criticized for trying to poke three-hundred pounds of shit into a two-pound sack — as it were. This is a crude way of putting it, but that's sometimes the way we airmen express ourselves, if anyone cares to know, because the subject of war does, truly, stink! Putnam shows us that and contrasts it well with those natural moments of levity found even in the worst of circumstances.

Having experienced the worst of the constant problem of trying to live in that air-less world just five miles up, I was personally made uncomfortable by the actors casual treatment of their oxygen masks, because the mask was life itself. Sure, facial expression is an important tool of acting and dramatic license is permitted, but it disturbed me, causing me to withdraw from the film at these times.

Likewise, there was too much talk on the intercom for reality and survivability. Such are the compromises of a dramatic presentation. The audience requires information that is already known by the aircrew; such as not touching metal with bare skin. For me, I would rather have SEEN how cold it was from some of the many examples: frostbite-scars on the faces of the waistgunners; tailgunner stirring a concoction of icecream as it freezes in a bucket.

You may criticize my impressions as that of a Monday-morning-quarterback, but please don't mistake my opinion as being critical of the motion picture "MEMPHIS BELLE", because it is truly worth seeing. My response is to those who have requested a reaction to the movie from someone who has — flown through exploding B-17's and that other stuff.

By the way, the real trip through another B-17 is only fractions of the real trip; which is not a criticism. However, it should be noted that anything impacting the plexiglass nose usually crashed on through it. Survival is not a matter of skill.

Others expressing their reactions to me about the picture are impressed with the post script that over 200,000 airmen of the Eighth Air Force were killed in the air war in Europe. To my knowledge this was the number serving in the Eighth, while the casualties were over 47,000. Even so, this was the highest casualty rate of any of the services in World War Two and nine times more, in only three years, than the Air Force suffered during nineteen years in Vietnam. It was a BADtime.

As for trivia. Colonel Cecil Williams, retired, who was a lead bombardier in the 91st BombGroup and a personal friend, told me that the first B-17 to complete 25 missions was not the Memphis Belle, but Delta Rebel. Public Relations selected the Memphis Belle as a better sell.

Truth aside, "MEMPHIS BELLE" is a motion picture worth going to see for good entertainment, a touch of history and a tribute to those whom the U.S. government has not yet

dedicated a memorial. Thank you David Putnam... it is ironic that it took an Englishman to honour the men of the Mighty Eighth Air Force of the United States.

Truman J. Smith
Lt. Col. USAF, Retired

5000 E. Prospect
Ponca City, OK 74604

Editor's Note:

Truman, a great review. Wasn't it 350,000 in 8AF, rather than 200,000?

Editor's Note

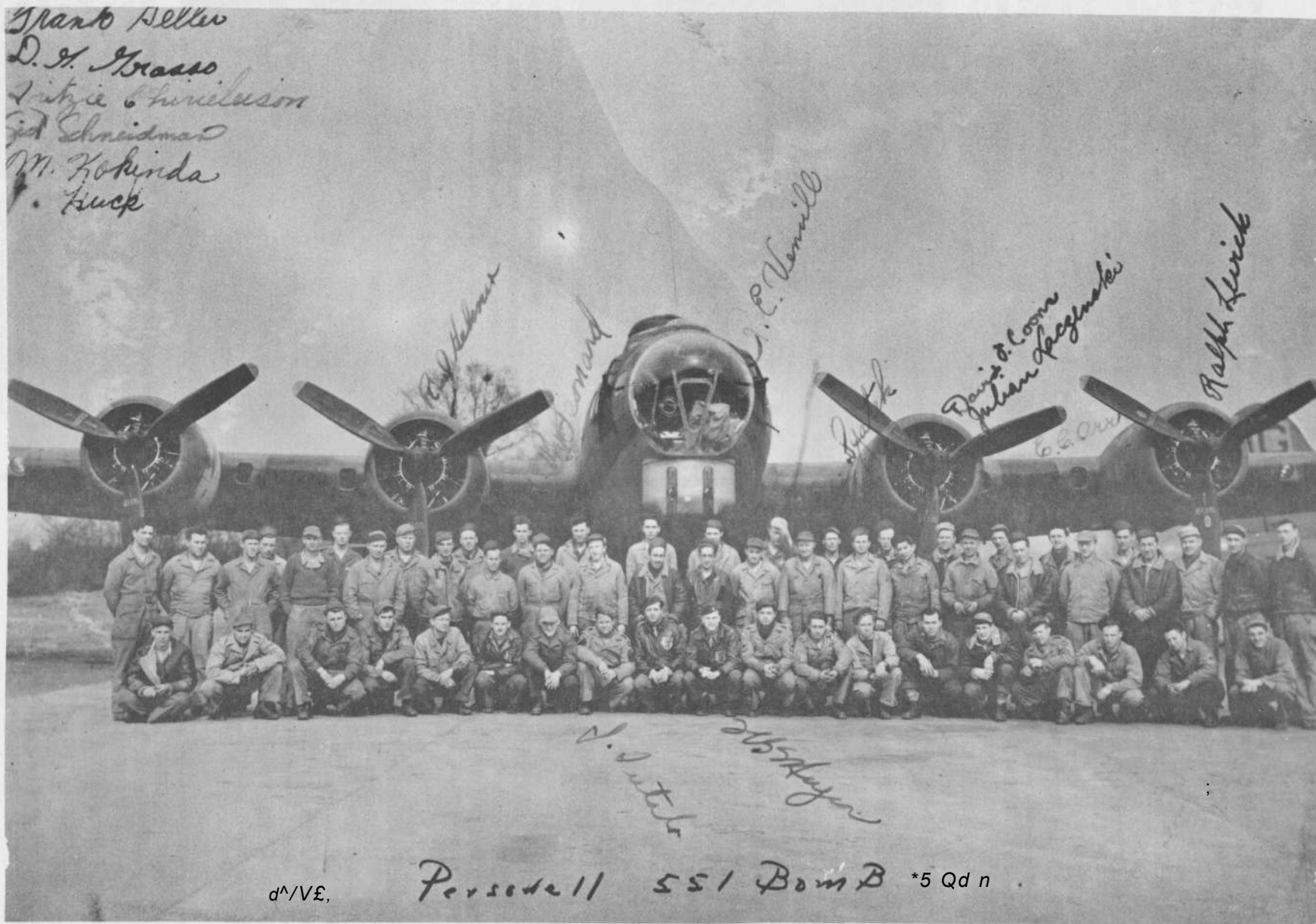
From Joe Zorzolis scrapbook.



This picture is of Earl Applelly crew chief, and the monkey was brought back by the crew that flew shuttle mission to Africa. The monkey got loose one day and pulled out the straw on the roof of a house. Major Witherspoon, our commanding officer at the time, made Earl get rid of the monkey.



This picture made of Capt. Daniel Riva, commanding officer of 551st Squadron. Twenty millimeter made the hole in windshield, went by the engineer, and wound up in the right wing tank. He had me crate the windshield, so he could send it home. He wanted to keep it for a souvenir. I was the crew chief on the Raunchy Wolf. Lt Irving Franks was regular pilot, finished his 25 missions, the first in the group. Flew back home, plane and crew.



d^/V£,

This picture was made in front of plane, "Lil Audrey". John De-Berg, crew chief.

Editor's Note

We were there, but we don't remember this yank story about the Hundred Mission party. Harry Monfort sent it in, and it makes good marlino



Ground forces and flyers of an 8th AAF heavy-bomber group join in tapping the keg at a 100-mission party. And there was plenty more brew where this came from.

T/S Clinton Parcells, of Ypsilanti, Mich., and Pfc. Thomas Malloy, of the Bronx, N.Y., receive Soldiers' Medals from Lt. Gen. Carl A. Spaatz at another 100-mission party of a more formal nature. The two Joes helped repair a wounded tail-gunner from burning planes loaded with bombs.



Century Marin

WHILE back someone called up to tell us about a 100-mission party which an Eighth Air Force Heavy Bombardment Group was cooking up and which was believed to be the first of its kind ever held in this theater. Well, naturally we hopped along on that, but by the time we got back to the office word had come in of a couple of other such shindigs and by the time those had been run off plans for even more were being hatched up. So we've settled for two—one on the moderately formal side, with plenty of brass and a meal served jointly in an officers' club and two messhalls, and the other a casual beer-spattered get-together for all hands in a hangar. Each had its points.

When you stop to think of it, there's something pretty awe-inspiring about that simple little expression "one-hundred missions." Even a person who has never so much as sweated out a single twilight down on the line can hardly help having some sort of a mental picture of what the phrase means—the night-long vigils, the pre-dawn chows, the missions scrubbed, the flak and the bomb runs, the anxious countings of specks on the skyline, the swearing and the shivering, the heartache and the exultation, and all the rest of the stuff it takes to get a flock of bombers off the ground and over enemy territory 100 times. And while that many missions may make a milestone, the parties celebrating them meant nothing in the way of a let-up. The boys who did the celebrating stood ready to get the bombers off again the following dawn and/or any dawn thereafter.

No less than four generals were on hand for the first, and dressier, of the two parties, four men who know what the score is when it comes to giving Hitler the screaming-meemies: Lt. Gen. Carl A. Spaatz, head of the USSTAF; Lt. Gen. James H. Doolittle, head of the Eighth AAF; Maj. Gen. Frederick L. Anderson, deputy to Gen. Spaatz; Maj. Gen. Curtis E. LeMay, head of a bombardment division—there they all were, and so was Col. James L. Travis, the group commander, and we were glad we had remembered to shipe our buttons.

Little flags had been hung about the room and at the entrance a GI band was swinging out some tunes. A young loonie with a few missions under his belt turned and whispered to his neighbor: "Just like the annual Chamber of Commerce dinner back in Springfield." And, in a way, it was, what with the cigars and stag jokes and all. But in another way it was a whole lot different because the same faces turn up year in and year out at a C. of C. affair, but here a lot of men were missing, men who by every right belonged at the dinner but wouldn't be attending dinners of any kind again, at least until after the war.

And the speeches, even through a haze of gags, told a story which would have impressed the sedentary membership of a Chamber of Commerce far more than it did this party, for it was the story of those 100 missions and that was old stuff to the men who had either been on them or had sweated them out. There was the memory of the first raid with plenty of snafu in it and then gradually, mander Col. Elliot Vandevanter fr. of 3m of Wash D.C. The colonel, who led the outfit on its first mission—a relatively pipsqueak one to Amsterdam way back last July—waited until the loud, long,

Then the limelight switched to the EM's combat mess, where Gen. Doolittle said a good word or two to the gunners, and finally to the messhall, where the ground personnel, a bit restive by this time in their Class A's, received a couple of vigorous verbal pats on the back from Gen. Doolittle and Gen. LeMay. Gen. Spaatz gave out medals to individuals, in all three groups and then everybody got down to a little partying. Tomorrow it would be fatigues again, more working and more griping, and, perhaps, a lap on the second hundred missions, but tomorrow was tomorrow.

GEN. LEMAY, chewing a big cigar, was on hand at the second party, too, but the similarity ended there. This one was given by the Base Command in honor of the ground personnel, and everybody was expected to turn out just as he happened to be dressed at the moment, which in most cases meant fatigues. For three nights previously the Local PX had been bone dry, just to make sure there would be enough beer to go around, and there was even supposed to be a girl show shipped in from a nearby city, but this had to be cancelled at the last moment because of military restrictions against the cast's leaving town. "Any women here at all?" asked the GI master of ceremonies. "Then that changes the complexion of the entire show," he added, when no hands were raised, and he went on to tell the one about the Joe who was standing in a phone booth talking to his girl. "And then an officer comes along," this wheeze wound up, "and he wants to phone, so the Joe and his girl had to get out of the booth."

This party got underway at 7:30 one evening when the doors of the hangar slid shut, some spotlights were focused on a stage made of bomb boxes, and a twelve-piece band swung into action. As luck would have it, the group's 100th mission had involved a pretty rough ride over Berlin a day or two earlier and everyone was all set to relax. Well over 1,000 men were on hand, seated on the floor, perched on airplane engines, queuing up for beer, or just milling about the place. The m.c.—Cpl. Jack Prince, of Chicago, who used to gag things up at the Chez Paris out there and is now gagging things up in the ETO for Special Service—broke the news about the girls and then introduced the group m.m. Maw Tack IT, M. Y. "app'Amcttan rights ra'ric'ta4 as Mm Im Graat Britain h, 041nm (Wafar4) Lt4., Wafac4

and enthusiastic whistling subsided and then went into his speech, congratulating the flyers, and particularly the ground men, on the hot job they'd done during the last eight or nine months. Col. Vandevanter recalled the "mudhole" that the field had been when the crews first arrived, mentioned the Regensburg raid as the group's first big one, and wound up by saying: "I hope that we don't have to do another 100 missions, but that if we do we will have finished up on Berlin and gone to work on Tokyo."

Then there were a few boxing and wrestling matches and some group singing, which was led by T/S Theo Alban, of New York City, a pudgy little Joe whom you used to hear back in the States singing *Happy Days Are Here Again* as the signature on the Lucky Strike radio program. While this was going on we wandered around and met two or three of the few men still at the base who flew with Col. Vandevanter on that first trip to Amsterdam. There was T/Sgt. William Nelson, of Chicago, for instance, who has been doing armament work since Completing his tour of operations and who recalled the old days when "there was nothing here to speak of" and the ground crews lived in tents. Then there was T/Sgt. Louis G. Lonsway, of Oklahoma City, who has been working in an orderly room since getting a D.S.C. for beating out a fire in a Fort over enemy territory, and Major Vincent W. Masters, of Los Angeles, who, as a group leader, manages to get in on only a couple of missions a month and consequently is still at it. "It was only a small raid," said the major, in telling us about that first one. "We just put up only about twenty ships from our group, which I guess was our maximum effort in those days. Boy, it was a big mission—four hours at least—and we had fine fighter support of about five planes."

The beer was beginning to take hold and up on the stage a free-and-easy quintet was riding into a jam session via *Honeysuckle Rose*. Joes were jitterbugging all over the floor. For our money, the musician of the evening was Lt. Michael J. Eichwald, of New York City; who used to play the accordion with Will Osborne and Rudy Vallee. The Lieutenant, who had just completed his sixteenth mission, told us that he was afraid the war had blasted his musical career because, since arriving in this combat theater, he had lost the use of one of the fingers on his right hand. "Flak?" we asked. "Hell, no," he replied, disgustedly. "I cut a tendon in the door of one of those British phone booths."

YANK, TW Army W... My... pak... tion lrmw 'NUY ky-Canch Official Army... Estab... tion mmd tafamartim Dthm. War
■■■■>-< am Mail Call png. Estw AS wasms<-dim aactar Mr "x"***, at the Past Offica at Now lark. N. Y. m'r the Act of March 2. U

Dept., MS East 424 Sara

Maw Tack IT, M. Y. "app'Amcttan rights ra'ric'ta4 as

Indic4 M the Mm Im Graat Britain h, 041nm (Wafar4) Lt4., Wafac4

first time out and it settled them all down nicely, for that matter. When Johnny Ertler gets through with his flying job for the day, for instance, he bangs out things on the tinny old piano in the Officers' Club or else hfc gets into a dazzling game of chess.

For turret gunner on Major Milow's ship this afternoon there was S/Sgt. Angelo A. Mattei, a boy built along the solid, reliable outlines of a baby tank. Mattei has been over ihf* Channel now more than a dozen times in the brief period he has been on combat here. Many more times than that he flew in a B24 across the Pacific to Australia, as a civilian. Each minute across the Channel into combat, however, is a helluva lot longer than each hour across the Pacific as a civilian. Nevertheless, for Mattei, it's almost a busman's switchover. He flew that Pacific route for two years, clocking 2000 hours in the Libs for Consolidated-Vultee. It was a technical job, checking stress and strain in new ships that were going into combat—and his background for it

the shades of yellow and yellow-green on the countryside, the little farmhouses, everything so peaceful, it suggested ambush. You knew that underneath this peace slumbered German guns, but the sight of Northern France so clean and good-looking in the Spring of '44 would have burst a loyal Frenchman's heart.

The first flak blossomed behind us. We were going very fast, with the escorting Spits outside the Boxes of A20s. The "Moose" called back and said, "If you lie on your stomach you'll be able to have a good view of the bomblj hits. Will you do it?" We said yes. Lying flat you could see the sticks of bombs falling beneath the bellies of the Azos like a school of fish, lost for a moment as they blended with the landscape—and then the telltale puffs of smoke. It was the clearest sight of bombing a man might ever want to see. The bomb pattern fell in rows one after the other as someone were planting seeds in furrows. One stick of them fell square across the center of the yards, and each bomb seemed to throw a sheet of flame ten feet high.

We tuki this to the "Moose" on interphone but he wasn't sure his own had hit in there and was already beginning to fret. The ordnance officer had said the bombs now used by U. S. planes had five times the concussion effect of bombs used a year ago. They looked rough exploding down there. The fire leaping off the bomb puffs made you think of the blinking eyes of enemy 20 mm. fire, but much bigger.

Then we were going back even faster than we went in. The blue ditch came into sight. Below us a freighter moved southward. With a small fast boat playing tomes around it and leaving a wake iike a waterbug. The Moose" was singing into the interphone ato.d we asked him if he always did that going home.

—Pvt. Tom Flannery

was acquired in three and a half years of an engineering course at the University of Southern California.

At briefing you could hear the same things that make all briefings a classic of understatement on the part of the officers—"You may expect flak at X and again at Y . . . This should be light flak, but the Germans as you know employ mobile flak guns.

Coming out at the coast, navigators should make sure they avoid Z which is a big town. You should have no trouble coming out if you follow the course laid out." But today there was also the scarcely uttered but still clear knowledge that now the time of the air war was running out—into the new time of the men who will invade by sea.

At the last minute Major Milow, our pilot, tells S/Sgt. Bill W. Pierson, one of his gunners, that someone is going to replace him for this afternoon's trip. The Major regrets this and says so.

"I know this is putting you behind Mattei on the missions, Bill," he says, "but we'll try and get it equalled up some other time."

Young Bill Pierson -isn't mad about it, but he looks at Mattei carefully and it's clear that he's going to sweat Mattei out on the ground. These boys have flown together for some time.

Bill goes up to the plane and sees to it that we have all our flying equipment and shows us the few minor adjustments of his gun.

This is another time and slightly different from the flying of last year. Last April they didn't wear flak suits and the escort fighters practically were non-existent. This year they wear the suits and today there will be Spits in the sky, over and back. It's Spring, 1944, which will be remembered for more reasons than most Springs are ever remembered.

Our planes got away fast, climbed up high in a hurry. The formation was set in no time at all. Then the coastline of England, the friendly, curving, familiar shore, the beaches that many thousands of airmen have said goodbye and hello to from above, the blue ditch of the Channel below. And right behind us Lt. Charles S. Reed's plane so close and undetneath our fuselage you would have thought it was infantry close order drill. We could see Reed chewing gum and grinning in his cockpit. France, separated from England by this impudent tough inlet of water called the Channel, comes up with beaches and curving shoreline like the other half of a clamshell. It was something to see today: very quiet. And

The Major broke in to say, "You're only hearing him once, but we get it all the time."

Our A20 landed smooth and fast, and the Major said, as we climbed out, "This leading a formation is too damn much of a responsible job."

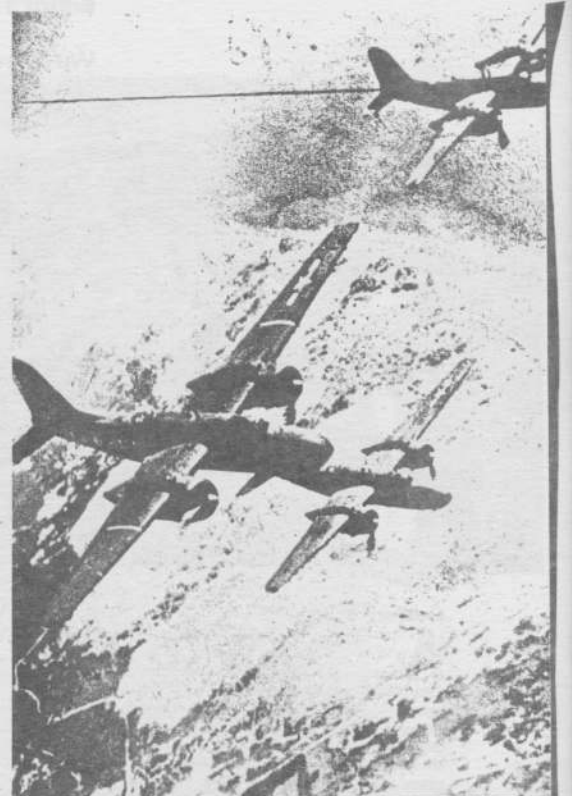
Bill Pierson was waiting for Mattei. After interrogation they went down the road to their barracks shoulder to shoulder. ^ r

This was the A20 raid on the railroad marshalling yards at Busigny—not a major raid by the standards of Schweinfurt, Berlin, Regensburg and Hamburg, but a different kind of attack designed to cripple the German military arm. Busigny was one of the two-a-day raids they have been making in the last few weeks. One day it was three raids, which may or may not be a record but is still an awful lot of combat flying. That was the promise of General Eisenhower to flying men in this theater and the General is making good. The men, of course, get very tired and there is very little time for the frisky evening down at the pub in town. This Spring the bombing day is a long, heavy routine like working a punch press all day long—but slightly more dangerous!

Afterwards—"the rule is Glass As in the Officers' Club"—the "Moose" played the Warsaw Concerto on the piano and then slipped into more down-to-earth rhythms. In the gunners' barracks, Mattei and Pierson and Ianson lay in the sack, a lot of very tired boys.

Lt. Frederick O. Rovente, the pilot from Binghamton with the little wisp of black mustache and the manner of warm friendliness; slow-voiced Major Milow, the exuberant Johnny Ertler from Cleveland, Lt. Merrill, the bombardier with the look of a young college prof, Lt. Larry Smith, a laughing boy whose letters home go to Minneapolis and young Red Walters from Idaho and Mattei of San Diego—they are the names of some of the men who are part of the last lap flying of the war in Europe. They are in on the finish, following the war "generation" of Americans who first blazed these combat trails in A2-J5 over the Continent on July 4, 1942.

The next morning, leaving this field, you see th| A20s off again. You always imagine you can hen. the planes long after they have faded over the horizon towards France.



Three of the 8th USAAF's Havocs leave the coast of France after shelling enemy-held targets in the Low Countries.



Tell me, Albert N. Roby Jr. (above), that you've never been in an A20 before and he'll give you a trip that makes rocket flights lullabies.

Editor's Note:

A couple of Stars & Stripes stories about Col. Van - the date was Aug. 15, 1943.

THE STARS AND STRIPES

Luftwaffe Tougher Foe Than Japs

Colonel Who Fought Iri Pacific Flying Over Europe

A USAAF BOMBER STATION, England, Aug. 15—Combat flying over enemy-occupied Europe on any given mission is vice as dangerous as it is in the air over the Pacific war theater.

Experience in both theaters brings that action from Lt. Col. Elliott Vandevanter Jr., of Baltimore, leader of an Eighth Air Force B17 group which has taken part in six missions since arrival here from the Far East.

Col. Vandevanter is also quick to credit the Luftwaffe with being a much stronger enemy than the Japs, whom he fought as a Fortress pilot with a distinguished combat group from bases in the Philippines, Java and Australia.

"Over here aerial warfare is more intensive than it was when I was in the Pacific," the Colonel said. "Here we fly hundreds of planes, each ship a cog in a machine. In the Pacific, our missions consisted of one ship and its crew out alone, whereas here in this theater we get specific details surrounding each operation, we were merely told in the early days of the war there was Jap activity in vicinity and to just go get it."

The Colonel got his flight training at Randolph Fields following graduation from West Point in 1939. He received pilot's wings in June, 1940, and was assigned immediately to a bombardment group. His outfit went to the Philippines two months before Pearl Harbor, and was at Del Monte field when Clark Field was shattered by the first Jap attack, on the islands. On



Stars and Stripes' Photo

Lt. Col. Elliott Vandevanter

that day he and his unit began bombing Nips, and they kept it up for many more weeks.

"Often we took off for a spot where we thought Jap ships might be without knowledge of the weather or the target. The Nip ships were usually there, however, so we'd bomb hell out of them, then head back only to find our base had been 'visited' and shot up, so we would find at another field, some 1,000 miles away. We never stayed in one place long. When I left Clark Field, I took only what I was wearing and later borrowed a razor. That was my entire wardrobe until I got to Australia weeks later and found some Aussie shorts."

Aerial Jvar in ETO 'More Scientific,' Pilot Says

It was while operating off Java that he had what he classifies as "the experience" of his Pacific fighting. "We were out alone to bomb Bali, and just as we came over the target—at about 30,000 feet—all of the engines and the electrical system cut out, all at once. To top it off, a swarm of Zeros were heading up our way. Fortunately the bomb bay doors were open, so we glided towards the target, and the instant we reached it the electrical system and engines cut back in. We dropped the bombs, then headed for the first protective cloud—there were ten Zeros on our tail."

When Java fell, Col. Vandevanter's was the last remaining tactical Fort on the island. Before the last Jap attack, he took his plane up and kept it in the air until things had cleared sufficiently for landing to take off about 25 American airmen.

"We've come a long way since then," he said. "The training now is 100-percent better than it was before the war. When a crew goes into battle now it is definitely trained for everything the enemy has to present."

It seems like ancient history now, the Colonel says, when he thinks back on the Philippine fighting days when combat involved everything from maintenance and bomb-loading to flying and fighting.

"In the ETO we have a well-coordinated team. Our ground crews and personnel are such that the combat crews have only to fly and shoot and bomb. The men in the air know everything is well taken care of by those on the ground."

Fort Hero Vandevanter Named Full Colonel at 26

AN IOWA BOMBER STATION, Jan. 7—Twenty-six-year-old Elliott Vandevanter Jr., of Washington, the youngest commander of a heavy-bomb group in the ETO and one of the youngest in any theater, today was promoted to a full colonel.

Col. Vandevanter, West Pointer and Fortress pilot with the 19th Bomb Group, which operated in the Pacific in the early days of the war, has led his B17 group and combat wing on numerous missions over Germany and Occupied Europe.

His decorations include the Silver Star, DFC, Air Medal and Cluster.

Conville and Al Bernie, comedians; the Foley Sisters, dancers; Penny Beaumont, accordionist; and Rose Ann Stevens, singer. A British pianist, Billy Mason, and a drummer also have been added.

Eight other shows are on the ETO circuit this week. "Variety Show," featuring Diana Ward, English singer, which opened last Monday in the London area, switches to Essex, and "Jive Time," Billy Guest's outfit, goes to the Bury St. Edmunds district.

"GI Gang" Still Going
Yvette, blonde singer who survived the Clipper crash to give 150 shows for American troops in the ETO, has arrived back home, but her "GI Gang," which played without her last week, still is going strong in Essex.

"Hollywood Time," featuring Adolphe Menjou and Grace Drysdale, goes to the Wellingborough area; "Band Wagon," with an eight-piece soldier band, is scheduled for the Liverpool district, and "Bally Laffs," starring George Freemen and Del Ohrel, goes to nouns around

Boomerang Publishers
6164 W. 83rd Way
Arvada, Co. 80003

WWII VIDEOTAPES: ARMY AIR FORCES

THE EIGHTH AIR FORCE

EIGHTH AIR FORCE REPORTS (Vol. 1)—First 8th Air Force Group Sails for England * First Missions Against Occupied France * The P-47s Come to Town * Schweinfurt and Regensburg * Raid on Wezesak * Maximum Effort: October 9, 1943 * Air Offensive Mounts * B-17s, B-24s Bomb.
SP 09 76 Minutes, b&w.....\$49.95

EIGHTH AIR FORCE REPORTS (Vol. 2)—Combined Bomber Offensive * Fighter KmS * Air Biows to the Reich * Ruhr Industry Devastated * Attacks on the Rocket Bomb Sites B-17 and B-24 Missions * Target Berlin * Escorting the Heavies * Softening up for D-Day * Bomb Cologne. D'esoen.
SP 40 62 Minutes, b&w.....\$49.55

B-24 LIBERATORS IN THE ETO—Story of all the 8th Air Force B-24 groups and their combat operations in Europe from beginning to end. Rare motion picture footage: se-oom-seer.stills. Knowledgeable narration; chronological account of Liberator units, men and planes, in ETO.
SP67 80 Min., b&w/color \$49.95 **NEW!**

TARGET FOR TODAY—A late 1943 8th Air Force bombing mission from England against Germany. From target planning, through D'lengers, takeoff, B-17 and B-24 formations, flak and t.gifters. Classic documentary; great film.
BP 01 93 Minutes, b&w.....\$39.95

B-17: THE FLYING FORTRESS IN THE ETO—1987; Story of Boeing's famous 4-engine bomber as used by groups of the 8th Air Force. Incredible aerial combat footage from USAAF and German sources. Interviews with numerous 8th AF B-17 veterans recall raids.
TT 8058 30 Minutes, b&w,color...\$19.95

FIGHT FOR THE SKY—Early on Eighth Air Force fighter planes a-c across in the skies over Europe. Sensational gun camera film, aerial kills, strafing. Exciting air combat.
BP 02 21 Minutes, b&w.....\$19.95

ESCORT: THE P-51 A? USTANG-WJU combat footage, some color, from 350th FG, plus interviews. Full story of P-51 from first flyer to today. Pictures in cockpit and wakaround of Lt. Col. IV, a beautifully restored Mustang. Spectacular flying scenes: surviving P-51 air racers shown.
CAMP01 60 Min., bw/color...\$39.95

THE MEMPHIS BELLE—Fma mission—or tms B-17 flying Fortress and her crew, a snow m color. Documents raid over Germany from Deginmtr, to end. Official USAAF film directed by William Wyler. A classic. Great air footage of ea'y 8th AF attacks.
BP 19 60 Minutes, color.....\$39.95

OPERATION TITANIC—Story of 8th Air Force shuttle missions from England to Italy to bomb German targets and land a base; in the USSR. B-17s, P-51s, U.S. airmen and Russians.
BP 44 37 Minutes, b&w.....\$39.95

CONQUEST BY AIR—Story of how strategic bombing by Eighth Air Force B-17s and E-24s crippled Germany's ability to continue the war. Much on fighter escort, P-47, P-38, P-51 strafing.
BP 125 20 Minutes, b&w.....\$19.95

THE UNKNOWN BATTLE—The Rare account of 8th AF campaign to destroy the Luftwaffe through superb intelligence work and careful target selection. Much combat film on successful offensive against Goering's air forces.
BP 124 40 Minutes, b&w.....\$19.95

FIGHTER ACES OF WWII—Mustang P-51 pilots escort heavies deep into Germany, and defeat the Luftwaffe fighter corps. Much combat film, gun camera. Exciting aerial dogfights, interviews.
SIM 7133 48 Minutes, b&w/color...\$19.95

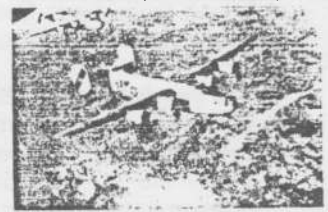
CASE OF THE TREMENDOUS TRIFLE—Official Air Force motion picture tells the story of the importance of ball bearings to the German war machine in WWII. The B-17 raid on Schweinfurt.
BP 101 27 Minutes, b&w.....\$29.95

FLAK SUITS AND BODY ARMOR—Story of 8th AF development in U.K. of "flak suits", the protective body armor for air crewmen. Fascinating account of life-saving apparel. Combat footage.
BP 128 15 Minutes, b&w.....\$14.95

MAYDAY, MAYDAY, MA YD A Y—Incredible story in detail of Air Sea Rescue service that helped save downed fliers in the English Channel. Rare footage of planes, pilots, crews; behind-the-scenes efforts to pull airmen out of the drink.
BP 127 16 Minutes, b&w.....\$19.95

TARGET WCTORY—Chronicles 8th Air Force operations in the U.K.; cooperation with RAF in strategic bombing offensive against Germany. Pictures day and night raids of B-17s, Lancasters.
BP 129 21 Minutes, b&w.....\$19.95

MISSION ACCOMPLISHED—Full story from start to finish of the first 8th Air Force B-17 mission against German-occupied France. Flown by 97BG from U.K. in mid-1942. Rare, historic film.
BP 130 12 Minutes, b&w.....\$14.95



COMBAT AMERICA—USAAF documentary in color narrated by Clark Gable. Follows the 351st Bomb Group, a B-17 outfit, from training into air combat with the 8th AF in England. Missions over Germany are shown. Terrific film footage.
BP 23 55 Minutes, color.....\$39.95

RAMROD TO EMDEN—Story of the 56th Fighter Group (8th Air Force) on a P-47 escort mission. Thunderbolt operation detailed: briefing takeoff, join up, rendezvous with B-17s. Tangle with ME-109s in blazing aerial dogfights.
BP 03 23 Minutes, b&w.....\$19.95

Editor's Note:

The following is a copy of Dave Oakleys letter to Col Jim McDonald.

Dear Colonel:

It was great to read your letter to Ed in the last *Hardlife Herald* advising of your surprise telephone call from Squadron Leader Bowers who was the Senior RAF officer at Great Ashfield. Who but a grateful and thankful Englishman would do such a thoughtful thing after forty-five years. I, too, like Bowers, had "lost" you; thus, it is quite nice to be able to communicate again.

Speaking of the British, you probably will remember Lt. Austin O'Connor who was Royal Navy liaison with the 385th. He is the officer who arranged the searches for and rescues of 385th crews in the North Sea and the English Channel. The O'Connors rented a place in Woolpit while we were at Great Ashfield, but their home was in Sussex. My wife and I visited them in Sussex in 1963. I later had a second visit with them in Sussex in 1976 when the 385th went back to Great Ashfield for a visit. While in Woolpit, their only child, a son they named Mickey, was born in 1944. I was one of his godparents. Mickey was married in 1977 in Bermuda. Dot and I were there at Mickey's invitation for a week of wedding parties. A great time was had by all! Mickey and his bride, Suzi, visited in 1982 during the Knoxville World's Fair. Mickey and Suzi now live in Hong Kong with their two young daughters, Diana and Elizabeth. Much to our sorrow, Austin, born in 1910 the same as I, died in December 1987 of a upper respiratory infection. His wife, Dianna, has sold the country home and now resides in Bristol I believe. Austin's organization saved a large number of 8th Air Force flyers from the icy waters which separate England, France, and Belgium.

Now, a word about the 385th Memorial Association. I may be repeating something many of the members know but I've got to say it for the record. I can safely say without fear of legitimate contradiction that there would be no association except for the sweat of Frank Walls and Ruel Weikert. I don't know when they started their organizational effort but I feel that it was prior to 1960. The first reunion I attended was in 1972 in Cleveland, Ohio. You could almost see the glow in the faces of Frank and Ruel as about 150 people showed up. But, best of all, Colonel Van was there. You could tell from his attitude that he was still proud of his "citizen" soldiers. He gave the address at the Saturday night banquet. He was most complimentary of the performance of his "right hand" and "left hand" as he described his two executive officers named Jim-McDonald and Lewis. At the Saturday morning breakfast, much debate was had on whether to meet again in two or three years. The final decision was to meet again in three years in the spring of 1975. Colonel Van was to be the principal speaker. In December of 1974 as we were working on plans for the meeting in Atlanta, I received a call from Washington advising that Colonel Van was dead of a massive coronary attack. Had we chosen the two year interval in our debate at Cleveland, it is likely that he would have been in attendance in Atlanta.

To continue, Frank and Ruel kept on doggedly working, and their perseverance resulted in a very successful reunion in

Atlanta in the spring of 1975. Attendees numbered a bit more than two hundred. Frank and Ruel this time, however, had some stalwart help provided by Charlie and Peg Smith. The reunion association was beginning to be recognized!

Frank only charged a \$20.00 fee for registration, but out of that we put on a free cocktail party in addition to the dinner and breakfast. Frank and Ruel now felt that the association was about to take the high road to success when people like Bill Tesla, O. B. Ross, Danny Riva, Bob Payne, Vince Masters, Merrill Kelin, Leo LaCase, Ed Faroe, Al Chealander, and Sept Richard began to show up at the reunions.

An important incident occurred at the Atlanta 1975 reunion which turned out to be mana from heaven for Frank and Ruel. John C. Ford, as master sergeant of distinction, recently retired at that time from the Regular Air Force, offered his services in the operation of the association.. His offer was accepted with alacrity! John was a natural born organizer. In a few short months, John had prepared a charter and taken the necessary steps to give the Reunion Association legal status; organized a 13 day back to Great Ashfield reunion which took us to Felixstowe, Stowmarket, Ipswich, Stratford-on-Avon, Windsor Castle, and London; (by using David Wade, a British Travel Agent, John saved us a lot of money) revamped the membership lists; and in general gave the organization vitality which doubled the importance of all the hard work Frank and Ruel had accomplished over the years.

I last saw John in Las Vegas at the 1977 Reunion. He died not too long thereafter but not before leaving a strong enduring organization as his legacy.

I didn't get to Fargo because of travel difficulty. The ungrateful airlines will not let me bring my small oxygen container on board even though it is far safer than the ones they carry, but they will furnish me one of their containers for \$50.00 a leg. I don't need the stuff in flight, but I do when walking in the terminal. They have no arrangements for furnishing oxygen to a passenger while in the terminal.

Until 1987 when pneumonia (secondary to psudomonos) got me hospitalized for 50 days, Carl Tuke and I rented condos on Hutchinson Island located adjacent to Stuart, Florida. Al Chealander visited here a few months before he died. His wife Gennie's mother lives not far from here. I was quite shocked because he looked great when he was here. While attending reunions, I usually pal around with Marano, Stern, Weikert, Walls, Arnold Levine, Earl Cole and Clovis McWilliams. All of these guys have pretty wives. McWilliams must have picked his Mildred from the cradle. At Colorado Springs, she and her oldest daughter were sunning together at the pool one day and some of the guys couldn't tell which was mother and which was daughter! And it is always nice to comtemplate that Kathleen will usually be at the reunions as a beautiful representative of the British. The wisest thing Marano ever did was to remain behind after the group came back to the States so that he could marry her!

Sincerely,

David L. Oakley, Jr.

Mr. John F. Pettenger

Dear John:

Enclosed is my check in the amount of \$100.00 for a Life-Time membership in the 385th BGMA. I should have sent it in years ago when I first signed up.

About five years ago I returned to the site of the old Air Base and also visited the Memorial, it was impressive and. I'm not ashamed to admit, brought a degree of "dew" to my eyes.

I read, avidly, each issue of our newsletter and enjoy immensely some of the stories which are recounted. For some reason, even though Ed Stern was Squadron Exec, for the 550th when I was there, I don't see many articles accounting for the existence of those of us who were there during the first five months or so of 1945. It's almost as if we didn't participate.

From time to time I get to see Gerard Asmus, our Crew Navigator and hear news of Joe "Bubs" Moran, our Radio Operator although I haven't gotten to see him since 1945.

Incidentally, on one of our several "milk-runs" we were shot up so badly, we had to leave our positions as Squadron-Lead and head home alone. A chunk of flak shrapnel having penetrated our nose, injured our navigator "Jerry Asmus" and imbedded itself in the instrument panel, knocking out most of our instrumentation and oxygen system. During debriefing, I asked that a Purple Heart be awarded to our navigator. It never did materialize. When we returned to our quarters after debriefing, we found Ed Stern packing our gear for "safe keeping". It appears we were reported to have gone down.

At any rate, I appreciate hearing the news brought in by the periodic newsletter and look forward to its' perpetuation. Perhaps, some day soon we may meet again.

Sincerely,

Ralph Mignone

Dr. Harold E. Jansen

L J Rogierstraat
The Hague
Netherlands

Dear Dr Jansen:

What a surprise. After forty six years someone is interested in one of the favorite ladies in my life—the RELUCTANT LADY.

She was quite a lady. I joined the crew after they had five or six missions. I had about ten or eleven. At the same time the Lady come into the squadron. We were quite a team.

We flew some tough missions together and she always brought us back. The last mission we flew in the Lady was

Paris. Her code name was Summer L for Love. When Summer L-Love returned to Great Ashfield we counted about 75 holes in her plus a flat tire. But she brought us back.

The next mission we were given another plane to check to see what made it so slow. Well the target was Hamburg. We lost one engine over the I P, and a second as we unloaded our bomb load. Not only was she slow, she was really slow on two engines.

We relinquished the lead to the number two and fell out of formation. Between boxes, we were jumped by Me-109's and Fw-190's. We hoped we could battle our way to the North Sea hoping to be in reach of Air-Sea Rescue and out of the hands of the enemy. Needless to say we didn't make it. Between Bremen and Wesermunde we were set on fire. So close and yet so far. The entire crew bailed out and within a couple of hours we were all rounded up along with a number of other crews that had befallen that fate on August 4, 1944.

Meanwhile back at Hardlife, the Reluctant Lady must have missed us. We found out a few months later from another Kriegie that she was shot down about a month after we were. It was our unanimous feeling that she came looking for her crew.

The Crew was as follows:

Lt John Masterson - Pilot
Lt Ed Calderaro - Copilot
Lt Joe Silverman - Navigator
Lt Steve Yarema - Bombardier
SSft P J McCabe - Top gunner
SSft R McNeeley- Radio Operator
Sgt E L Ferris - Ball turret
Sgt G A Mannerino-Tail gunner
Sgt M W Knox - Waist gunner

We all got out, and after the usual POW processing and interrogation, the officer crew members wound up in the North compound of the famous Stalag Luft III. The sergeants were sent to an enlisted camp.

Over the years we lost track of each other, until recently. I acquired the address of Ed Calderaro, the copilot, who filled me in on the addresses of Pete McCabe and Bob McNeilly. I've tried to get in touch by phone with the latter two, but so far have not been successful.

I hope that this will fill in the gap of the history of the RELUCTANT LADY. She was truly a great lady. There were other great airplanes, but the Lady doesn't take a back seat to any of them.

If you have any other questions, I'll be happy to fill in any gaps that still exist. Of, course, with age cobwebs set in on memories. At least this portion is written.

Sincerely

Steve Yarema
Lt Col, USAF, Retd

Letters to the Editor:

Two nice letters from England.

Dear Ed and our many friends in the 385th,

It has been like old times at Fox Farm, Wetherde, with two 'American Visits' within a few weeks. Early in October we had the great pleasure of entertaining John and Ruth Pettinger during their short stay in England, and last week we were able to renew an old association with Marion and Catherine Raper, who were on their way from the Cotswolds to Devon. We are very convenient, either directly from the Cotswolds or the Midlands or just a short trip over the Severn Bridge, a wonderful trip along the Wye Valley from Chepstow to Monmouth, and there you are, with a traditional welcome from John and Lucy Ellis to await you.

Although it is over five years since we left Suffolk we have kept closely in touch with Great Ashfield and, each year, have promised ourselves a visit there. Each year something else has intervened, but, next year, it is a promise. We still receive the monthly Newsletter from All Saints Church, and are very interested to read of the new Staired Glass Window to be placed near the Memorial Altar and Flag. We shall look forward to seeing that one day in the future. John Pettinger, in sending a photo taken on his visit, said he hoped he would see us on the Group's visit in 1992. We hope, too, that we shall make it.

Last year we enjoyed a visit from Bob and Nancy Valliere. Bob was on his annual 'Operation Manna' visit to Europe, held near Cambridge at that time. He was staying with an RAF friend at Cowbridge, in South Wales, and they were able to call at Monmouth to see us.

We live in a beautiful and historic part of the country. The borderland between England and Wales was the scene of constant battle between the Norman Barons and the Welsh for many hundreds of years and the countryside is dotted with the remains of ancient castles and fortifications, while the remains of Tintern Abbey, and several other ancient religious foundations are part of the Heritage Trail through England and Wales. We enjoy all these scenic and historic places and, of course, can visit them when the touring crowds have returned to their city dwellings and we can wander round at our own pace.

We always enjoy reading the Hardlife Herald, and often remember our old friends, especially those who entertained us on our historic visit to the United States and the Kansas City Re-union in 1979. We have our back numbers, or own and others, photographs and press cuttings which bring you all close to us again.

We send our greetings to the 385th BGMA, especially those we know and the many others we have met on various occasions.

Yours very sincerely,

John and Lucy Ellis

Ian included some interesting pictures, and, while Hardlife Herald has always been a "family" publication, we see no need to censor any of these after 48 years.

We must absolve ourselves from any participation—we manned the orderly room of the 550th while that personnel went to see what they could see. Honest! If you don't believe us, just ask Sgt. Halstead—if you can find him.

We were told that the girls had to stand still or they were illegal.

Dear Ed,

Sorry for the comparative silence from our UK contact this year but things have been difficult on a personal basis and my research had to take something of a back seat. What time I did have focused on getting my 8th AIR FORCE BOMBER STORIES to the publisher because I was on a contract deadline to do so. That task is now complete and I'm now trying to be of more value to the 385th again so, for a kick-off, I thought I'd send in some more pictures and a few comments. (By the way, I would appreciate the loan of ANY 385th pictures to copy, they're often used, like those that follow, to create interest and add to the group's history).

Firstly, let's stir a few memories (if nothing else) with some pictures of the famous Windmill Girls when they visited the base in August, 1944. I'd like to hear from anyone with memories of the show or additional pictures.



Letters to the Editor con't.

Next, but not (to my knowledge) related is a picture borrowed from Jack Silverman who told me the eight-ball outside the hut denoted the "award" for certain unmentionable ailments. Not involved but in the picture is, I think, Tom Kenny on the left - who are the others?

Again from Jack are two nice B-17 pictures. #336 has her gear down as an assembly signal - my records show this ship was salvaged in may '45 when the tail wheel collapsed. Frank Walls was the pilot. Ship #684 was "Sweet Chariot" and she took twenty men safely home in June '45. Her crew were as follows: Donald E. Black; Dolliver J. Kent; William W. Varnedoe; John S. McDaniel; George D. Lentz; William M. Rozosky; Ira H. Barnes; Herman L. Lancaster; John E Peters. Anyone got a nose art and crew picture I can borrow!



After you'd gone, and before the base went into terminal decline, it was briefly used by the RAF's 94 Maintenance Unit and the last couple of pictures come from Sid Moore who served the 94MU in 1948. Sid is shown outside number one hanger - a far cry from the occasion pictured earlier when a stage was set up in the hanger for the Windmill Girls, ^low the wind sweeps across Great Ashfield undisturbed by the great, iron clad edifice. No one would ever know scantily-clad young ladies danced there to the cheers of boys far from home unless some nut like yours truly tries to capture something of the history before it vanishes.

Thanks for all the work you put in HARDLIFE HERALD.

Cheers, Ian



Oxford Nylon Garment Bags \$8.00

There are still a few garment bags left from the Fargo Reunion-red, green, or blue with 385th Group Insignia imprinted in white. They're top quality, sell for \$10 regularly, make a great conversation piece when you travel. If you didn't get yours or want another, let your Editor know, and sent \$8 for each one you want. Price includes postage.

NOTICE

Anyone wanting to contact Bombardiers, Inc., their address is changed to:

Bombardiers, Inc.
200 Van Buren St., Box 2509
Daphne, AL 36526-2509

Dear Ed,

I recently learned of the 385th BGMA from Ian Hawkins, author of "Munster: The Way It Was", and the revised addition, "Munster: Bloody Skys Over Germany." First, I hope you've read Ian's work. In the past year I've been in contact with numerous air war organizations and researchers, both in the U.S. and Europe. All refer to Ian's book as a "must read."

I'm now a 385th member representing my uncle, 2nd Lt. Jim F. Burch, Co-pilot to Lt. Whitlow in the 549th. They were one of the 30 crews shot down at Munster, 10 October 43, and declared MIA. In the following months and years, two letters arrived for my uncle. They were from underground members who had aided my uncle, and wanted to renew their brief friendship after the war. My uncle was never heard from, however, and his status was revised to KIA after the war.

And so began the decades of agony for his family, which wasn't eased until I found Ian's book. A short paragraph described my uncle's fate; he drowned while wading and the body was never found. Unfortunately, I had already watched most of his immediate family grow old and die, still with that deep pain in their eyes. Those still alive cried, finally knowing something.

With contacts provided by Ian, I've since learned a great deal of further information. The following is a summary. My uncle had struck the A/C while parachuting, and was hidden near Holton, Holland for 2 weeks until he could walk. He was then taken to Brussels, staying with 3 separate families until 19 December. He still had great difficulty in walking and remained in Brussels to rest. His stay there was coordinated by Gaston Matthys, who was highly decorated by all Allied nations after the war. From Brussels he was taken by train to Paris, and then by train and bike to St. Jean de Luz in extreme southwestern France. He arrived there on 22 December at the home of Cattalin Aguire, alias Philo Baita. She also was highly decorated after the war. There, an evasion group of 10 men formed: Bosque guide; 4 US airmen-my uncle, Stanford of the 385th, Horning of 91st, and Grimes of the 96th; 1 Belgian; and 4 senior French underground members sought by the Gestapo.

The group left at dusk on the same day. The guide's intended route was to cross the Pyrenees Mountains, cross the border into Spain at the Bidasso River near Drun, and then travel 50 miles to the consulate in San Sebastian. They crossed the Pyrenees which was a terrible ordeal since they had no winter clothing. It was even worse on my uncle, who still had difficulty in walking. The group finally reached the Bidasso River at 2 AM on 24 December. In winter it was 100 yards wide and a freezing torrent of white water. The group stripped, formed a chain, and began crossing into the pitch blackness. My uncle and a Frenchman, Antoine d'Uysel, alias Jock Cartier, were swept away and drowned. Their screams and the commotion quickly drew Spanish guards, who began to fire aimlessly at the group. The European members fled, knowing the Spanish would probably turn them over to the Germans. The Americans surrendered and were taken to a jail in Drun. They were detained for several days and then released to the American Consular from San Sebastian. They arrived in England a few weeks later. During their debriefing they each identified my uncle, described his fate and said the body had not been found.

My uncle had walked almost a thousand miles and was killed 30 yards from freedom. For some unknown reason also, the War Department files apparently weren't correlated, and they never notified my uncle's family of his death.

But the story doesn't end there anymore. The two bodies were found the next morning, Christmas Day, by local Frenchmen. The bodies were taken to a monastery, which overlooks the drowning site from a high hill. After the war a cross was erected on the river bank in their memory. Germans came to the monastery and took the bodies away. I have received assurances that the bodies were later turned over to French authorities, that an official post mortem was conducted and that my uncle was positively identified. He is apparently buried in a village cemetery-but where. I'm told that the grave is surely marked. Secondly, French archives would name the gravesite. So that's where I am for now. I've hit the usual wall in asking official U.S. and French channels for assistance, but I've become accustomed to that during the last 35 years. My personal search has been recently interrupted by several stays in the VA hospital, but I'm up again and have 3 new contacts in Europe. I started this search when I was well and have never doubted that I would someday stand at my uncle's grave. I just want to bring him home. He surely deserves that much, and maybe what's left of his family can rest.

I was too young to know my uncle. Until Ian's book I didn't know his unit. I would sincerely appreciate corresponding with anyone who knew him, or with anyone who will take the time to write. I've probably read every published work on the B-17 and most of the air war. I've been to all the museums, airshows, and too many libraries to count. In all those years of searching I've developed a deep admiration of the history and A/C of that era, and its become a major part of my life. See you in Tulsa.

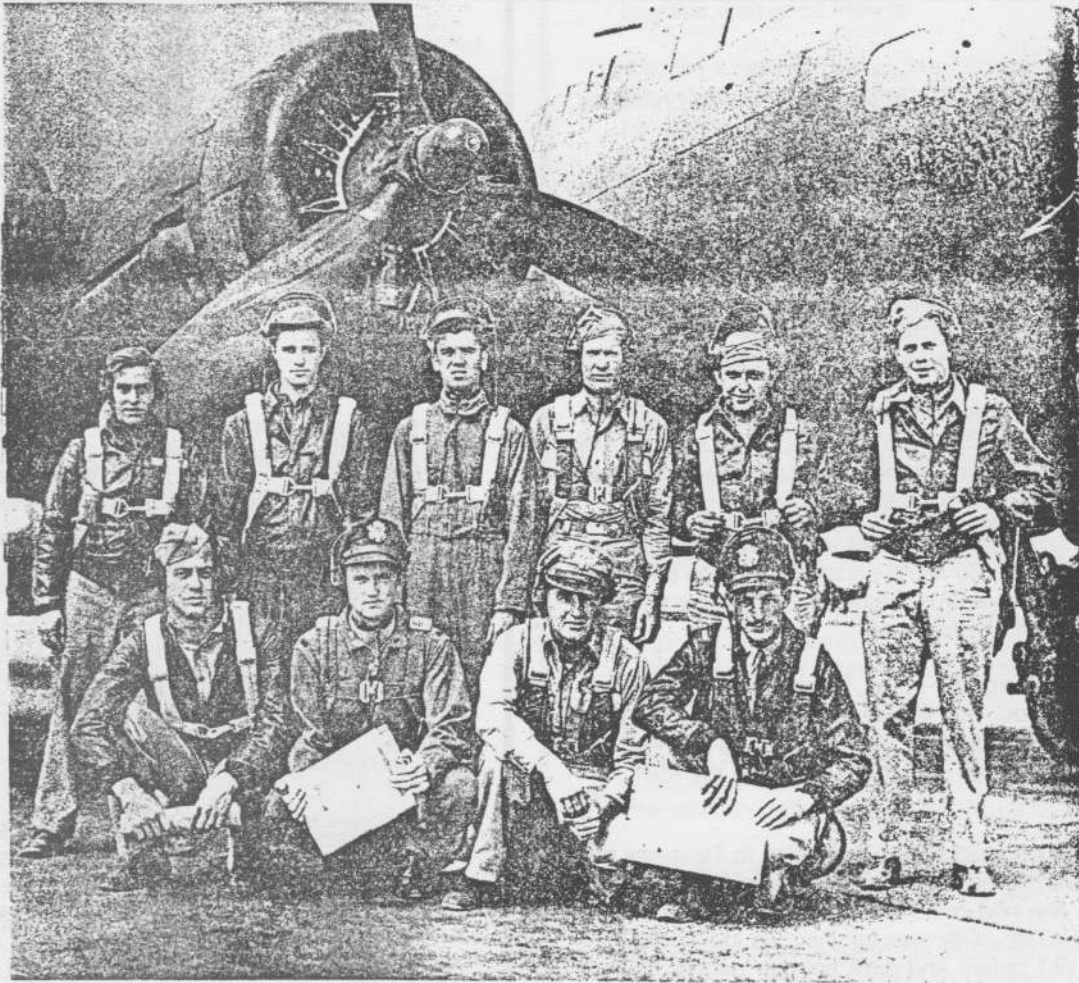
Sincerely,

Bob Burch
8702 Olney
Rosemead, CA 91770



2nd Lt. Jim F. Burch
Co-Pilot, 549th
MIA, Munster, 10/10/43

Photo was taken approximately 10/1/43. Copy of a photo given to me by Dick Whitlow.



The crew of B17 539, 385th Bomb Group, shot down 10 October 1943. Back row, left to right: H. Gilbert, WG (POW); R. Richards, TG (POW); T. Ennis, BTG (KIA); J. Ashcraft, ROG (Evaded & Escaped); H. Walker, WG (KIA); and W. Shaneyfelt, TTE (POW). Front row, left to right: W. Fazenbaker, N (POW); L. Stanford B (E & E); J. Burch, CP (Drowned during evasion); and W. Whitlow, P (E & E).

William Whitlow

385th BGMA APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP

Please Print

LAST NAME, First, MI,

Spouse's Name

Street or P.O. Box #

(J) Telephone Number

City, State, & Zip Code

Squadron or Support Unit

The annual dues are Eight Dollars (\$8.00)
Life-time memberships are one payment of \$100.00
Make out check to "385th BGMA" and mail to:
John F. Pettenger, Treas.
Box 117
Laurel, FL 34272-011 7

POW Capture Data
Date
Place
Stalag Unit

Life-time memberships are used to perpetuate the memorial at All Saints Church in Great Ashfield, Suffolk County, England.

Letters to the Editorcon't.

Dear Ed,

Best wishes to you and yours for a very Merry Christmas and a most Happy and Prosperous New Year.

Several days ago my wife came across this article in the newspaper on Col. Jumper, so we sorted through the back issues of the paper and found this obituary, didn't know if the organization would get the word on Col. Jumper's passing, so thought I'd pass it along as it would be interesting to many of the members who served under his command.

Thanks again for the super job on the Fargo Re-union. My wife and I had such a good time and enjoyed meeting the many new friends and old comrades. God willing, we plan to make all the future Re-unions.

I made the 8th AF Re-union in Las Vegas this past October and approximately 25-30 385th personnel were in attendance. While there Warner Bros. Studio treated all to a showing of the new Memphis Belle movie.

As a result of the Fargo Re-union, I have been in correspondence with our pilot. Arch Garvin, whom I haven't seen since England. He has indicated he would make Tulsa in June. Don't let me down Arch - have another crew member who plans to attend also.

A friend of ours who had been on vacation to Tennessee this past August was telling us about her vacation and the wonderful people she had met in Tracy City, Tenn. For some reason or other Tracy City was familiar - so looked through some of my old orders and sure enough James Payne's name appeared. He was the waist gunner on our crew. I mentioned this to our friend. She was going to send a thank you note to the folks in Tracy City and ask if they knew James for me. A few days later she called to tell me that the folks in Tenn. had sent an address and phone no. of James Payne in Chattanooga, Tenn. Well after several days and many attempts, I finally was able to speak to him. Needless to say we had quite a Re-union via telephone. He was not aware of the existence of our organization, but he does now. He has promised to join and be with us in Tulsa.

Through James I have the addresses of two more, who were members of a buddy crew. Plan to get a letter off to them and encourage them to join up and make the Tulsa Re-union.

Was wondering if during the Tulsa Re-union we could get a bus trip to revisit Ardmore, Ok?? Many of us went through OTU there - may even have some old friends still around?? Just a thought if enough people are interested.

Thanks again Ed. See you in Tulsa.

Sincerely,

Steve W. Zaputil

Dear Ed,

BELOW IS A COPY OF THE LONG STANDING Bay Area gossip column with an item that seems pretty far out and kind of reads like one of those cheap tabloid headlines.

Perhaps you might have a comment to make on that, Ed.

Best regards,

Fred Nestler



HERBASIDES: Earl Zwingle tips me that omens who aonohvoterinBelgium get fined \$30 the first time and \$50 a pop thereafter and that dmds like a pretty fair deal. I wouldn't know wfedm to vote for there, either ... S.F.'s Alan Goldman just red'd a Croix de Guerre from France, 46 years after he was a navigator on a B-1 F that dropped supplies to the French underground. Surviving members of his bomber group got them, too, with no explanation for the delay... Good news for fans of Cold War TV series: the British espionage classic "The S&Bdbaggers," will be revived on Ch. 54 tonight It 10, first episode of 20-wk. run ... Add good things to come: Andrea Marcovicci's week of conceits presented by ACT Dec. 26-31 at Herbst Theatre, Her show's title: 'Til Be Seeing You: The Love Songs of World War 11," including my contribution to the medley, the long-forgotten "My Sister and.J remember it because Benny Goodman made an appropriately nonswinging record out of it.



Dear Ed,

I received my first copy of Hardlife Herald and really enjoyed it. I read it over and over again when I can get it away from my son. He enjoys it as much as I do.

My son is in the Air Guard full time and is sweating out going to the Middle East. I sure hope not.

It seems we keep having war and killing off our young men but no one seems to learn anything from it.

You had a note on the front of the Herald that I was to send you the names of the crew I flew with. I'm doing better than that. I'm sending a picture. Also five dollars to help the cost of printing it in the Hardlife.



From left to right as you see them:

1. William Fitz - Pilot
2. (Me) Lester Miller - Top turret
3. (Not sure) Could be Joseph Ward - Bombadier
4. I cannot remember this mans name but he is probably one of the many Co-pilots we had.
5. I believe is Lt. Erwin Erp - Navigator
6. William Cory - Waist Gunner
7. In back William Rennert - Tail gunner
8. Last is Freddie Cramer - Radin

Also Vernon Sieved not on picture flew Ball Turret. Another co-pilot by name of Frank Thilen, also Virgil Knight co-pilot as the armor gunner name was Murray (alias) Pinkey. Thats about it. Can't wait for the next paper.

Thank you so much,

Lester Miller

Dear Sir,

Have hou heard from any armorers from the 548th Bomb Sq? I have renewed a friendship with Richard Hethercote and we are both retired on Cape Cod. We would like to hear from anybody.

Ed, How about a note in the Newsletter.

Roy Larson
83 Wheels Rd.
Marstons Mills, MA 02638

Dear Ed,

The reunion of the 548th Engineers has come and gone and

a good time seems to be had by all. It really is great getting together with good friends.

We had a real nice group. I am enclosing a picture taken at the fountain at Pittsburghs Point State Park, where the Allegheny River and the Monogahela River merge to form the Ohio River. As you can see there are only 10 of us in the photo. I don't know where the other 5 were.



Those that attended were Moe Bridges, Dave Beam, Tony Ragone, Paul Kostial, John Alcock, Berry Bielli, Dale Leggett, Forbes Tenbrook, Ted Thomason, C.J. Huber, C.J. Thomas, Hy Siederer, Wayne Detwiler, and of course me.

We plan to have the 1991 reunion the week end of Oct. 12 in Indianapolis, Ind. and Wayne Detwiler is the host. Anyone interested in joining us, just let Wayne know.

About that article in a previous newsletter about famous people that might have been in the 385th.

I know a few that were in the 548th that became pretty well known after they got out of the service. I am not going to mention any names because I don't want to embarrass anyone. One of bur friends vis with the space program and has been since the program started in 1945. When the first shuttle landed, the first person the astronauts shook hands with was a former member of the 548th. Another fellow from the 548th was in the South Carolina Senate until he retired and now has an Interstate interchange named after him. Another was the head of Security when they were making nuclear war heads at the Savanna River Project and another fellow was an executive with a large Department store in Florida and is now in the land development business. And I also know a Merchant in Fargo,ND that is on a first name basis with the Governor.

Nobody can deny that war is a terrible thing; but had it not been for the war (WWII) I would never have met the great friends that I have from the 385th that live all over the United States.

Thanks for taking the time to read this and keep up the good work. You are doing a terrific job.

Sincerely,

Marty Girson

Editor's Note;

In North Dakota, **everyone** is on a first name basis with the Governor, Marty.

Dear Ed:

I have just finished reading Ian Hawkin's updated and second edition book *The Munster Raid: BLOODY SKIES Over Germany*.

It is a great one, and should be a must read for anybody with normal corpuscles and ample adrenalin and a bit of curiosity as to a lot if not all that went on that day of October 10, 1943; from start to finish and then some.

Can we forget this was the day the Jerry hotshots tried so desperately to turn us four-motor boys back (Ian says they called us terrorists), busting guts to keep us away from pooping our eggs into their nests? Needless to say (it was) at one helluva cost to BOTH sides.

Of course the main characters of their part of the show were mostly those men and boys of the 13th Combat Wing, the 95th the 100th and the 390th BG's. And what a beating they all took.

And just as I did when viewing the movie *MEMPHIS BELLE* the other day, I bawled all the way through. Even puckered a bit, too, here and there.

I especially appreciated Ian's unique formatting the action of not only the blood scenes of battle, but much of the grievous and sometimes comedic consequentials by way of actual personal witness accounts.

We heard from all kinds of participants: the BombERS, the BombEES, the pea shooters both sides, the jumpers, the evaders and the pows, even the underground.

And Ian, after completing what had to be a momentous piece of research, tied it all together with a superb job of writing. I liked it all.

To us of the 385th it is of particular interest that three 385th participants are recognized, although we of the 4th Combat Wing were I think the last over the target as was the 13th the first. (We of the 385th lost "only" two crews that day, Pettinger and Whitlow.)

John Pettinger, who we all know as our present day BGMA Treasurer, was shot down from out of our lead squadron. He contributed some graphic descriptions of his capture and prison camp experiences. I think John should write a book and tell us more.

The inflight part of the Whitlow drama took place maybe a hundred feet off our right wing just aside my cockpit window, and I say he could have gotten more if he'd had a fly swatter, they came that close. And our crew had solid claims on I think 24!

It's hard for me to believe the German's only put up 250 planes that day. It was impossible to get any kind of count for sure, for who can count an awful mess of goosey hornets? I swear there were that many trying their best to mug just us of the 385th, and there's no way they could have been the same bunch that worked over the 13th.

I can't help noting the way too many Forts were shot down, by fighters and not flak, the result of their oh so futile (and too many times fatal) duking it out with Jerry, one on one. What a mismatch, and formation notwithstanding. Ever see a flock of ma-hens in a barn yard, squattin' for a hop on by the papa rooster? Sad. There should have been a whole lot more o' jinkin' going on!

Last thing. Ian comes up with a bit of information that was news to me when he reports the Munster raid was the first for a new policy of (our) bombing the German women and kids and old folks. The lead bomb got a shack, the historic medieval cathedral in the center of town, and other bombs fell on a good many homes nearby.

Not that it made any difference, we were told I think the 385th was bombing the railway marshalling yards, and I guess we did. I find it hard to believe the USA would target a prized piece of architecture, especially a church (of any kind) without more provocation than that given. Maybe Fat Herrman had goodies stored there, who knows.

As I remember, we were allowed to bomb indiscriminately in Germany, but in occupied areas, no wholesaling be sure. And in all my twenty five missions I don't recall a concern one whit of what went on, on or upon, the earth five miles down. The immediate air space of the place upstairs was all we could handle.

Ed this is a great book. And if Pettinger hasn't made arrangements with Ian's publisher for a supply, the 95th BG already has. Just send \$15 to Ellis Scripture, 1636 Wynthre Brooke N. York PA 17403.

A thought Ed. Wouldn't it be nice if we could hear from, and about, any or all of 385th members who were short time members by way of a parachute trip to a career change, like evasion, or pow? For starters, the names Pettinger and Whitlow come to mind. We already know both can write, and both have something to say. Tell 'em Ed.

Tom Helman

Hi Ed and all.

I was flight Eng. for Fred Heiser in 550th and now have same title in Confederate Air Force here in Mesa.

We have the B-17 (Sentimental Journey) and go on summer tour all over U.S.

I am trying to schedule it to come to our reunion in Tulsa. If you could put something in the newsletter about that, I would present it at our next meeting.

Perhaps 385th BGMA would help sponsor this famous B-17 Airplane.

Sincerely,

Carlyle J. Hanson
3403 E. Main #2202
Mesa, AZ 85213
Ph. (602) 924-3618

Dear Ed:

I enjoy the Hardlife Herald very much and we have tried to make all the reunions since I found out several years ago that there was a 385th Memorial organization. We weren't able to make the North Dakota one though as after you get past 70, like it or not, things happen.

I have noticed in reading the different crew members letters to you that the mission on March 2/45 is quite often referred to.

Both March 1 st and 2nd were red letter days for our crew which consisted of pilot - Eugene Vaadi, Co-pilot - Jesse Brown, Navigator - Tom Conway, Nose gunner - yours truly, Engineer & top turret - Ray Anthony, Radio - Art Gilts, Ball gunner - Gine DiFonzo, waist gunner - Marshall and tail gunner - Penchi. Giltz manned the left waist gun when needed.

As with most crews we still keep in contact, there are six of us still left, and we have had a couple get together and probably should do it again before its too late.

On the March 1st mission to Neurenberg, we were just behind Rusecki and Armbusters crew when they collided over the channel. We sustained considerable damage flying thru the parts of the exploded planes. Due to the alertness of our two pilots who peeled us off straight down in a dive toward the channel and then pulling us out not too far from the water we survived this one. We had lost a lot of skin from the radio room back and oxygen lines ruptured. We got the leaks stopped, and had the tail gunner and ball gunners positions both out, both gunners having to go on walk around bottles, but Vaadi said the ship still flew OK so we elected to climb back up and join the tail end of the bomber stream and finish the mission. We dropped with the Hundredth group that day but was late getting back, I guess, due to the excessive drag from our ripped up skin. We knew both crews from the ships that went down, in fact I flew my first mission with Ruseckis crew. A good friend of mine named Claibough was flying togeleer, having been a sole survivor of another crew and had been thru so many close ones they were going to finish his tour a mission or two early. I was surprised to hear his name called that morning.

This was the mission that Mr. Lucky, Joe Jones rode the tail down all the way to Belgium.

The next day was the mission to Dresden but I have learned since it was changed to Leipzig. We were flying lead that day when we were hit by fighters not too far from Leipzig. It was a sudden and apparently well executed attack, as they had been able to lure our escort to the tail end of the stream while they pounded our end. It didn't take many 20MM to set our #2 engine and gas tank on fire. Tony, came down from the top turret, looked out the nose hatch at the fire and shook his head, there was nothing we could do, I motioned him out first, he was always smiling and a lot of fun, we had been real close, all thru training but that day he was dead serious. We checked the guys in the waist and they had gone, then Tony went and I followed him. Gene and Brownie went out their windows and shortly after the ship blew. I free fell for quite a ways as I wanted to get down where I could breath but it was all guess work. After my chute opened a piece of wing came fluttering down past me. I could only count two other chutes but two 17s were trailing smoke. One fellow wrote a plane below him had #2

on fire, that very likely was us. Anyway we all made it, although two of us were injured when we hit the ground, I the most having been completely paralyzed my first few weeks in prison camp. As I remember this was a one way trip with alternate countries to land in due to a 65 mile tail wind. There may be some who don't agree with this account but it is how it looked from the nose of the "Leading Lady".

Neil G. Duell

Dear Ed,

I'm sure our local newspaper. The Tribune, did not carry anything on Curt LeMay's death; it would have jumped out of the page at me. So it was a shock to see it in Hardlife.

But then, I am a freak who doesn't listen to the news, and scans the local sheet, winding up with the few funnies I like. I figure always if it's bad news I'll hear it eventually. I try not to worry ahead.

That Tesla was one handsome man, from the 8th photos I saw. I've always wondered if he is related to Tesla the well-known scientist. I suppose so, since it is such an uncommon name. I'm glad to hear he's hale and active.

I remember Ruel Weikert with pleasure. One of the two reunions Helen and I were able to make was the Kansas City one (thanks to arrangements Jawn Cee Ford made for us); the other was St. Louis. H. and I were out scouting to see where in Kansas City the nearest Catholic church was to our hotel, for Mass, and ran across Ruel doing the same thing - for his wife; The St. Louis Reunion impressed me with what a tremendous force the original 8th was, because those who were left were still many, after all the losses. Can anyone tell me about Angelo Martin, who was there? One of the handsomest man I've ever seen (all the ladies thought so), also self-effacing. He looked a true Spanish don. Helen and I'd like to make Tulsa, but it is increasing difficult in our circumstances.

Rose Mary Bushard

Dear Ed:

You should be awarded a Distinguished Service Medal (civilianversion) in recognition of your magnificent work as editor of the Hard Life Herald!

I see many once-familiar names in your great Newsletter, e.g. Totten J. Anderson. He was my boss when I was for a time assistant base air inspector (administrative).

Later I was adjutant of the 548th; My CO was Lt. Col. Thomas F. Kenny Jr., who earlier had been General LeMay's personal pilot. His name has never appeared (to my knowledge) in Hardlife Herald. Perhaps another reader of your Newsletter could send me some information of him.

Hope to see you in Tulsa.

Henry I. Dworshak

Dear Ed,

My wife, Pat, and I recently returned from a 15 day trip to the U.K. We spent a week in London, then visited the east coast of England, over to Wales, back to Brighton and to Galwick and home. Had one good time and brought home many memories.

Remembering it from 44 and 45 and my 3 year tour in London 57 to 60, I proceeded to plan the whole trip, hotels, driving etc. To my surprise it wasn't as easy as it was in the old days, (younger then). There are many two car families now, in fact a whole bunch. The roads are still the same except for a few more motorways similar to our interstates. In the country there are still 90° turns and hedgerows on both sides. Gas being \$3.50 an imperial gallon, people just buzzed on. I was driving a Ford Escort that showed 135 MPH on the speedometer. Cruising at 70 on the motorways I felt I was going backwards. It seems 120 is usual. They still drive on the wrong side.

Anyway, after seeing all of London we wanted, we moved on to Norwich. Visited the USAAF Library and the Cathedral there. Didn't get to Great Ashfield as darkness was approaching and we pushed on to the east coast. Had a great night in a pub, however, I didn't like steak and kidney pit and bitters in 44 and still couldn't get used to it on the trip. Lager-iced was great.

Went on to Cambridge, visited the USAAF Memorial Cemetery. Really something to see and admire, if you can call cemeterys nice. It is well maintained and fitting for the Americans who are buried there. Saw the University of Cambridge, went to Oxford and wandered about. Plenty to see and do. Off to Nottingham and Robin Hood. Visited RH's castle. He wasn't in.

Enroute to Wales we stopped and pubbed with the natives. We used back roads and saw the sheep, the green fields etc. Really restful and relaxing. If it wasn't for the cars and telephone poles you could easily imagine yourself back in King Arthurs days.

We really enjoyed Wales, the place, the people, the slower pace etc. Weather during our journey was great. Very little rain and weather was about 55°.

Returning from Wales, I stopped in Glastonburg, England. I was born in Glastonburg Conn, so we had something in common. The natives really showed us a grand time. Time seems to have stopped in downtown Glastonburg. The shops are still like they were in the olden days. No car could travel in the square. They did it up grand for the tourist. Of course, there was a Safeway just out of sight and gas stations. No cold cokes, they put them on the cold slab of marble and served them room temperature. A warm coke goes a long way. Oh well in England do as the English. Oh yes Fish and Chips no longer served in newspapers, but waxed paper imprinted like the newspaper. Not nearly as good as in newspaper.

People still que up and they still want to know "what time to knock up you". "Didn't get any gum chum" Et "got a cigarette yank".

Came back through Brighton, beautiful day and all the beauties were sunbathing. Did we ever get to Brighton in WWII?

London sights are still as good as ever. Tubes run on time, plenty of busses, taxis and even Burger Kings. Palace and the guards still impressive. Wouldn't take anything for our trip and the many memories we brought back with us. However, if I ever go back I'll let someone else do the driving. The front seats of a tour bus seems more our life style now.

I was in the 550 Bomb Squadron - copilot on Magnones crew. We were a lead crew. Spend 20 years in the USAF, retired in 63 as a Major. Flew the pistons and got into B-47's for a short while. Still nothing like the B-17's. Last flew one in 51.

Plan to go to the reunion in Tulsa in 91, so may see a few of you there.

Regards,

Larry Coggiola

PO Box 5151
Bossier City, LA 71171-5151

Dear Ed,

I want to thank the individual who placed the notice in the "South Bend Tribune" lost and found column seeking lost 385th B.G. vets.

On March 16, '44, the bombardier, Bernard Wasserman and I, the navigator, bailed out of our plane shortly after we dropped the bombs on Augsburg. Apparently something changed with the plane and the rest of the crew made it to Switzerland.

That same day that I was MIA, a cousin of mine named Robert J. Fillman, also a 2nd Lt. and from Des Moines, Iowa too was killed in a plane crash in Texas. This coincidence caused much confusion and grief in the Fillman family with Mis-sent cards, flowers, etc. To add to the confusion the wrong body was sent to the family.

In P.W. camp I met several from the 385th and many from my class in Navigation school. I celebrated by 20th birthday shortly after getting there. Life was rather dull my 20th year, but my next birthday was May 1, 1945, the day the Russians arrived at Stalag Luft I and the number one song on the Hit Parade was "Don't Fence Me In."

The newsletters are most interesting. Keep up the good work.

Sincerely,

Robert W. Fillman

Dear Ed,

I am writing you in regards to the letter you received from Fred Nestler of Sonoma, Ca. with regards to the B-17 G Heavenly Body that he would like to know just what happened to it. Well, being Bombadier on "that mission" that ended it's combat. I'll tell you all the details. On Wednesday September 26th, we were on our way to Bremen or as we said "Little Berlin." Things were normal until we hit the shore line of Willemshaven when we were hit by flak in our number one engine. Our group leader told us to abort and head back for Great Ashfield and we proceeded to do so. Just about the time we made our turn towards home we got another burst of flak which shook the Heavenly Body pretty good. I don't know what happened but after a short while #2 engine began to act up and Charlie Lament our pilot stuffed and feathered the engine. In the meantime our radio operator sent a message to Air-Sea Rescue that we were in trouble and might have to call on them for help. His request was confirmed. Charles told us we had better jettison everything we possible could so we began to throw everything thru the bomb bay doors, all those 500 pounders first, of course. Our altitude was around 26,000 at first, but by this time we had lost quite a bit of heighth. In a short time Lament told us all to get into the radio room and prepare for ditching as things didn't look too good. Just about the time we got into position, old #3 engine died and then we were told we were going in the drink. Gilbert Waerner our radio man called off the latitude to us as taken from Lament. In a short while he lay down his head set and came and joined the rest of us. I remember hitting the sea and was stunned for a few moments. Next thing I know I was in water up to my chest & walked out the side of the radio room by #3 engine and looked in the pilots compartment. They were slumped over and I'm sure they were dead, as I couldn't raise them. About that time, a huge wave washed me into the sea. I never made it to the dinghy but floated around on an oxygen bottle that floated out of the wreckage. Sid says the plane floated at most 30-45 seconds. Her nose was broken off as well as huge rips in her radio room. Officer Nestler, I believe this was one of the first missions she was in or she appeared to be just about brand new. We were picked up by Air-Sea Rescue in about 30-35 minutes and sure bless those two P47's flying from us to the rescue ship. Oh yes, this was our last, 35th mission, and Lt. Gutierrez first. The ships skipper told us that they debated coming after us as the sea was so high and rough. Needless to say there was never another B-17 called "Seven Angels".

In conclusion, it sure was great to rise up high on a swell and look out and see the beautiful ship heading my way. I hope I haven't bored you to much and this clean up the mystery of your "Heavenly Body."

Sincerely,

Roy F. Buck

Below is a list of our crew for that day.

1st Lt. Charlie Lament - 1st Pilot
 2nd Lt. Rudolph Gutierrez - Co-pilot
 1 st Lt. Herbert Greider - Navigator
 1 st Lt. Roy F. Buck - Bombadier
 T/Sgt. Albert M Delert- Flight Engineer

T/Sgt. Gilbert H Waerner - Radio Operator
 S/Sgt Robert R. Hoyman - Ball Turret Gunner
 S/Sgt Gilbert E Rolander - Tail Gunner
 S/SGT. Laurence X. Crilley - Waist Gunner



Dear Ed,

This letter is in response to your letter to me dated Dec. 6th in regards to the Heavenly Body. Ed, I have this picture of our crew taken while doing our plane training at the Sioux City, Iowa Air Force Base. Of course old "0291" wasn't the Heavenly Body, but who knows, maybe she pulled a few early missions in the good old 385th. The crew is the same with the exception of one pilot. The one in the photo is Capt. Woodward, was was our 1st pilot. On our, 33rd mission we got shot all to Hell and in fact, that plane was scrapped. Capt. Woodward was hit by flak in his leg and they let him come home with us after we went thru that "fateful 35th" with the Heavenly Body. As I stated earlier, this was Lt. Rudolph Gutierrez' first mission, with our co-pilot Chuck Lamont flying as 1 st pilot. Hope you might be able to use the photo for identification if for nothing else. It's hard to believe all this happened 47 years ago. Where does the time go. As for now Ed, its time to close and wish you a best ever Christmas and New Year and may life to good to you. Thanks for taking the time to read about my trials and tribulations.

Sincerely,

Roy F. Buck

Dear Ed,

Anyone remember the pub in the Fox hotel? The rear is now a parking lot and the hotel lobby is a mini-mall.

Picture of a tree shaped like a tuning fork in the 551st area. My crew taken during 1943 and the tree today. The tree is all that remains.

sincerely,

John Pettenger



Dear Ed,

Last Nov. 19, I received a note from John Pettenger, including a letter, and color photo of the proposed stained glass window for "All Saints Church" at Great Ashfield. The letter from Stephen Miles, at the Limes, Bury St. Edmunds, Suffolk, explaining the progress to date, and the bake sales they are having from time to time to try to overcome the awesome cost.

The included photo of the proposed window is in no way garish or flamboyant. It is very tastefully done and fitting to be in a house of God.

The "G" on the tail is more meaningful to "ALL Saints Church" and the people of Great Ashfield. To me, it signifies "Great Ashfield." I would venture to say that 70 to 80 percent of our men lost in our three years there, were in 1943 and 1944 flying under the square "G".

Those of us remaining of the 385th Bomb Group have absolutely no right, whatsoever, to suggest or dictate anything as to the design of the window for All Saints Church.

These very forthright and wonderful people of Great Ashfield, and parishioners of All Saints Church started all this for those of the 385th who made the supreme sacrifice. For a group of total strangers from across the Atlantic.

First with a beautiful hand carved oak memorial altar to those we lost.

Now, this stained glass window for all of the 385th, a great undertaking, and most awe inspiring, and costly.

It is their church and hallowed grounds for over 900 years. We were transients there for only 3 years.

The only thing that makes any sense, is to forget our "small talk" about the proposed window, and help them out. The cost will be \$12 to \$13,000 by the time it is dedicated and installed in 1992.

All contributions (the sooner, the better) can be sent to:

Mr. Stephan Miles
The Limes
Great Ashfield
Bury St. Edmunds
Suffold, 1P31 3HA
England

I'm certain we'll all sleep a hell of a lot better. Please, dig deep.

Most sincerely.

Gene Silberberg

Dear Ed,

In the October issue of *Hardlife Herald*, there is a report from Frank Walls, Bob Valliere and wives concerning their journey back to Holland to help celebrate the 45th anniversary of food-drop missions.

It was my privilege to make the mission. A few planes happened to be a bit off the imaginary line and quite a few 20MM's were fired at them. The plane that I was in was just right of one that was hit - however I did not realize they had been hit.

The mother of my Daughter-in-law (Lita Gall) was living near the drop zone and had written an article concerning hardships endured during WWII and the food drop.

She sold the article and I could not submit it until now as rights have expired.

W. H. Bill Koon

Editor's Note

Bill is the flyer referred to in the "Twenty years later" section of this story.

Winter '44 was a very cold one and sometimes I asked why? Didn't the Lord know that we had nothing? The war was 4 1/2 years old and by then the Nazi's had stolen or requisited everything. The Dutch were barely hanging on with our self organized central kitchens in North and South Holland, the two western Provinces of the Netherlands, where the big cities of Amsterdam, Rotterdam and The Hague are located. The kitchen provided a small bowl of soup and one slice of bread a day. Nobody could tell what kind of soup it was: it always looked grey like dirty dishwater. But it was warm and since we had no electricity, gas or coals, we were glad we could have it. Twice this winter we even had eaten a pancake each! (Father, Mother, four girls and one boy, of which I was the oldest: 21) One of the many "inventions" was a big empty can, used long ago for orphanages as vegetable cans, put on our potbelly stove, so the chimney could help pulling the air. Some paper and wood in that thing and we could warm our hands and even some food.

Once a week a wealthy couple in our parish invited the five children for dinner and we could eat as much as we wanted. "Tante Mien" and her husband were in the candle business and were able to buy food on the black market. They had no children themselves and invited other children every day of the week. (They helped us survive and we still visit her family, every time we go home.) The day after we ate at her house, though, the hunger pains were worse than on other days. The winter dragged on and at the end of April we had some fresh snow. In the mornings we all stayed in bed and tried to keep warm with the blankets we had left after the Nazi's had gone from door to door to requisite them some months before. Dysentery was setting in and the cramps were terrible. One of my Sisters had found that to eat bouillon cubes - they were not on coupons - makes you feel very full but for the cramps they did nothing. This is how we were struggling, all of us: our neighbors, everybody. When we got the news that the central kitchen could no longer cook and that the slice of bread would be our only food. Meal made of tulip bulbs and the pulp of sugar beets was used for the bread and I doubt if I could eat it today. That evening, after the last bowl of soup, one of my Sisters almost screamed at God during our evening prayers: Oh God, please let a bomb or a V-II fall on our house tonight! It

would be better than this slow dying!" (V-II were rockets shot from Germany to England to destroy London and they often fell on places in Holland before reaching the North Sea.)

That same evening at 7 p.m. we heard on the English Radio (officially "verboden" but we all kept one radio when the Nazi's had come to confiscate them) that the Americans would start a food-dropping for the western part of the Netherlands. We almost didn't dare to believe it, for fear to be even more discouraged when it would not come true tomorrow.

It was a restless night and we had to go to the bathroom" a lot of times while it became harder and harder to get warm again. It must have been around 10:30 the next morning and the sun was trying to melt the snow. A lot of planes were coming over, but that was not unusual: The English planes came over to bomb German ammunition factories - at one of them my fiance was a forced laborer - at all hours of the day or night. All of a sudden Mother was shouting at us (the four girls had their bedrooms on the attic floor) "The Americans are here! I see it by the emblems! Mother grabbed a bit towel out of her linen closet, ran downstairs one flight and out into the yard. There she was: in her slippers and long nightgown in the snow to wave at the American planes! Closeby was a military base where the food was dropped. Crackers, made out of flour and water. The only kind of food we could digest at the time. (One of my uncles had gotten a hold of a can of Spam somehow; he devoured it and it almost killed him.) That same afternoon Mother brought home seven coupons worth of crackers: one pillowcase full. We had a feast! a most joyful feast. This was truly a miracle and we began to know that we had survived the war. If the Americans could bring us food, the peace treaty could not be far behind. We had made it! Our whole family had survived. Thank You Lord! You saved us just in time! There was going to be freedom....and maybe even a wedding too?

Twenty Years Later.

By then we lived in Louisiana, U.S.A. and our oldest daughter had fallen love. She was a senior in college and the parents of her young man wanted to meet us. As is a Dutch custom, which we always kept, we invited them for tea at 3 in the afternoon. While the four of us were talking, someone mentioned World War II and the father said: "There is something I have always wanted to ask the Dutch people who have survived. You see, I was in one of the planes that dropped food in the Western part and when we came very low over the airfield, we saw many German soldiers standing there. Did they let you have it?" We could not speak for a little while and then my husband said: "If we had not gotten those crackers, we would have died. And you see, the soldiers knew that they had survived the war too; they had plenty of food so they just let us have it. There was no point in maybe risking their lives if they didn't let the people have the food for their children." "Oh, did you see my mother waving a bit towel?" I just had to ask. The answer was "No". On May 5 1945 the peace treaty was signed, almost 5 years to the day of the invasion in 1940.

But in our home we have a commemorative tile depicting a Dutch woman greeting the American planes, which brought us food and liberation and the date is April 29, 1945. On that date one of God's miracles happened and your people and mine have never been closer.

Lida Gall



Colonel George Y. Jumper
Our Second Commanding Officer
August 1944 - May 1945

Colonel Jumper, who took over command of our Group from Colonel VanDevanter, died on November 22, 1990 in Santa Rosa, California. A long-time member of our Association, and one of the leaders on a return to England some years ago. Col. Jumper had an outstanding career in the Air Force. With his wife Anita, he attended a number of our Reunions, enjoyed the comradeship and reminiscing, was a generous supporter of our organization. He is survived by his wife, 1 brother, 5 children, and 8 grandchildren.

We all join in sharing his loss and in saluting his memory.



Col. George Y. Jumper	Nov. 1990
Donald R. Points	Nov. 1987
Gerald Thacker	1990
John A. Holmes	Feb. 1990
Reuben Eckhardt	Nov. 1990
Henry Nemec	Apr. 1990
Lester Esterman	Nov. 1990
James R. Child	Jan. 1991

LIFE MEMBERS

John O'Donnell (missed when he joined in 1986)	
Charles G. Flynn	229
Lawrence R. Fostmeier	230
Glenn P. Weisgarber	231
Roy C. White	232
Albert M. Detert	233
Kimber D. Crowl	234
John W. Wood	235
Glen W. Hufschmidt	236
Glen is also a new member.	

385TH BGMA

ED STERN, EDITOR
P.O. Box 2187
Fargo, ND 58108

Non-Profit Org.
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
Fargo, North Dakota
Permit No. 1761

R 91
Joseph R
Iff⁴. Sunset*Tr^{inski}
« 535U