

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. XXII, NO. 1

Editor: Ed Stern
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 Fargo, North Dakota

FEBRUARY 1995

SUPPORT UNITS

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

ASSOCIATION OFFICERS

PREZ SEZ:

ASSOCIATION OFFICERS

PRESIDENT

Robert C. Smith
N 12019 Anna J. Drive
Spokane, WA 99218
509-466-7824

Ted Wilbur, our Artist, has had a rough time. His wife has been terribly ill with cancer these past few months and was in a coma most of December. On 4 January 1995, Maureen, Ted's wife passed away. In behalf of the 385th I have extended our deepest sympathy to Ted and their family.

1ST VICE PRESIDENT

Robert A. Valliere
18 Whiting Farm Road
Branford, CT 06405-3223
203-488-1622

We must be patient - Ted will complete the Schweinfurt painting just as soon as he can. For your information at the present time 85 have purchased a lithograph and 14 others have indicated they would like a copy.

2ND VICE PRESIDENTS

Mrs. Jean Smith
N 12019 Anna J. Drive
Spokane, WA 99218
509-466-7824

George Hruska continues his good work as Host in Omaha this coming September. Each day we will see a little more sunlight and soon it will be warmer.

Arch Benner
1760 Dale Douglas Dr.
El Paso, TX 79936-4605

God Bless you all,

SECRETARY

George Hruska
7442 Ontario St.
Omaha, NE 68124
402-397-1934

TREASURER

John Pettenger
Box 117
Laurel, FL 34272-0117

Bob Smith

CHAPLAIN

Rev. James H. Vance
15929 SE 46 Way
Bellevue, WA 98006-3240

EDITOR, HARLIFE HERALD

Ed Stern
P.O. Box 2187
 Fargo, ND 58108
701-237-9999

6TH AF HISTORICAL UNIT CONTACT

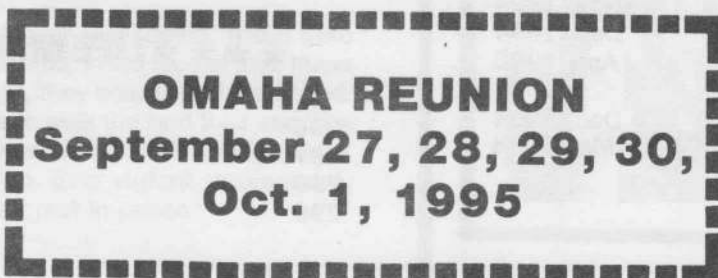
Gerry Donnelly
10770 SW 46th
Miami, FL 33165

HONORARY MEMBERS

Ronald C. Nolan
M/Sgt John McKay, Jr. USAF

PAST PRESIDENTS

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



CHAPLAIN JIM SEZ:

Hi to all in 199b

As I am writing this I am thinking of the year 1995, since it has just begun and what it might bring. And as I am the 'Minister of Visitation' at the church where we attend, I am confronted with helping those who are dying and the families that are left. I can not help but wonder who will be next or maybe it will be me. It is very difficult for all of us to accept death as part of living. BUT it is. And we should think about it.

Each of us leave a legacy of some sort for our families. A legacy of 'love' may be all we can leave. But that is needed much more than a lot of money, property or investments. This sharing or giving 'love' is something we need to develop before we die.

God has given us His love and I know He can help us share that with our families and friends. No, not just with our family and friends but with all whom we come in contact.

This may sound negative but I hope you will see it in a positive way. Positive in that all who read this, can develop that positive 'love' legacy.

"Love,-whether used of God or man, is an earnest and anxious desire for, and an active and beneficent interest, the well-being of the one loved."

This article may be the shortest sermon I have ever delivered and the most important.

Keep the peace; love your God, family, friends and neighbors and I'll see you all in Omaha.

Sincerely in love,

Jim Vance



Robert E. Lee	Oct. 1994
John Benevich	Oct. 1993
Frank Every	1988
Robert Read	May 1994
Richard Wasser	Nov. 1993
David B. Roberts	1994
Joseph C. Kolasinsky	Jan 1992
Ralph A. McCool	1994
Russell H. Hulse	Nov. 1994
Leon Slosberg	Nov. 1994
Joseph D Brocker	Dec. 1994
Louis G. Lonsway	April 1993
Dennis L. Stevens	
Mrs. Pat (Gloria)Howard	Dec. 1994
Richard W. Vrska	May 1994

Dear Ed:

Sadly I am writing to advise of the death of my husband, Robert e. Lee on October 20.

During the war he was stationed with the 385th at Great Ashfield and flew bombing missions as a waist gunner on "Haybag Annie" over Germany and central Europe.

We especially enjoyed our trip back to the base in 1976 and meeting Annie herself.

Bob was a fourth cousin of General Robert E. Lee and received his name on the General's birthday.

I hope to continue receiving the 385th BGMA newsletter.

Sincerely

"Barney" Lee
3602 Indian River Dr.
Cocoa, FL 32926

Dear Mr. Stern:

It is with great sorrow that I notify you of the death of Leon Slosberg; member of the 385th and 551 st, a lucky bastard, bombardier on the "MoonGlow", and forever my hero and father. He passed away in the early morning of 20 November, bringing an end to a long illness and 50 years of pain and health problems caused by wounds suffered on his 32nd mission (17 Oct. 44).

I write this while wearing my most treasured possession - Daddy's A-2. Somehow, that Wolf, Donald Duck carrying a bomb and the rest of the fading artwork help me to smile. Maybe I should blow the whistle!!

Sincerely,

Sherry Slosberg
485 cheney Ave #4
Oakland, Calif 94610

Ralph A. McCool
Lakewood, Ohio

Pilot with 385th B.G.
Flew 28 missions-On Raunchy Raiders
First Mission on D-Day.

Ralph, born in 1924, a direct descendent of a Mayflower passenger William, The Pilgrim White, after the service he worked with Libby MacNeil Co. until retirement.

He is survived by his wife Sally, a son William, and Brother Raymond.

□ □ □ □ **LIFE MEMBERS** □ □ □ □

- 296
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- Roy O. Werner, Jr.
- Robert G. Klostermeier
- John Shealy
- Laurence V. Volrath

BULLETIN

BOARD

STRESS STRESS STRESS STRESS

The stress of getting this issue ready was so great that your Editor and his wife decided they had to spend 2 months of R & R in and around Tucson. North Dakota winter weather had NOTHING to do with the decision. We'll be working now and then on the April issue while we're away, but it will probably not be mailed until the middle of the month.

And if any of you get to that area, let's get together. Our phone number is 602-575-8631.

CONFEDERATE AIR FORCE

March 2-4, 1995 (Midland, Texas) -- Pilot and Poster Girls, an International Symposium program to commemorate the 50th Anniversary of World War II. The symposium will feature an evening with actor Van Johnson, luncheon with World War II poster girl Margie Stewart, a panel of international pilots and more than thirty authors and historians will make presentations. For more information call (915) 685-4641 or write to Dr. William Morris, Midland College, 3600 N. Garfield, Midland, TX 79705.

OMAHA WAS A SMASH!

That's the headline from the 401st Newsletter after their Reunion in Omaha in the Fall of 1994. "Never before have we had so many cards and letters praising the hotel staff and the general run of the reunion, including the tours, food, service, etc. We had 410 people attend this reunion and we think we may have had a few extra that just snuck in!"

Ours will no doubt be the same -- rave reviews that will probably say "the best ever -- except for Fargo." (That last should be listed under Editor's note)

THE DISTINGUISHED FLYING CROSS SOCIETY

The Distinguished Flying Cross Society was formed in California in 1994 'as a non-profit organization who's member have been awarded the DFC as a result of deeds accomplished during aerial flight. the societies aim is to publicize the meaning of the award and to honor its recipients.

The organization will arrange reunions to reunite holder of the DFC, conduct tours and present a forum for patriotic, historical, social and recreational acitivities. A newsletter will be published to keep its members informed of aviation activities and present first person accounts of its members exploits.

Write for a membership application blank.

Alexander D. Ciurczak
34552 Cimino Capistrano
Capistrano Beach, CA 02624-1232

YOU CAN HELP!!!

Anyone in the Omaha area who is willing and able to join Host George Hruska in planning some of the 1995 Reunion, give him a all. He especially needs help in arranging for the Saturday's Ladies luncheon and the Friday night program. George--just don't end up with any long speeches.

SOUTHER HERITAGE PRESS

Souther Heritage Press is finalizing the plans for a new Group History. Bill Varnedoe has spear-headed the effort. He urges all who have pictures that would be of interest to send them (You'll get them back).

Send to Souther Heritage Press, PO Box 10937, St. Petersburg, FL 33733.

Letters to the Editor:

EDITOR'S NOTE: Page 4 of the December Hardlife Herald has a story "Gen. Castle's Last Mission". Our Col. Jim MacDonald sent the following really gripping account of his part in the story. Our letters to the Editor can't get much better than this!

Dear Ed:

Re: Gen'l Castles Last Mission. How he happened to be there, in the last Hardlife issue. I have a different very personal view.

At lunch on the 23rd I told Gen. Castle that I had given permission for the 446 or 447 C.O. to take a 3 day leave in London. I confided that the C.O. didn't know his group would be leading the next day's mission and therefore I would be the leader of his group.

The General smiled and complimented me on my astuteness. You see, I had completed my 25 missions as a combat leader with the 385th, never touched the wheel!

I volunteered for a second tour, went home for R&R, was delayed in getting back, was to be C.O. 385th, delay caused a decision to be made - Jumper got the group and I was sent to be C/S 4th BW-C.O. Castle.

C.O.s of the 5 groups under our command all were eager to get combat leads and as a result I was back 3 MONTHS and had led only 3 missions. (I was restricted to leading only wing and above missions). I began to feel left out - the purpose of my return (to provide combat leadership), was being thwarted.

Back to lunch with Castle - he grinned and said do it.

About midnite, the combat order came in. We were leading the Air Force!! I put me in as lead combat C.O.

Castle came in, noted our position and said he had to lead. I protested. He asked me to fly deputy in the #2 spot! NO WAY I would sit there. We argued. He was determined. Finally I agreed to be deputy C.O., but with the second group (1 minute behind), not in the #2 position of his group, but as leader of the 2nd group.

Perhaps the rest of the story would be interesting. As we were about to cross into Germany, about 40-50 enemy fighters were approaching from about 11 o'clock. At the same time, one of Castle's engines began smoking. I called to him and he said he would abort. Unfortunately he didn't give the abort signal and his group started following him. I called him up and he turned on course, gave the signal and aborted. Where were the fighters? Attacking his spread out group. I saw at least 7 blow up. I called the new group leader, ordered him to slow down as best he could and we would fly over him to give him whatever support we could. We took the lead on the deep penetration and returned safely - no more fighter attacks. Good bomb results. Castle - engine still smoking was headed west beneath us when last seen. He never got back. I sent a search party to the conti-

nent. Found his thumb in a tree crotch. One parachute short on plane. Castle gave his away and rode the plane down. It blew up before hitting ground.

One really remembers when it could have been you.

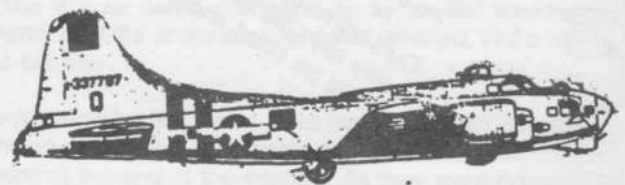
P.S. Somebody must be saving me for something because when Gen. Wilson went down with our best (385) lead crew on the 1st try to bomb Berlin - I had taken his place in the aircraft and was starting engines when he drove up to the hardstand in his HUMBA (auto), jumped out and said, I'm leading. He was the first C.O. of the 4th BW!!

You may remember that the 8th AF tried to bomb Berlin on 3 consecutive days but the weather rebuffed us the first two times.

Gen. Wilson had been briefed twice, had taken off, aborted with the rest of the 8th and didn't need the 3rd briefing. Since he didn't show I got my stuff and was ready.

As ever,

Jim McDonald
950 Mandolay Bch Rd
Oxnard, CA 93035



EDITOR'S NOTE: This story from the East Anglian Times, October 24, 1944 tells of the get together enjoyed by the Gordons, referred to in this letter.

Dear Ed,

As you will see its the turn of the girls, the American Red Cross at Lakenheath (USAF Base in Suffolk) have honoured the girls who gave voluntary service to the boys who were over here during the war by serving up coffee and doughnuts etc in the Red Cross Canteen in Stowmarket and the photo of the main street is probably taken from an upstairs room over the old canteen now a solicitors office. I am told that the same door is on and have taken a photo of it as there is something special about the handle which you will see when I get my film developed. Maybe some of our 385th men might remember.

I am pleased to say that my health is quite well after my mild heart attack in April of this year and a couple can verify this who know you from the war years "or at least the husband of the couple" who we picked up in Stowmarket a few weeks back who were hoping to hire a car to take them to Great Ashfield, but unfortunately they were not lucky on that score as we don't have hire cars in Stowmarket, but we do have the Gordons and we took them out there to have a quick look around.

Just a reminder to any couples coming over here, Paul Ryan was quoted 75 pounds to take them to Great Ashfield by taxi. NO WAY!

Getting back to the husband and wife we took to Great Ashfield, he remembers you when you told him off in your office at the base for being improperly dressed, having looked at himself and found nothing wrong, you told him he had not got the correct stripes on his arm, as he was on furlough, he had been promoted to Sgt and I think he did another tour of operations.

We would like to attend the reunion at Omaha for more than one reason, the first GI we wrote lives there and Peggy was bridesmaid over here at his wedding to an English girl now deceased. So that is another reason for being able to attend Omaha reunion to meet up with all the guys we know and all the others we would like to know.

May God bless you all
Our love and best wishes,

Les and Peggy Gordon
39 Combs Lane
Stowmarket
Suffolk, IP14 2DD
England



■ I remember it well: looking up Ipswich Street from Stowmarket's Market Place In 1955

Ten wartime Red Cross club workers reunited

A GROUP of wartime comrades was reunited this month.

The women, who staffed the Anglo-American Red Cross Club in Stowmarket during World War Two, were brought back together by Peggy Gordon and Frank Shouse, station manager at RAF Lakenheath.

Ten former comrades from London, Clacton and Stowmarket were treated to a tour of RAF Lakenheath, a visit to the 494th Fighter Squadron, and lunch at the Officers' Club.

Mrs Gordon said it was the first time they had all been back together since the club closed at the end of the war.

About half a dozen of them still lived in Stowmarket and she had traced the others through people living in the town.

Mr Shouse said the American Red Cross at Lakenheath had decided to reunite the women because next year is the 50th anniversary of the end of the war.

There were a number of clubs like the one in Stowmarket open across East Anglia during the war.

■ The ten who attended the reunion were: Barbara Turner, Joan Mayhew, Olive Hayward, Cath Larter, Phyllis Read, Renee Churchman, Vivian Churchman, Molly Pettitt, Mrs Emily Hart and Mrs Peggy Gordon (nee Riches). Three - Mary Aldis, Molly Halls and Pat Paget - were unable to attend.

TREASURER'S REPORT 1994

Total Assets 12/31/93		20,629.57
CD'S		2,000.00
Checking Account		<u>12,144.10</u>
Total Assets 12/31/94		14,144.10
INCOME		
Dues 4 Donations	8,168.00	
Interest	401.50	
Life Memberships	<u>700.00</u>	
Total Income	9,269.50	
EXPENSES		
Newsletter	10,336.40	
Treasurer	132.00	
Secretary	86.57	
Life Memberships	700.00	
Ted Wilbur Painting (1)	<u>4,500.00</u>	
Total Expenses	15,754.97	
Net Loss 12/31/94		6,485.47

Note 1 Artist Fee for B-17 Lithograph.

Respectfully Submitted

John F. Fettenger
John F fettenger
Treasurer

Dear Ed:

This is bit late for Christmas and too early for Easter, but vulgar enough to fit right in between. So if it's fit to print, have atter.

The picture (if you use) I would like capped such:



Cap'n John of Naples, Florida 1 994
Checking latrine of the G Model

Dear Ed:

I don't know if you're ready for this, but I have one more tall-tail-tale left to tell; on John Richey's OHIO AIR FORCE B-17 crew.

Far be it for me to bore you with any more of my shootem-uppers, I am tired of telling all those myself. But I think that anybody and everybody of high-fly fame, can relate to the simple fact that there can come much more from out of the belly than a mere laugh or two.

Don't smile when I say the alternate to a belly laugh is not one bit a laughing matter, maybe even a peril to the finny bone.

The old saying, when you gotta go-you gotta go, takes on another meaning when gotta-time gets to show-time at the double-cold heights of thirty thousand feet. And who ever did hear of a Flying fortress with indoor plumbing all its own, even on the ground? Or any of its crewmen with weatherized equipment to use it, especially upstairs?

As you know Ed, I was the copilot of this neat bunch, and while I was never told I was an unnecessary item, it was my front office job only and always and all ways to make that man Richey look good; that was it. And never ever did I ever ever do latrine duty.

I remember way back in the late thirties

I remember way back in the late thirties in Seattle, while I was a high-schooler, and the early forts would loll around overhead with the look of a huge barn door pulling a skinny waspy tail (in the day before the dorsal fin), and I read articles several on this modernized goliath, that could go all the way there and half way back - nonstop - and proudly featur-

ing a galley for lunch, a cot for the extra pilot, and a funnel and pot for all the boys, no girls allowed, No not once did I dream, day or night, that I had future in one of these.

It was maybe six years later when I climbed aboard one of Geiger Field's wdary warriors, alas not to find either a galley, nor a cot, or a pot, just one lonely lone funnel ahid on the wall somewhere the bomber belly, nary not a dream come true.

The proper name for this dandy device was and is the relief-tube but the uninitiate and all girls were told it was the interphone, so if the wish is to call the pilot, stand close and speak to the tube.

My first-time experience with one of these gadgets was back when I was in Basic Flying School where we flew the Vultee BT-13. It had a couple of the things, one for the front seat and one for the rear and put in a place only a Texas Longhorn could use.

On this particular day, I was on a regular check ride doing all the maneuvers I was told by my.worthy instructor. This guy was a sourpuddle second loo, an acid personality who is mad at mad and all because he's been stuck at herding cadets in a flying school. I know the feeling, it could only be worse than a tag as a forever pilot.

I had completed what I thought was a pretty smooth job of under-the-hood instruments, when he burnt my ears with a blip blast in the interphone, spouting, "If you're so dam good, lets see your slowroll."

Aha I mused, this I AM good at. But just when I had that little honey on her back, I wasn't too sure; for then whammo and all of a sudden and shouting "I got it", he split-essed to a dive straight down and we were pronto on the ground and rolling hells-bells flight line bound where before the stop he hit the ground running shouting as he passed, "you got it" and 'Til be back, you wait here!"

It was maybe an hour when I guess he remembered me, and returned all spic and span for proper dismissal (for I dasn't leave the plane before popping him a salute) and to explain that at the precise time we were on our back he was doused full measure by used suds from the plugged up relief tube. So from that time I would trust them not. My gosh, is there such a thing as a Rotor-Rooter Air Service?

There was more than one reason why the B-1 7 RT was the folderol nonsense of stupidity for use at any altitude below freezing, and/or whenever grouped with other planes, either friend or foe. Obviously no one dares leave his post sans parachute or oxygen. And if one did, with chute in one hand and walk-around bottle the other, how to make the move, to "bleed the willow" or "moon the bare" through layers of shorts and longjohns (with or without backflap) and pants and flight suit, ah me, what else? You can dress rehearsal these maneuvers all year but its no go unless tried for true at 20 to 70 below. So pity the poor guy peeling the electric suit, and not to forget the fleece liner coat and the Mae West apron. What the heck, let er fly, oh so?

Little did we know the "hows and why" of the oxygen system, but lucky for us the oxy-mask masked all the stinko

stench which was too much the likes of an old-time backyard one-holer. Wonder of wonders how could we survive without it the hours of on hours insucking our own exhaust with no hint even of our own bad breath? Hail you gas mask!

So I would ask, howcum our big brass could- expect us young bucks to fly high all the day with brimfull tanks of warmed and wet juices and in a climate only an ice cube could like, and not go aplumdum in our own scum? It was each man his own, for ary a pot and a window.

EDITOR'S NOTE: Sorry, Tom - this got a little too long and we had to edit out a few of the problems that your crew encountered. Here we pick it up with the pilot John Richey, who won the Big time award. It went:

Honor's don't come easy to a cockpit dweller. He has no gun, nor even a piddle for up the creek. It's he those bogeys throw rocks at, and to defend himself, he can only pucker-up-on his own dear bung.

John's big day hatched in the usual manner of an ordinary combat mission, in no way different than any of our twenty-five missions we flew. Only thing was, he should never have been allowed off the turf that morning, he was one sick turk, but sick call? Not for John, no.

He was yet aboil from the big chief's chewing him, over the time we aborted our number three mission; the inference being his spinal-bones were color lemon the gutless, no matter the charge untrue.

But John was no chicken, he neither cackled or crowed, but he'd not plead belly-ache with a mission to fly. So off we go, we did.

It was when we had climbed to ten-thousand feet, where decreased atmosphere pressure begins to comingle a man's insides, and the time came for oxygen masks, that John took on the pale-face of an s.o.s.

From the looks of him, it was hard to tell which would be first, upchuk? or downchuk? It was plain to see, this was gotta go time.

So I asked him, "You wanna abort? Let's go back", and he roared "Hell no, and that's NO", as he shot from his seat and went looking, I guess, for Mac's G-map and maybe Bob's tin hat. Instead though, he had gone to the bomb bay where he loosed a glut-load of loose geese all over a full bomb load for ready-to-go five-hundred-pounders.

Suddenly (without knowing where he had gone and by the time we'd dumb through 12 thousand) I'm thinking, this here's one big stinky winket, where in hell's John? on A john I hope, but his cute is yet under the pilot seat and his oxy-mask? Oh no, he didn't use that for up-chuk?...downchuk?...omigosh ohmy...methinks its time to punt.

Good thing I didn't, I'd probably drop the snap. But in our case today, good news came in pairs. In my preoccupation with herding the bird, at the same time wondering if John got any on him, I failed to note the formation had ceased the climb, and was now descending.

At the precise same time, I was startled to find dear John, only partly barbed but looking like an all-night schlitz party... but now pale budweiser, aclimbing stiffly back in the head saddle left seat.

It was a mixed feel when was heard the mission was scrubbed, and with great feeling, John said too loud, "Oh great! And WHO's the guy ashlushing off those stinking bombs?"

And so it was, this officer and gentleman, and number one combat bomber pilot, with flair and great skill, hosed and hosed whilst his most loyal crew and well out of range, har-moanized the old ditty of the guy who crawled from the pit all covered with sweet violets. But John? He only said if your pants are down and you can't find a pot, any old tub will do, end of quote.

Tom Helman
718 Sherman Street
Medford, Oregon 97504

Dear Ed,

Something came up in the writing of my memories of early 1944, titled "*The WRONG Stuff*", that might be of interest.

In November 1994, I was re-writing the 22 June 1944 mission to Paris, wishing I had the details of what had happened to Bill Shannon, we had buddied around for about five months. He had hoped to get every medal he could; even the Purple Heart. He was a navigator, duty station in the nose. So when I saw the nose of his plane ventilated with flak holes over Paris, I concluded that he got his Purple Heart.

After the mission it was confirmed that he had, indeed been wounded, but I never saw him again.

So there I was, fifty years after the mission, trying to document what had happened to him-not having a clue as to how I could find out, when the telephone rang. It was a Believe it or Not and Margot, my wife, said, "Don't try to make something out of it. Just accept it."

"This, is Bill Shannon. Do you remember me?"

"If you were wounded over Paris", I replied, "I remember you."

Bill had seen my name in the Hardlife Herald, told his wife that he knew me and was going to call me. Well, he didn't call me until his wife reminded him several months later-when I was writing about him. We had a fine visit...THANKS BILL!

Truman Smith
Ponca City, OK



Ed:

Just got my Hardlife Herald for December, it looks great!

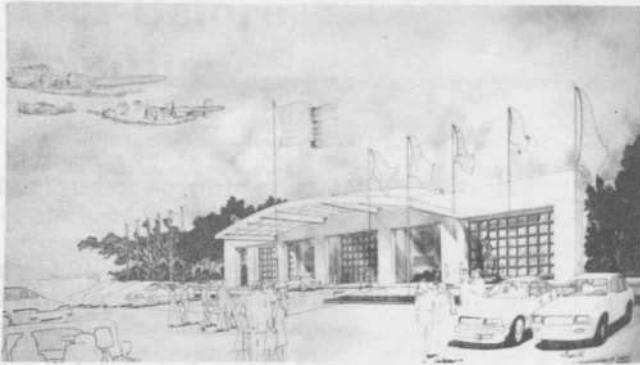
Thanks for the plug about the Heritage Center on page 6. Keep up the great work.

Thought you might like a copy of the architect's rendering of the Heritage Center. We are pressing on with a goal of opening in April 1996.

Happy Holidays! Come to see us.

Wayne Corbett

P.S. Your Omaha agenda looks great. When I was Director of Public Affairs at SAC HQs I used to conduct those tours thru Underground, SAC HQs, SAC Museum, etc. Still own a house in Omaha. You all will have a great time in Omaha- we sure enjoyed our 9 years there.



Dear Ed:

Has any individual crew in the 385th had more reunions than we have?

Perhaps. But we'll be near the top.

First Lt. Wilbur N. Whitehead and his crew finished our missions over Berlin on March 18, 1945 as deputy lead of the 548th. While we all headed home for careers and families, we never lost track of each other.

We were too busy raising kids to get together collectively until we neared retirement age. And then, for our 40th anniversary, in 1984, we came from Oregon, California, Texas, Ohio, Pennsylvania and North Carolina to the Air Force Academy at Colorado Springs for three days of trading old war stories and enjoying the scenery. Our number had been reduced to eight by the deaths of bombardier Bill Butler and assistant engineer Leonard Edwards.

Two years later, we were inspecting NASA at Houston, then on to Boeing Field in Seattle to share in the 50th anniversary party for the B-17.

About this time the wives began to complain that we only

went to places where there were old airplanes. So our next port of call, two years later, was at Palm Springs, Calif. Two years from then we were in the resort city of Asheville, N.C. We met there to be near tailgunner Mickey Purnell who was on kidney dialysis at his home in Monroe. He died on the day we were to visit him.

Two years after that we convened in a motel overlooking Monterey Bay in California. We'd lost track of our engineer, Olen Gilmore, but discovered his whereabouts in time for he and his wife to participate with the rest of us this past October and the grandest reunion of them all, our 50th, starting with a festive dinner at the home of our radio operator Jack Povey and his wife Betty in Philadelphia and continuing on to three days in condominiums overlooking the Atlantic at Sea Isle City on the New Jersey shore.

All seven of us old flyboys and five spouses (We've all remained married to the same women over the decades.) were at the 50th. Other than those already mentioned, we were George Crobaugh, ball turret gunner, Gene Hackney, navigator, Dave Cates, radarman, and myself, Wess Sullivan, copilot.

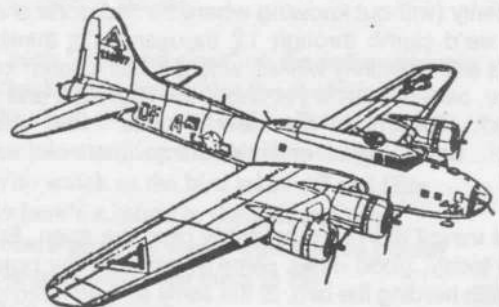
We gave a plaque to our first pilot Bill Whitehead, honoring his inspiring leadership. The bond of mutual dependence we developed in wartime has matured to deep friendship. We and our spouses look forward to each reunion. We have our eyes set on San Antonio two years hence. Hackney and his wife Phyllis already are laying plans.

Incidentally, if you've lost track of a crew member, try checking your local library for a computer data base that has compiled all the names and numbers in all the telephone directories in the nation. That's how we found our missing engineer.

Now, once again, has any crew in the 385th had any more reunions than we have?

Sincerely,

Wes Sullivan
1135 Waller St. SE
Salem, OR 97302



Dear Ed:

Many thanks for all the hard work you and others do on publishing the "Hardlife Herald." I continue to be amazed at all the things I missed seeing or whatever even when right there. Sort of busy most of the time just keeping in formation and stuff like that.

Is getting close to the 50th anniversary of December 24th, 1944 mission. Had been grounded due to bad weather for many days. Crews were eager to get up and help the ground troops according to my memory. On this mission I think the 86th was leading the group and according to information in Willard Richard's book the 385th was #3 group behind General Castle. Capt. Bill Wray was pilot on the lead crew and when his deputy lead had to return due to some malfunction, Bill called us up to fly the mission on his right wing. Shortly thereafter the lead group and General Castle's aircraft were hit by fighters. I clearly remember seeing this.

Enclosed are some comments I made on Willard Richard's book to sort of try to make things more historically correct as I remember. Generally, a fine bit of work and recording of events except for a few things which need correction.

I can't imagine how Bill Varnedoe was able to compile so much detail and records of things All read with much interest.

One thing that occurred in reading the Dec. 1994 newsletter was that it might be fairly easy to do and not too expensive to get a good professional photo of the stained glass window in Great Ashfield's All Saints Church. Am sure many missed even seeing the church while there plus may not have the opportunity for a return visit. Is hard to believe the church dates clear back to the 13th century. (Getting close to the time of my ancestor King Richard I). Wish I had known more about history and such things when in school.

Sincerely,

Bob Bensing
5185 Desert Lane
Silver Springs, NV
89429-9211

EDITOR'S NOTE: Every one of our members who visits the Church seems to get a good picture, I'm sending you one of those I've received.

Dear Ed,

Believe it or not, my sis Helen Creegan across the street and I had a visit from a young man of 35, Brent Cox, who is showing an interest in 8th Air Force history, and local men in particular. He comes from a nearby town.

So as the records are at Helen's, she dug them out, he came and talked and photographed some things.

After he left, Helen was looking over the 385th Group Reunion's Sixth Reunion Booklet, reading the article on "Brownie" - Charlton K Browning - and noted it gives the date of our brother Frank's death in England as Feb. 24, 1944. Oddly enough, that is the date of our mother's birth.

But the date of his death is Feb. 21, 1944. Can you print this letter or in some other way clear that up, to our satisfaction?

Thanks,

Mrs. Rose Mary Creegan Bishard
725 South Eddy St.
Ft. Scott, Kansas 66701

Dear Ed:

About three months ago Frank Stetson from Portland, Oregon came by our home here in Vacaville, California. Frank was on his FIRST mission, and our crew when the MARYONOVICH crew ended up in Lisbon, Portugal. So we had much to talk about in the 3 hours we spent together. Frank ended up as Group Bombardier. He also had just recently heard of our reunions and did attend the one in '93. Frank was extremely interested in reading my diary account of the missions we had flown together. At that time I assured him that I would see that he got a copy???? To say that I have been too busy (in my retirement) is just making an excuse.

And then two weeks ago I received a letter from our radio operator on MARYS crew. He had a bunch of questions and wanted info from the diary, since he is writing for some publication. So now I had to catch up with Frank and Edwin "Johnny" Johnson, from Midlothian, Texas.

While going through some photographs I had copies, I opened up a full page spread from the "Stars and Stripes", dated January 27, 1944. I had always appreciated this article because it was one of the few pictures I had showing the "G" group actually on a mission where the "G" was NOT blocked out. Col Mac and Piper in picture #1 and Col Van in #2 and again in #12 with Sam P Dixon the third with Warren Bock in C/P. AND then in #14 we have Maryonovich and Bill Flagler and crew getting debriefed.

I don't know if you have a copy of this article but since you also know ALL the people in the various pictures, I thought you might be interested in laying ALL five photographs on your dining table like I just did. SO you can fasten the pictures together if you like.

As Ever,

Bill Flagler





1.—The alert is called the evening before the mission. When the target comes in the operations and Intelligence officers get together with the lead pilot and begin working out details.



2.—The Group C/J, who often leads his unit or 3.—Intelligence officers hours before briefing choose their map, bigger forces, call in the weather, and pictures. The whole picture—route—situation—reference on the all-important "spit problems" — many, and the target itself—must be clear in every airman's mind.



—Before take-off the navigator rebriefs the pilot, co-pilot and bombardier, while the gunners install their weapons and the ground crewmen make a final check of the ship. No detail is overlooked.



8.—Then comes take-off. The heavily laden bombers assume their place in the carefully stacked

WITH a vast number of heavy bombers — Fortresses and Liberators—now operating from England, and increasingly large forces planned for the future, every American attack against Germany is a major offensive, and each mission requires the strategic planning plus the plain hard work of a battle operation.

While the targets are selected and the planning executed in higher headquarters, details of the mission are worked out in individual-combat groups, mostly by the men who are to fly and fight that day.

Surprisingly rapid and smooth-running channels exist for every operation. Higher headquarters, which has the overall command, delegates out duties to the Bomber and fighter commands, and the whole day of combat is cut up and divided among the lower echelons. Ultimately a combat group is told that it is to fly certain place, at a certain time, with its bombs aimed at a certain target.

This is the story of a combat operation by one of the participating bomb groups.



Meanwhile, as time for the return approaches, groundmen gather to eat with their comrades. The chaplain and a detachment of medics are



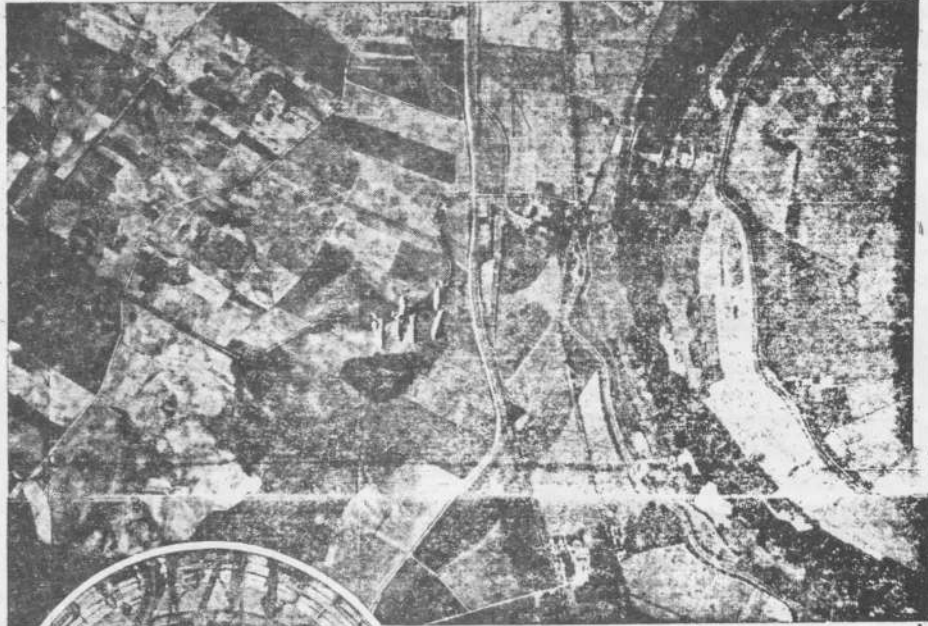
12.—On landing, the pilot signs his Form 1, and after looking over the ship with the crew



4.—Crewmen have gone into action, the big ships are gassed and bombed in part, and every part of their structure checked.

5.—The lead navigator and bombardier for the day are especially careful to check routes, points of bombing and after-bombing rally points and every flak position en route.

6.—At briefing, several hours before the take-off, intelligence officers, the weather man and flying control personnel review every detail of the day's operation.



9.—Perhaps the most tense moments of the normal mission come during the bomb run. This photo is of the first stick of bombs falling away from the lead Fortress—precision bombing at its best.

formation, and head for the enemy coast.



12.—During the mission, the ship's gunners are on alert, ready to blast Nazi fighters.



11.—The impact on battle damage.

13.—Immediately on coming within the line, combat crewmen are alerted to any threat that will require immediate action.

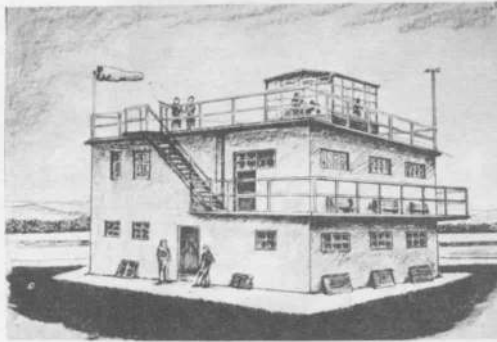
14.—A cup of hot coffee, a bite to eat, is followed by the intelligence intercept and evaluation from the operational and intelligence viewpoint.

THE EIGHTH AIR FORCE MEMORIAL MUSEUM FOUNDATION Control Tower Dedication

On 22 April 1995, after 61/2 years, the Control Tower Memorial will come to fruition. Of the many museum displays put in place by the 8th AFMMF this is by far the largest and most impressive.

A replica of the control towers which we had on our bases in England holds a commanding position along the entrance to the U.S.A.F Museum, Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, Dayton, Ohio. This is a fitting memorial to our fallen comrades and the many accomplishments of "The Mighty Eighth", as well as an educational exhibit for the youths of today and tomorrow.

Arrangements have been made with the Dayton Airport Inn



Charcoal sketch of 8AF Control Tower for AF Museum.

and Conference Center for the following:

- Hotel room (tax included, single or double) \$50.00
- Bus transportation to USAF Museum on Sat 8.00
- Buffet Breakfast Saturday morning (tax included) 8.51
- Buffet dinner Saturday evening (tax included) 18.37

Fill out the registration form below for any or all of the options and send with your check or credit card number to the Airport Inn.

Dayton Airport Inn
Dayton International Airport
Vandalia, OH 45377

For more information write:

John E. Greenwood
607 State St.
Alton, IL 62002



US Air Force Museum-Aug. 1994 by Dayton Ohio

Please Reserve The Following Accommodations For:

Name _____

A r r i v e L e a v e
(date & time)

(date)

Guaranteed by _____

(credit card)

Exp. _____

Address _____

City/State/Zip _____

Bus transportation required for persons _____

Breakfast buffet for persons _____

Dinner buffet for persons _____

Room with Queen Bed

For One

For Two

Room with Twin Beds

For Two

EDITOR'S NOTE: Here's a story we can relate to--we had lots of planes from other groups at Great Ashfield, too, and we scrambled to house and feed them. We don't show

A Safehaven for Christinas

Christmas 1944 brought sadness to the 94th Bomb Group. There was more despair than hope. It was one of the very worst winters on record in England for heavy snows and ice. Not only that, thick fog blanketed the base at Rougham Airfield, Bury-St-Edmunds, so that incoming pilots, on damaged aircraft and almost out of fuel, had to strain every nerve and skill they knew to attempt a safe landing on to runways they could not see!

Christmas 1944 arrived with some of the worst winter weather on record in England, with heavy snows and ice. Ground-hugging clouds caused a constant hazard for the Eighth Air Force. Towards the end of December the bad weather curtailed operations for five days, during which period the "Battle of the Bulge" was raging on the Continent without the help of air power. The crews of the 94th BG at Rougham Airbase followed developments closely while they waited for intelligence briefings. By December 22 the Base was completely immersed in fog. The air was raw. Ice and heavy hoarfrost coated the landscape, covering trees and vehicles. Aircraft were grounded. A previously alerted mission was scrubbed owing to the impossible weather conditions.

On December 24th the weather cleared, and the Eighth Air Force launched a vast number of bombers on a mission to Germany. More than 2000 B-17s and Liberators, with massive fighter escort, flew from England to bomb the marshalling yards at Babenhausen. The 94th sent 50 aircraft in four squadrons as part of the 4th Combat Wing. Brigadier General Fred Castle, former 94th BG Commander, led his 4th Combat Wing in a 487th BG aircraft. The weather had improved.

Overall conditions appeared to be above average for December. However, luck ran out over the Liege area. Both bombers and fighters sustained great damage from heavy ME-109 attacks, and although photographs showed that the bombings had successfully hit their targets, the Eighth had suffered heavy losses. General Castle's aircraft had been among those hit by the enemy, and the few who were aware of it thought he had escaped by parachute, as several of them had been seen emerging from the aircraft before it exploded and went down in flames.

Darkness was falling as the returning aircraft of the 94th approached England. Rougham was almost closed in by a heavy blanket of fog. One of the few bases still open, it was reporting bare minimums. By the time the aircraft had landed and been parked on base, the order came through to prepare immediately for other returning groups. Aircraft headed for inaccessible airfields were to be diverted, including many Halifaxes and Lancasters.

The following two hours can only be described as "organized chaos." The fog worsened. Soon, battle-scarred aircraft, some almost out of fuel, were skimming the frost-covered tree tops with their landing lights on, shrouded in fog, and as a control tower operator described them, looking for all the world like giant ghostly "frosted chandeliers." Long after dark they came, looming low over the runways in all directions, while the control tower did a superb and nerve-racking job of guiding them in. The colored flares, mingling with the glitter from the icicles on the trees, caused a rainbow effect. A memorable sight. A tragic note was

a mission for Dec. 25, 1944--we show Dec. 24th to Gross Astgion (Vogt), then Dec. 27th to Andemock.

when seven men of the 92nd BG were killed as their plane hit a tree in the fog and burst into flames. They had run out of fuel and had attempted to crash land almost a mile from the Base.

Finally the last of the diverted aircraft had landed on the Base and had been parked. At final count there were more than 150 aircraft occupying space normally allocated for 70. A sergeant who had directed the parking described the runways as looking like a busy boulevard, never thinking so many aircraft could have been parked. But there they were.

There was a general feeling of thankfulness, and the men of the 94th and their "guests" were able to think of Christmas. Then their thoughts were interrupted with a flash ordering all aircraft to be fueled and loaded for a Christmas Day launch. This was a crowning blow, and presented another problem. Sleeping quarters must be found for the air crews who had to get some sleep if a mission was scheduled for the next morning. Once again the resourceful 94th answered the call and found sleeping spaces for 700 extra men, in briefing rooms, clubs, mess halls and in planes that were scattered all over the Base. From bedlam quietness fell. A heavy snow began to fall. From somewhere across the Base came the strains of *Silent Night*, and just as on that first Christmas, the Innkeeper had found shelter for Mary and Joseph, so the 94th BG at Rougham was providing a sheltered safehaven for their fellow comrades.

Meanwhile, there was no rest for the ground crews and support personnel who worked all night shoveling snow from the runways, fueling and loading the bombers and getting them ready for the morning. At daybreak they staggered back to their huts, weary but with the satisfaction of a job well done. Then the inevitable word came that the mission was cancelled after all.

There was some anger and frustration. Morale was flagging, but the spirit of Christmas soon surfaced as traditional Christmas dinners were served throughout the day. The 94th shared with their visitors, among them many Canadians who expressed their appreciation for the hospitality. When the turkey ran out, the hosts got the Spam!

In the afternoon a football game was played in a dense fog on a frost-covered field. Spirits had revived. An evening Service was conducted which was attended by many grateful airmen. Some officers reviewed the dramatic events and raised their glasses to "Victory soon."

Then on the 26th came the sad news that Brig Gen Fred Castle had been killed in action. Great sorrow was felt throughout the Base. As former Commander of the 94th, General Castle had earned the respect and affection of officers and enlisted men. He was known as a fearless pilot and a top leader. On his promotion day he had visited the unit and expressed his appreciation at all levels. The local English people who knew him remember him with great affection, because in their opinion - "he stood for every fine and decent thing about people, a credit to the United States, typifying the best in all Americans who came to England." His loss was a great blow to the men who had come under his leadership.

Thus ended Christmas 1944. A bright spot in the midst of the gloom was the many letters received by the 94th, praising them for the fine job they did as hosts to 70 or more diverted aircraft and their aircrews of 700 men, and the help they provided at a time of peril.

EDITOR'S NOTE: The pictures shows the square J of the 390th, but the story credits the 385th on this food drop mission. Thanks to Bob Silver for the copy. It was 50 years ago May 2nd—remember? Our last mission.

NO BOX TOPS:

The Start and Stripes H'ar Band Contest is easy to enter



CLASS B ALLOTMENT

Taken tomorrow makes you eligible for The Stars and Stripes War Bond Contest

WD Says 650,000 ETO Discharges After IE-Day

□ □ k □ □ □ □ □ □

3rd Army Drive Takes Pilsen

May Wait Year Before Trip Home

By William R. Spear

WASHINGTON, May 6—Only about 650,000 soldiers from the ETO are ticketed for discharges with the end of the war in Europe, the War Department announced last night, and it will be as long as a year until they all get home and get out.

The number of troops in the ETO never has been officially disclosed, but most unofficial estimates put the number at 4,000,000 and the War Department's statement hinted that the figure was about right. Viewed mathematically, this would mean that 65 out of 400 men would be discharged.

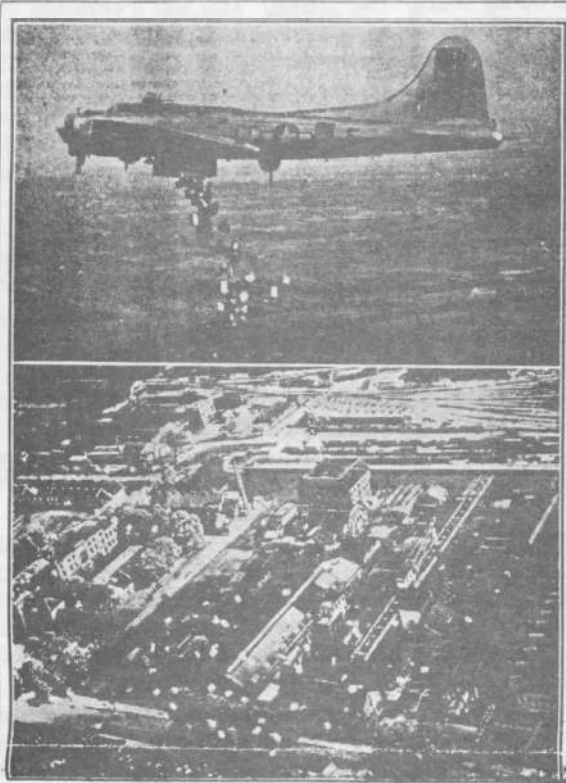
AH the rest in the ETO will be needed in the Army—and officials still stick to a year and a half or two years as the minimum estimate of the time it will take to lick Japan, notwithstanding two Jima, Okinawa and the B29s.

Many troops going to the Pacific will get no furloughs home in between. About one-third of the combat troops and "the larger proportion" of the service troops slated for the Pacific will go direct from the ETO; service troops will be needed in a hurry to build communications lines, bases, airfields and other facilities for armies coming later.

But about two-thirds of the combat units going to the Pacific will be staged through the U.S. and these men will get furloughs home.

These cold facts of the Army's redeployment plans were made public officially for the first time last night in a War Department press release (complete release printed on page 2), although some of the details previously had been reported by unofficial sources. The plan had been outlined by members of the General Staff Friday at a closed session of the House Military Affairs Committee.

The Department said it had "desired to delay any public statement in this matter until several basic factors had been cleared with overseas commanders."



MANNA FROM HEAVEN FOR THE DUTCH: @

Crews of the 8th Air Force, accustomed to high altitude bombing, skimmed low over Dutch cities to drop hundreds of cases of ten-in-one rations to beleaguered civilian population. These pictures show a 385th Bomb Group Fort dropping its "mercy cargo." On each of the first three days of May approx. 1 y 400 B17, sent 800 tons of food down toward areas carefully marked off by the Dutch and just as carefully pin-pointed by the airmen. »

Czechs in Revolt; Hint War's 'End'

Gen. George S. Patton's 3rd Army was on the march along a 110-mile front yesterday into Czechoslovakia, as Czech patriots broadcast appeals for assistance in their week-end uprising against the Germans in Prague, capital of the only central Europe country where the enemy maintains some vestige of power. Pilsen, 50 miles from Prague, was captured. Soviet forces were closing in through Moravia for an all-out assault on Bohemia, where Prague stands.

With the Germans left to be conquered only in Czechoslovakia and Norway and in small areas of Germany, there was speculation that an official proclamation declaring all organized enemy resistance in Europe ended was now being drafted.

Resistance on the southern front had ceased Saturday when German Army Group G, including the 1st and 19th Armies, surrendered to Lt. Gen. Jacob L. Devers, 6th Army Group commander. Gen. Eisenhower in a statement at SHAEF Saturday cited as an example of the enemy's disintegration and demoralization the fact that the German officer who negotiated the surrender with Devers could not accurately say how many troops were involved, but believed that between 200,000 and 400,000 men were affected.

4 Million PWs Pose Problem

WASHINGTON, May 6 (ANS)—Faced with the unprecedented problem of handling nearly 4,000,000 German prisoners of war until a government is set up in defeated Germany, Allied military authorities are wrestling with the choices of disarming and turning them out to pasture in a chaotic Germany or retaining them in camps until order returns.

The Geneva Convention, the Allies are required to conduct orderly liquidation of surrendering armies, feed, shelter and clothe them then negotiate with the defeated enemy government for their return to civilian status.

The Russian government, a non signee of the Geneva Pact has served notice that

On the northern front Allied troops were expected to march soon into the ports of Rotterdam, Amsterdam and Utrecht, in Holland, and Emden, Wilhelmshaven, Bremerhaven and Cuxhaven in northwest Germany, a dispatch from 21st Army Group HQ said. Terms for the surrender of the enemy forces in these areas and in Denmark had become effective Saturday morning.

All Quiet in Copenhagen Reports received at 21st Army Group HQ said all was quiet in Copenhagen, but that important problems were raised by the presence of numerous German civilians who had fled from the political and military situation believed to be at large in the country.

Capitulation of German troops in Norway, coupled with movement of enemy forces in the northern part of the country to surrender in Sweden, was considered imminent by informed observer in Stockholm. Such a surrender pact may be signed soon, it was said. The Germans were said to be seeking assurance that their forces in the north would

EDITOR'S NOTE: Author unknown published in Winter Flying Fortress newsletter.

Bender Of Wrenches

- Here's to the people with dirty hands
- Who fuel the planes when the pilot lands
- Who fix the canopies and stop the leaks
- Change the tires and oil the squeaks
- Who smooth the scratches and rivet the panels

- Check "loud and clear" on the radio channels
- Check wires and cables for chafing or tears
- Who pull the chocks and walk the wings
- And do a million maint'nance things
- Who watch as the bird takes off and flies
- So here's a salute to the gals and guys
- From a group of flyers who seldom ponder
- The ones who keep them in the Wild blue yonder.

EDITOR'S NOTE: From the 486th Bomb Group newsletter -- the way it was!

Pearl Harbor Day at Grenier Field

This article submitted by Chet French and was written by Col. William A. Whelton.

A few weeks ago Grumman announced it would no longer manufacture planes. My heart sank when I read the story. I remember when America didn't have the planes we needed to defend ourselves, and suddenly the enemy was at our throats.

It was December 7, 1941. I was Officer of the Day at Grenier Field, a new Army Air Corps base near Manchester, NH. We knew war was imminent. In fact, I'd recently been offered a well-paid—and strictly unofficial—job as a pilot for the Chinese air force, with a bonus for every Japanese plane I shot down. But the fighting in Asia and Europe had done little to prepare the United States for War.

Most of the planes in my squadron were obsolete. Our B-10 Bombers were so out of date only a few of us knew how to fly them. When the news from Pearl Harbor reached Grenier Field, we pilots were ready to go. But our planes were not. My .45 sidearm—borrowed from my brother—was one of the few working guns on the base.

The guns we did have were packed in cosmoline. Even if the guns had been ready, our Lockheed-Hudson bombers had no gun turrets. Not that it mattered. We had no ammunition, either. The only bombs on the base were one pound training devices detonated by percussion caps. To make things worse, some of our planes had been painted with German insignia during war games in Louisiana. Grenier had no mission and no orders. We waited for something to happen, but the entire nation seemed stunned. So when I got off duty I took my wife and in-laws into town. I loved Manchester. The people opened their hearts and homes to the airmen of Grenier Field, and I'll always be grateful. I remember being at the movies in Manchester when a message was flashed on the screen ordering all military personnel back to base. America began to mobilize at last.

In the days that followed we did what we could, but we couldn't do much. I remember flying down to Westover Field in Massachusetts hoping to find some ammunition. There was none to be had. We were on our own. When reports came in that a German battle fleet had been sighted in the Atlantic, unarmed planes from Grenier Field tried to find the enemy's position. Fortunately, the reports were false.

However, the onslaught that followed was all too real. In the first three months of the war, 121 Allied ships were sunk along the east coast and in the Gulf of Mexico. I flew coastal patrols, but German submarine crews were battle hardened and usually stayed a jump ahead of us. The U-boats had easy pickings, especially at night when convoys were silhouetted against the glow of city lights. It was terrible to see the smoke of burning freighters on the horizon and know there was virtually nothing we could do about it.

Few Americans remember those harrowing days. So heavy were the U.S. losses in 1942 that 11 months after Pearl Harbor only one American aircraft carrier—the Enterprise—remained afloat in the Pacific. If the Japanese had kept coming, in my opinion they could have landed in California. We had almost nothing to stop them.

But little by little we armed ourselves. We learned to black out coastal lights. We learned to track and sink submarines. We learned to fight. Nevertheless, America had been caught off guard. It was our soldiers, sailors, and fliers, and marines who paid the price.

That's why I'm concerned that Grumman won't be making fighter planes anymore. From the F4F Wildcat to the F14 Tomcat, Grumman built the fighters that kept America free. Will a new generation of Americans one day re-learn the lesson of the past? As we recall the sacrifice at Pearl Harbor, let's also remember the lesson of Grenier field. Always on guard. If we want peace, we must be ready to fight.



EDITOR'S NOTE: We've just finished reading "Crusade" by Rick Atkinson, who won a Pulitzer Prize in 1982 for a book on West Point Class of 1966. He was the Washington Post's lead reporter during the Gulf War. His book is fascinating - if you want a "behind the headlines" in depth look at the Gulf War.

Here are a couple of excerpts--the first one relates to our WW2 efforts. Wrong--we say.

Giulio Douhet, the dogmatic and imperious Italian artilleryman who became air power's most celebrated theorist in the 1920s, even argued that combat in the air offered a merciful alternative to the carnage of ground fighting—a view still supported by many in the modern United States Air Force.

Yet theory had never quite lived up to expectations. "The potential of the strategic air offensive was greater than its achievement," British Bomber Command historians admitted after World War II. Warden believed, however, that modern munitions offered a precision that would marry theory and practice. A B-17 bomber in World War II had a "circular error probable" of 3300 feet, meaning that half of the bombs dropped would likely fall within that radius; mathematically, that meant it took nine thousand bombs to achieve a 90 percent probability of hitting a target measuring sixty by a hundred feet. (A bomber "can hit a town from ten thousand feet," one military writer observed, "if the town is big enough.") Even in Vietnam, hitting that sixty-by-hundred-foot rectangle required three hundred bombs. But an F-117 carrying laser-guided munitions could theoretically destroy the target with a single bomb.

And then later on in the same chapter:

Thousands of feet of gun camera videotape of bombs missing their targets remained classified; only flawless missions displaying dead-on accuracy were released—with the audio recordings of cursing, hyperventilating pilot primly excised. Of 167 laser-guided bombs dropped during the first five nights of combat by F-117s, considered the most accurate aircraft system in the allied arsenal, seventy-six missed their targets because of pilot error, mechanical or electronic malfunctions, or poor weather. None of those was acknowledged by Riyadh or Washington.

By the end of the war air strikes killed nearly 2300 and injured six thousand Iraqi noncombatants, according to figures provided by Baghdad to the United Nations and believed to be reasonable accurate. The toll was remarkably close to that predicted by General Tony McPeak, the Air Force chief, who had warned Bush in December, "You're going to kill two thousand people you're not mad at."



EDITOR'S NOTE: Truman Smith's reaction to news stories about the Smithsonian's Enola Gay exhibits and the controversy surrounding it. The bomb probably did some of us out of a trip to Okinawa back in 1945, although we now know the Japanese were anxious to give up if we would negotiate. Anyone interested in the other side of the story should read Stuart Udall's "The Myths of August."

TO BOMB OR NOT TO BOMB

BY

Truman J. Smith

Lt. Colonel

U.S. Air Force, Retired

As a former B-17 pilot, having flown combat in Europe, I felt honored to have been invited to join the crew of the B-29 "Fifi" for dinner and to listen to their "war stories" from a tour they were on with the Confederate Air Force back in the '70's.

The year before I had been impressed by the Confederate Air Force's re-enactment of aerial battles of World War Two, from the sneak attack by the Japanese on Pearl Harbor to the end of the war. Colonel Tibbets, who had piloted the "Enola Gay" to drop the first atomic bomb, had flown "Fifi" (representing the "Enola Gay"), re-enacting the dropping of the atomic bomb on Hiroshima.

The crew told me they no longer did the reenactment of the atomic bomb, because Japan had objected to the U.S. State Department, who requested (?) the demonstration of that part of history be eliminated.

"Did the Japanese object to the opening of the show when they made the sneak attack on Pearl Harbor?" I asked.

"No, they were proud of that."

Another member of the crew explained how they had a problem at their previous show when a Priest and four Sisters managed to get through security and onto the flight line.

"When I saw that the Priest had a can of spray-paint and he started to paint on our airplane, I decked him. The police took him and his Sisters away. After all, we work hard trying to preserve history and he was out to destroy it."

Some twenty years after hearing this account, I saw on ABC's NIGHTLINE, in October of 1994, the TV program about a controversy over the Smithsonian Institution's intended display of the "Enola Gay" in 1995, on the 50th Anniversary of World War Two, and the American Legion's objection to the Smithsonian's account of what had happened.

John Dear, a Jesuit Priest, one of a group of anti-war activists who had met with the Smithsonian Institute, also appeared on ABC's NIGHTLINE.

"They have created an exhibit that is going to continue the myth that what we did was right. It was WRONG!", said Jesuit Priest John Dear. "We're going to hold an alternative exhibit in front of the Air and Space Museum with pictures

and photo of the victims of Hiroshima, and pictures from Nagasaki, and say 'This is what the Pentagon and the American Legion don't want you to see.'

Obviously Jesuit Priest John Dear was not trapped with the thousands of American Sailors, still aboard, now under the waters of Pearl Harbor; nor the hundreds of thousands of prisoners who were taken, brutalized and killed by the Japanese.

It is most unfortunate that there exists a self-destructive attitude that the Pentagon, American Legion, and all veterans are "War Lovers", when the opposite is true. In that having participated in war, it is they who have the greatest aversion to war.

Likewise, it would be incorrect to assume that all priests, other mediators between god and man, and the anti-war activists, are experts on how to prevent or stop wars...Would that they could. Rather, the converse is true, since historically most wars have been fought "In the name of God".

Their ignorance and conduct in protesting the IDEA of war only perpetuates the FACT of war. For those who survive the Hell of war, regardless of nationality, race or religion, are even more committed to the battle and to final victory, rather than turning the other "cheek".

The problem in trying to prevent war comes from not understanding the purpose and nature of war.

The ultimate aim of war is to end the horrors of war by making it so horrific that it stops the fighting. Thus, victory and the spoils of war go to the "Bad Guys" who can create the greatest destruction. "Good Guys" don't win wars.

Okay, "We'll drop an atomic bomb. That should get their attention and they will stop the war."

According to the anti-war activists, America was the Bad Guy. Well, of course. Good Guys don't win wars. But evidently, in dropping the first atomic bomb, America was not bad enough, because the Japanese made no effort to stop the war that they had started?

No, Japan did not protest the war. Rather, they chose to perpetuate the conflict that they had covertly launched against the unsuspecting and unprepared Americans.

Since they were not willing to stop their aggression when the "Enola Gay" dumped its load on Hiroshima the 6th of August, 1945, another bomb was dropped three days later on Nagasaki.

Did the Japanese then stop fighting?

No, not even after experiencing two atomic bombs did Japan stop fighting. The Japanese War Council was committed to continuation of the conflict.

Much has been made of Hiroshima and Nagasaki and the possibly 120,000 fatalities. Yet, conventional bombs killed even more on just the SINGLE target of Dresden, Germany. Few German cities escaped the bombings.

Five-thousand American and British bombers hammered Hamburg into fire-storms that depleted the oxygen. One Hamburg woman watching corpses being stacked into trucks said, "If there were a God, He would have shown them some mercy." An elderly man replied, "Leave God out of this. Men make war, not God."

However, as devastating as were the first two atomic bombs, the men in charge of Japan's destiny DID NOT STOP FIGHTING, but continued to press their attack against the United States.

Finally, nine days after the "Enola Gay" had dropped the first bomb, Emperor Hirohito announced over the radio, on the 15th of August, 1945, that "The war situation has developed not necessarily to Japan's advantage. Therefore, Japan was FORCED to accept the Allied demand for surrender."

Even so, on the same day as announcing surrender, Japan launched a KAMIKAZE attack against American forces on Okinawa. Unfortunately for them, all of the KAMIKAZE dive bombers were destroyed by U.S. fighters.

Based on the invasions of Europe and the Pacific islands, an invasion of Japan, as an attempt to end the war, would have amounted to hundreds of thousands of more casualties, for both Japanese and Americans, than dropping the first, and even the second atomic bomb. ..

There was certainly no question as to the hostility and aggression of Japanese against the United States, which remains today and will have a great impact on the future. And had the war not been stopped by the United States, and it had developed into "Japan's Advantage" as the Japanese had intended, the results would have been unthinkable. For one thing, anti-war activists in the U.S. would be out of business.

It is one thing, in the warm afterglow and security of a No-World War, paid for by almost a million American battle deaths and wounded, to find fault. However, it is quite something to make judgements in the midst of a raging war-storm when survival is at stake and multitudes are dying.

History has proven: if there is an honest desire to prevent war, then there must be a total commitment to the means and will to inflict the greatest damage-by going to war.

To dispute and ignore such a costly TRUTH is to invite WAR.

Let there be no mistake: War is a crime. Therefore, a successful war against ANY CRIME must absolutely guarantee that the criminals shall suffer GREATER than the victims.

Such penalty necessarily includes the forfeiture of human rights of criminals who have violated the rights of others. Any judge, jury, lawyer or criminal, regardless of nationality, should understand this simple Law of Nature. Even a two-year old who bites another two-year old can quickly comprehend such justice when he is bitten back.

And as war is a crime, it is also a transgression of human rights to misrepresent the facts and lessons of war.

The Smithsonian Institute, who receives 80 per cent of its funding from the U.S. government, and must operate under Title 20, U.S. Code 80a in the commemoration and display of the U.S. military's contribution to a free, peaceful and independent society, is committed to the TRUTHFUL portrayal of the "Enoia Gay" as an inspiration to the present and future generations.

To claim "They have created an exhibit that is going to continue the MYTH that what we did was right", as being WRONG is itself a very dangerous sin against humanity. For such an ignorant and distorted perception of the truth, can only lead to greater destruction.

The truth is-as the anti-war activists claim- America was, in daring deed, the Bad Guy in World War Two. Thank God, because it destroyed the evil forces of Nazism, Imperialism and the oncoming threat of communism.

God Bless America

Truman Smith
Lt. Colonel, USAF, ret.
5000 E. Prospect
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CLINTON ADDRESSES VETERANS OF THE AIR CAMPAIGN OF WORLD WAR II AT 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF D-DAY AT MADDINGLY

First: Prime Minister Majors spoke:

For a while, every 30th person in Britain was an American serviceman. In the European theater, more than 150,000 Americans, including 57,000 Airmen, lost their lives. Nearly 4,000 of them, mostly young men who flew extremely dangerous missions right here in this garden of remembrance in the midst of the English countryside. Over 5,000 more are commemorated in the Wall of the Missing.

Among them are a few who achieved fame. Some who, surely had they lived, would have been destined for fame. Many who were less well known, and some who are unknown warriors.

All their lives were cruelly cut short; and to them, all of us owe a debt too deep to pay.

President Franklin Roosevelt wrote out for Churchill some lines from Longfellow which sums it up: "Humanity, with all its fears, with all its hopes of future years, is hanging breathless on thy fate."

Whenever the going has been hardest, Britons and Americans have stood together in unity of belief. The peoples of Europe owe their freedom and their peace to those we honor this weekend, both the living and the fallen. Here, today, at this tranquil memorial and a thousand more, generations to come will give thanks for all that they did to give us this peaceful day."

President Clinton's talk included the following very meaningful remarks.

In death, all these people on the Wall and buried behind us are equal. They came from every state in the Union, they were of many races and religions. They had names like Carillo, Kaufman and Wood. They were, all of them, Americans.

They fought to defeat a great evil which threatened to destroy our very way of life - what Winston Churchill called "the great principles of freedom and the rights of man," which are the joint inheritance of the English-speaking world.

For long months Britain bravely carried that fight on alone. In the Battle of Britain night after frightful night the people of this besieged island withstood this attack of Nazi bombers. It was their finest hour. Amid the horror the British looked west for help. Then the Yanks came, deepening one of history's profoundest bonds.

Overnight, it seems, tens of thousands of GIs filled the streets and camps across southern England. All these many years later we find the memories of many of them very vivid - smiling GIs tossing packs of spearmint gum to British schoolboys, new faces and funny accents at corner pubs, Lindy hops in London, kids from Milwaukee invited in for high tea, all in uniforms filling the pews of British churches.

All shared a faith that our people, nurtured on freedom, would rise to the call of history. Nowhere was our bond more important than in the air war launched from the green fields like this one. The Royal Air Force and the Army Air Corps joined in countless sorties to cripple the Luftwaffen, to decimate the Nazi war machine, to soften the Atlantic Wall. One British citizen remembered, for a thousand days, the sky was never still.

It was some of the most dangerous work of the war and the pales of valor still amaze us all. Pilots going down with burning flames to give all the rest of the crew just a few more seconds to get out. Of the two crew members who shared the only parachute on board as they jumped together from their burning plane over England. The Marauders, Liberators, Mustangs and Flying Fortresses, the Halifaxes and Mosquitoes. They were all sturdy. But as one American remembered, the flack sometimes seemed so thick you could walk on it. The wild blue yonder above Europe could quickly turn cold and grey and lethal.

A few days after the Normandy landing, General Eisenhower stood on the beaches of France with his young son, John, recently a graduate of West Point and told him: "If I didn't have the air supremacy, I wouldn't be here." After D-Day, the air corps continued to fly toward freedom's horizon, until the entire continent was retained, and a world was set free.

The Airmen who flew these skies had a ritual that Secretary Bentsen mentioned-for signaling to their comrades on the ground at the end of the mission. As they were coming in for landing, if they fired off a red flare it meant that there were casualties aboard. And if they fired off a green flare, it meant some lucky pilot had just completed his last mission before shipping out.

Well, the generation that won the Second World War completed their mission, whether they walk among us or lie among us today. And after looking down in sorrow at those who paid the ultimate price, let us lift our eyes to the skies in which they flew, the ones they once commanded. And let us send to them a signal, a signal of our own, a signal that we do remember, that we do honor, and that we shall always carry on the work of these knights borne on wings. May God bless them and all our peoples."

Secretary Bentsen flew 35 missions as a Pilot. Here's his complete Talk.

War is a terrible thing, but at times necessary. It places demands on men and women, who must fight and sometimes die, on families who must wait and hope, and on nations, which must divert their resources to the weapons of war, as we did 50 years ago.

Today we honor those who flew, and those who supported them. They paid a terrible price - nearly 44,000 dead or missing in the Eighth Air Force alone.

Here in England -- as we did at every airfield and on every front - boys grew into men far too fast. Here, airfields operated 24 hours a day, the Americans flying by day, and the British by night, they circled these green fields and assembled, heading for Europe in formation, coming back, they were strung out across the Channel, fewer in number - a feathered prop, a smoking engine, holes in the fuselage where a gunner once stood. A red flare arcing up on the approach to bring the medics for the wounded. And green...green flares for those who beat the odds, made their 35 missions.

They squeezed the oxygen hoses to break up frozen breath clogging their face masks. They cranked down their landing gear by hand because the hydraulics were shot out. The ground crews cheered when their plane made it home.

That's how it was on the way out and the way back. At the target, a pilot six feet tall at the start would be five feet at the end of squeezing down in the seat. The flack would come up in black clouds. That flack gear - every flyer wished it was a suit, not a vest. Planes disintegrated in flight, a shell through the wing tank. One minute a plane's out front. The next, the one behind is flying through the debris, counting parachutes, praying they're not next.

Scared? Of course. Anyone who wasn't was either a fool or had no imagination. But they pressed on. It was love of country, and all it stood for, home, family, because it was expected of them. And it was the knowledge that the nation was pulling together, every family and friend, every farm and factory.

Numbing fatigue. Faceless danger. Fiery death. These were an airman's constant companions. In the face of this, these men not only flew and fought, they soared and triumphed. Many never had the chance to walk the land their sacrifice helped liberate. But they live on today on the wings of our dreams - dreams of freedom. Ever vigilant, courageous, heroes every one. May they rest in peace.

Those of us who flew had a job - take control of the air, shut down the industries, destroy the fuel supplies and refineries, cut the supply lines, support the landings. That took considerable time - two years of work before the invasion.

With us much of the way were men like Ed MacLean, a P-47 pilot who logged 95 missions during that long war.

Men like Ed MacLean took on extraordinary risks, alone, so that Europe could be freed. He flew escort missions for our bombers, shepherded our gliders to Normandy, and supported the 3rd Army. He earned the distinguished Flying Cross, and the air Medal with 16 clusters. Ed, on behalf of every bomber pilot who enjoyed the protection of our fighter planes, thank you.

Then, he introduced Ed MacLean, who spoke as a representative of all the fighter pilots - we didn't get a copy of his remarks.

And here's Ian's report of the closing ceremonies and the fly-over. All who have been there will remember the thrill they felt.

The sharp crack as the first volley of a salute rang out to be followed by "Taps" which faded against the approaching roar of four F-15 Eagles from the 48th Fighter Wing. Screaming low overhead, one thundered vertically heavenwards to create the classic "missing man" formation in salute. As the shockwaves subsided, the Service concluded with the Benediction and closing remarks. Then, the finale. Hugging the horizon, three silhouettes slid towards the crowd. Aging eyes focused, sinews stiffened with pride as the familiar shape of a B-17 droned overhead. Flanking her were a Spitfire and a Mustang, sleek symbols of our two nations and the pinnacle of air-power they achieved. Nearby one veteran could contain himself no longer. Waving excitedly, he shook off the years and leapt up, whooping like a nineteen year old enthralled by the best buzz job ever. Sweeping majestically into a turn, the formation split and treated its dispersing audience to a series of fly-bys evoking memories of multitudes of their kin now only spirits in the sky.





The wreath Ian placed at the Wall of Missing



President Clinton speaking at Maddingly



Ian's wartime, tribute

IAN McLachlan, who wrote about Luftwaffe fighters followed the young Americans killed as their American planes were attacked over, Norwich, as they reached home, stood before their graves.

As British historian of the 385th and his Bomber Stories to Bombardment Group flew at the President Clinton to say thank-you American cemetery, at Maddingly, to the American people and to near Cambridge, to place a wreath to ensure the stories from veterans at the D-Day 50th anniversary were not lost.

■; memorial service, attended by CXJSK>S>He said of the visit: "It was very President Bill Clinton and Prirtie. ^fi^nioving. As I researched the stories Minister John Major. ^P^Sl-gbt. to know about the men. I Ian is author of Night of the * —knew what they looked like and Intruders* the story of USAAF>'.'-J'. \ how they died. Now I was standing Mission^ 11, which ended as ;■ f-josby their graves." >■ {> ■

385th BGMA

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