

HARD LIFE



HERALD

OHIO AIR FORCE GOLDEN GOOSE THUNDERBIRD WANDERING DUCHESS CURLY'S KIDS
SKY GODDESS WAR HORSE PICCADILLY QUEEN BLUE CHAMPAGNE MARY ELLEN
SALLY B ROUNDTRIP TICKET CHOWHOUND YANK GELDING WINNIE THE POOH
HONKY TONK SAL "HAYBAG" ANNIE MISS AMERICA STARS AND STRIPES DORSAL QUEEN WAR WEARY
HESITATIN' HUSSY "HAYBAG" ANNIE MISS AMERICA STARS AND STRIPES DORSAL QUEEN WAR WEARY
GROUND HOG HUSTLIN' HUSSY PREGNANT PORTIA LEADING LADY ALEXANDER'S RAGTIME BAND
BIG GAS BIRD LIBERTY BELLE LI'L AUDREY LONESOME POLECAT HARES BREATH
STAR DUST ANGELS SISTER SLO JO TARGET FOR TONIGHT MARY PAT
SKY CHIEF PERRY'S PIRATES SACK TIME JUNIOR SLY FOX
MR. LUCKY MADAME SHOO SHOO ROGER THE DODGER IMPATIENT VIRGIN MR. SMITH
BARBARA B PAT PENDING POSSIBLE STRAIGHT MICKY RAGGED BUT RIGHT SHACK N LADY
ROUNDTRIP JACK HOMESICK ANGEL LATEST RUMOR MAIDEN AMERICA OL' DOODLE BUG
SHACK BUNNY MY GAL SAL BIG STINKY VIBRANT VIRGIN MISSION BELLE RUBY'S RAIDERS MISSISSIPPI MISS
SOUTHERN BELLE SPIRIT OF CHICAGO RAGGEDY ANNE MAC'S HACK OL' RUM DUM FOOLISH VIRGIN SATAN'S MATE
VAT 69 YANK LADY ANN CRASH WAGON III THE JOKER BELLE OF THE BLUE
HELLS BELLS MARY ELLEN III HOT CHOCOLATE LIL-LU STORK CLUB AIN'T MISBEHAVIN' KITTY'S REVENGE
PRINCESS VAL IN LIKE FLYNN FICKLE FINGER OF ? MARY ELLEN II



**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. XX, NO. 1

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SUPPORT UNITS

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

FEBRUARY 1993

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PREZ SEZ:

Hope you haven't broken all your New Years resolutions yet. I have.

Congratulations to Ron Hanauer for finally receiving the medals he so richly deserved. I'm sure you all enjoyed his story in the Hardlife Herald. Particularly, you ex P.O.W.s who also made the 600 mile P.O.W. march.

Bob Smith has everything pretty well set for our get-together in Spokane. All he needs now is your reservations. Get with it.

Some of the most beautiful scenery in the world is north and east of Spokane on both sides of the border. Take advantage if you can, of a few days before or after the reunion, to see more of our glorious north west. Yes Virginia, there is more to Washington than Moses Lake and Ephrata.

We will be making our annual trek to Florida in a few days to visit our number three son. Each year we take advantage of the trip for a get-together with some of the 385th members. We look forward to our annual dinner with the Pettengers, Weikerts and Vallieres.

Don't forget to make your Reunion reservations.

Regards,
Sid

ASSOCIATION OFFICERS

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Sam Lyke

**50th Anniversary Reunion—Spokane, WA
August 25-29 1993**

CHAPLAIN JIM SEZ:

Dear Ed,

We are two months closer (since the December issue of the Hard Life Herald) to meeting at Spokane in August 1993. The year 1992 is past and all the things we did or did not do are history. We can not help but realize they can not be changed. Also we must admit the year has changed us. I think I have saved all the "Hard Life Herald's" and in looking through them I see changes in all of us.

The December issue has a story "Book of Memories" by Ronald C. Hanauer which hopefully will never be experienced again. Since the year 1943 there have been many changes in us, in our society and in the world. Scripture tells us God never changed and I truly believe that is true. Our experience of God and understanding of God may change but the fact of the changeless love of God does help keep us in balance; if we will let it.

I am speaking to one of my Brother Lodges on the theme "No More Spittoons". Think about that. We do not see 'spittoons' in hotel lobbies, offices, Post Offices, Union Halls etc. anymore. Times have changed! But, I repeat, God is Love and never changes. So "Let us love one another."

Read Psalms 106:1 and 118:1 then go back to Psalms 105:1 - "O give thanks unto the Lord; call upon his name; make known his deeds among the people".

May the year 1993 be a Happy year and the changes that we all will experience be helpful.

Love,
Chaplain Jim Vance

★ ★ ★ ★ LIFE MEMBERS ★ ★ ★ ★

Jack King	281
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Martin C. Girson	283



Raymond A. Podolske	Nov. 1991
Robert E. Jewell	July 1992
Preston Piper	Oct. 1992
Harry N. Monfort	Jan. 1993

Lloyd Hephner, retrieved planes shot down in Europe in WWII**MAPLE HEIGHTS**

As a flight engineer with the Army's 8th Air Force during World War II, Lloyd W. Hephner had the task of retrieving aircraft that had been shot down.

One of the downed planes that Mr. Hephner was sent into Europe to repair and fly back to an American air base in England was a B-17G bomber nicknamed "Shoo Shoo Baby." Like the famous "Memphis Belle," the plane was used in bombing raids over Germany.

When the U.S. Air Force Museum at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base near Dayton acquired the bomber in 1988, museum officials invited Mr. Hephner to attend its welcome-home celebration as a special guest.

Mr. Hephner, 74, of Maple Heights, died Saturday at Brentwood Hospital from complications of a stroke.

Col. Preston Piper, 76, of Pebble Beach, CA, passed away Oct. 16, 1992. In WWII he served as Deputy CO of 385th BG, 8th AF. His B-17 was shot down Aug. 1943 and he and his crew were rescued by the British Air-Sea Rescue after 36 hours in the ocean off Lands End, Eng. He transferred to fighter aircraft and joined the 56th FG; in May 1944 he was shot down while flying a mission with the 63rd Sqdn. He was taken prisoner, held at Heidelberg Hospital and later Stalag Luft III, then marched to a prison camp near Munich. They were liberated in April 1945 by Patton's Armies. Col. Piper had the dubious distinction of being the first American pilot to be shot down in both bombers and fighters. During his 26 years of service he served in Korea and other overseas assignments. He leaves his wife of 49 years, Dorothy, a daughter and three grandchildren.

WISCONSIN CHAPTER

All members of the new Wisconsin Chapter who were unable to attend the first meeting and would like to be on the mailing list of our BADGER NEWSLETTER, would you please send me a postcard and let me know. Be sure to give your name, address, zip code and phone number.

With the high cost of printing and mailing we will do our best to keep them at a minimum. Your generous donation at this time will go a long ways towards covering these costs.

Don Kabitzke, Editor
2464 North Sherman Blvd.
Milwaukee, WI 53210
414-442-8890




551 st Squadron Armament Personnel

TREASURER REPORT 1992

Balance 12/31/91	20,686.70
CD'S	8,000.00
Checking Account	<u>10,169.10</u>
Balance 12/31/92	18,169.10
Income	
Dues & Donations	6,249.20
Sales	<u>408.00</u>
Total Income	6,657.20
Expenses	
Newsletters	8,546.27
Secretary	72.73
Treasurer	179.80
Reunion AdYahce	<u>376.00</u>
Total Expenses	9,174.80
Net Gain or Loss	-(2,517.60)

Note
 Not included in the above report
 Life Memberships 1,356.00
 Great Ashfield Church Window 10,000.00
 (Many thanks who all who donated.
 A special thanks to Gene Silberberg
 who gave half the amount)

Respectfully submitted

 John F Pettenger
 Treasurer

OLDEST MEMBER

When Adelbert Wagner paid his dues in October, he sent a note along saying that he was probably the oldest member of our Group-he's 86. He was an Intelligence Officer in the 385th-and your Editor seems to remember him as a "Prosecutor" when I was trying to defend some poor, innocent guy who was being charged with something in a Court Martial case. I'm sure Wagner won! If YOU are older than 86, drop us a note-and you might want to write him too-2710 Briarhurst, Houston, TX 77507.

Your Editor lays claim to being the third oldest-half-way between 78 and 79. Frank Marano is a little older. Anyone else?

NOTICE

Don Kabitzke, 2464 No. Sherman Blvd., Milwaukee, WI 53210 would like to buy 8x10 photographs of WW2 Aircraft. Anyone have some to see or know where to get them-please write Don.

SPOKANE REUNION NOTES

Reservations are coming in that indicate^pokane will be our largest ever. Please choose the tours you want and send your registrations to Bob so that he can finalize plans.

Help publicize our Spokane Reunion by giving your local media information that they can print. It usually picks up a few new members!

EDITOR'S NOTE: Please note that the Squadron Executive Officer was NOT INVOLVED in this screw up

Reprinted from Dec. 1992 Crosshairs.

A CLASSIC CASE OF "GARBLE"

[CMSGT Retired Robert Dyer of San Antonio shared the original Field Artillery (horse drawn) version of this as sent him by his buddy Jerry Eades. Ye Olde Ed has taken literary license to apply the Air Corps/Army Air Forces command channels to this classic of how difficult it was for the ungarbled word to flow down to the troops!]

COMMUNICATIONS

A colonel group commander issued the following directive to his executive officer:

*Tomorrow evening at approximately 2000 hours Halley's Comet will be visible in this area, an event which occurs only once every 75 years. Have the men fall out in the Group area in fatigues, and I will explain this rare phenomenon to them. In case of rain, we will not be able to see anything, so assemble the men in the theater and I will show them films of it."

EXECUTIVE OFFICER TO SQUADRON COMMANDERS

"By order of the Group C.O., tomorrow at 2000 hours, Halley's Comet will appear above the group area. If it rains, fall the men out in fatigues, then march them to the theater where the rare phenomenon will take place, something which occurs only once every 75 years."

SQUADRON COMMANDERS TO FLIGHT COMMANDERS

"By order of the Group C.O., at 2000 hours tomorrow evening, the phenomenal Halley's Comet will appear in the theater in fatigues. In case of rain, the C.O. will give another order, something which occurs once every 75 years."

FLIGHT COMMANDERS TO CREW PILOTS & SHOP OICS

"Tomorrow at 2000 hours, the C.O. will appear in the theater with Halley's Comet, something which happens every 75 years. If it rains the C.O. will order the comet into the group area."

PILOTS TO AIRCREW/SHOP OICS TO PERSONNEL

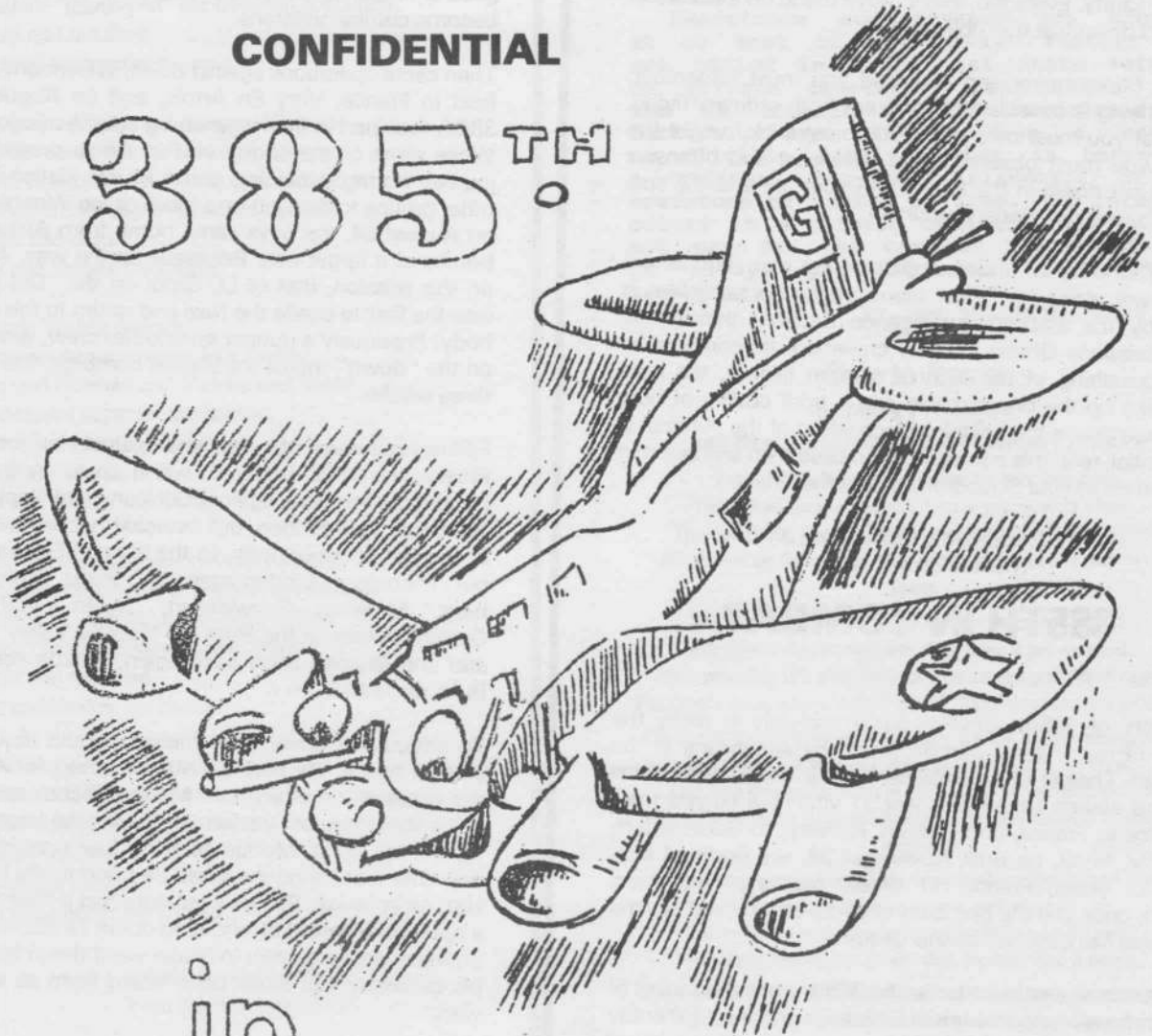
"When it rains tomorrow at 2000 hours, the phenomenal, 75 year old General Halley, accompanied by the C.O. in fatigues, will drive his Comet through the group area to the theater."

EDITOR'S NOTE: Newly arrived crews were given the following information prepared by Group Intelligence as an introduction to our Group. It's dated Nov. 29, 1943, and makes interesting reading 4916 years later!

Any of you Intelligence people remember writing it?

CONFIDENTIAL

385TH



in
REVIEW

Issued Nov. 29, 1943. - For New Air Crews
By Intelligence Section of 385th Bomb
Group. Pamphlets To Be Returned To
Squadron Operations.

'I HE COLONEL'S MESSAGE

To be successful, a bomber group must both hit its targets and bring its men and aircraft safely back to base. These two items are my prime concern: destruction of the enemy and your safety. Every job, every move made on this station are aimed directly at that objective.

You will be told over and over and you must remember: combat flying is considerably different from ordinary flying. In combat you must be a team, you must stick in tight formation, you must observe every defensive and offensive principal set down in the SOP. Both your life and the success of the mission depend upon it.

Feeling that a better understanding of the men with whom you fly will make for better team work, this pamphlet is issued by the station's Intelligence Section, through its Public Relations Officer for new crewmen. Its contents include something of the 385th's combat history, the men who make up the organization, and a brief outline of how things operate on this station. Since some of the material is confidential, read this pamphlet, then pass it on and see that it is returned to your Squadron Operations Office.

Lt. Col. Elliott Vandevanter, Jr.
Station Commander.

385TH IN COMBAT

The story of 385th activities since mid-July is really the history of major army bombardment by Americans in the European Theater of Operations. In four odd months Forts from this station have been over 37 vital Nazi targets from La Pallice in France, and Bergen, Norway, to Schweinfurt, Germany. In all, up until November 28, we bombed Germany 23 times, France, 11 times, Norway, twice, and Holland, once and the bombing of some of the most severely hit targets has been led by this Group.

Here are some pertinent facts: the 385th since the outset of its operations has led the entire Eighth Air Force (and thereby perhaps the whole Allied World) on very official scoring of bombs dropped within the 2,000-foot circle of targets. The last report, including the three-month period ending in October, indicates that our record on that 2,000-foot score is over 75% perfect.

Our record of enemy fighters downed in another "Lead" point. In 37 missions to date, this Group's gunners have accounted for 217 Nazi aircraft. Of these, credit has been given for the destruction of 160, the probable destruction of 24, and the severe damaging of another 33.

In losses, the 385th's record (3.5%) is considerably better to date than that of the Bomb Division as a whole (5.3%). Unofficially, this Group is known to be second only to the 96th in the "smallness" of its loss rate.

The 385th, like most Fort units, was activated in the 2nd Air Force. From February to July (1943) came phase training and organization. We began combat operations July 17, against a comparatively easy target, Amsterdam. A week

later we made the long haul to Bergen, up the line in Norway, then came the opening attacks on Germany itself. In one week, from July 24th to 30th, our Group went out six times - to Warnemunde, Wesermunde, Oscheraleben, Kassel, and Warnemunde again - simple dots on the European map that actually were vital cogs in the Hitler war machine. And the men who, two weeks before were merely good B-17 pilots, navigators and gunners, were beginning to become combat veterans.

Then came operations against Bonn, in Germany, and an airfield in France, Vitry En Artois, and on August 17th the 385th took part in the Regensburg shuttle-mission to Africa. While most of the Group was in Africa preparing for the journey home, remaining crews at this station joined with other groups to do a job on a place called Woensdrecht, and on August 24, the boys came home from Africa, dropping bombs at a target near Bordeaux on the way. A crew alert on this mission, that of Lt. Grodi on the "Old Shillelagh", was the first to evade the Nazi and return to this station as a body. Previously a gunner on another crew, which was lost on the "down" trip of the shuttle bombing, had returned in three weeks.

Following a week of operations against Nazi installations in France, the 385th began to warm up to another series of bombing operations against Germany. On September 27th the target was Emden, but overcast necessitated selection of a target of opportunity, so the town of Essens was wiped out. Then came Emden again, St. Dozier, Bremen, Marienberg, Munster, Schweinfurt, Duren, Wilhelmshaven, Gelsenkorchen (in the Ruhr - or "Happy Valley"), and Munster and Bremen once each again, Rjukan near Oslo, the Ruhr, and Paris.

To adequately cover each mission would require a 5-foot shelf of books. The first Munster bombing, for instance, was the occasion on which Lts. Mudge, Richey and Whitlow's ships somehow lost the formation over the target and had to fight it out alone. Mudge came so low in evasive action at one time that his gunners had an opportunity to shoot up a Nazi radar tower; Richey's gunners had a field day: they set a new world record by shooting down 12 German fighters in unprecedented battles; Whitlow went down (at least one of his crewmen has since been heard from as a prisoner of war).

While in most respects the 385th leads the Eighth Air Force, our abortion rate is a fraction of one percent worse than the division as a whole. However, the Group's first crew to "graduate", that of Lt. Irving Frank, Savannah, GA., set a record by doing 25 missions without once turning back for any reason.

It is practically impossible for men on the spot to realize the vital roles they in their Forts are playing in winning this war. But as surely as the stories of such organizations as the "Fighting 69th" in the last war have been told and retold, those of this Group - if it continues its present pace - will be remembered and held up as examples of how World War II was won. Legends are already abounding around such crews as Master's Lulu Belle, Frank's Raunchy Wolf, Jordan's Piccadilly Queen, Doron's Mr. Smith, Herr's Mission Belle, and numerous others. Doubtless many new crews and their ships will be added to the 385th's roll, to make a Group History second to none after victory.

MEN YOU FLY BEHIND

Here are thumbnail sketches of some of the men you will fly with:

Lt. Col. Vandevanter of Washington, the CO, is a veteran of the 19th Bomb Group fighting in the Phillippines, Java, and Australia. Over here he has led the Group on numerous major operations including the "deep in the heart of" bombing of Schweinfurt.

Lt. Col. Preston Piper, Santa Ann, Calif., Deputy Group CO, is a former pursuit pilot. He led the bombing of Regensburg and many other missions, and proved his salt better than ever when his ship ditched in the Atlantic on the return from the shuttle bombing. In a terrific ocean storm he saved at least one life, and was adrift for 21 hours until Air-Sea Rescue people came along.

Major James G. McDonald, Boston, Operations Officer, a former football star, has led missions to Wilhelmshaven and other places.

Major Daniel Riva, Hartford, Group Training Officer, formerly commander of the 551st, who was a star athlete in college, has led operations against the Nazi at Fauville and Benuvais in France.

Major Septime S. Richard, Jackson, Miss., CO of the 548th, was deputy leader at Regensburg, and was group leader in the highly successful bombing of Warromundo and other targets.

Major Archie Benner, El Paso, Tex., 549th CO, received news of his promotion from captain, while leading the Group on a recent mission deep in the Ruhr. His lead includes one bombing of Bremen.

Major William Tesla, Pittsburgh, PA., CO of the 550th, has, among other places, taken the Group to Munster.

Captain Herbert O. Hamilton, Orange, N.J., is a Fort pilot who was promoted first to an assistant operations post, then to command of the 551st. His leads include one "ride" into the Ruhr.

The four Squadron Operations Officers - Captains Masters, 551st, of Los Angeles; Binks, 550th, of San Antonio; Klein, 549th, Peoria, ILL.; and Bexfield, 548th, Gallup N.M. - are all regular pilots who were raised entirely on merit proved in combat.

The Group Navigator, Capt. Paul Schulz, Detroit, found the way to such targets as Marienberg, Warnemunde, and Bergen, and the Squadron Navigators, likewise, like all leadmen here, have proved their mettle under the heaviest fire the Germans could put up.

Capt. Orville Ross, Group Bombardier of Peabody, Kansas, in leading the bombing which resulted in complete destruction of the fighter plane factory at Warnemunde, scored one of the very few 100% (bombs within 2,000 foot circle) ratings achieved in the ETO; and Capt. Lou "Little Doc" Dentoni, San Francisco, 551st bombardier, dropped the first

bombs that meant obliteration of another Nazi fighter plant at Marionberg. The Rogersburg job, also led by Dentoni, was rated 76% perfect, and the bombing of Schweinfurt (pronounced SCH-WEEEE-IINN-FFURTTT by those who were there) was rated 77%. It was led by Lt. George Brown, San Francisco.

THE INTELLIGENCE SECTION

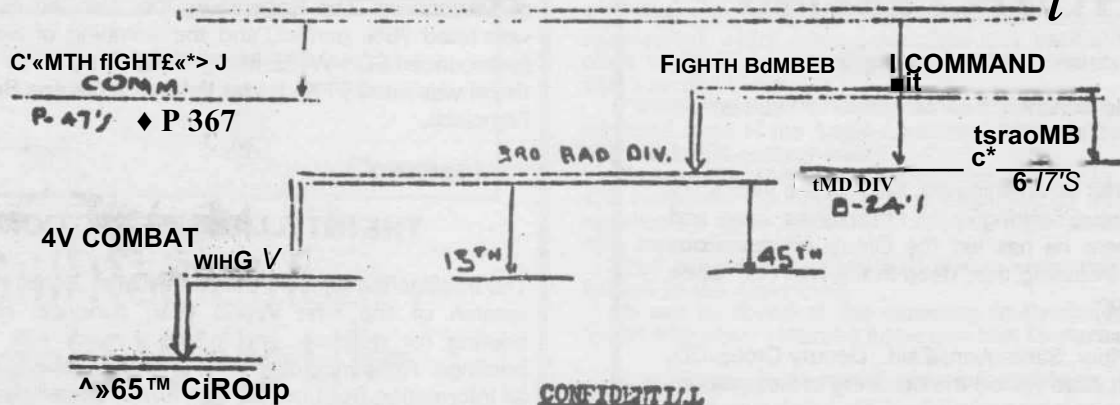
The Intelligence Section, headed by Maj. James H. Lewis, a veteran of the First World War, conducts pre-mission briefing for gunners, and plays a major role in officer briefings. After missions, through interrogations, it gathers all information from returning crewmen. Intelligence also is responsible for awards, security, public relations, and numerous other matters.

TRAINING

Every "old" pilot, navigator bombardier, and gunner in the 385th is, by now, a seasoned veteran. Col. Vandevanter and Maj. Riva have emphasized what military leaders have often repeated: expert fighting men can be made only in combat. While the training you are now undergoing is tried and proven and is vital, and is being conducted by veterans of some of the hottest combat in aerial warfare, it has been pointed out that new men, regardless of their position on the ship, will learn best by listening to the "old boys", and remembering what they say. One point in a casual conversation may save your life. That was proven here many times.

For instance: a couple of weeks ago, Lt. Pete Ginn (of the 548) and eight others were afloat on one five-man dinghy in the North Sea. After an accident they had fought their way back from Bremen, only to crash into the sea 80 miles from the English coast. One dinghy had, somehow, been torn, and only one remained. Air-Sea Rescue planes, which picked up their location almost immediately, dropped them another raft, but it landed over 25 yards away. Some of Ginn's boys wanted to swim for it, despite the huge storm-strewn swells of the sea. But the officer wouldn't let them. He remembered the experience of Capt. Master's Fort which had ditched in August.



EIGHTH AIR FORCE *i***CONFIDENTIAL****A.A.F. a STATION ORG.**

Briefly, this is your present organizational setup: you are in the Eighth Air Force (Commanded by Maj. Gen. Eaker), which includes the Eighth Fighter Command (P-47's and P-38's), and the Eighth Bomber Command (commanded by Brig. Gen. Anderson). In the Eighth Bomber Command are three Bomb Divisions, the first and third being Forts, and the second being made up of Libs. Yours is the Third Bomb Division, temporarily commanded by Col. Wilson. At present this division has the following Bomb Groups: 94th, 95th, 96th, 100th, 385th, 388th, and 390th. A couple of others are about to be added. For tactical purposes, alone, the Division is divided into three Combat Wings, the Fourth, Thirteenth, and Forty-Fifth. Yours is the Fourth, temporarily commanded by Col. Castle.

Under the setup in which you will fly, two full combat teams of 21 Forts each will be put in the air from this station for every mission.

The station organization is as follows:

Lt. Col. Vandevanter is commander; Col. Piper is deputy commander and air executive; Lt. Col. Irwin Goldman, Spokane, is ground executive.

The combat sections are: operations, headed by Maj. McDonald, which plans the Group's part in missions called by higher headquarters; training, directed by Maj. Riva, which prepares air crewmen for combat operations; and Intelligence, which prepares and presents material necessary for combat crewmen on missions.

Among allied units which* make up the station's full organization are: a service squadron for major aircraft repair and maintenance and Air Corps supply, commanded by Maj. Henry B. Todd, Port Washington, N.Y.; an ordnance company for handling bombs, munitions and vehicles, commanded by Lt. O.F. Anderson, Jr., Williamston, N.C.; a quartermaster supplies, commanded by Capt. W.E. Studdard, San Francisco; an MP company interested in law and order, commanded by Capt. H.A. Foster, Lawton, Okla; a station complement, commanded by Capt. E.B. Cleaves, of Bar Harbor, MO.; a chemical warfare unit, headed by Lt. Alan Brower, Tallapoosa, GA.; and a service group

headquarters detachment, under Capt. P.J. Anderson, of Ventura and Los Angeles, Calif.

STATION HOSPITAL AND MEDICOS

Maj. Williston Bunting, Kansas City, Mo., is station surgeon. Under him are seven medical officers, five doctors and two dentists, and a full staff of assistants. While this station has a fully equipped hospital and dispensary service, a huge evacuation hospital for major cases is located about 12 miles away.

RELIGIOUS SERVICE

The 385th has two chaplains, a Protestant, Chaplain James O. Kincannon, who conducts regular Sunday services for Protestants and assists in Friday night services for Jewish men, and a Catholic, Chaplain J.P. Schorer, who conducts masses, confessions and services. Chaplain Kincannon is from Van Buren, Ark., and Chaplain Scherer is from Piqua, O.

FLIGHT EQUIPMENT

Deaths and serious injury have resulted from carelessness in handling flight equipment. In other words, your heat suit and gloves, etc., need as careful attention as your Fort. For your own sake don't just leave stuff around after using it. Turn it in properly. You'll be wanting to use it again. What with shortages, the job of the flight equipment section is tremendous. It will pay aircrewmen to cooperate with that section.

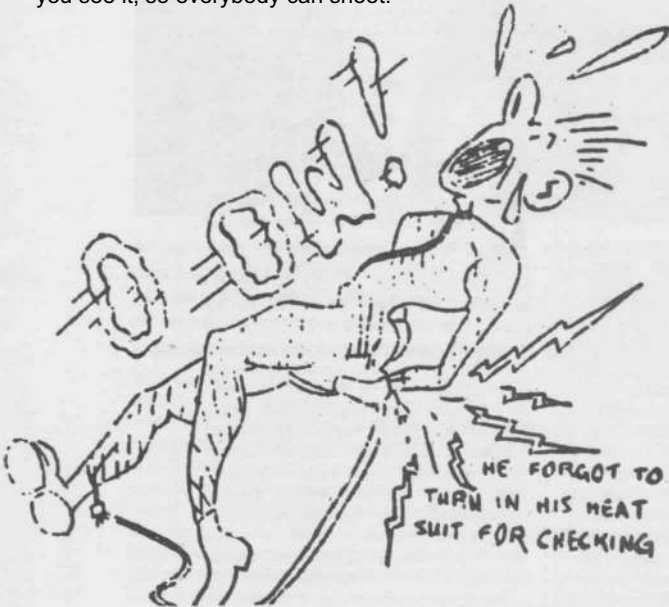
QUOTES WORTH REMEMBERING

Lt. Irving Frank, pilot of first crew to complete operations at this station, who did 25 major missions without an abortion: "First of all, make the ground crew part of the family. My boys and I always figured that while we were the ones sticking our necks out, it was the guy on the ground who saw to it that things were in shape and right so that our necks weren't stuck out too far. As a matter of fact, my crew

and I figure that our record is due almost entirely to our relations with the ground crew. Our few success points ARE: don't sit still for the enemy, weave around and shoot like hell; stay in tight formation; keep crew working like a team; make the ground crew part of the family."

Staff Sgt. Chandler Beeman, Louisville, Ky., Waist Gunner, formerly a gunnery instructor in the States. In 11 missions he has destroyed 3 fighters. "Don't relax for a second up in the air. Once you leave the English coast, keep strictly on the ball. In shooting, remember always to follow through. Two things that should be checked and double checked before every mission are heat equipment and oxygen equipment that can't be stressed enough."

Lt. Charles Shaw, Cody, Wyo., navigator who has led such missions as Bremen, Munster, and Paris: "Every navigator ought to pin-point himself and know where he is at all times. You never know when you will have to go off alone. Good navigators have often saved crews. The navigator should also anticipate the turns, fighter rendezvous, and flak areas. Many gunners start shooting at fighters without a word just as they see them. For maximum fire power, there should be perfect coordination in calling out what you see as soon as you see it, so everybody can shoot."



MEDALS AND AWARDS

To date in the 385th, four men have been recommended for Distinguished Service Crosses; 14 for Silver Stars; 77 for Distinguished Flying Crosses; 11 for Oak Leaf Clusters to DFC's; and 10 for Soldier's Medals. Also recommended: 459 Air Medals and 681 Oak Leaf Clusters to Air Medals. Awards resulting from a majority of the above recommendations have already been presented.

According to regulations, awards are made on this basis: Medal of Honor, for heroism beyond call of duty; D.S.C., extraordinary heroism; Silver Star, gallantry in action; D.F.C., heroism and extraordinary achievement in flight; Soldier's Medal, heroism not in action against the enemy. Air Medals are given in an automatic system. It works this way: every

sortie counts one point; every enemy aircraft shot down counts five points. For the first five points, the airman gets an Air Medal. For each succeeding five points up to 20 he gets an Oak Leaf Cluster. Since achievement of 25 points (either thru 25 missions, 15 missions and two Nazi, or any other way) is considered "extraordinary achievement", the DFC is presented for that number of points.

Recommendations originate through the CO, and are filed to higher headquarters by Lt. Adelbert Wagner, and his Awards Department of the Intelligence Section.



Carolyn Buehler (far right, front row) with Col. Lewis, Col. Jumper and staff.

Readers Digest offers a complete history of World War 2 with 512 pages, including 50 maps in full color and over 800 photographs.

Reprinted here are 6 pages about our part—not extremely complimentary, certainly brutally factual in some respects at least.

There probably isn't a more complete history available. It makes fascinating reading and brings back those days in complete detail, pointing out the victories, the defeats, the mistakes, the luck—everything. It's probably available in most book stores.

Daylight raids cost US dear

The Yanks had come, and with them the heavily armed B-17 Flying Fortress and the Norden bombsight that could 'drop a bomb into a pickle barrel from 20 000 ft'. But, like the night-flying RAF, the daytime fliers of the United States Army Air Force had some bitter lessons to learn.

TO AMERICAN AIRMEN the sky over Europe was a horizontal clock face, with 12 o'clock straight ahead and 6 o'clock dead astern. Hence Lt Colonel Beirne Lay's introduction to his report of the battle on the way in to bomb Regensburg on August 17, 1943: 'Swinging their yellow noses around in a wide U-turn, the 12-ship squadron of Me 109s came in from 12 to 2 o'clock in pairs and in fours, and the main event was on. A shining silver object sailed past over our right wing. I recognised it as a main exit door. Seconds later a dark object came hurtling through the formation, barely missing several props. It was a man, clapping his knees to his head, revolving like a diver in a triple somersault. I didn't see his 'chute open.

'A B-17 turned gradually out of the formation . . . in a split second [it] disappeared in a brilliant explosion, from which the only remains were four small balls of fire, the fuel tanks, quickly consumed as they fell . . . I watched a B-17 turn slowly out to the right with its cockpit a mass of flames. The co-pilot crawled out of his window . . . reached back for his 'chute, buckled it on. Let go and was whisked back into the horizontal stabiliser. His 'chute didn't open . . . The fighters queued up like a breadline and let us have it . . .'

MODEST BEGINNINGS

By the time of the Regensburg operation, the US Eighth Air Force had a battle-scarred history. Eighteen months earlier, in February 1942, Brig General Ira C. Eaker had arrived in England to pave the way for the mighty air armada that would, the Americans were convinced, bring Germany to its knees. Already the method had been settled. Unlike the British, who bombed at night, they would use their force as a rapier to make daylight precision attacks by close-flying formations of self-defending bombers upon key industries and military targets. After a slow start, the British-based heavy bomber force gradually grew in the summer of 1942. Ground crews were shipped over from the USA, while the bombers were flown in by the men who would fly them in action. Dozens of airfields were hastily constructed, mainly in the area of East Anglia that lies between The Wash and Cambridge.

On August 17, 1942, a dozen B-17s took off for the first all-American mission, with Eaker himself riding in a plane called 'Yankee Doodle'. The target was the marshalling yards at Rouen, in northern France. All returned safely, some bearing a few flak scars. Bomber Command chief Arthur Harris wired congratulations to Eaker: 'Yankee Doodle certainly went to town, and can stick another well-deserved feather in his hat.' *

The British press lauded 'the remarkable success of the new Flying Fortress' and cheered the B-24 Liberator bombers too, when they went to war in October. Between August 17 and

December 31, 1942, American heavy bombers flew 1547 sorties, many of them against the concrete-roofed U-boat pens in occupied France. The average American loss rate per raid at this period was only 2 per cent, half that of the RAF. But no American bomber had yet flown to Germany, beyond the range of friendly fighter cover.

In January 1943, a directive issued at the Casablanca Conference defined the chief war aim of Allied bombing commanders as 'the progressive destruction and dislocation of the German military, industrial and economic system and the undermining of the morale of the German people to a point where their capacity for armed resistance is fatally weakened'.

FACING THE FIGHTERS

Prodded by this, 91 B-17s and B-24s were sent against the naval base at Wilhelmshaven on January 27. From this first German target, beyond fighter protection, only three bombers failed to return, a fairly encouraging result. But by February the German defences began to find the measure of the 'invincible' Fortresses and Liberators. That month, 22 bombers were shot down, each crewed by ten highly trained specialists.

As spring advanced, losses escalated: out of 115 aircraft attacking Bremen on April 11, 16 were lost and 44 seriously damaged. On June 13, 22 out of 60 B-17s went down in a single raid on Kiel, a grim curtain-raiser to 'Blitz Week' in July - which included the Eighth's part in Operation 'Gomorrah' against Hamburg - that cost over 100 aircraft lost or damaged and the equivalent of 90 crews killed, wounded or taken prisoner.

The principal cause of the losses was the limited range of the Allied fighters then available. Taking off from English airfields, they could escort the bombers only to and from the borders of Germany. It was with foreboding that the bomber men watched the 'Little Friends' - code-name for Allied fighters - depart, for as they left, gnat-like swarms of Messerschmitts and Focke-Wulfs rose ahead to make their attacks from head-on. This took iron nerve and great skill, but the Luftwaffe had soon learned that the American bombers, lightly armed forward, were most vulnerable to this kind of tactic. One bombardier recalled: 'They came in from 10, 12, 2 o'clock, guns winking, then just feet away, would break below, some of the hot-shots actually doing a roll as they went. You could feel the shells hitting the ship, but you were holding formation, and apart from a quick burst from the forward guns, there wasn't a damn thing you could do about it.'

Combat in a B-17 was always a nerve-stretching, physically exhausting business. From below, the rigid formations, each plane trailing dramatic white plumes of condensation from the engines, seemed serene and invincible. In fact, these contrails were a pilot's nightmare, advertising his presence from scores of kilometres away.

Behind the flight deck stretched a vibrating green metal tunnel draped with cables and ammunition belts, filled with deafening noise. Those who could endure real claustrophobia volunteered for the 'ball-turret', under the belly of the bomber. In this plexiglass bubble, the gunner curled foetus-like, plied his trade and hoped that in an emergency, his friends would remember to open the hatch above him. This was because there was no room for a parachute in the turret - he had to reach up into the fuselage for it.

Escape was not easy for anyone. In a compartment beneath the flight deck in a B-17 there is a tiny hatch through which, if the plane were badly-hit, five men encumbered by flying suits and parachutes were meant to squeeze. But if the plane went into a spin, no one would get out at all; centrifugal force simply pinned the crew to the walls. By mid-1943, it was apparent to any crew member that his chances of completing a tour of 25 missions were little better than one in three.

Not only the crews, but the Allied High Command were becoming seriously alarmed. The Luftwaffe's determination and skill were biting hard. If the fighters gained the upper hand.

LEADING FROM THE FRONT

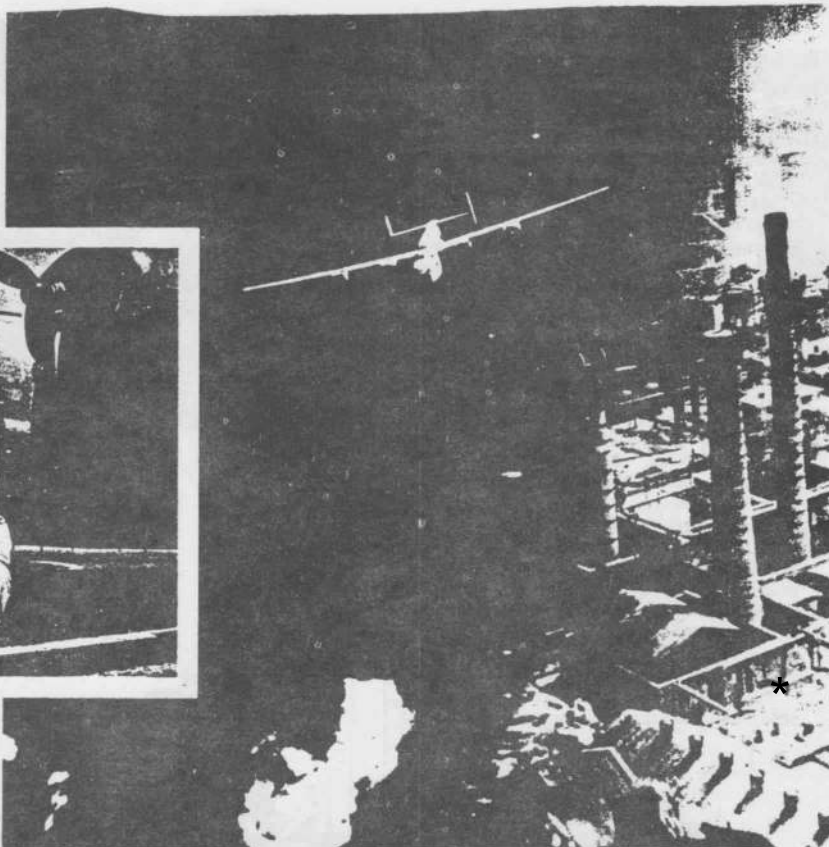
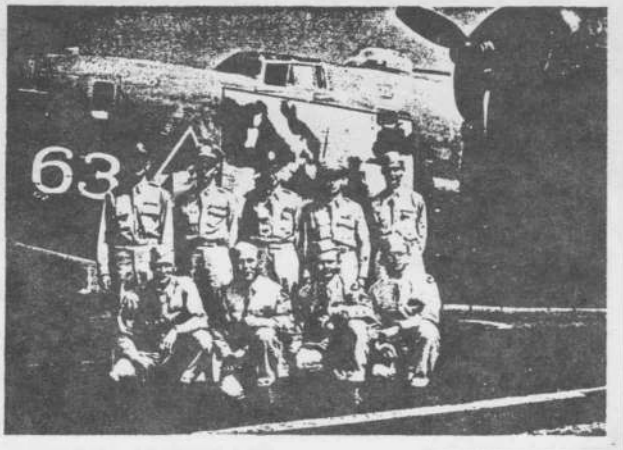
Ira C. Eaker (1896-1987) was a brilliant pilot and a firm believer in the ability of the heavy bomber to win wars.

Daylight precision bombing was the method he advocated, and the heavily armed B-17 Flying Fortress the tool he chose. To demonstrate his faith, on August 17, 1942, at the age of 46, he flew in one of his 12 Flying Fortresses to bomb the marshalling yards at Rouen - the first all-American bombing attack made by the USAAF in western Europe. He pressed the case of daylight precision bombing at the Casablanca Conference in January 1942, when 'Bomber' Harris pressed equally hard for area bombing by night. It was agreed that both forms of attack should continue, giving rise to the 'round-the-clock' Combined Bomber Offensive.

Eaker was promoted lieutenant general in 1943, and in the following year was made commander of Allied air forces in the Mediterranean. Flying from bases in Italy, his new command continued the offensive against Germany and played a major part in the Italian campaign, including the bombing of the monastery of AAonte Cassino, and supported the invasion of southern France.



TARGET PLOESTI Dense black smoke pours from a burning Ploesti refinery (right) during the American raid of August 1943; a shaft of light strikes one US B-24 Liberators. The crew of 'Wash's Tub', a B-24 that returned safely, pose (below) on the tarmac. Of 178 B-24s that set out, 46 went down, eight took refuge in Turkey. 58 were badly damaged.



then the policy of destroying German industry could not be carried out. Worse, as Hitler had discovered in 1940, without command of the air there was no chance of mounting a cross-Channel invasion. In June 1943, the Combined Chiefs of Staff issued a directive code-named 'Pointblank'. Henceforward, the US Eighth would concentrate on destroying German fighter power - through bombing aircraft factories and associated targets; the RAF would continue to concentrate on 'the general disorganisation of German industry'.

DIVIDED THEY FELL

An early 'Pointblank' mission was flown against Romanian oil refineries at Ploesti, on August 1. It was carried out by the Eighth's sister force, the Ninth USAAF, from Benghazi in North Africa, and involved a 4350 km (2700 mile) round trip across the Balkans. The plan was for 178 B-24 Liberators to attack at low level and knock out Ploesti. In the event bad weather, murderous flak and swarms of enemy fighters caused a fiasco; 310 US crewmen were killed and 114 became prisoners of war. Little damage was done to Ploesti and its output was soon back to normal.

In England, Eaker prepared for a double assault - the biggest American sky battle so far - on the Messerschmitt aircraft assembly works at Regensburg and the vital ball-bearing factories in Schweinfurt. Two overwhelmingly large task forces would go out together on August 17. A surprise move was to send the Regensburg planes on to land in North Africa while the Schweinfurters returned to England, hoping to divide the defenders into two weakened forces chasing off in opposite directions.

The plan began to go wrong at the outset, when low cloud put the Schweinfurt force's takeoff back by 3 1/2 hours. Two separate raids on the same target were thus created. Because they failed to coincide, neither raid diverted German fighters from the other. The Regensburg force lost 24 bombers and took over 11 hours to reach Africa, losing two more aircraft on the way. The Schweinfurt planes finally managed to get off the ground in late morning and, just after 1 pm, 216 B-17s in two task forces crossed the enemy coast. At the limit of

their range, the protecting RAF Spitfires and American P-47 Thunderbolts had to turn back near Aachen. At once a formidable array of German fighters rose up to harass the bombers. Twenty-one Fortresses were shot down before reaching the target, one fell to flak over Schweinfurt, and another three were lost to fighters as the squadrons turned for home.

Of 230 Fortresses sent against Schweinfurt, 36 went down. In addition to the 24 lost on August 17, the Regensburg task force left 60 badly damaged aircraft in North Africa and lost another three on the return flight to England. The Germans had lost only 25 fighters and, although reconnaissance pictures seemed to show a devastated Schweinfurt, in fact the bombs had done little more than strip the roofs off the workshops, leaving the heavy machinery relatively unscathed. Within four weeks they were back in full production.

LONG-RANGE SUPPORT

Other operations at that period were hardly more successful. However, the men flying 93 B-17s bound for Frankfurt on October 4 were considerably cheered by an escort of Thunderbolt fighters. These were fitted with extra fuel tanks beneath the fuselage to increase their range. The 'drop-tanks' slowed the fighters up, and resulted in instant incineration if hit, but they could be jettisoned before going into action. The Germans soon learned to attack P-47s just as they crossed the coast, forcing their pilots to drop the tanks and thus reducing their range to near to what it had been before.

Undaunted, the Eighth decided to visit Schweinfurt again on October 14. This time, the plan involved three task forces of B-17s and B-24s, each flying separate routes, and each

covered by an escort of twin-engine P-38 Lightning fighters equipped with drop-tanks sweeping ahead. But the P-38s were not operational in time; once again the bombers would have to go it alone. The crews learned of their destination with deep gloom. At one briefing, the commanding officer

SKY MARKSMAN The waist gunner of a B-17 grips his Browning .50 in (12.7 mm) machine gun. His parachute lies at his feet, attached to his clothing by webbing so that he can find it in a hurry. He wears a fleece-lined leather flying suit, and large leather overboots. Earphones in his flying helmet keep him in touch with the rest of the crew.

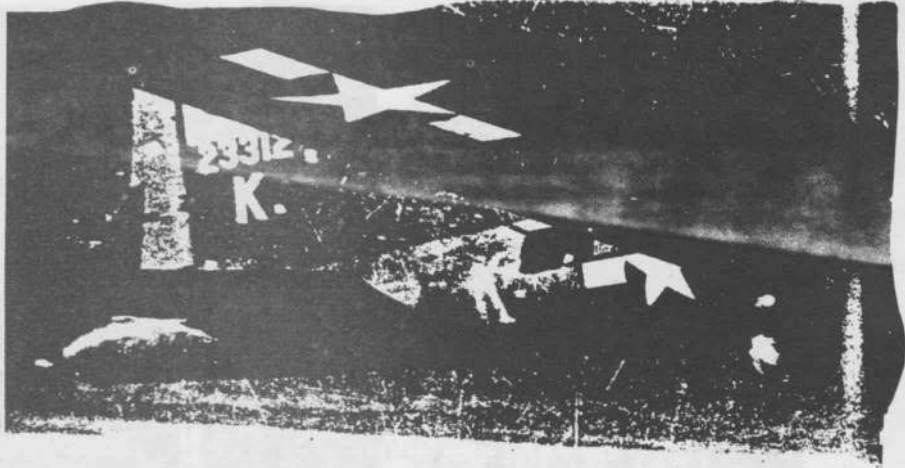


tried to raise his audience's spirits with a pep talk: 'It's a tough job, but I know you can do it. Good luck, good hunting and good bombing.' A doleful gunner added from the rear: 'And goodbye!'

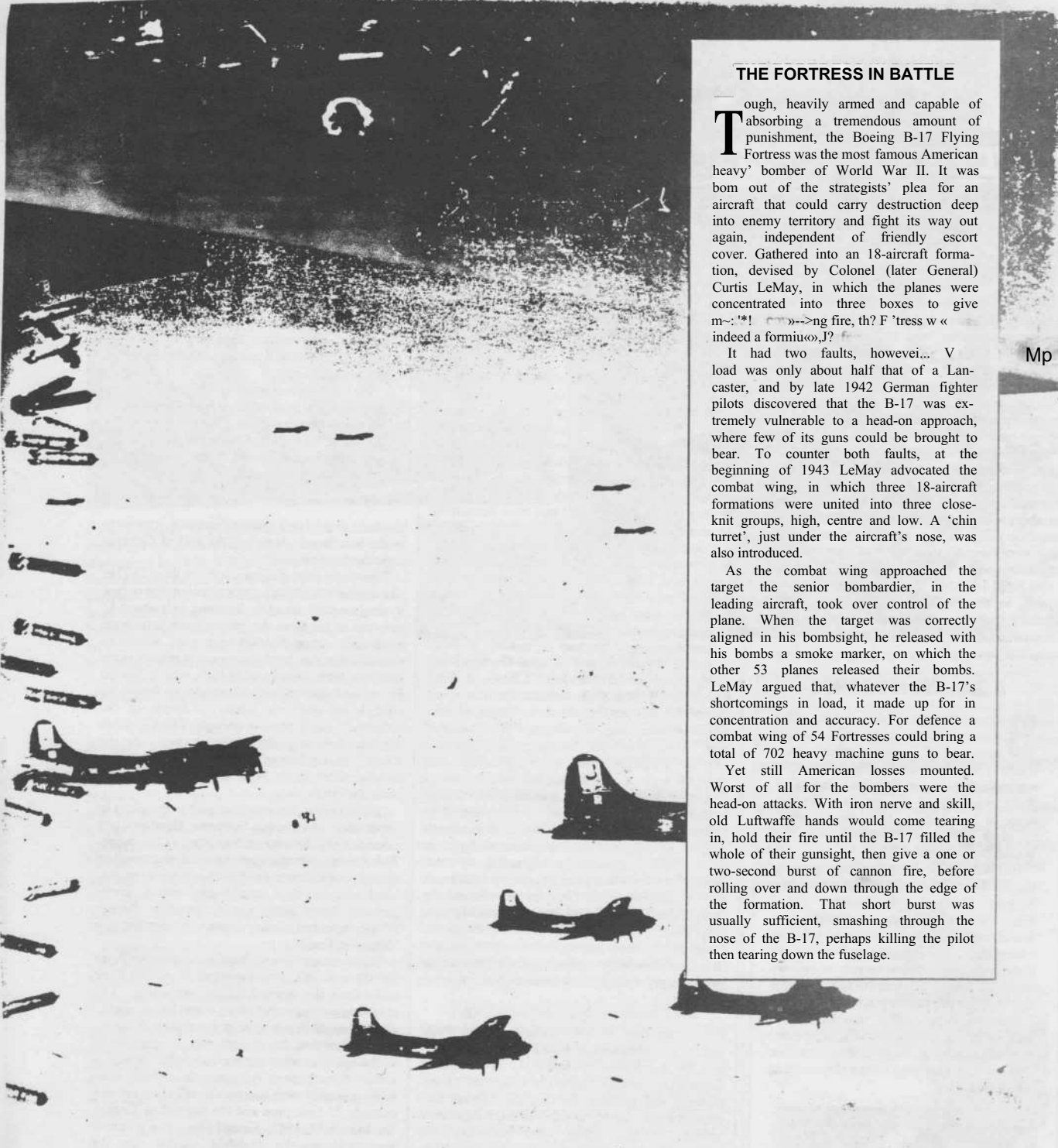
Because of poor weather, the Liberators were badly scattered, and could not be sent against Schweinfurt. Not until midday did 291 B-17s in two task forces set out over the North Sea. The Luftwaffe homed in as soon as the Americans crossed the Dutch coast and again the fiercest fighting took place south of Aachen as the 'Little Friends' departed. A new and highly unnerving form of attack was the rocket-carrier. 'Suddenly the German fighter seemed to disappear behind four bright flares,' recalled one airman. 'The rockets were on their way. Then he came in close to use the 20 mm cannon.'

The battle on the way home was even tougher than the one to the target. No sooner was Schweinfurt left behind than some 200 single and twin-engine German fighters flung themselves on the bombers and harried them on their homeward journey. Fifty-eight Fortresses fell victim to German fighters and two to flak; another five crashed after crossing the English coast.

These losses finally convinced even its most ardent advocates that there was no such thing as a



TOGGING UP American bomber crewmen tug on overboots and pull flying suits over their uniforms. They needed every scrap of clothing to protect them from freezing gales that blew in through open waist-gun positions.



THE FORTRESS IN BATTLE

Tough, heavily armed and capable of absorbing a tremendous amount of punishment, the Boeing B-17 Flying Fortress was the most famous American heavy bomber of World War II. It was born out of the strategists' plea for an aircraft that could carry destruction deep into enemy territory and fight its way out again, independent of friendly escort cover. Gathered into an 18-aircraft formation, devised by Colonel (later General) Curtis LeMay, in which the planes were concentrated into three boxes to give maximum firepower, the Fortress was indeed a formidable force.

It had two faults, however. Its load was only about half that of a Lancaster, and by late 1942 German fighter pilots discovered that the B-17 was extremely vulnerable to a head-on approach, where few of its guns could be brought to bear. To counter both faults, at the beginning of 1943 LeMay advocated the combat wing, in which three 18-aircraft formations were united into three close-knit groups, high, centre and low. A chin turret, just under the aircraft's nose, was also introduced.

As the combat wing approached the target the senior bombardier, in the leading aircraft, took over control of the plane. When the target was correctly aligned in his bombsight, he released with his bombs a smoke marker, on which the other 53 planes released their bombs. LeMay argued that, whatever the B-17's shortcomings in load, it made up for in concentration and accuracy. For defence a combat wing of 54 Fortresses could bring a total of 702 heavy machine guns to bear.

Yet still American losses mounted. Worst of all for the bombers were the head-on attacks. With iron nerve and skill, old Luftwaffe hands would come tearing in, hold their fire until the B-17 filled the whole of their gunsight, then give a one or two-second burst of cannon fire, before rolling over and down through the edge of the formation. That short burst was usually sufficient, smashing through the nose of the B-17, perhaps killing the pilot then tearing down the fuselage.

Mp

successful self-defending bomber. Bomber leaders clamoured for some new and wondrous long-range fighter that would solve their dilemma. In fact, it already existed - the North American P-51 Mustang, which had been around for a while but was considered underpowered. However, fitted with a Rolls-Royce Merlin engine instead of its American Allison it grew mighty indeed. In Washington, General Henry 'Hap' Arnold, Commanding General of the US Army Air Forces, ordered the new P-51D version

into immediate large-scale production; using an American-built version of the Merlin, it had a range of up to 3680 km (2300 miles) and a top speed of 703 km/h (437 mph).

Awaiting its arrival, the Eighth was forced to reduce its efforts. The Reich gained a respite, at least from daylight bombing, during the winter of 1943-4. Then, on the last day of February 1944, England-based bombers, protected by older fighters plus Mustangs, were joined over Germany by Fifteenth Air Force heavies flying from

Italy. Together, by the end of March, the two commands were dispatching a combined force of 1000 bombers a day into enemy territory. To the bomber theorists, American and British alike, it seemed that victory through air power alone was now a distinct possibility. But the picture changed: Supreme Allied Headquarters decreed that both the Eighth and RAF Bomber Command should now direct their attentions largely on communications, and military installations in Northern France, as part of the run up to D-Day.

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Together to the end

As part of the great plan for the invasion of Europe, RAF Bomber Command and the US Eighth Air Force combined to strike day and night at the enemy, but where to strike - and where to draw the line - caused sharp discord.

A SPRING CAME to Europe in 1944, British and American airmen alike sought to erase the grim memories of the late winter months, when losses mounted and the chance of completing a 'tour' of 30 operations seemed ever more remote. Germany's arms factories were still humming with activity. Its workers, far from being cowed by heavy civilian casualties, seemed to be spurred by the bombing to work even harder for victory.

But there were signs that the tide was about to turn. Mustang fighters were now escorting the daylight bombers all the way to distant targets and back, and were destroying ever-increasing numbers of their opponents. Especially damaging was their killing of experienced Luftwaffe pilots, who were forced to defend vital targets against impossible odds.

On April 14, 1944, General Dwight D. Eisenhower, in charge of the invasion of Europe, officially took overall command of both Bomber Command and the American Eighth Air Force to

coordinate their roles with those of other arms in the build-up to the invasion of France. It was clear to him what those roles should be: to support the ground forces and in particular to destroy French railway and other communication systems so as to hamper German forces after D-Day - the so-called 'Transportation Plan'.

Churchill and his Bomber Command chief, Air Chief Marshal Sir Arthur Harris, both disagreed - as did Lt General Carl Spaatz, newly commanding US Strategic Air Forces in Europe. Spaatz saw his Mustangs axing down German fighters to carve avenues through which his Flying Fortresses and Liberators could fly on daylight precision raids. These would destroy oil plants, cutting off Germany's fuel and thus destroying its ability to fight. Harris was equally certain that night-time pounding of German industrial centres and civilian workers would destroy the will to fight. The two envisaged slotting together their different styles of raid to mount a ferocious round-the-clock assault that would demolish all German resistance.

Eisenhower got his way by making a direct appeal to Roosevelt and General George Marshall, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee in Washington: either the Transportation Plan was put into effect, or 'Overlord', the Allied invasion plan, was doomed. Their answer was predictable: the invasion had absolute priority, and from about April 1 the RAF and USAAF began to switch their targets.

As a result, by June 1944, less than 10 per cent of British bombs dropped were being aimed at Germany. The heavies flew instead to northern France and Belgium, bombing marshalling yards at Le Mans, Trappes, Courtrai, and many other places. On the night of June 5/6, several squadrons were briefed to attack German batteries on the French coast. Crews were warned particularly to keep course and not to jettison bombs in the Channel. On their way back from the targets at dawn, they saw why - spread beneath them lay the vast panoply of the D-Day invasion fleet.

BOMBING BEGINS TO HURT

Before starting on the Transportation Plan, Spaatz had obtained permission from Washington for a number of full-scale raids against German oil installations - the 'Oil Plan'. Their purpose was to force the German fighters into combat and to destroy as many of them as possible before D-Day, while also reducing the Luftwaffe's stocks of aviation fuel. On May 12 he sent 886 bombers and 735 long-range fighters to bomb oil installations around Leipzig. The Americans lost 46 planes, but claimed 56 German fighters. Further attacks were made on May 28 and 29.

The German Armaments Minister, Albert Speer, wrote later: 'Until then we had managed to produce approximately as many weapons as the armed forces needed, in spite of their considerable losses. But with the attack ... upon several fuel

TOOEYATTHETOP

Carl Spaatz (1891-1974)-nicknamed 'Toey' - commanded a US Army Air Corps squadron in France in World War I, and early in World War II was an official observer with the RAF. He returned to England in 1942 as commander of the Eighth Air Force.

Spaatz went to the Mediterranean to organise air support for the 'Torch' landings, and stayed there until returning to England in January 1944 as commander of US Strategic Air Forces in Europe to work closely with the RAF in the combined bomber offensive on Germany. Under protest, he diverted to give support to the D-Day landings.

In 1945, Spaatz went to the Pacific to direct air operations against Japan, including the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. He became Chief of Staff of the new independent United States Air Force a year before he retired in 1948.

plants in central and eastern Germany, a new era in the war began. It meant the end of German armaments production.'

The major part of Spaatz's effort after D-Day was devoted to ground support and to destroying V-weapon sites. Even so, by using only about 15 per cent of his force, he cut German petroleum production from 940 000 tonnes in March to virtually nothing by the autumn. A respite came with the bitter winter of 1944-5, which limited flying and allowed the Germans to build up enough oil stocks to open the Battle of the Ardennes. But it was not enough. The Germans did their best to protect their oil, cramming the whole Leipzig area with anti-aircraft batteries. But however many bombers they shot down, more took their place.

Harris turned his attention back to the cities in September 1944, until Supreme Headquarters extended the Transportation Plan to Germany. The Reich's communications presented tougher targets, but the means to hit them were already at hand - a 10 tonne 'earthquake' bomb, code-named 'Grand Slam' and designed by Barnes Wallis, who had earlier created the dambusting 'bouncing bomb'.

Wallis meant 'Grand Slam' to be dropped from 12 000 m (40 000 ft) to penetrate 30 m (100 ft) or more into the ground before exploding. The resulting underground shock wave, like an earthquake, would bring down the sturdiest of structures. However, no aircraft was yet capable of carrying such a weight to such a height. Even so, a scaled-down 6 tonne version, code-named 'Tallboy', was used with spectacular effect on railway tunnels, U-boat pens and the battleship *Tirpitz*. On March 14, 1945, 'Grand Slam' was given its first trial on the Bielefeld Viaduct on the Hamm-Hanover railway. Dropped from only half the designed height and aided by a few 'Tallboys', it reduced the great arch to rubble.

CLIMAX OF AREA BOMBING

Skills evolved and polished in the Transportation Plan helped Bomber Command when it returned to bombing German cities. For example, aircraft approached targets from several angles and released their bombs at different set timings

A MAN AND HIS BOMBS

Barnes Neville Wallis (1887-1979) was a brilliant, innovative British aeronautical engineer whose early training was in marine engineering. He was an early designer of airships, including *R100*, which used his 'geodetic' framework of lightweight, crisscrossing rods. He later used such a framework in the Wellington bomber.

But Wallis is best known for the 'bouncing bombs' used in the 1943 dams raid. His 6 tonne 'Tallboy' and 10 tonne 'Grand Slam' bombs - the most powerful in the world until the advent of the atomic bomb - were used with devastating effect on such previously unreachable targets as railway tunnels and concrete-roofed U-boat docks. After the war he was a pioneer of the swing-wing concept for supersonic aircraft. When Wallis died, in his 92nd year, he was working on designs for an airliner that would fly halfway round the world in only four hours.





BETWEEN RAIDS The men who meted out death from the skies, making light of danger with mascots like Lady Luck (top), had to live with tension and fatigue. Papers, pets and pin-ups kept these foes at bay - until the next raid.

beyond the markers - a technique called 'over-shoot' - thus spreading the destruction even wider. The ancient city of Darmstadt, attacked on September 11, 1944, suffered terribly in this way. The bombs, dropped from seven different angles, opened what Darmstadt later termed a *Tods-facher* (death fan) of fire from the central markers to engulf a large part of the city. The same methods destroyed three-quarters of Bremerhaven a week later and Brunswick and many other targets in October.

These and many more attacks through the winter of 1944-5 were mere curtain-raisers to the climax - Operation 'Thunderclap', designed to destroy German morale with a series of cataclysmic raids upon cities. The force and techniques needed for such missions became available only in mid-February 1945 - by when it was clear that Germany was doomed. But Churchill and Roosevelt, bound for the Yalta Conference, wanted to give Stalin some concrete evidence of Western support for his offensives in the east. They asked their air chiefs for action against east German cities.

Dresden, the seventh largest city in Germany, was just one name on the target list. According to a briefing note, 'it is the largest unbombed built-up area the enemy has . . . With refugees pouring westward (to escape the Russians) and troops to be rested, roofs are at a premium'. A raid on Dresden would also 'show the Russians when they arrive what Bomber Command can do'.

The Dresden raid saw the culmination of the

RAF's 'master bomber' technique-a refinement of earlier 'pathfinder' methods. Marker flares were dropped by the master bomber flying low in a fast twin-engine Mosquito. Back-up Mosquitoes followed and then came high-flying pathfinder Lancasters followed by the main force. During the whole raid the master bomber patrolled over the target - braving enemy flak and RAF bombs - to order corrections and, if necessary, further markers. In this way Bomber Command's accuracy became greater even than that of the daylight-flying Americans.

The master bomber placed his markers on Dresden at about 9 pm on February 13, and 786 RAF planes dropped 2690 tonnes of bombs from relatively low altitudes - for there was no opposition. Soon the city was an inferno visible to aircrew 320 km (200 miles) away. With daylight came the Americans to stoke the blaze still higher - as they did again on the 15th -but the target was already a towering vortex of devouring flame. Nobody knows how many people died there, because of the uncounted refugees; estimates vary between 25 000 and 200 000.

When the extent of the cataclysm became known, there were uneasy murmurings among the Allied High Command. Had someone gone too far? Spaatz re-stated the USAAF's policy of bombing only specific industrial or military targets; civilian deaths were inevitable when bombing, say, railway junctions, but they were not part of the policy. Even Churchill began to wonder if RAF policy ought to be reviewed, but Harris was adamant: 'I do not personally regard the whole of the remaining cities of Germany as worth the bones of one British Grenadier.'

In the end, did strategic bombing work? In the sense of the prewar dream that the bomber could win wars all by itself, it did not-except, arguably,

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JOINT VENTURE The US P-51 Mustang fighter hail a British Rolls-Royce designed engine. Extra under-wing fuel tanks put eastern Germany within range, and a bubble canopy improved visibility.

in the case of the atomic bombing of Japan. In the early war years the bombers showed that war could be carried to the heart of the all-conquering Third Reich. Despite the horrors, bombing failed to break German morale and, until the last months of the war, did not decisively affect German industrial production. Its greatest contribution was probably to pave the way for the armies, by depriving the enemy of oil and destroying fighters, communications and heavy guns - all precision rather than area targets.

THE FIRST JET

The Messerschmitt Me262 might have changed the course of the air war in Europe if its development had not been delayed. Hitler was so impressed when he watched the 870 km/h (540 mph) twin-jet fighter put through its paces on November 26, 1943, that he ordered it into immediate production - as a fighter-bomber. The result was confusion and delay as numerous variants - all-weather fighters, reconnaissance planes, ground-attack models and fighter-bombers, as well as day fighters - were produced. Some 1430 Me262s were built, but only a quarter of these went into action, beginning in April 1944. The fighters were heavily armed with cannon, and highly effective against Allied bombers - but they were too few and too late.

The Me262 had been under development since 1938 and - together with the accident-prone rocket-propelled Me 163 'Komet' - was by far the fastest aircraft in 1944-5. It was considerably faster than the first British jet fighter, the Gloster Meteor, but the two never met in combat. Meteors did not fly over Germany until the very last weeks of the war, when shortages of fuel and skilled pilots and Allied air superiority kept most Me262s grounded.

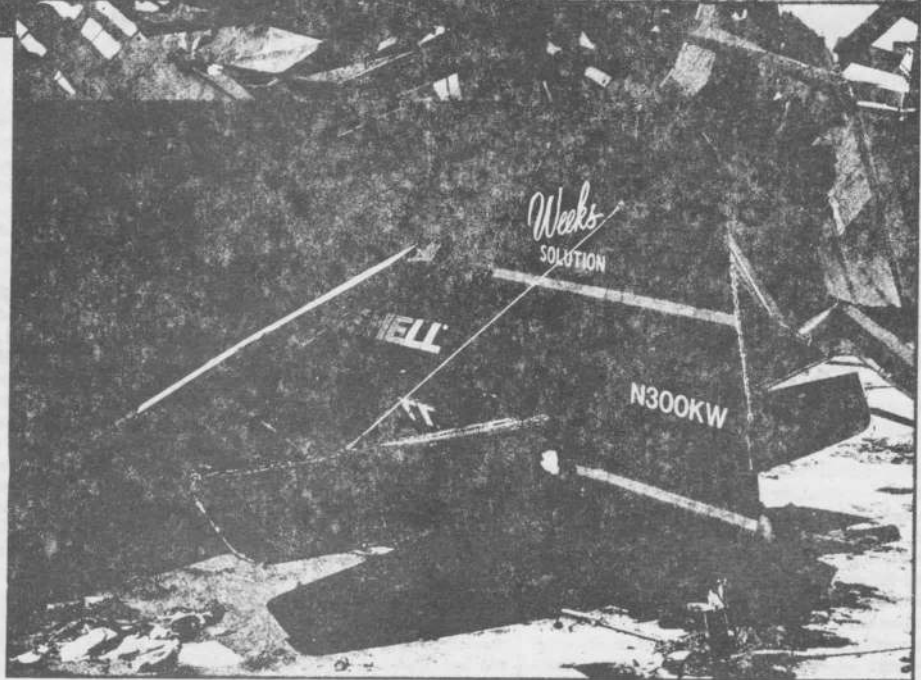




Photo by St. Petersburg Times

Hurricane Andrew Demolishes Weeks Museum

Among the untold victims of Hurricane Andrew was the Weeks Museum located on the Tamiami Airport just southwest of Miami. The main museum building housing Kermit Weeks' fabulous collection of vintage aircraft, most of which are World War II combat types, was completely demolished . . . with its steel framework blown down atop the aircraft. Although every aircraft was damaged, the wood and fabric World War I types suffered the worst. Many were crushed virtually beyond recognition and all suffered water damage as well as from the effects of the hurricane force wind. The World War II machines such as Kermit's Grand Champion Mustang, his Grumman Duck and others familiar to EAAers were severely damaged. Both Kermit's and Linda Meyers' aerobatic airplanes were also badly damaged. The Museum's Ford Tri Motor had been hangared at nearby Homestead General airport and it, too, was smashed like a child's toy. Amazingly, however, Kermit's B-17 and a wingless B-23, which were tied down on the ramp outside the Museum were blown on the ground for nearly two miles, across roads, railroads and farm fields until they came to rest at the edge of a wooded area and sustained only relatively moderate damage.



Storms, Storms And More Storms!

A great many other EAA members who live in Guam, in south Florida, coastal Louisiana and the Hawaiian island of Kauai undoubtedly suffered property losses during the recent hurricanes, which very likely included aircraft. Then, shortly

after Hurricane Andrew, two tornados struck just to the west of Oshkosh and did considerable damage . . . and there were others around the nation as well. As of mid-September, EAA Headquarters had not been informed of any loss of life among our members . . . and we pray that word will never come.

MORE STORIES FROM BERT VARADY'S BOOK ON OUR YEARS IN ENGLAND 1943-45

as explained on page 29 of our
April '92 issue.

GROUND PERSONNEL

AN EIGHTH AAF BOMBER STATION, England - Staff Sergeant Robert H. Wise, pictured with one of the many vehicles which he cares for at an Eighth AAF Flying Fortress base in England, is one of the many cogs in the ground machine which are keeping our bombers flying.

Sgt. Wise, son of Mr. & Mrs. H.B. Wise, 743 SW Maple Crest Court, Portland, Oregon, is a motor sergeant in charge of a squadron transportation unit. It is his job to help keep the vital ground traffic, which is necessary for efficient operation, rolling smoothly. The heavy bombers at his station, which have been blasting targets for more than a year as part of the pre-invasion bombing program, and since D-Day have been striking at choke points and military installations behind German lines, need men and material to make them fly.

Transportation is the department which facilitates this large requirement. They provide the means for refueling planes, reloading bombs, guns, ammunition and other equipment, pick up and deliver the combat crews to their ships, and perform the hundreds of other services which are part of the active life at a combat Fortress base.

Jeeps, weapons carriers, buses, trucks -- all come under Sgt. Wise's responsibility. His principle duties are dispatching vehicles and driver, inspecting vehicles for maintenance or repairs, checking out new drivers for permits and occasionally he makes some of the run himself.

And in addition to that full time job, Sgt. Wise is helping to alleviate the shortage of barbers on the station, by cutting hair after hours at his barracks. Barbering is "just something picked up in civilian life" to him, but to the busy men on the station he is a godsend.

The 31 year old sergeant, who in civilian life worked as a plumber in his father's company, enter the AAF in April 1942 and has been serving overseas for one year.

EDITOR'S NOTE: Col. Van found it necessary to crack an occasional whip - June 1944.

OFFICE OF THE COMMANDING OFFICER

All functions of the 385th Bomb Group for the month of June were naturally affected by the invasion of France. Shortly before the invasion the confinement of all personnel to the base gave a hint of the great things to come. For some time prior to 6 June our missions had been against counter-invasion targets. Consequently, "D" day was a great satisfaction to all personnel and fostered a great surge of morale. The slump in morals subsequent to "D" day was

quite apparent when it became evident to everyone that the inclement weather was hindering our aid to the ground forces and there was a general feeling that we were not doing our share in the invasion. Later on in the month our operations were switched again to strategic targets and this feeling was soon dissipated.

The month of June was significant in many other respects. We built up to some 85 combat crews - the largest number we have ever had at one time. This resulted in many facilities such as housing and messing being greatly overcrowded. It was also a burden on the training office. The problem of personnel as regards to combat crews was great. For several weeks, the length of the combat tour was uncertain. Finally, it was set up at 25 missions. Also, during the month of June came the initiation of a policy allowing 10% of the combat personnel of a station to be sent home prior to the completion of their tour for 30 days rest and recuperation and return to their group. These two changes coming at this time made for some confusion and suspicion on the part of combat crew members.

During the latter part of the month the group began to recover from its temporary slump in bombing accuracy. Many important targets were hit well. Most of the lead crews were recent graduates of the group's new lead crew training program.

A tightening of discipline and regulations over the entire field became necessary. After a year on foreign service men are naturally becoming more lax. It became necessary to institute several new policies. One concerning the bicycle "borrowing" situation required each bicycle owner to have a license which he carried on his possession at all times. Transportation regulations had to be tightened since our gasoline consumption had skyrocketed. Our station defense has been greatly strengthened due to the possibility of enemy counter-invasion parachute attacks. A mobile defense unit consisting mainly of graduated gunners has been set up. Ground personnel are still restricted to 24 hour passes and a 25 mile radius. It is unfortunate that this is still deemed necessary since all personnel are working extremely hard and need the relaxation of getting away from the station.

Other than these and a few important changes in personnel, the functioning of the 385th Bomb Group during such an important phase of our lives as an invasion of the continent remained surprisingly uneventful and commonplace.

E. Vandevanter, Jr.
Colonel, Air Corps, Commanding



At the 200th Mission Party



Comment

Joe Oravec

British Still Remember What Yanks Were Like

PERHAPS BECAUSE THEY KNEW first-hand what war was like, the people of England, Luxembourg, Belgium, France and other countries haven't forgotten the Yanks who fought for their freedom during World War II.

An example came from Thomas L. Winterbottom and his wife, Edie, who sent us a copy of a souvenir supplement published by a newspaper in England.

Winterbottom, who was the first sergeant of an 8th Air Force squadron stationed at Wattisham-Hitcham near Ipswich, in East Anglia, received the copy, as Edie explained in an accompanying note, "from a friend who visits our town every year or so and he brought this paper over this year. Thought you might like to read it."

Headlines over stories read:

County bases echo to the bravery of American fliers ... We'll never forget the friendly invasion ... First and last raids from base dubbed 'Grafton Undermud' ... Heroic act ended in tragedy ... Golden memories for a teenager who became a GI bride... US sergeant found love on the buses ... Young bombardier ended war as POW ... Unsung heroes played vital role in wartime effort... The Carpetbaggers top secret mission ... Fame's Favoured Few remembered in bricks and mortar...

Photos show aircraft taking off, over enemy territory, crash-landings and Yanks entertaining village children at American bases at Christmas. There are pictures of huts in which the GIs lived and aboard bicycles that were their main transportation on and off the base.

Tony Smith, who compiled and wrote the stories in the *Evening Telegraph*, explained why the supplement was produced in a story with the headline: Yanks for the memory.

He wrote: "From the summer of 1942, thousands of young American servicemen descended on Northhamptonshire, formed a bond with their English hosts that still exists.

"Almost overnight the high-spirited Yanks stirred up as much excitement in the county's quiet market towns and sleepy little villages as the Second World War itself.

"For 1,000 days the sky was never empty as the brave young men of the 8th United States Army Air Force added their military might to the fight against Hitler. Many were never to return.

"Young, fresh, well-fed and confident they could win the war, they came with one aim - the destruction of Germany's ability to wage war on Europe. Their method was high-altitude precision bombing using techniques developed in the clear blue skies of Georgia.

"Many were little more than kids. Barely old enough to drive in most states, these rookie fliers were expected to crew huge Flying Fortresses on raids 30,000 feet above enemy territory.

"The often unsung heroes of the ground staff, meanwhile, worked round the clock, often in freezing conditions, to make sure the planes were ready for the next mission.

"Off-duty these good-looking men in smart uniforms were looked upon as long-lost uncles with seemingly endless supplies of chewing gum, candy bars and cigarettes.

"They gave us our first taste of such delights as chili con carne, peanut butter and cola. They complained about our warm beer but they loved our fish and chips and bread-and-butter pudding.

"To the local girls they were a breath of fresh air in a society riddled with taboos and conventions. Many were swept off their feet by smooth-talking GI Joes with their movie star accents and sense of fun.

"To mark the 50th anniversary of their arrival in Britain, the ET (Evening Telegraph) has produced this special souvenir supplement, which takes a nostalgic look back at those tragic but often magic times when our quaint little county became Uncle Sam's second home.

"With a mixture of memories and pictures, we hope we have captured some of the Anglo-American spirit of friendship which is still felt half-a-century later."

Apparently, they haven't forgotten the Yanks, many of whom still remember the kindness they displayed by welcoming the GIs, opening up their homes and sharing their meager food rations with many a lonely GI.

The people in England will always remember the legacy left behind by the Americans.

It can be found at the cemetery in Cambridge, where many Yanks who never returned home now rest in eternal peace.

(Joe Oravec is a retired newsroom employee of The Scranton Times.)



AIR FORCE GUNNERS ASSOCIATION, INC.

This organization was formed in 1986 as the B-36/52 Gunners Association and in 1987 it was decided to open membership to all Air Force Gunners and the name was changed to the above. A 2nd Reunion was held in Denver, Colorado and membership is continually growing. They now have members who were gunners on B-17's and other bombers through to the current B-52. The Association is incorporated in Florida as a non-profit Florida corporation and has by-laws to operate by. Goals are to promote the welfare and fellowship of all former and present aerial gunners who were crew members on "medium and heavy bombers. Bill Dayton, M/Sgt. USAF Ret., is the President of AFGA.

For further information write:
AIR FORCE GUNNERS ASSOCIATION
POST OFFICE BOX 568102
ORLANDO, FLORIDA 32856-8102



50th #102431 crashed & exploded at Bradwell, Essex, Jan. 21, 1945. Not much left! Lt. Jacobsen's crew.

STONES OF LIFE

Wreaths of black crepe adorn them;
An annual homage to their sacrifice.
How many pause to consider their service?
Passing by we take no notice, nor
Say a silent "thank-you" for freedom sustained.
The cold and the dead
Protect and shelter the living.

Names incised with care and precision;
Letters cut deep, but the loss cuts deeper.
Fields in France and Belgium claimed some.
Skies over Berlin made heroes of the rest.
The cold and dead
Protect and shelter the living.

With each Yizkor service.
Their names become more like family:
Emmer and Herman and Yawitz and Wohl.
Three decades separate the horrors
That brought them together.
The cold and the dead
Protect and shelter the living.

To their families they are eternally young.
Their names reminders of dreams unrealized.
To us they are "heroic Jews" who fought
And died "in the service of our country."
The cold and the dead
Protect and shelter the living.

Two slabs of grey lifeless limestone
Are suspended from a brick wall.
Sparrows nest just below, behind
The top of the stones.
The cold and the dead
Protect and shelter the living.

written by Rabbi Mark L. Shook
Yom Kippur 1992/5753

EDITOR'S NOTE: This poem was written by Dave Framer's Rabbi Mark Shook and read as a memorial in October 1992.



HEADSTONE 4 - MARKER STILL AVAILABLE AT NO COST!

The Dept. of Veterans Affairs (VA) is still providing headstones and markers to identify the graves of veterans at no cost to their survivors. There is no change in the program that authorizes the VA to provide these to veterans at no cost.

Headstones and markers are provided at no cost to the veteran whether they are buried in a national state veterans or private cemetery. Last fiscal year the VA ordered 292,103 headstones and markers..always free. When a veteran or eligible family member is buried in a national cemetery, placement of the headstone or marker is free. If interment occurs in a private cemetery, the VA does not pay for the cost of placement. The VA always provides for the cost of transportation.

EX-POW BULLETIN, JULY 1991

Ode to Spam

by Mark F. Quigley

from *Yank Magazine* via B-17 Combat Crewmen

Jackson has his acorns, Grant his precious rye,
Teddy had his poison beef, worse you couldn't buy,
The doughboy had his hardtack without this Army's jam
All armies on their stomachs move, and this one moves on
Spam.

For breakfast they will fry it, for supper it is baked.
For dinner it goes delicate..they have it pat-a-caked.
Next morning it's with flapjacks, or maybe powdered eggs,
For God's sake, where'd they get it? They must order it in kegs.

Oh surely for the evening meal they'll cook up something new
But cooks are sure uncanny, for now it's in the stew.
And thus this endless cycle goes, it never seems to cease,
There's Spam in stew and Spam on pie and Spam in boiling
grease.

We've had it tucked in salads, with cabbage for corned beef.
We've had it for an entree, and aperitif,
We've had it with spaghetti, with chili and with rice.
We all remember one bright day, we only had it twice.

Back home I have an angel whose name I'm going to change.
I'll purchase her a fancy home with new-fangled range.
But marital bliss is sure to cease if ever I ask for ham,
And find my eggs are looking up from a @#%#@ slice of
Spam!



There are still a few B-17 on show around the country.

Letters to the Editor.

Dear Ed,

Enclosed is an article of the activities of the Mass. Chapter of the 8th AF Historical Society. We are very active and hold monthly meetings at Hanscom Air Base in Massachusetts. Enclosed is a picture that may be of interest for publication in HH. It shows some of the honor guard listed from left to right: Albert Audette, V.P., Charles Coughlin, Joseph De Giacomo, and Norman Menard directors of the Massachusetts Chapter of the 8th AF Historical Society.

We, the above also participated in the Reunion in Louisville, KY. We are looking forward to the Reunion in Spokane, WA.

Thanks in advance.

Albert E. Audette

P.S. The picture may help locate some of my crew.



Massachusetts Chapter

The Massachusetts Chapter held back-to-back activities over the weekend of Sept 18-20. On Friday 20 members provided an honor guard for the visit of the Collings Foundation B-24 and B-17 to the Norwood Airport. Bill Eagleson showed the film "Start Engines." Saturday featured a catered dinner at Hanscom AFB. Barkev Hovsepian, Hugh Jones, and Art Fitch were reelected as Pres., Secy, and Treas., respectively. Albert Audette replaced Helen Smith who declined as VP. Helen joined the Board of Directors along with Bob Doherty, the new Editor of the chapter newsletter, *Vapor Trails*.

Dear Ed,

About 6 months or longer, I sent a donation to a man in Delaware that said he would make patches of the Wolf Squadron 385th - 551 st Squadron.

I have never heard one word from him. He did cash my check. I don't care about the money, I only would like to have a patch for my grandson. Can anyone help?

Lester Miller
RR 2, Box 276D
Bunker Hill, WV 25413

Dear Ed:

Recently I received a letter from: Ray Bowden, the USAAF Research Project in England. (Copy Enclosed) He is interested in obtaining a photo of the nose art of "Lil Audrey." Our crew flew a mission on Lil Audrey on July 14, 1944 to southern France to drop supplies to the Partisans. Unfortunately we do not have a picture of Lil Audrey.

Perhaps someone has a snapshot of Lil Audrey. I would greatly appreciate it if they would send me the picture or the negative, I will have copies made and return the original.

Sincerely,

Elmer Snow
139 Runnymede RD
West Caldwell, NJ 07006

Dear Ed,

The Confederate Air Force, as a part of the American Airpower Heritage Museum, recently opened the second major phase of the museum. As a part of the display is the original nose art as cut from a B-17 prior to the planes destruction. The painting was done by a Bob Garner (?) on a 385th B-17. I will try to develop more information as to where and when.

As a member of Lt. Montgomery's crew we arrived at the 385th, 549th in early Oct. 1944. I was shot down over Germany on Dec. 6, 1944 while flying with Lt. Hufford's crew. We all survived the crash landing and spent the rest of the war visiting various spas across Germany. We completely destroyed the B-17G #338612 in the landing. Ted Findeiss advised me at the Tulsa Reunion that he had named the plane "Lil Lu" after his wife and had flown it over 250 hours, without a scratch.

Olga and Ed Stermer, Jack & Julie Nobles, Clarence Strout, Marty & Harold Trousdale, Margaret Ann Miller, Carolyn Montgomery and Margy & I try to gather at the Reunion but with the cost of maintenance and upkeep on these old airframes we do miss some of them.

Keep the news coming.

Sincerely,
Dean Leverly

Dear Editor,

I just heard about the Hard Life Herald and now am a life member.

It was among the first to arrive (the 385th) at Gt. Ashfield and among the last to leave. I was the Pharmacist at the Air Base there and would love to hear from any of my old friends.

Thank you,

Jack King

Dear Ed,

We know that this card will be late, we had intended to get it sent out sooner, but like every one else, have been very busy. Any way, we wanted to let you know what a pleasure it was to meet you and the other GIs in person at the 385th Reunion. We only wish Woolpit had been included on your tour. We do understand that your time was limited. You would have really enjoyed our Museum display of Gt. Ashfield. We were very proud of it. John Wiley of The Walnut Tree Cottage, Green Rd., Woolpit is our Curator and the display was his idea and he worked very hard on it. We had lots of visitors and lots of compliments. Maybe some time you'll be back over here and will get a chance to come and see our little Museum.

Love,

Grace and Dick Herdman

Dear Ed,

Some time since.....Ran into this article in the Cleveland Plain Dealer which I thought might interest some of our people. Can't say who (from the song of the same name). My daughter Linda toured Australia last summer and was very well received, even more so than England. She's had invites to Canada, Hong Kong, Egypt, and Jerusalem since then.

As every,

Norman Madsen
Stowe, Ohio

EDITOR'NOTE: Linda Madsen played her harp for a ladies function at the Fargo Reunion.

Aloha Ed,

In trying to locate one of my crew members in Kentucky I wrote to all our 385th members listed in the latest roster. One person was Mrs. Garnet Holt of Tollesboro, KY. She answered with the enclosed letter, which I thought was very interesting and possible you may want to print it in the newsletter.

If any former POS has any information Re: Service Connected .Disability, please write to Mrs. Holt.

Thanking you,

Jerry H. Ramaker
Carson, City, NV



Dear Sir,

Sorry I cannot be of more help. I cannot find a Cecil Huston in the phone book. Every veteran in KY is listed at Louisville. I called and they won't give information but probably you could get it.

In the December Newsletter, I'd appreciate the address of Ronald C. Hanauer (It's 1821 W. Lake, Peoria, IL 61614-Editor's Note).

About the POWs, my husband was in Patton's Third Infantry Div. and was captured Dec. 13, 1944, held till May. There's nothing those men went through that hasn't talked about, though some had it much worse than others. Many POWs held with him died of starvation and diseases wondered if those POWs received service connected disabilities. My husband didn't. He wouldn't file.

It certainly makes the differences now. I cared for him over 30 years. I read that some were awarded service connected in later years, but that's probably asking too much.

I've made it this far with the Lord's help. I didn't think there would ever be an article about the POWs, but at this Christmas, here's the whole story. Thank you.

Garnet Holt
RI Box 223
Tollesboro, KY41189

ANOTHER "YIP" FROM THE "LONE WOLF"

Dear Editor,

Regarding the Brussels 11th, May, 1944 mission on Page 8 of the Oct. issue of the Hard Life Herald. I was on that mission (my 27th), and was flying as tor oleer I no* ed the bombs being dropped, and knew we h ust id the IF and starting the Bomb Run, and we we t over he *nroet yet. I talked to the Pilot and explained uaticn ' held the bombs.

When we returned to the base ana were at the hearing, C Vandevanter was surprised that this Sgt. Toggoleer w_o aware of what was happening and did not drop his bombs.

Enclosed copies of flight records of bombing and missions. My biggest question was why they only listed me as Waist Gunner (except the Toggoleer listing in April), when I flew 13 as waist gunner, 16 as toggoleer, and 1 as Navigator.

Also notice that my 13th mission was the "Big B", Berlin March 8th. I did not mention it to the crew when we took off, but waited till we returned.

Another Story, another time.

Ralph B. Joye
P.O. Box 1247
Land O'Lakes, FL 34639



One of ours getting his "Short Snorter" signed by Jimmy Doolittle at the 200th Mission Party.

Dear Ed:

I know it is late for answering your letter. We had been busy with Hurricane "Iniki" where the Oahu and Kauai took the force..and proved tragic at the same time most of Hawaii can be thankful that the impact was not far worse elsewhere, yet "Iniki" was a catastrophe here for its victims. Some suffered physically and most our friends lost their homes and now is "homeless victims" by fate.

These couple of months was "hectics" as we went to Minneapolis in Minnesota for our 50th Anniversary Sentimental Journey Reunion held by our unit U.S. Military Intelligence Service Language School at Camp Savage and Fort Snelling. We had guys from far away as Japan and Australia. They work for the U.S. Embassy (Foreign Service). We met a good friend of mine and we served at the same



A painting by Lawrence Beall Smith
"Tension at Dawn"
8th Army Air Force, England
This is a copy of the painting in my house.
George Iwamoto "Gunner"

outfit.. his wife who is from Los Angeles was in Manzanar "concentration camp" and she got out and settled in Minneapolis while he was shipped to the South Pacific in August 1943 .. she bought a \$2,000 house near downtown Minneapolis so she could bring her parents to live with her.. she looked for the house and found out it was displaced years ago by Interstate Highway 94 .. and almost nothing remains of Camp Savage.

Also enclosed two photos of #Y-1 B-17 later known as "B-17-A" Boeing "Flying Fortress" Army Air Force taken January 1936 at Langley Air Field - 2nd Bombardment Group with Wright Cyclone engines, the car is 1942 Studebaker "President" eight Sedan-Coupe, I had one in 1942 in Hilo, Hawaii but sold .. and the order is a painting "Tension at Dawn" while I was with the 8th Army Air Force in England .. I copied from my painting on my wall.

Sorry, for the delay in my writing to you and please excuse me for my terrible English and errors, etc.

May GOD richly bless you and Mahalo & Aloha!
George Iwamoto
Your ex-8th Army Air Force in England

385th BGMA APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP

Please Print

LAST NAME, First, MI.

Spouse's Name

Street or P.O. Box #

()
Telephone Number

City, State, & Zip Code

Squadron or Support Unit

The annual dues are Ten Dollars (\$10.00)
Life-time memberships are one payment of \$100.00
Make Check out to "385th BGMA" and mail to:
John F. Pettenger, Treas.
Box 117
Laurel, FL 34272-0117

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.

FIGHTING PILOTS: Air Force pilot Charles L. Brown, right, came face-to-face with German Luftwaffe flying ace L. Franz Stigler over German territory during World War II.



Two
WWII
enemies,
now
friends,
reunite to
save
Homestead
Air Force
Base

Time
heals

The best of friends against all odds

Charlie Brown and Franz Stigler — the two former war enemies who have become good friends. The peak moment of the ball, clearly, will come when the two relate their story:

It was Dec. 20, 1943, the first mission for 2nd Lt. Charles Brown as commander of a B-17 named Ye Olde Pub in the U.S. Eighth Air Force's 379th Bomb Group. The day's order: Bomb the Focke-Wulf aircraft factory in Bremen.

The Germans were expecting them; flak rose up in dirty, brown-gray clouds.

"They always said that if you could see the orange inside the flak burst, you were in serious trouble," Brown says. "They looked like beautiful orchids in front of us."

Tense moments

Almost immediately, the B-17's nose was shattered, two of its engines destroyed. Brown pulled out of formation so his plane wouldn't destroy the other American planes if it exploded. Quickly he was attacked by eight German fighters from one direction, then seven more from another.

"I headed right at one of the fighters. I had given up. I felt we wouldn't survive."

Trying to dodge the attack, Brown put the B-17 into an ever-tightening Luftbury Circle, which four-engine bombers aren't supposed to do.

"Just as I was trying to reverse it, I blacked out. They'd shot up our oxygen system."

Brown has no memory of the plunge from 25,000 feet. He regained consciousness 50 feet above ground, miraculously flying level, unfortunately flying straight over a German air base.

On the ground, re-arming after shooting down two other B-17s, Oberleutnant L. Franz Stigler saw Brown's plane fly over. He leaped into his Messerschmidt ME-109 and took off in pursuit.

He was chasing a cripple. Brown's B-17 had one dead, three wounded. Its fuselage was riddled with holes from machine-gun bullets. Its right wing had a gaping hole from an 88-millimeter anti-aircraft shell. Its tail was half blown away. Its hydraulics, electrical and communications systems were shot to pieces.

Stigler, his Messerschmidt capable of 300 miles per hour to the B-17's 150, overtook from the rear. Decades later, he described the scene:

"The B-17 was like a sieve. There was blood everywhere. I could see the crew was having a terrible time dealing with their wounded and struggling to stay in the air."

He could see Brown's tail gunner slumped dead over his gun, his blood running thickly down its barrel. Through a big hole in the fuselage he could see crewmen working frantically over a buddy whose leg was blown off.

Stigler pulled up alongside the B-17 — his wingtip three feet from Brown's. The two pilots were 50 feet apart, close enough

to see the expressions on each other's faces.

"Ugliest plane I ever saw," Brown shudders.

Staring at Brown, Stigler nodded in greeting.

"My mind just wouldn't accept that," Brown says. "I closed my eyes and shook my head. Then I opened them and he nodded again."

"I thought his plane was out of ammunition. I thought he was going to pull out his .45 pistol and kill us. It would have been very unsportsmanlike after they'd already shot the bejesus out of us."

Stigler flew beside Brown's plane for 10 minutes, escorting it out over the North Sea. Then to Brown's astonishment, he saluted, executed a crisp roll and flew away.

"I started breathing again," Brown recalls.

Years later, Stigler explained why he didn't make the kill.

"I thought to myself, 'How can I shoot something like that? It would be like shooting at a parachute.' I had flown in North Africa, and our commander told us, 'You are fighter pilots. If I ever hear of you shooting at someone in a parachute. I'll shoot you myself.'"

Stigler told the story once, in 1990, to American author William Neely. He doesn't like to repeat it. "I hate the emotional things," he explains.

Brown's B-17 struggled over the North Sea, jettisoning any equipment not bolted down to

lighten the load on its final, crippled engine. He came in over the English coast at 250 feet and made a skidding emergency landing at Seething, a B-24 base, 150 miles short of its own base at Kimbolton.

Brown's superior officers said his B-17 was the worst-damaged they had seen land on its own power.

"They said they would put me in for the Medal of Honor. But the next day the entire mission was classified secret. To recognize us as heroes, they would have had to include the part played by the German pilot. Our whole crew didn't get a single award, except for the purple hearts."

Stigler, who could have qualified for the Knight's Cross for shooting down three B-17s in a single day, couldn't tell his superiors of his act of mercy. "I could have been court-martialed. I could have been executed."

Miaaiona, caualtiea

That both men survived the war was another miracle.

Brown flew another 28 missions. The 11 crews he trained with suffered 97 percent casualties, wounded or killed.

Stigler became a distinguished Luftwaffe Fighter Ace, flying 487 combat missions in Africa, Italy and Europe, shooting down 28 Allied airplanes, including 14 B-17s.

Shot down 17 times himself, he was one of only 1,200 of Germany's 30,000 combat pilots to survive the war.

But post-war Germany wasn't a friendly place for Stigler. "Some people felt the fighter pilots hadn't defended the Reich," Brown says.

Stigler's home in eastern Germany was gone, absorbed into Poland by postwar treaty. He worked in a machine shop for a while, then emigrated to Canada with his wife, Haja'. He set up a machine shop in a logging camp and worked there, becoming a Canadian citizen, until he retired in 1982.

After the war Brown served in the U.S. military government of Japan. After earning a college degree, he went into counterintelligence, served on the staff of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and later in the State Department as an inspector in the Agency for International Development. Retiring at 65, he set up a company to research gasoline and diesel combustion.

It wasn't until 1985, after fellow fliers at an Air Force reunion laughed at his story of the German pilot who had saluted him, that Brown decided to And his benefactor. After four futile years, he finally met Stigler's old commanding officer, Gen. Adolf Galland, who suggested that Brown write a letter in Jagerblatt, a newsletter for former Luftwaffe pilots.

A month later Stigler, then living in Surrey, British Columbia, responded.

I was the pilot, he wrote.

Making sura

By phone and letter, Brown asked a dozen questions that only the pilot of the ME-109 could have answered. He was the one. Brown decided.

Brown, who by then had retired in Miami, flew to Seattle, where the two met in a hotel.

"He threw his arms around me," Brown says. "He almost broke two ribs."

Stigler still hates such emo-

tional things: "You can't describe it. It's hard to say," he says.

A month later Stigler got an even more emotional reception at a Boston reunion of Brown's 379th Bomber Group: He met Brown's radio operator and his ball-turret gunner and the 25 children and grandchildren who would never have been born if not for his act of mercy.

"He got a standing ovation everywhere I took him," Brown says.

Now the two men — Brown is 69, Stigler 77 — are fishing buddies. And their wives, Haja and Jackie, are friends.

"We stay at their place. They stay with us. We think alike," Brown says. "We're both conservative. We've worked hard all our lives. We know we're very lucky. I'm as close to him as to my two brothers."

Stigler, the man of healing compassion, still has trouble with the emotional parts:

"You can't describe these things."

IF YOU GO

■ **What:** 44th Annual Air Force Ball, celebrating the anniversary of the U.S. Air Force becoming a separate branch of the armed services.

■ **When:** 6 p.m. Saturday.

■ **Where:** Radisson Mart Plaza Hotel, 711 NW 72nd Ave., Miami.

■ **How much:** \$65 each, \$100 per couple.

■ **Tickets:** Call Mel Mendelson at 665-6226 today through Friday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Hi Ed,

My sister-in-law from Florida sent me this clipping from the Miami Herald with a note saying she thought I might find it interesting reading. I did, and it was. It's along the same lines as that oil painting entitled "When Mercy Was Victory Enough", I think.

I'm passing it on and if you think it's worthy of the H.L.H. have at it, others might also find it interesting.

Keep up your good work.

As ever.

Bob Milligan



GONE FISHING: L. Franz Stigler, left, and Charles Brown spent time' together in 1991.

385th BGMA

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

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