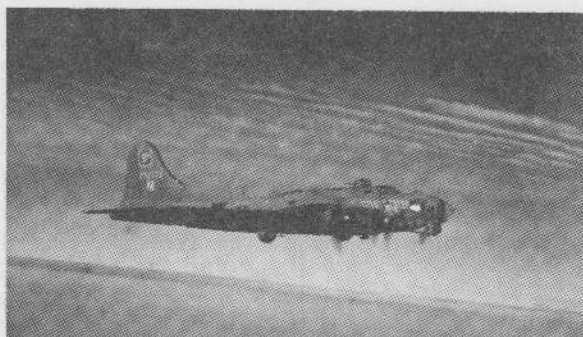




#### COMBAT UNITS

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



#### SUPPORT UNITS

424th AIR SVS. GP.  
677th CHEM. CO. (AO)  
DET. 155, 18th AWS

## *"The Mighty Eighth Reunion Group"*

385TH BOMBARDMENT GROUP REUNION ASSOCIATION

GREAT ASHFIELD — SUFFOLK, ENGLAND

STATION 155

# NEWSLETTER

Volume VII, No. 4

15 January 1978

Editor: John C. Ford

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##### 1979 HOST

Larry R. Russell

## ECONOMICS AND THE ENGLAND TRIP..

### PRELUDE TO DISCUSSION:

Today is Friday the 13th of January 1978. It is the first time in 55 days that I have been able to start the Newsletter, or to answer many letters that have flowed in during the month of December. The problem became real when I tried to prove to myself that I could grow one inch shorter by lifting a microwave oven from an awkward position. Three things happened when I lifted. First was a soft crunch accompanied by a great pain in the lumbar region of my back. This was quickly followed by the inability to breathe, and finally, my Scots blood would not let me drop that new \$500 microwave oven! As I sank slowly into that tiled kitchen floor, I was glad that Betty was not at home at the time. When I finally got out from under the oven, I crawled to the bedroom, managed to get into my pajamas and into the bed. There I remained for 40 days and 40 nights. After that, the Doctor allowed me to get up for short periods of time, and to gradually walk around for exercise. But when I looked at the calendar today, I knew I had to set down and discuss some economic actions that affect our trip to England.

### RE-EVALUATION OF THE POUND STERLING:

During November the pound was re-evaluated upward from \$1.70 to \$1.86 and was caused by improved economic conditions in England. Oil had been discovered in the North Sea in 1976, but it was November 1977 that a study was completed on the true impact of the oil discovery. The study indicated that England was becoming supportive of its own oil requirements, lessening the need for Middle Eastern oil and its by-products. This saving of import sterling allowed the Government to raise the value of the pound, meanwhile holding the line on wages and the cost of petrol and other oil products. This latter action was taken to help stem the inflation in Great Britain. The pound sterling is sold on the exchange just like other foreign currencies. On 9 January 1978, the USA dollar had fallen to the point where one pound sterling cost \$1.9745. On 11 January 1978, the Federal Reserve Bank took action to improve the value of the dollar overseas and today (13 January) the pound closed at \$1.9395. To put the pound value in its true perspective, let's match the dollar against the English pence, showing what the dollar bought in September 1976 against what it will buy today. In September 1976 the pound cost \$1.67. The dollar was worth 59.9 English pence. Today, with the pound at \$1.9395, the dollar will buy 51.6 English pence. However, at the present time in England, there is talk that Leyland Motors will go out on strike. If this happens, and if the strike is prolonged, the pound sterling may take another dip, but this is pure speculation.

### HOW DID THE BUCK BECOME THE MINI-BUCK:

In the 1950's the Allies decided to help renew the economy of those countries that opposed them during World War II. In the following years the USA opened its doors to imports from those countries. Meanwhile, we assisted their industries to get on their feet by giving them most favorable terms for the latest industrial equipment, such as hot and cold steel rolling mills and forging equipment that brought their motor industries to top production. Meanwhile, the State Department made separate treaties with those countries, returning to them sovereignty. These treaties stopped military dependents from working at on base jobs, reserving these jobs for indigenous personnel only. In the interim, their cost of maintaining United States forces in their lands was drastically reduced. Imports were limited and exports were increased, making it very difficult for the natives to buy on their own market. In 1960, the United States had a "Gold Flow" deficit of \$14,000,000 - most of it from the European area. The \$1.00 bought 4 marks 25 pfennigs in 1960. As of last night, it bought 2 marks 12 pfennigs. Dollars which had paid for many of the exports, were hoarded in European countries and became known as Eurodollars. In the late 1960's and early 1970's, European Gold manipulators started an assault on the gold market, knowing the Eurodollars were backed by Fort Knox gold. This year, our export deficit was \$44,000,000,000, \$10,000,000,000 of that total was caused by Japanese imports not matched by our exports to Japan. The USA

## Econ & England

cannot compete against cheap labor, nor the latest technical manufacturing equipment with its high production capability. Our steel mills are outdated and our use of energy is unbelievable. Put all these factors together and the result is the "Mini-Buck" - tolerated on the world market, but not respected. Meanwhile, over all these years, our Allies, Great Britain, have had to operate on the "brink". The pound sterling in 1945 was worth \$4.03. It was devalued to 2.85 in early 1950, and once went down to \$1.54. It's enough to make one wonder who the hell won World War II? To end this economic tirade, however, even England is moving in on us with some excess Eurodollars. It has just been announced during the past week that American National Starch has accepted a \$485,000,000 take-over offer from the British-Dutch multinational corporation, Unilever. Bayer AG, of West Germany has offered \$275,000,000 for Miles Laboratories, and Nestles of Switzerland has put in a \$277 million dollar bid for another U.S. pharmaceutical company named Alcon Laboratories. Including the Unilever take-over bid, England has invested over one billion dollars in the U.S.A. during the past year, and West Germany is after more and more businesses. This reverse flow of investments grows more intense daily. Because it does, it affects our planned trip to England and it was my desire to put everything in its proper perspective so that I could talk about the trip and the problems facing it.

When accommodations and prices were requested in October 1977, there were 147 names on the passenger waiting list. It was understood that selection of travel dates would cause a dropout effect on some members who could not get away that early in the year. When the final pricing was received, I knew it would cause more dropouts because of the inflationary rates over September 1976. Inflation amounted to almost 22 percent. David Wade again submitted the best bid and it was based on \$1.72 per pound sterling. There were no indications on the financial market that England planned to re-evaluate the pound sterling. As soon as we got the brochures and Tour Agreements in the mail, reservations started to flow in, indicating we would have an early full house. In November 1977, when the new value for the pound was announced, reservations stopped coming in. It was thought that Christmas might also affect bookings. But when bookings arrived one day, and cancellations followed the next day before the deposits could be processed into the bank, I took action by calling David Wade to see if some adjustments could not be made in the trip, thereby lessening the dollar impact on our members. David explained why he did not want to change the trip, and those who know him, will certainly understand the high goals and quality of his tours. Instead, David Wade conceded .03¢ on the pound and stated we could indicate the U. S. dollar figures were based on a going rate of \$1.75 per pound sterling! This amounts to a sizeable financial contribution by the Wade organization to our BGRA trip.

As of this date, we have almost one coach load of passengers booked for the Germany-Copenhagen trip, eight (8) persons remain booked for the Amsterdam, Brussels and Paris trip and eight persons have booked to do their own thing during the midweek break. That means we now have 60 solid bookings left after some 30 cancellations, and I remain hopeful about filling the PAN AM 707 with another 123 passengers. Don't forget that friends and family are welcome to participate and participants can take airfare only at the fixed price of \$287.00 roundtrip. Members of the old 4th Combat Wing such as the 94th, 388th and the 447th BG's are also welcome and buses will be provided to get them back to their old bases.

Keep the faith! Hope and pray the pressure of the pound Sterling against the dollar will weaken and our final price differentiation will be minor.

There is one other point that should be cleared up about the financial aspects of the trip. The trip provides no profit to any individual or to the 385th

BGRA. The only cost not involved in the trip itself is \$1.17 which is budgeted for printing and mailing costs. Under IRS rules and regulations governing non-profit organizations, no monies from our Association can be used to defray any part of the expenses of this trip. The initial \$500.00 deposit for the PAN AM 707 aircraft was paid from the personal funds of your Travel Coordinator and Editor, and, if the aircraft is fully booked, this money will be applied to the aircraft seat prices for my wife and self. If, however, the flight does not fill and cancellation would be necessary after 17 March 1978, each participant will receive his full deposit back and the \$500.00 forfeiture will be borne by your Travel Coordinator. What I am saying is - if I have faith in your participation, don't shake my faith-tree with late bookings. Get them in to me before 28 February 1978.

### SPECIAL NOTE

A query among Washington, D.C., Travel Agencies operating tours to England, indicates they are quoting prices based on \$2.00 per pound sterling. This means you are going to reap the benefits if the dollar cost of the pound sterling continues to drop back to \$1.75, or less.

## Other Trip Ideas!

For the benefit of sons and daughters of members who wish to make the trip, with guaranteed seats and travel dates, but who do not want to participate in the group land travel plans, let me tell you how you can find fun in England and on the Continent. Number 1. You can find cheaper air travel fares between London and places like Dublin, Paris, Frankfurt, Madrid, Italy and the Channel Isles, than prices that will be quoted you in the U.S.A. In Ireland you can take a horse and caravan trip around the south and up to Galway Bay. Camping and back-packing trips are available in England and the Continent, with very reasonable lodging and meals at the various Youth Hostels or camp sites. Grown-ups can rent Volkswagen Kampers and visit sites in France, Spain, Italy, Switzerland, Austria, Germany, Denmark, Sweden and Norway. It's great fun. Our family has gone the route! NUMBER 2: Try a ride on the cross channel Hovercraft.

## Small Edition Newsletter

This issue of Newsletter is published in an abbreviated form in order to get more information to our members about the pending trip to England from 17 May 78 to 5 June 78. There have been several members who have passed away and many change of address. In addition, Paul Sciull z., - former Group navigator, recently made a trip through Montana and Washington states, visiting old base sites of the 385th Bombardment Group. It is a most interesting article and will recall many incidents and memories among those members who "went all the way" with the 385th.

## Charles Gallagher & FOTE

Charles Gallagher, the benevolent Dictator" of the "Friends of the Eighth", has finally packed up his work at the General Post Office and he and Mary have moved to 10 Miller Street, Londonderry, BT48 6SU, Northern Ireland. We in the 385th BGRA thankfully have Charles in our film "Wings from the Past" and we are very proud of the fact. The "Friends of the Eighth" held a farewell party for Charles at the Angel Hotel in Bury St. Edmunds during the month of November 1977. Roger Freeman made a special presentation on behalf of Charles and at its conclusion the entire membership was on its feet giving voice to their admiration for the work Charles and Mary have dedicated to FOTE and its interests. The new FOTE Convener/Chairman is Louis A. Pennow, one of our Associate members. Louis was a former U.S. Weather Officer with the 388th BG at Knettishall, and the Hq 3rd Air Division at Elveden. Lou and Winnie, our best Louis is the first bonafide 8th "F member holding office

## Obituary

*During the past few issues of, NEWSLETTER, I have used the photograph of, S N 42-3547, "Lateit Rumor". It was my intention to tell the story of this aircraft in this edition so you could understand why it was elected, but the death of, a few of our top maintenance men has caused me to replace it on a one time basis and salute our departed comrade with a 100 million aircraft "Rum Pam".*

FORREST ALVIN KEEN  
550th Bombardment Squadron  
Aircraft Maintenance  
DIED: 21 October 1977

It was just a short step into the past to recall the beginning of my friendship with Forrest Keen. We were crew chiefs of B-17F's and our aircraft were parked diagonally opposite across the perimeter track. It was July 1943 and our planes had just departed on a mission. We were cleaning up around the hardstand, refueling the APU's for the aircraft's return, and waiting for one of our crew members to come back from breakfast so that we might eat. When I saw Keen searching through the hedgerow, I thought he had lost something and I went over to help. To make a long story short, he taught me how to find mushrooms in the hedgerow ditches, and how to cook them briefly in a mess kit spoon, with a little butter, over a small Coleman stove. In our conversation, I found out what farm folk miss the most - even in time of war! It was the feel of good earth between their fingers. Forrest would scope up a bit of the rich English soil and softly admit it was tolerable, but he still wanted the soil of Kansas under his feet. In the next year I moved from crew chief, to flight chief, and on to Line Chief of the 550th. I wanted Forrest to become a Flight Chief, but he had been given a new chin-turreted B-17G, had named it "Rum Dum" and was aiming at the maintenance record in the Group. It made 106 missions without an abort when the war ended in Europe. Keen had been awarded the Bronze Star, the Army Commendation Ribbon and a leading part in an English film documenting many of the 8th Air Force accomplishments in the ETO. Returning to the States in June 1945, our paths did not cross again until April 1975 in Atlanta, Georgia, when I met Forrest and his wife Pauline at the V Group Reunion. Somehow it did not seem as if we had ever been parted. The easy camaraderie was still there. We were together again in April 1977, but the most memorable get-together was at a Mini-Reunion at Keen's Farm in Kansas from 29 July to 1 August 1977 past. I reported on that weekend in the August Newsletter. There were about 20 of us, including the Keen's youngest son and daughter-in-law. There was a lot of dry, parched land and stunted crops to be seen. And an awful lot of sky and sunshine. I watched Forrest make a contract in quasi-style, bonded with a prairie affidavit - the handshake! Sam Lyke, Walter Phillips, Forrest and myself had an early morning 22 caliber shoot-off, where Keen gave us a lesson and I found out that Washington political promises were more deadly than guns. On the morning of 1 August, Pauline and Forrest drove me to the Kansas City Airport. On the way I found out that a secondhand tractor tire cost more than \$200. I could put new radials on mine for that amount. We had lunch together for who can visit Kansas City without trying a steak? All through that meal I was fascinated by Forrest's work hardened, knarled hands, thinking of the tremendous energy he had poured back into the earth he loved, just to get something out of it to put in this nation's breadbasket. When I arrived back home, I conveyed to my wife Betty that Forrest seemed to retain all through life those qualities of quiet dignity, caring, and thoughtfulness that made one like him the minute he met him. So when Pauline and David called that morning in October to tell me that Forrest had been killed in an accident on the farm, it was like a low blow. More than 300 farm folks and friends attended his funeral, ample proof to me that I never misjudged his character. In that accident under the combine I am sure Mother Earth was embracing him and welcoming him home!

JAMES A. LAMBERT  
548th Bombardment Squadron  
Aircraft Maintenance  
DIED: 28 November 1977

Jim Lambert, far better known to his many close friends as "Bert", had suffered with heart trouble for the past few years. In March 1976, he was one of first to book on the trip to England, to be accompanied by his wife LaNelle and his nephew, Tom. In May 1976, he wrote to cancel, stating a change of work as the reason. However, at the VI Reunion in Las Vegas, Nevada, Bert told me he had been operated on, and so far he was doing much better. On 1 December 1977, Marty Girson, of Pittsburgh, Pa., wrote, telling me of Bert's passing. He died at 1100 hour, just one day after his 56th birthday. Here was a man, who, all those years ago, worked hard to become a top aircraft maintenance technician. In the process he was liked, but even more, he was respected by his fellow workers and by the aircrews that flew his aircraft. During the time at Great Ashfield, Bert was a good athlete and was the third baseman on the Squadron team. He will be missed by his many friends and family. Marty Girson ended his letter to me by stating that "Jim died of a bad heart". That's not so, Marty! Bert had a heart of gold. It was the hearts plumbing system that malfunctioned.

### MEMORIAL GIFTS

Several letters, containing gifts to the All Saints Church Memorial Fund, have been received in the past few weeks - all advocating our having a Memorial Fund Contributory System for honoring our friends who pass on to meet their Maker. Forbei Tenbrook and his wife Evelyn, made the suggestion and the first gift in honor of Bert Lambert. A \$100.00 Memorial gift was also made to the fund by Earl and Ruth Cole.

ARNOLD WILLINGHAM  
385th Bombardment Group  
Northwood, Illinois  
DIED: 13 December 1975

MRS. ARNOLD WILLINGHAM  
Northwood, Illinois  
DIED: 1 OCTOBER 1977

The NEWSLETTER of 15 October 1977 was just returned to me in the past few weeks and it was annotated only with the death dates of the Willingham's. A thorough search of my files brought forth no other information such as Squadron or unit. The first issue of this Newsletter format was mailed on 15 October 75 and perhaps Arnold saw that copy. Since that first issue, the front of each copy contains the statement, "ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED", so that I can keep up with the movers. I have looked at this returned Newsletter many times since it came back, and I like to speculate that Mrs. Willingham had read the other copies since that first issue, and perhaps - I hope - she gained some small consolation reading about those early years of Arnold and his friends in the 385th. I would appreciate learning a little more about Arnold, so if any of you kind folks knew his work, squadron, or other contributions of Arnold to the 385th, please send the information to your editor as soon as possible. Meanwhile, may they both rest in peace.

## Address Changes

Crosman, Dorland L.  
468 Broughton Avenue  
Bloomfield, NJ, 07003

Groening, Homer  
1700 SW 4th Avenue  
Portland, OR, 97201

Gorchak, Joseph  
246 East 21st St.  
San Bernardino, CA, 92404

Me Inerney, William K.  
655 Godfrey Ave SW  
Grand Rapids, MI, 49503

Ferguson, V. W.  
908 E. Inwood Drive  
Arlington, TX, 76010

Smith, Ralph P.  
Wild Rice  
Horace, SD, 58047



## Thoughts about England Trips

..... By Margaret (Peggy) Smith.

*Peggy and Charles Smith have, long participated in the activities of the 385th BGRA and as Hostess and Host (or the Filth Reunion in Atlanta, GA, in April 1975, they presented a gala event for those attending. They were among the first to contract for the Memorial Trip to England in September 7 9 76 and both gave of, themselves to help others. They also were chosen to be two of the Freedom Forces Ambassadors to Newcastle-Upon-Tyne in England during last summer. This is an open letter to all our members!*

WAR TIME MEMORIES OF ENGLAND..... Those comments, stories, and tales that Charles has mentioned from time to time during our married life are true! I had thought he surely exaggerated about the beauty of England, its splendor, its people, its pomp, ceremony and traditions, its pageantry, its courage, its spirit. After all, 1943-1945 were war years when Charles first became acquainted with England, and he was a young man. Could it ALL have been so wonderful? How could it create ALL those wonderful memories with dimmed lights, air raids, the lack of personal transportation facilities, including rationed petrol, the long working hours, little sleep, the small amount of fuel with which to keep warm, and, above all, the sometimes "interesting" chow? (Brussels sprouts for early morning breakfast??) Yet over the years, his war time experience is deeply imbedded in his memory.

THE 385TH BGRA TRIP TO ENGLAND, SEPTEMBER 1976..... With special thanks to John Ford, the most memorable reunion in Great Britain reaffirmed Charles' respect and love for England and the English people. The enthusiasm and generosity which we experienced, particularly that of the citizenry of Suffolk County, was quite thrilling and amazing. Throughout our visit, and especially when we were enplaning at the Heathrow Airport in London, in our Hearts we knew we would be returning.

SO, RETURN WE DID..... In the summer of 1977 another great opportunity came our way. It was an experiment and adventure into the field of international friendship. We were selected to become good-will Ambassadors to England with the Friendship Force. As a result we made the inaugural flight from Atlanta, GA, to Newcastle-Upon-Tyne - the first time a Boeing 747 had landed there. It was a PAN AM flight.

The FRIENDSHIP FORCE is a multi-nation, people-to-people cultural exchange whereby people of the United States and other nations can meet with each other and develop friendship and understanding at the grass roots level. It is a non-profit, non-governmental program headquartered in Atlanta, GA, and largely maintained through volunteer effort.

For the actual people exchange participants are either hosts, or ambassadors matched with persons with similar occupations and/or interests. We were guests of a lovely retired couple in Whitley Bay on the North Sea. Soon we were learning some real English. (John Ford had warned us.) The blooming salty mist of Northumbria didn't dampen our spirits during one minute of our entire fortnight, and now we have more treasured memories of another part of England - Geordieland! It was smashing! Aye!

May we supply the name of your State FRIENDSHIP FORCE volunteer chairman so the YOU also can meet and live for a short time with people of other nations? As of this writing, 35 countries have started Friendship Force programs, and 30 states are participating. By 1980 it is planned that approximately 600 odd FRIENDSHIP FORCE flights will be taking place around the globe.

NOW, AGAIN, MERRIE OLDE ENGLAND..... The plans for the 17 May to 5 June 1978 trip of the 385th BGRA sound wonderful. Indeed, Charles and I will never see enough of England, so we've signed up and hope to see you there!

### DON'T DELAY

### BOOK TODAY

FIVE DOUBLE BOOKINGS HAVE BEEN RECEIVED BETWEEN START OF NEWSLETTER AND THE DAY IT WENT TO PRINT!!!!!!

## 385" BGRA

JOHN C. FORD, President  
7204 Easy Street  
Camp Springs, MD, 20031



FIRST CLASS MAIL

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