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10th Reunion 42d Anniversary 1985 Los Angeles



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"The Mighty Eighth Reunion Group"

385th BOMBARDMENT GROUP MEMORIAL ASSOCIATION

GREAT ASHFIELD — SUFFOLK, ENGLAND

STATION 155

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

PAST PRESIDENTS

Ruel G. Weikert
Frank B. Walls
Vincent W. Masters
John C. Ford
James H. Emmons
Paul Schulz

NEWSLETTER

VOL. XII, NO. 1

JANUARY, 1985

PREZ SEZ

With the holiday season behind us again it is time to look forward to the 385th BGMA Reunion in Los Angeles this coming September. Please get busy and send your reservation to Sam Lyke. If it turns out you are unable to make it, we will refund your registration fee.

John Pettinger and Verne Philips have forwarded your letters relating your disappointment in the tour to England last September. Each of the officers of the BGMA were furnished a copy of these letters along with the background file I had on the trip as planned. It is our decision that all future trips and/or any advertisement in the Newsletter will have to be cleared by the officers of the BGMA.

I am meeting with Al Chealander and his committee to put the plans and program together for the reunion.

I would like to take this column to thank Verne Philips for an outstanding Newsletter for October. You see what he can do when each of us gives a little and sends in our remarks and pictures.

Sincerely
Sam Lyke

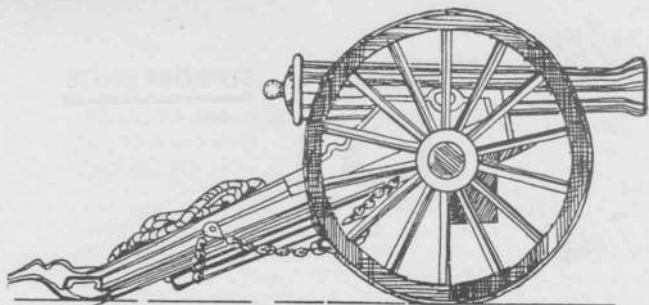


Bulletin....

The Tenth Reunion will be September 11-14. The registration fee is \$58 per person for Friday night Mexican dinner, Saturday night dinner dance, Sunday breakfast on the 15th, and coffee for the Saturday meetings. Mail fees to SAM LYKE, 4992 Princeton Drive, Bartlesville, OK 74006. Sam says we now have 35 members signed up - hopefully will pick up now that the new year is here. Those registered so far are:

Archer, Vance D. and Mrs.
Cerrone, Warren and Ales Victoria
Chealander, Allan and Geneva
Eckhardt, Reuben and Irene
Gazda, Walter and Elizabeth
Gaul, Norman and Kay
Hite, John
Hunter, Bill and Ruth
Lyke, Sam and Mary
Moll, Francis and Rose Laswell
Poore, Forrest and Florence
Richard, Septime and Teresa
Rollins, Clark and Mrs.
Solenberger, Cleve and Angela
Stern, Edward and Mrs.
Traudt, Ernest and Ruth
Weikert, Ruel and Mary
Weisgarber, Glenn and Erma





A FEW WARM WORDS FROM WETHERSDEN

November 15, 1984

As a memorable year draws to a close I would like to write a few words for the newsletter. Although saddened by the passing of our old friend, John Ford, I feel that for us and also for Great Ashfield, 1984 has been a memorable year. We have, personally, had more 385th visitors than any year in the past, and, although it was a sad occasion, it was a joy once again to meet Betty Ford and her two daughters, Dee and Mary. The warmth of their greeting to us was just the same as in 1979 when we were with them at Camp Springs.

As for many years past, the second Sunday in November, this time the 11th, was held as Remembrance Sunday, and as on many occasions in the past, I was asked to take the service in Great Ashfield, and as we have always done, when the names from the War Memorial were read, we included a few of our wartime American comrades from the 385th Roll of Honour - as we stood there in silence we felt very close to you who are on the other side of the Atlantic. Each year, on the Saturday before Remembrance Sunday the British Legion (War Veterans) hold their Festival of Remembrance at the Albert Hall in London. We always watch on television and feel that we are taking part. The Queen is always there with many members of the Royal Family, including the Queen Mother, England's favourite Grandmother, who, at 84, still graces any occasion which she attends. The King of Norway also was there. After displays by the armed services there is a short Ceremony of Remembrance, then, as silence falls, millions of poppy petals, one for each soldier who has fallen since 1914, fall from the roof onto the crowd below.

Our American visitors started with Earl and Ruth Cole, with "Benny" and Betty Benefield in March - the last to come was Lou Massari and wife Mary, and two American friends on tour with them, and a London courier who brought them to see the Church, the old airfield, and us. After tea together we made a hasty visit to the airfield before they went their way to London. Many others have come, some by chance and some by arrangement, many others have visited other friends in the village and, of course, there was the group visit in September. I would not let it pass without mentioning the many generous donations to the Church, both by visitors and also in memory of John Ford. These have been particularly welcome, as, after a recent architect's inspection, we have once again to start on more restorations.

With Christmas and the New Year not far away, we send our greetings to you all, and thank the many who have come to see us and have written to us - we feel our link between Great Ashfield and the 385th grows stronger with the passing years.

John and Lucy Ellis
Fox Farm, Wethersden
Engl and

Short Bursts

EARL COLE'S OFFER To Harrodsburg Museum

The 457th Bomb Group Association ran a story in its newsletter about the efforts of some people in Harrodsburg, Kentucky to find a leather flight jacket from the World War II era with appropriate art work to display in a beginning military museum there. We sent the information to one of our 385th life members in nearby Barbourville, Kentucky, Earl Cole.

Earl responded with the offer for display of his flight jacket with the 551st Wolf head, Earl's name, and that of "Lil Audrey" on the front, and the appropriate art work on the back. If all works out for the new Harrodsburg military museum, Earl, "Lil Audrey," and the 551st Wolf will join Dan'l Boone as famous Kentucky military memories.

HOMESICK ANGEL LETTER TRIGGERS OLD MEMORIES

In the October issue there was a letter from Clarence Abrahamson concerning the crew of the "Homesick Angel," which reminded Buell Martin, of the 550th, of his time at St. Wendel in Germany as a prisoner of war. He encountered someone there from the 385th who, as he remembers it, had flown with the "Homesick Angel," and he has written us a letter about those times. Frank Sutton, also of the "Homesick Angel," has contacted us on the same subject, and we have asked Buell and Frank to sort out the accounts of long ago and provide a more complete story of what undoubtedly will be a fascinating picture for the rest of us.

SAD NEWS OF BOB JOHNSON

To the Editor:

I was with the 550th Sqdn. and I am a member of the Ex-P.O.W.'s of America.

There were 6 385th men in the Connecticut chapter of ex-P.O.W.'s.

This is to inform you of the sudden death of Bob Johnson of Milford, Conn, on November 1.

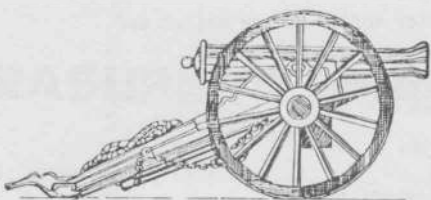
I talked on the phone with Bob the night before his death and we were trying to get all 6, 385th men to the next ex-P.O.W. meeting and have a mini 385th reunion.

Bob was shot down on November 11, 1943 and was a member of the 385th Association. He was 61 years old and a very likeable man.

Connecticut gives free auto plates for two cars to ex-P.O.W.'s and Bob had No. 385 on his.

One of our members was shot down on the same plane as Bob.

Buell Martin



ccti/f'nued"

THE SEARCH FOR MADAM SHOO SHOO'S STRAYS

Cleve Solenberger, flight engineer of the 551st crew which flew Madam Shoo Shoo, wrote to say that he and fellow crew member, Clark Rollins, had been trying for a year to locate Ernest Casner, when Ernest happened to be at The Air Force Museum the day the 385th plaque and tree were dedicated.

Clark Rollins, Jr., co-pilot, has also written to point out that their crew chief and three of their flight crew are still unaccounted for. Anyone knowing anything about the crew chief, Seymour Albert, the radio operator, Robert D. Long, 39280171, or gunners, L. D. Hull, 1818308 and William H. Chain, 37675428, please pass along to:

C. B. Rollins, Jr.
2409 Valley Brook Road
Nashville, Tennessee 37215

or

Cleve Solenberger
7601 Illmerton Road, #434
Largo, Florida 33541

Sad to say, the gremlins sneaked in and took Cleve's name and address from the 385th roster printed in the October newsletter. So, please write him in at the proper place on your copy of the roster.

A QUERY - WELL, REALLY THREE —
FROM NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE

Dear Verne:

I need a little help. First off, I need an update on an address for one of our 385th'ers. This is Mr. V. W. Ferguson.

Secondly, I have been trying to get our crew together and during some of our correspondence I have tried to find what our base radio code name happened to. Some say that we changed it every day, but as best I recall I thought it was one name that stuck during our whole tour, maybe not. Can you fill me in? I do recall that the wing code name for as long as I can remember was Chairleg. Anyway, you see I need a little help.

Thirdly, the crew chief on our ship in the 551st squadron and the 385th bomb group was Sergeant Albert. I have no other name. He was a crew chief on Madam Shoo Shoo as long as we were in England. Do we have any information or address on Sergeant Albert?

Thanks so much for your help.

C. B. Rollins, Jr.
2409 Valley Brook Road
Nashville, Tennessee 37215

(Ed.: First: The address was furnished.

Second: How about Hardlife and Quarterback? Will someone please straighten us out?

Third: How about Sergeant Albert? Was he, as Clark Rollins speculates in a later letter, T/Sgt. SEYMOUR ALBERT?)

A Note from the Ford Family

Dear Mr. Philips:

Thank you so much for the extra copies you sent to us of the tribute to Dad. We surely do appreciate your efforts on Dad's behalf.

Please thank all those in the 385th for their remembrances. The 385th meant so much to Dad. It is very gratifying to us to know how much he was appreciated.

The Memorial Service in England was wonderful. So many friends gave of themselves for, as Ian McLachlan puts it, "John C's last flight from Station 155."

Incredibly, when we returned from England I found myself reading through some of Dad's books, one of which was Roger Freeman's "Airfields of the Eighth" - only to discover that the last of the 385th left Great Ashfield on August 4, 1945. It seems Dad returned 39 years later to the day for his final flight - August 4, 1984.

Thank you again for everything.

The Ford family:
Betty Tord
Gary and Mary Randleman
John and Dee Lavelle
& grandchildren

BOB DOUGLAS AND JETHRO E. CULPEPER

Our 385th BGMA Secretary, Bob Douglas, writes to say that he and his little dog are about to hit the road from Pueblo when the winter is over. He hopes to get to Harlingen to visit the headquarters of the Confederate Air Force.

Bob is trying to start a Southern Colorado Wing of the C.A.F. and raise enough money (in the neighborhood of \$185,000) to buy a B-17G in flyable condition. He reports that our member, Wes Brashear, in Colorado Springs, has been a C.A.F. member since its beginning.

Another 385th "graduate," Bill Tesla, lives in Harlingen and has gotten information about the C.A.F. to us. As most of us probably know, it is a "patriotic organization dedicated to the preservation of the world's greatest combat aircraft - 1939-1945."

Incidentally, you are not turned away from the organization, its museum in Harlingen, or its airshows in various places, just because your ancestors in 1861-1865 wore Federal blue instead of Confederate grey; it's interest in the airplanes of 1939-1945 that is required.

The C.A.F. commander is said to be Col. JETHRO E. CULPEPER, whose devotion to turnip greens, mint juleps, cornbread and other such delicacies is legendary. He has a reserved parking space at Rebel Field (where else) in Harlingen, but never seems to show up - Perhaps, he, like his devotion to turnip greens etc., is legendary.

OF INTEREST TO ANY WHO WALKED OUT

If you are one of those who went down and evaded capture or escaped after capture, you will be interested in a recent notice from the Air Forces Escape and Evasion Society. "Scotty" David, wife of Lt. Col. Clayton C. David, 303rd Bomb Group, who walked out in 1944, asked that we let you know of the organization. If you want more information, write her at 215 Dennis Lane, Saint Clairsville, Ohio 43950.

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"Tasdale"
1 Joy Avenue,
Newton Flotman,
Norwich
Norfolk NR 15 1RD

Tel.: Swainsthorpe 470851

30th November 1984.

Dear Verne:

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In October, I spent some time with John Ford's family to help them sort out the masses of 385th material he'd gathered. The purpose of this was to use my knowledge and ensure any documents, correspondence and pictures relating to the history of the 385th were preserved. Over the years John and I had gathered and exchanged data and John had spent many hours in National Archives researching information about the Group. I come from the generation following World War II, but, as an aviation historian, I'm extremely anxious to secure what I can, not only for my benefit but for those who'll follow me so John's work is in good hands for, God willing, several years yet. The purpose of this letter is to say that I came across a few letters from members seeking return of their pictures and this task I've undertaken. In some cases I have no problem because the prints are in their original envelopes or have addresses on them. These I'm in the throes of copying and they'll be on their way back as soon as possible. My plan is to clear them all by the end of February. However, I've also found letters referring to pictures and the pictures may have been muddled with others, so I don't know who they belong to. If there are any Group members who sent pictures to John and who didn't get them back, please write and I'll try to locate them.

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My own research into the 385th will continue, spurred on by the memory of a valued friend who dedicated hundreds of hours to the Group. I returned from America with a suitcase of letters and documents which I'm sorting and filing and would appeal to others in the Group who have recollections, documents or photographs. Please put the recollections on tape and give me the opportunity to copy the documents and photographs. I want to make sure succeeding generations have access to the splendid story of the 385th.

Ian McLachlan

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THINKING OF STARTING OVER IN BOMBERS ?
READ ON -
(from a 1985 Air Force Policy Letter)

B-1B CAPABILITIES. The B-1B is a long-range, high-subsonic derivative of the original B-1. Smaller than the B-52, an operational B-1B will carry a considerably greater weapons load because of improved engine performance and advanced aerodynamic technology. Three weapon bays will provide the flexibility to carry long- and short-range nuclear air-to-surface missiles, nuclear or conventional gravity bombs, mines, other weapons or fuel as required by the assigned mission. The B-1B will be equipped with electronic jamming equipment, infrared countermeasures, radar location and warning systems, and other devices necessary to defeat enemy defensive systems. To facilitate very low-level penetration of sophisticated enemy defenses, it will have a terrain-following radar system that will allow it to follow "the nap of the Earth" at near supersonic speeds. This ability will make it extremely difficult for enemy defensive radar systems to track the B-1B.

DATA ON THE B1-B. The wing span when spread is 137 ft. The aircraft is 147 ft. long and 34 ft. high. Its maximum takeoff weight is 477,000 lb. Maximum speed at low level (200 ft.) is high subsonic. At altitude its speed is supersonic. Its range is intercontinental unrefueled. Armament load (nuclear/non-nuclear) is 125,000 lb. Contractor: Rockwell International, North American Aircraft Operations. Power Plant: four General Electric F101-GE-102 turbofan engines each 30,000 lb. thrust class. Accommodations: four: pilot, copilot, and two systems operators (offensive and defensive).

From the *TeM Veterans Affairs*
Commihion JoutnaZ, September, 1984

SEARCH FOR TWINS

A nationwide search is now under way by the U. S. Government to locate some 30,000 veterans who are twins who served in Vietnam while their brothers did not.

The purpose of this search program is to determine if there was anything in the Vietnam experience that was damaging to our servicemen's physical or emotional health or had a long-term effect on their readjustment as civilians.

Since identical twins share the same genetic and environment influences in their developing years, they provide an ideal group for comparison. Whatever health differences show up can possibly be described to the Vietnam experience. Broader findings into the entire relationship between service in Vietnam and long-term health and socioeconomic state are expected.

Know any *iach tcim*? Suggest they contact the I. A.

TREASURERS WORD

TOTAL ASSETS, DECEMBER 31 , 1983 \$20,954.61

INCOME

Dues Donations	3,468.00
Interest	2,097.26
C.D. Transfer	500.00
Total	<u>\$6,065.26</u>

EXPENSES

Newsletter	2,822.63
Mailing (Pettenger)	82.43
Computer Mailout/roster (Schulz)	1,125.90
Friends of the 385th expenses(England)	270.50
All Saints Church	1,300.00
Memorial (Dayton) 1	329.25
Total \$6,930?7T	

TOTAL ASSETS, DECEMBER 31 , 1984.....-\$20,089.16

NOTE: C.D.'s increased from \$15,000 to \$17,500.

Respectfully submitted,
John F. Pettenger
Treasurer

HOW ARMY AVIATORS GOT A DOUBLE WING

The United States entered World War I on 6 April 1917 unprepared. Our Aviation Section of the Army Signal Corps was pitifully weak. In June 1917, the War Department sent a group of aviation officers to Europe to find out how we could close this aeronautical gap and best cooperate with our allies. More specifically, the Army wanted to know what United States industry should produce and what was available from our allies by purchase. This group of officers became known as the Bolling Mission, headed by Major Raynal C. Bolling and including two Army aviators and two Navy aviators.

Although printed regulations weren't published until 15 August 1917, the Army aviators put on the soon-to-be-announced wing badges. At that time, the Army had two ratings: Military Aviator, requiring

three years flight experience; and Junior Military Aviators, with less. The Military Aviator wore a pair of wings on either side of a center shield bearing the letters US; but the Junior Military Aviator had only one wing to the right of his US shield. There was no wing badge for Naval Aviators in June 1917, — it came later.

When the Bolling Mission arrived in England it soon learned that in Europe halfwings designated observers, not aviators. This caused some slight disadvantage in England, but when the Mission moved into France, Colonel Edgar S. Gorrell, a member of the team, recalled: "The single wing became a serious obstacle. We talked either to flyers of inferior ability or were made to feel inferior when in conferences with officers of equal rating." The Army aviators were well aware of their problem and in the middle of July, before leaving France for Italy, solved it.

First, they removed the insignia from their officers' caps, fairly large American eagle devices, (Fig. 1), and with tin snips cut off everything except the shield and eagle's wings, fashioning "rather unlovely pairs of wings," according to Colonel Gorrell. (Fig. 2). After they had replaced their halfwings with these new ingenious creations, Colonel Gorrell said: "Our newly made unauthorized balanced wings were not things of beauty, but what they lacked in artistry they more than made up for by the magical manner in which they immediately settled the delicate matter of rank." And proved that they were full-fledged aviators, not observers.

By the time the Mission returned home, Army Uniform Regulations had been published and Junior Military Aviators were wearing halfwings. But the Army members of the Bolling Mission knew it would be a humiliating error to send our aviators to Europe wearing halfwings. Through their efforts a regulation change was published on 27 October 1917. Henceforth, Junior Military Aviators would wear a pair of silver wings on either side of a US shield. Military Aviators would add a silver star above the US shield.

And what became of the discarded halfwing? It was reassigned as the wing badge for observers, endorsing the European interpretation that with only *one* wing man cannot fly alone.

◆◆◆
J. Duncan Campbell

(Based on an article written by Colonel Gorrell in the July 1935 issue of U.S. Air Services Magazine.)
Reprinted by permission from a recent issue of Military Collector and Historian, Journal of The Company of Military Historians.



Figure 1.



Figure 2.