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11th Reunion 44th Anniversary 1987 DAYTON, OHIO

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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. Curtis LeMay
Gen. E.P. Partridge
L/Gen. Ira C. Eaker
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NEWSLETTER

VOL. XIV NO. 1

JANUARY 1987

EDITOR, ED STERN

Prez Sez

January 1987,

For several years now, we've had inquiries about another printing of the Group History. Here's the latest scoop.

We can get another printing if we get 100 orders at \$20.00 a piece.

For those who do not have one, the History is a 100 page account, complete with pictures, of the 385th's history from our inception at Geiger Field on February 1, 1943. It tells, in detail, of the men and missions during the entire war, complete with details on both combat and ground personnel. It's really a "Must have" for anyone interested in the story of our participation in World War II. Those of us who have copies have been taking nostalgic looks for all these years.

Fill out the order blank if you want one, enclose a check for \$20.00, and you'll get it back if we don't sell enough by August 1, 1987.

JOHN PETTENDER
Treasurer 385th BGMA
P.O. Box 117
Laurel, FL 33545

Here's my \$20.00. Order a Group
History book for me:

SEE SPECIAL INSERT WITH INFORMATION AND
REGISTRATION BLANKS FOR 11th REUNION,
JULY 24 - 26, DAYTON, OHIO.

Another 548th Mini-Reunion

Dear Ed:

It's been some time since my last writing to you. I do look forward to getting the 385th Newsletter and I must agree with you - you certainly do need a proofreader.

Anyway, I've been asked to report to you on our 548th mini-reunion in Corning, NY September 11-14, 1986. This reunion was hosted by John and Doris Alcock and Forbes and Evelyn Tenbrook. Needless to say, they really did a fabulous job.

We got together the night of the 11th and on the 12th we toured the Taylor-Great Western Winery. Then a museum on early aircraft and then The Corning Glass Works and Museum. The 13th was a trip to the Geneseo Air Show. They also had two B-17's there and also other WWII aircraft (the women went on a shopping spree). Get-a-way day was Sunday the 14th (most of us left right after breakfast).

This reunion was attended by 16 couples and the following are the names of the male members:

John Alcock	Dale Leggett
Dave Beam	Anthony Ragone
Martin Bielli	Hy Siederer
Martin Bridges	Forbes Tenbrook
Marty Girson	C.J. Thomas
Herb Granger	Ted Thomason
Chuck Huber	James Vance
Paul Kostial	Francis Wagner

I have enclosed a photo of us taken at The Corning Glass Works. I do hope you can put this picture and part of this letter in a future Newsletter. Please be good enough to return this photo when you are through with it.



We are going to forego our mini-reunion in 1987 and all of us are going to do our best to make the 385th reunion in Dayton. I have not been to a 385th reunion since 1960 when it was in New York. I'm looking forward to Dayton.

That's about it and I do hope this finds you in the very best of health.

Sincerely,

Anthony Ragone
6 Wood Lane
Valley Stream, NY 11581

Drug Use Down in DOD

A worldwide survey of military personnel in 1985 showed a 67% reduction in reported drug use — from 27% in 1980 to a little less than 9% in the most recent survey. Figures for the Air Force show a reported use of 14% in 1980 with only 4.5% reported in 1985, the lowest of the four Services. However, Dr. William Mayer, assistant secretary of defense for health affairs, said, "Alcohol continues to be a very significant problem. There may have been some shift toward the overuse of alcohol, in fact, as pressure has been put to prevent other drug use... It's possible, and I think quite predictable, that we'll see some rise in alcohol abuse behavior as the use of illegal drugs diminishes, because alcohol, after all, is legal and it's much more generally accepted... by society."

Here's an interesting description of the Bombing Range at Lewistown, MT where the 548th trained in April and May of 1943.

The Indelible Bull's-Eye

by Larry C. Eichhorn

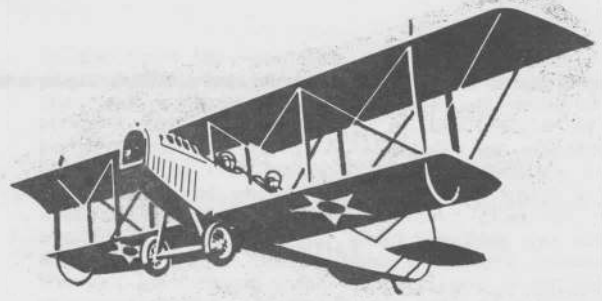
What a sight! Giant (for the 1940's) four-engined bombers rumbling in, dropping strings of practice bombs from open bomb-bays, throwing up dust as the bombs hit the ground. Many remember the U.S. Army Air Force B-17 bomber squadrons that trained in northcentral Montana during World War II. The crews and planes are long since gone, of course, but they've left a memorial behind. The one part of the above scene that remains is the target the airmen were trained to hit.

This particular target can be seen on public lands 50 miles east of Lewistown. It was used by the Army Air Force beginning in the fall of 1942 through the fall of 1943. Located in a draw to make it hard to find and hit by the low-flying B-17's, the 1,000-foot target consists of 5 concentric rings. The diameter of the center ring is 200 feet. Apparently made by a 14-inch, one-way molboard plow, the furrows are still 18-24 inches wide and from 6-10 inches deep today even though the target is now 38 years old.



Relic reminders of World War II on the plains of Montana!

**385th Bomb Group
11 th Reunion
44th Anniversary
July 24 - 26, 1987
Dayton, Ohio**



Don't read this if you've already attended a Reunion—you already know how great they are!

But if you haven't gone to one—if you're putting it off until it's more convenient—if you think it isn't worth a few hundred bucks—if you don't thin you'll know anybody—read on.

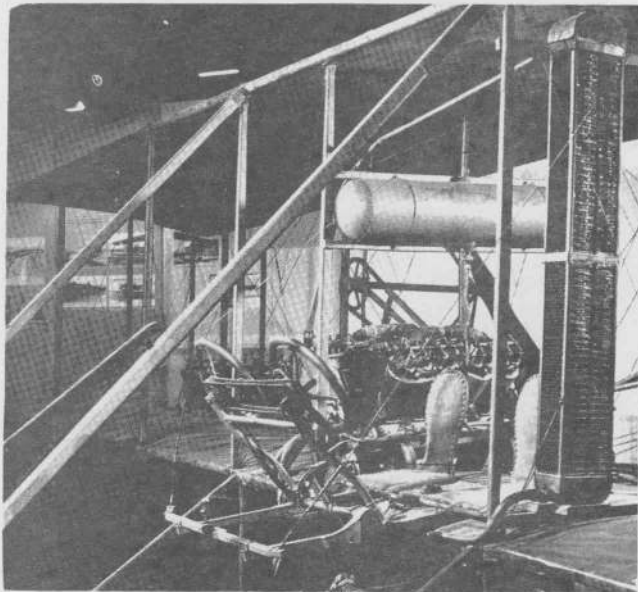
The 300 to 400 who usually show up look forward to seeing the new faces—the ones they haven't seen in 40 and more years. You'll be surprised to find someone you last saw in a POW camp, or the guys you went to Ipswich with when you missed the last train back, or the Mess Sergeant who slipped you a can of Spam to take to town, or one of the fellows who kept your plane flying, loaded the bombs, or flew on your wing your fist 6 missions.

Don't miss another one—it's getting later than you think. Get your wife enthused, send in your reservation, and make this 11th Reunion the best one we've had!

The 11th Reunion will be held during the Dayton International Airshow—the World's fifth largest Air show. Each year's Airshow includes at least one military flight team, six civilian performers, experimental and antique aircraft. World War II aircraft, business and corporate flying demonstrations, a parachute demonstration team, hot air balloon rides and radio-controlled aircraft.

Our activities will be a part of this year's Airshow.

Included will be a visit to Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, one of the most important and certainly the most historic of all military aviation centers. It is one of the few twin airfield bases in existence.



Cockpit - Wright "B" Flyer



Flying Tiger P-40

Listen to a little of this history of Wright-Patterson.

"McCook Field was so located that it could not be expanded in size. A large sign, visible to pilots circling the field read, "This Field is Small—Use it All". In 1924, a tract of 4,500 Acres including Wilbur Wright Field and the area known today as WPAFB, Area B, was purchased by the Dayton Air Service Committee, with money contributed by Dayton citizens, and the entire tract donated to the government. Operations at McCook Field were moved lock-stock-and-barrel to Area B during the spring and summer of 1927. The entire move was accomplished with 40 trucks, 16 trailers, and one Dodge touring car at a cost of \$12, 500. On October 12, 1927, this expanded installation was dedicated as Wright Field, in honor of both Wilbur and Orville."

That's just a small piece of the history that you'll be surrounded by at Wright-Patterson.



B-29 walk-through exhibit



11th Reunion of 385th BGMA
Dayton, Ohio
July 24, 25, 26, 1987

Send Reservation Fee to: Sam Lyke
4992 S.E. Princeton Dr.
Bartlesville, OK 74003

Reservation Fee \$60.00 X _____ = \$ _____
(number) (Total)

ENCLOSE CHECK MADE PAYABLE TO 385th BCMA

Reservation fee includes: Friday sit down dinner
Saturday continental breakfast
and dinner dance
Monday sit down breakfast

Information

NAME _____ Spouse's Name _____

ADDRESS _____ PHONE _____

ZIP _____

Guest(s) Name _____

Arrival Time/Date _____ Departure _____

HAVE YOU MADE RESERVATIONS?

PLEASE SEND IN YOUR RESERVATIONS EARLY

11th Reunion of 385th BCMA
Dayton, Ohio
July 24, 25, 26, 1987

Hotel Reservation thru: Ruel C. Weikert
6306 Green Leaves Rd.
Indianapolis, IN 46220
(317) 257-3969

NAME _____ Spouse's Name _____

ADDRESS _____ PHONE _____

ZIP _____

For arrival on _____ Depart _____

Rate \$64.00. plus 6% tax (\$67.84) per night times
number of nights = \$ _____

CUT - OFF DATE MAY 27, 1987

MAKE CHECKS PAYABLE TO 385th BCMA

PLEASE MAKE RESERVATIONS EARLY

Check the events you're interested in and we will forward additional information along with your tickets.

Aviation Trail

A planned tour of aviation sites telling of Dayton's contribution to man's conquest of the air.

Arcade Square

A refurbished turn-of-the-century market designed with a glass dome rotunda which houses over 40 specialty boutiques, shops and restaurants.

Bluejacket

An outdoor drama about the famous Shawnee Indian chief.

Carillon Park

A 65-acre site with museums and exhibits preserving inventions, principally in transportation, that contributed to the development of the Miami Valley. Exhibits include the Wright Flyer III, early automobiles, and railroad cars.

33 Courthouse Square

The courthouse, built in 1850, houses the Montgomery County Historical Society and local historical exhibits. (It is often cited as one of the finest examples of Greek Revival architecture in America.)

Dayton Art Institute

The institute, an example of Italian Renaissance architecture, holds one of the finest art collections in the Midwest.

Kings Island

Features six theme lands, live entertainment and the world's longest and fastest roller coaster.

(3) National Aviation Hall of Fame

"Congressionally chartered" and features portraits of honored aviators drawn by Milton Caniff, creator of Steve Canyon.

(3) Oregon Historic District

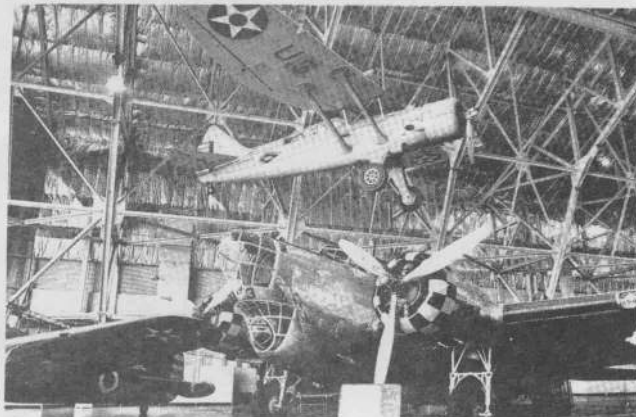
Step back in time to the 1820s when you visit this historic neighborhood. . . This area comes alive with antique shops, boutiques, and fun-filled pubs.

The Victory Theatre

Dayton's historic showcase for the arts—the first and last remaining theatrical facility in Dayton built especially for live entertainment. Classical films are shown during summer.

United States Air Force Museum

The world's oldest and largest military aircraft museum, this features an ever-changing display of nearly 200 aircraft and major missiles . . . also documents, books, periodicals, photographs, films and other materials relating to aviation.



Letters to the Editor

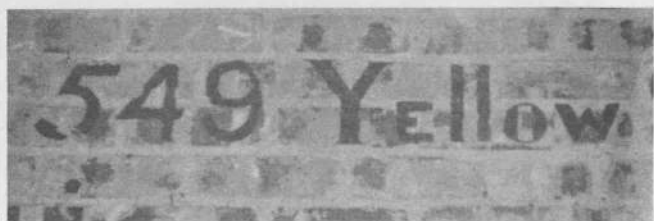
Aloha Ed;

First of all I want to thank you for listing all of my former crew members names in the January '86 issue of the newsletter. Although I still haven't heard from a single one of them. I'm still trying.

I recently returned from a trip to England, and spent 4 days in the Great Ashfield area, exploring and just poking around. My first contact was Stephen and Patricia Miles at the Limes, Great Ashfield, and I want to say they were really very helpful in taking us to the All Saints Church to view the group memorial, then to the field for a look around.

My wife and I then were invited to spend the afternoon with Ian and Mary Hawkins at their home in Bacton. I want to say Ed, that was some afternoon. Ian has copies of all the raids, detailed information on everyone involved, A/C serial numbers, etc... Of course with the book he wrote, he had a lot of research to do and accumulated a world of information. Needless to say I was eager and Ian was willing to pour over his information, books and had a wonderful talk besides. I was really thankful for my decent health also after seeing what that man went through, and is still suffering greatly, I feel.

We went to Duxford, and I was able to crawl through the hangered B-17 and even looked into the ball turret where I use to fly, and Ed, I can't figure how I ever was able to get inside that thing, much less stay there for long hours at extremely low temperature??? Anyway we all did it, and a good thing for our country, too.



In the April '86 newsletter, there was a letter and a picture sent to you by Bob M. Taylor. While I was at the field, I found pictures that I am enclosing of the other 3 Squadrons, also one of the interior of the building and one of the outside with me standing at the corner of that building. I'm also enclosing a map or rather aerial photo of the field, on which I have indicated the location of this building. Question, what was this building used for when the field was active, and why were all the Squadron's numbers painted on the wall just as you enter the door, and in the proper colors of each Squadron? Maybe some of our readers may be able to come up with the answers. I know you have a million already, but also pictures of myself in the fire station, the main runway and one of the perimeter tracks. Unlike most of the other overgrown runways I saw, one could easily use the main runway at Great Ashfield today just the way it is.

My Jane and I are going to the '87 reunion in Ohio, so hope to see you there. It will be our first, and I hope not our last. Before this becomes a Sears & Roebuck catalogue, I had better stop boring you and close. Keep up the good thankless work, Ed.

With warmest personal regards,

Jerry H. Ramakes
76-6176 Lehua Road
Kailua Kona, Hawaii 96740

Dear John,

I just received a letter from George Hruska offering me membership in the 385th BGMA. I am pleased to give you my check in the amount of \$8.00 for one year's membership in the association. I am looking forward to learning about the members of our old Group. I am very much interested in attending the upcoming reunions in Dayton and in England.

Thank you,

Karl Stubenazy
736 Independence Avenue
Trenton, NJ 08610



Dear Mr. Stern:

I always enjoy reading my husband's BGMA newsletter, and was very surprised to see the "unidentified" photo of my friends wedding. Joan and Corporal Bill Beach were married in St. John's Church, Elmswell, July of 1944.

Bill was in operations, and died January.-23, 1 978.

Joan and I lived together in Elmswell, and keep in touch, we often reminisce of our days in Elmswell, and wonder what happened to the other "War Brides" who lived there, we would enjoy hearing from them.

Yours truly,

Pamela F. Pease
582 Middle Road
Caledonia, NY 14423

(Letters to Editor cont.)

Dear Ed:

I am enclosing correspondence in answer to the letters you have published of Martin Hols of the Netherlands. His primary concern, you will remember, was the Fort that fell near his town of Holten on October 10, 1943, the day the 8th hit Munster, Germany, and which he had determined was the plane of Dick Whitlow, of our 549th. You can print this if you wish.

Whenever I am able to contact Dick, I hope, with his permission, to submit to you a short story on him. Smilin' Jack himself. I guarantee it is a good one.

Ed, I know you will agree, those were rough days for all of us of the Eighth AF, 1943 and 44, especially that winter. Instantly, quietly, we boys became men, and heroes were everybody, wholesale, and fleeting. Very much hero, but never called it nor recognized as. Then, much too quickly, dead or down, gone, forgotten, and with no time nor way to be remembered. Or honored.

Methinks anyone that ever drove or rode in a B-17, the so called Flying Fortress, into battle like we did, along with a head examination, should be given the Congressional Medal of Honor. Can you imagine anyone but an idiot or a second lieutenant that would be caught squatted and strapped to that ilcladramored, gas-fired pyre, a fox-hole deluxe nesting amidst the tonnage of hi-test and piles of bang-bang, to be delivered dangling high up there to the pot shots of the long barrels and Mercedes and BMW? Did everybody get their Air Medal?

But I loved that sweet old girl, still do, and for sure I always will. For her, I have only fond memories. It was just a year ago July in Seattle at her Fiftieth birthday party that I stood next to my "old pilot", John Richey, at the time the three old Forts fired up for takeoff. He had tears on his face when he said, "My gosh look at me, I've got goosebumps all over".

As a final comment, let me say I think you are doing a great job with the Newsletter. It is first class. And too, please make note of my correct name and address. We'll see you in Dayton.

Tom Helman
718 Sherman Street
Medford, OR 97504

Dear Ed Stern,

When we left Great Ashfield area to settle by the River Waye at Monmouth I promised to keep in touch with our many, many friends in the 385th in the best way possible, by a letter to the Newsletter.

Over a year has passed and I have not kept my promise, however, a letter from my friend, Marion E. Raper of Topeka, Kansas, enclosing some back copies of the Newsletter has prompted me to write, in the hope that some might be pleased to have news of us.

But, first, we have changed address once more, and, although not far from 50 Hereford Road where we first lived in Monmouth we have found a much more convenient house, with, what is most important, garage accommodation for our own and our son's cars.

For those whose vision of South Wales as a long vista of coal mines and steel factories, to visit this part of the country is an eye-opening experience, for here the rivers wander through verdant valleys, some of them laid out with tiny fields and ancient stone farmhouses.

and others colorful with trees of every variety, while, being the scene of the old wars between the Anglo-Saxons and the Welsh almost every village and small town has the remains, some slight and others extensive, of the castles which kept guard along the border land.

We find plenty to do, but as often as time permits we spend time exploring this beautiful countryside, we have the ancient Forest of Dean just over the river with many hundred acres of woodlands, old Roman roads and mines, as well as quaint villages, churches and castles.

We always enjoy reading the Newsletter it keeps us in touch with your doings and there is often news of friends. We shall look forward to hearing more of the proposed visit to England - maybe, if we are well enough we might make the journey to Great Ashfield to be with you all once more.

With every good wish from ,

John and Lucy Ellis
13 Dixon Close
Monmouth
Gwent NP5 3HE
Monmouth (0600) 5944

ANOTHER FRIEND IN ENGLAND

Dear Mr. Stern,

I guess it was you, who sent me all those newsletters, which I received last week.

I can't thank you enough, I have been trying, for the past two years, to have one sent, and a very kind person has sent me all those, way back to '84.

I will give them a donation at All Saints Church, Great Ashfield, when I am over there, I go quite often, as my mother is buried there, my father now lives in Bury St. Edmunds, since my mother died, but when they lived at Great Ashfield, near the Thurlow Arms, public house, they were visited by lots of G.I.'s, as they kept chickens and would sell the boys some eggs.

I have looked through the list of names in your magazine, but haven't found any names I remember, we did have a C.I. visit the family, who was on duty in the control tower, the day the German plane came over. I remember that day, I think someone was killed at Wetherden, by that German, the G.I.'s name was Charley, but thats all I remember.

My mothers friends husband, was killed by a B-17 in a field opposite the main runway at Great Ashfield. I think the undercarriage was damaged, after a mission and it overshot the runway and landed on the two men who were working side by side in a field, the other man escaped injury.

If I can be of help to anyone, at anytime, I will try my best. I have a small car, so if anyone wants transport from Bury St. Edmunds to Great Ashfield air base, I will willingly transport them anytime.

I was only fifteen when the war ended so I was at Great Ashfield school till the last year of the war then I worked in Bury, and traveled to work by train from Elmswell.-

Well I think that's enough. Once again very grateful thanks,

Mrs. Kathleen Sapey (Carter)
6 Ashwell Road
Bury St. Edmunds
Suffolk IP33 3LU

(Letters to Editor cont.)

A Nostalgic Visit To Great Ashfield

Dear Ed:

Well we finally returned from England two weeks ago, and had a really marvelous time. We drove from London East and North as far as Edinburgh and stopped at three different Estates. The country side is beautiful and the weather was great. In the low 70's everyday and no rain.

We went to the American Cemetery in Cambridge, I have enclosed some shots we took, not too good, but at least you can get an idea of what the place looks like. It was beautiful, if you can call a Cemetery beautiful, absolutely immaculate.

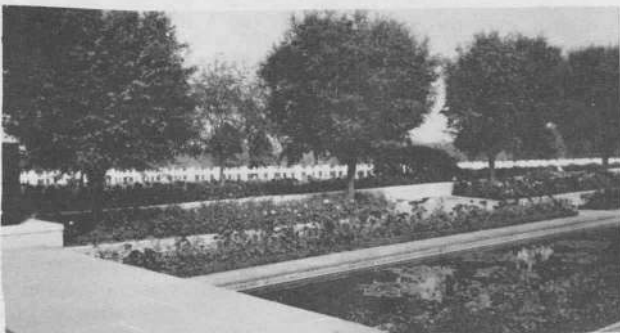
We then went looking for Elmswell, you didn't mention that it is only a station stop, and I had forgotten. We finally stopped an old gentlemen on the road and asked him for directions. As luck would have it, his name is Bill Phillips, about 75 years old or so, but he not only knew the place, but he worked on the base from the day they opened until it was deactivated. For about 3 i hours he rode with us and gave us a conducted tour of entire area, the old Pub is still there, and he knew every stone for miles around. The only thing left of the base, as you probably know is the Runway, which is gradually being eroded away, mostly they are using the concrete for building etc. There is still one hut standing that the farmers are using. I have the entire thing on my video recorder. The-sound isn't too good, as the wind was blowing, but you can still get most of it. For me it was kind of like "Twelve O'clock High", I could almost hear the engines revving up. He then took us on a tour of Great Ashfield Church. He told us that Mrs. Patricia Miles had passed away, but he got the keys from a neighbor and took us inside. Our plaques are beautiful and the look and feel of the place is quite extraordinary. The entire trip was a fantastic experience for me. I am still in touch with my first pilot Neal Rosener and the navigator, John Storer and have told them all about it as they have never made the trip. .

Incidentally, Mr. Phillips told me about the first 500 men who arrived at the base and only 7 survived after the first month or so. He told me so many stories, I didn't know what or whether to believe them or not, but I'm sure most of his tales were true.

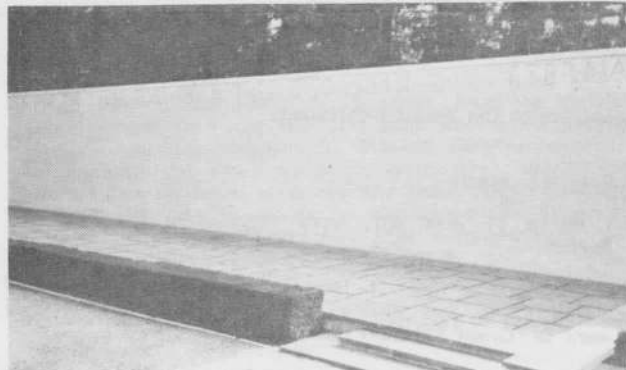
Anyhow, once again, thanks for your help, and I do enjoy getting the bulletin and I'll do my best to make it to the next reunion and I'll bring the tape along, maybe some of the old timers who really spent time there will enjoy it.

With kindest regards.

Jerry Leichtman



Cambridge Cemetery September 1986. Flowers in foreground, rows of graves in background.



Memorial Wall at Cambridge Cemetery.



Cambridge Cemetery - Administrative Building

Dear Ed:

You are doing great. The October Newsletter is a professionally turned out product. The format is orderly and the printing clear and easily read.

I liked the McLachlan item and would like to get it published in the local newspaper about 11 Nov. It is a graphic and touching story most appropriate for that date. Will I be getting into copyright problems?'

The item by Marty Girson was timely and well put. Something like that is needed, too, about the ordnance boys who were a hard working bunch of night owls.

You may recall I was the Base Material Officer for the last year of operations. During that period I made monthly summaries of the supply and maintenance problems and accomplishments. The maintenance departments chiefs generally gave me memoranda to aid in preparing the writings. Henry Stokes, however, in his characterist methodical fashion always gave me the ordnance data in a finished form. I am including here with a copy of his report for March 1945. Perhaps you can extract something of interest from it that will give recognition to many more good soldiers who were on the 385th "team".

Also two extracts from my report for February and March 1945 which gives some idea of the engine change work load.

Two other large categories of work were the airframe repair (bottle damage) and aircraft servicing which are in addition to the catagory of work performed by crew chiefs.

When a fellow hits the 80's, he is logging excess "engine time". The doctors are retuning my works and with luck I plan to make a piggy back train trip thru Mexico with the RV this winter.

Best regards,

Harry Monfort

(Letters to the Editor Continued)

Dear Mr Stern,

I am a 19 year old, very much into the "8th Air Force".

In my spare time, I love to visit some of the old airfields, to see what's left and not so long back I went to "Great Ashfield's" old field.

I would love to know more about those days from anyone based there during the war and also of any fond memories you may have to. Any information you can give me about those days and of the association will be greatly appreciated.

I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Your faithfully,

Mandy Cockerton
1, Twites Corner
Great Saxman, Burty St. Edmunds
Suffolk, IP29 5JR, England

The July Newsletter had an interesting letter and pictures sent in by David Coggiola, the son of member Larry Coggiola. Here are two interesting responses that he received from his letter.

Dear David:

Reading your letter in the recent issue of the newsletter of the 385th Bomb Group, brought back vivid recollections of my days with your dad, Larry; our training here in the States; our flights to and from Europe, crossing the Atlantic in our own "Fort," and, of course, the time in between, flying our missions out of England each day that it was our turn to fly.

I tried to contact your Dad several years ago, but never did receive a reply. I have thought of him often and of the "Care" packages your grandfather used to send us from Glastonbury, Connecticut.

The Bomb Plots you submitted to Ed Stern depicted three missions which your Dad and I could not have been participants in since we did not arrive in Great Ashfield until February 2, 1945 and were in indoctrination training from the 5th through the 14th of February. From the 15th through the 18th of February, I flew several missions as co-pilot with another crew (Lt. Armbruster) while my crew was grounded.

On February 24, 1945, we did fly our first mission as a crew to Bremen, followed by missions to Munich, Berlin and Kassel, closing out February with Kassel on February 28, 1945.

The mission we flew on April 8, 1945, was to Plauen as low squadron lead. We were unable to drop our bombs that day because the target area was so covered with smoke that we were unable to distinguish the target itself. The mission is memorable, however, because our navigator Jerry Asmus was slightly wounded and our plane was damaged to the extent that we left our formation and flew back unaccompanied.

The mission you note as February 7, year unknown, could very well have been the one in which we bombed the submarine pens at Hamburg. All missions were secret, but this one was an especially sensitive one. I do not have the date for that mission logged, but I'm sure your Dad will recall it, since we led a special squadron which dropped "chaff" loaded bombs and were required to turn sharply at the start of the bomb run so that we would be first over the target area. There were so many aircraft over the target area when we released our bombs, that we were forced to take immediate evasive action and found within minutes that our squadron of six had picked up 12 more aircraft that had become separated from their squadron and flew back to our base with a group of planes three times larger than when we started out. The highlight of that mission, however, was that we inadvertently strayed over the island of Helgoland and nearly got ourselves shot out of the sky after a most successful mission, over a place we had no business being near.

David, I would like very much to hear from or about your Dad. If you hear from him, tell him I've had lunch with Jerry Asmus earlier this year and that he retired from the insurance company he was working for in June. Tell him that the last I heard, Joe Uzmann, our bombardier, after I saw him at Cornell where we were both students, moved to the state of Washington and its the last I saw or heard from him. Recently, I got word of Joe Moran, our radio operator, and he too retired and moved to North Carolina. I expect some day I'll run into him, however, since we have a mutual friend, one whom I have met as a business associate who was a high school buddy of Joe Moran.

Again, please convey my wishes to your Dad. I enjoyed your article which Ed Stern published in the 385th Newsletter.

Cordially,

Ralph Mignone

Dear Mr. Coggiola:

I can help with three of your questions in the July 1986 385th BGMA Newsletter.

The heavily damaged B-17 was involved in a midair collision with a B-24 during a routine flight over England. It wasn't a combat mission. The accident is mentioned on page 6 of the July 1982 Newsletter. Sadly, the tail gunner's position was occupied by a passenger who was just along for the ride. After the collision the pilot was able to bring the airplane home by using the ailerons which everyone agreed was a nice peice of flying.

The airplane was a "war weary", meaning it was no longer considered fit for combat. On the tail in the photo can be seen part of "WW" which indicated its retired status.

In the 385th Bomb Group's history book there is a picture of the airplane, too, with the caption reading "How this one got back is hard to tell". I guess when the book was brought out there were a few mistakes made. I'm not aware of any others though.

Your map labelled "Secret" is a flak map. They were distributed at the mission briefings, and their primary use was to help airplanes pick their way home if they got separated from their units. These maps showed the latest flak deployment as determined from reconnaissance flights and other information gathering

(Letters to David Coggiola cont.)

means. The Germans had a lot of flak guns mounted on railroad equipment making it all highly mobile. I suspect that one of the reasons for the secret classification was to conceal our ability to get this information so efficiently. We always got the latest maps - hot off the press. Actually they were photostats.

In looking in the history I see that the 385th bombed Unterschlaursbach in April 5, 1945. My guess is that your photo which is dated April 8 is an assessment of the mission three days earlier.

That's all the help I can offer. I was a navigator in the 549th Squadron during the winter and spring of 1945. It was during that period that the squared G on the tails of the group's airplanes was replaced with the red checkers. I wish I knew more about that.

Very truly yours,

Mat Leupold
246 Old Connecticut Path
Wayland, Mass. 01778

Word From Ian

Dear John,

You mentioned in your letter that your crew were assigned to "Mr. Smith" because your B-17 had been blown up the day before in an armament accident. Reference to this accident sent me scurrying to my files where I pulled out the following story which, although not exactly the day before, must be the one.

At 0335 hours on 15th June, the Control Officer notified the Base Fire Station that there was a fire in an aircraft on Hardstand 34. Serial of this ship was 42-97818 (Can you tell me if you named her?) and she had been loaded with 10 x 5001b bombs. The cause of the fire was never fully established but, around this time, the Group were having trouble with the oxygen swivel in the upper turret base of Sperry Turrets and, as the fire started in this area, this was assumed to be the cause. Records say the navigator suffered slight injury as a result of "contact with propeller blade while attempting to clear aircraft". One assumes engines hadn't been started and he ran into it - whirling prop blades tended to leave more than slight injuries. When the Crash Crew arrived, the B-17's nose was enveloped in flame and fell off moments later. There was no chance of saving the ship and the Crash Crew were ordered to a safe distance. Two minutes later the Fort exploded and wreckage was scattered over a wide area: one piece hit the crash truck which had only managed to get 100 yards away but, happily, no injuries were sustained. The blast stripped all the roofing off a fuse house and a blazing engine hurtled inside but was quickly extinguished by the Crash Crew. Another loaded B-17, serial 107232, was sitting on the perimeter near Hardstand 34 and debris set fire to the fabric of the stabilizers. Wreckage prevented the crash truck getting near enough to lay on a hose line and fuel was streaming from pierced wing tanks. Fire Chief, S/Sgt Lawrence M. Hill, had been in the second fire truck and was some 400 yards away when the first B-17 exploded. The situation was precarious and, if the fuel ignited, they might lose another Fortress quite apart from the danger to the firemen themselves. Hill pulled off his coat and raced up on to the tail of the B-17 where he managed to beat out the fire before it took hold. For his courage, he was later awarded the Soldiers Medal. Further danger became apparent when they realized leaking fuel was draining towards a small oil house which had

been ignited and was only 15 yards from the stricken Fortress. A line was laid and foam smothered the fire before the gas reached it. Fifteen minutes after the explosion, the fires were under control but it took more than an hour to douse the numerous, small fires dotted around the crater in Hardstand 34. It says a lot for the Group that they still managed to put 32 ships over Hanover that day.

There you have it, from your mention of the incident leading to your last flight and the "loss of "Mr. Smith", we find we're on to another story.

For your interest, I've enclosed some data on the missions of 20th June 1944 and I've sent a copy of this letter and yours to Ed Stern in case he wants to include them in a future Newsletter. I'd like a copy of your experiences as a P.O.W. but promise I won't do anything with it as you intend to publish - it all adds to the archives of the 385th.

All the best for now,

Ian McLachlan

Here's a Graphic Account of a Rough Mission

Dear Mr. McLachlan:

Received your letter of 6/30/86 and yes, I am the John Hadzega that was on the ill fated Mr. Smith. I completed an account of my experiences as a prisoner of war planning on having it published but have not submitted it as yet. I excerpted my experience on Mr. Smith intending to forward it to Chet Doran but never did. Anyway, here it is:

The final resting place of Mr. Smith was in Nordholz, Germany, sadly, completely disintegrated on an open meadow.

6/20/44, our crew was assigned to fly a "Mr. Smith". We were told that the old reliable Mr. Smith had flown 80 missions without an abortion. Our B-17 had been blown up the day before in an armament accident so Mr. Smith was our replacement. I can still vividly remember the "Mr. Smith" scripto type printing on each side.

I was a ball turret gunner; Joe Montgomery, pilot; co-pilot, Sam Levy; Bombardier, Santo Caruso; Navigator, Milton Shalinsky; Engineer, James Martin; Radioman, Yorris Cottougium; Waist Gunners, John Davis and Leo Allard; Tail, Frank Sutula; Commanding Officer, Major Witherspoon, 385th Bomb Group, 549th Red Wolf Bombing Squadron. I'm sure there were no other Mr. Smiths in the 549th so this must be the same Mr. Smith.

6/20/44 - Target for today was Hamburg. Breakfast at 11 PM, briefing, jeep ride to Mr. Smith, Bombs check, armament and takeoff at daybreak. This was my 4th mission (one aborted). We regrouped with our squadron and headed for Hamburg, climbed to 25,000 ft. Everything fine, oxygen check, etc. Over Germany one engine quit. We were carrying 10 500 lb. bombs and were not able to keep up with our formation. We were into Germany when another engine quit. We were in trouble - we couldn't keep altitude. We were flying on two engines and had to get rid of our bomb load in order to keep flying so we dropped our bombs. I saw them hit down below - 10 donut type smoke rings. Just after we unloaded our bombs the third engine went.

(Hough Mission cont.)

A decision had to be made quickly. We were at approximately 24,000 ft. Should we bail out or try to make the North Sea. We voted for the latter and started to throw out ammo boxes and all our guns, etc. to relieve the weight. Just then the bail out alarm rang and Joe said, "Bail out" over the intercom. We all had our chest pack chutes on. I started for the door just before the tail section but just as I got there, the plane began shaking badly and I was thrown against the side opposite the door. We were in a full blown stall spin situation. (Incidentally, I had a private pilot's license then and still do. My problem then and now was a color deficiency so I could not go any higher than a private ticket in Civil Aviation where I was stuck.)

Getting back to Mr. Smith, we went into a graveyard spiral straight down. To make matters worse, the only engine left ran away. It was the left engine which compounded the centrifugal force we were under. To this day I can see John Davis' eyes and expression that we were doomed. I couldn't move a muscle. I prayed. My mother came before my eyes. This can't be it! We went down and down, waiting for the impact and I know how it feels to know you were about to die.

But somehow I was out the door and not knowing how high we were I lost no time pulling the ripcord. I estimated our height at 6,000 ft. I heard a screaming engine sound and machine gun fire, maybe I was having hallucinations but I thought the German fighters were firing at me so I hung limp in my parachute playing dead. I did see "Mr. Smith" going into a climb with the right side on fire and the engine howling. I couldn't understand this - there must have been someone left in the cockpit (there was, it was Sam Levy).

After reconstructing the whole thing in the POW Camp Luft IV with my crew members and interrogations with a German Colonel at Oberlustle near Dulug Luft - I quote the German Colonel - "you are very lucky to be alive. You were saved by a Jew (Sam Levy). He told me that this information was given to him by his Intelligence Group. He added, "you don't very often find these people that brave. You can thank him for your life".

After being captured by the Germans, I was taken to an Infantry camp where I was given very brutal treatment because our bombs dropped just outside their camp. They thought it was deliberate and nothing I could say was believed and they treated me with utmost cruelty. After several hours of physical abuse, they took me to a meadow with Jim Martin and five Germans in a truck with a coffin in it telling us the coffin was for us, etc.

In the meadow, we found a body (Sam Levy) face down in a hole in the ground, next to what I thought was a dump. The body had a parachute harness on it and a chest chute lay 10 feet away from it. The Germans ordered Jim Martin and I to load the body in the coffin. Jim then said to me, "That's Mr. Smith" and pointed to what I had thought was a dump.

Sam had stayed in the plane too long. He did not have a chance to put his chute on and I surmise he thought he could put it on, on the way down. He saved all of our lives by pulling that plane out of the spin allowing us to bail out. It still makes me sick recalling this experience.

I don't have any snapshots of our crew but thanks again, for the photo of "Mr. Smith".

With all the information you are accumulating I imagine you are hoping for publication. Should you do so, keep me in mind as I have a 61 page account of my experiences as a German POW.

Sincerely,

John Hadzega
21 Acme Dr.
Middlebury, CT 06762

Report of Operations, 20 June 1944,
385th "B" Group

A2 Report. Mission 20.6. 44. 385th "B"

Target: Fallersleben

1. Leaflets: none
2. Bombing results - very good
3. Enemy Air Opposition - none
4. Flak - Fallersleben - moderate and accurate.
•Wesermunde - meagre to moderate and inaccurate.
5. Weather - CAVU
6. Observation - 5345n - 0830e - a/d - 50 a/c on ground.
All types
7. Fighter support very good

A2 Report. Mission 20. 6. 44. 385th "B"

Target: Fallersleben

1. Enemy Air opposition: none
2. Observations of crew: Smoke screens were observed at both Wilhelmshaven and Hamburg. Large storage tanks at A/d 5346N - 0940E. Heavy concentration of shipping around Bremerhaven. Sighted about 60 ship convoy headed for Bremerhaven and many more on the river. They put out a smoke screen. Many vessels were observed in the mouth of the Elbe.
3. Crew reports of Friendly A/C in Distress - At approx 5430N - 0900E at 0824 hours, an unidentified B-17 was seen to head for Sweden under control. At Fallersleben, at 0910 hours, a/c "985" from 385th was seen to pull out of formation under control and slowly fall behind. One crew reported seeing P-38's drop back to circle them. At 5407N - 0745E and 0958 hours, an unidentified B-24 was seen ditched. This was called in by radio. At 5350N - 0450E and 1023 hours, an unidentified B-17 was seen at about 3000 feet to turn toward Frisian Islands under control

Relive October 10, 1943

Mission to Munster

A letter to Martin Hols of the Netherlands, responding to his letter published January 1986.

Dear Martin:

I am sorry I have neglected to write sooner. Ever since seeing your letter in the January 1986 issue of the 385th BGMA Newsletter, and then again yours to John Pettenger in the April, 1986 issue, I have meant to try adding to your information on the Whitlow airplane which you call 42-2549.

Although I can't provide you with a picture of the plane nor tell you where to find one, or even substantiate the number as his, I can relate several things that should be of great interest to you, like certain events that took place leading up to Whitlow's coming down in Holten.

I was copilot on the John Richey airplane, Ohio Air Force, flying in the number 6 position on the left wing of the B Flight leader Jerry Mudge. Dick (Whitlow) was flying in the number 5 slot, or the Mudge right wing. All this made us the lowest flight of our 21 ship group, also the last ones over the target, the town of Munster.

(Mission to Munster cont.)

Standard-operation-procedure (SOP) for immediately after bomb release was for the whole group to make an about thirty degree diving left turn, losing a thousand feet, for the obvious reason to throw off ground fire aim. And of course, in doing this it was necessary for the low squadron to slide in under the lead squadron (or really, wait for the lead squadron to slide over the low squadron) in order to match the arc of the leader's turn. Also, for the same reason, the three-flight, nine-ship high squadron must slide over the top of the lead squadron. (This made for some very deft airmanship let me tell you.)

At the very time of bombs away, John Pettenger's plane, flying in either the number 2 or 5 position of the lead squadron, took a flak hit I think on either engine three or four. And, at the very same time our low squadron was approaching to beneath him, someone, apparently popping their chute somewhat prematurely, came tumbling out of the Pettenger rear door, his parachute already streaming out behind him, directly into the Mudge plane's path.

When Mudge reacted with a violent left turn, I mean violent—more like a sudden diving lurch to the left, both Dick and ourselves were suddenly way out of formation, a very unenviable position to say the least. Especially when it happened that all at once the sky was full of jerry fighters. I'll guess in the hundreds, all after the three of us.

If memory serves me correctly, the Whitlow airplane was one of the first B-17-C's in combat, identified in the air mostly I think by the lack of the camouflage color olive-drab which meant the plane was brilliantly shiney aluminum, and the chin-turret slung under the nose. It seemed evident to me that jerry was laying for Dick because of this and they gave him quite a go to knock him down. But he gave them one in return I can say for sure. I think the first thing that happened that ended in doing Dick in was that they had killed his ball turret gunner, knocking it out. Then it was easy for them to come up under him, one after another, raking his belly and probably knocking out three of his engines from this tactic. (It was when Dick was left with one engine that he ordered his crew out.)

To say the least this was one big air battle, but of course from where I sat, I could see but sketches, as we were somewhat busy ourselves. However, I did see what was probably a first, when Dick's bombardier Lloyd Stanford surprised one of those jerry's that were gutting their belly, by sawing off his wings and exploding his fuselage into splinters as he came from passing beneath him and moving out ahead of the Whitlow B-17.

I would guess the time involved, from when we encountered our first enemy fighter to when Dick bailed out was maybe no more than ten minutes, so as far as Dick was concerned, that was the end of the fight. But for us other two, it was but the beginning of maybe a thirty minute or so (it seemed a lifetime) air battle that was, as far as I'm concerned, the most eventful of all air battles of all time. We separated from Mudge at about the time Dick went down and we didn't see him again until that evening at Great Ashfield. The Mudge crew was credited with downing nine German fighters as I recall, so you can see they too had an eventful afternoon just like we other two.

As for us, we were one bunch of scared kids. There were so many jerrys and they were so persistent even careless in their pursuit that we had no alternative but to put that old B-17 into the wildest dives and twists and turns imaginable, so violent that we found

ourselves on our back twice resulting in our executing two pretty nice slow rolls, a maneuver uncommon to the B-17, and that which obviously led Luftwaffe head Hermann GSeering to complain we Americans were now using four engine fighters against them.

When I say the Germans were persistent even careless in their chasing us I mean to relate they were really forced to come to nearly a collision position to score any hits because of our extremely violent evasive action. A fighter plane is a gun platform that can shoot only straight ahead, and if it be in the slightest slip or skid, it hits nothing. So a moving target gives them great difficulties. Our gunners, although thrown about so violently, hung on desperately and took good advantage of the extremely close shots, so much so that they claimed I think 24 destroyed German fighters. However, it turned out we were credited with 12, a world record that still stands. Battle damage to the Ohio Air Force was minimal, good evidence our shooters were either quicker or much better shots, or maybe the only ones who got good shots. Or maybe Richey was one helluva smooth fighter pilot.

I have no idea just how many so-called kills the Whitlow crew scored before their demise but I'll wager they got more than just a few. It's a pity there were no awards nor even recognition given this gallant pilot and his crew and probably there never will be. There is an untold story of this soldier, of mostly that which occurred from the time he abandoned ship, through evading the Hun, both after hitting the ground and being helped by your countrymen, and then walking out through France and Spain.

This all leads me to what I want from you. I see from your letters to the 385th Newsletter that you have made contact with Dick, so you must have his address, which is something I do not have. I was hoping his name would show up on the BGMA membership list, but no. So I am asking, would you send me his address? I will be obliged if you will.

As for the picture you seek, I think it most probable there is none in existence, especially when Whitlow couldn't produce one. As I related before, his airplane was brand new. I'm sure this was his first mission in it.

I'm sorry I couldn't give you the help you want, but do hope you can use any thing of what I have told. I would enjoy hearing from you, and promise to answer all correspondence.

One other question, just where is Holten? I can't find it on my map, so maybe you can tell me in relation to some other larger town.

Respectfully yours, I am,

Tom Helman
718 Sherman Street
Medford, Oregon 97504



Pregnant Portia S Portia's Revenge Mystery

Dear Ian:

I am following up on William A. (Bill) Nicholls' letter of 31 March 1986, copy attached. Bill offered some personal insight on my search for information regarding my uncle, S/Sgt. Douglas "Peter" Binford and the crew of the "Pregnant Portia" and later the "Portia's Revenge", which was assigned to the 385th BC and the 551st BS at Station 151, Great Ashfield, England, during 1943. "Portia's Revenge" and her entire crew was lost in a midair over England on 26 September 1943.

For your reference I am enclosing copies of my letters to Paul Schulz of the 385th BG Association, Mickey Russel of the AF Historical Center, and others associated with the 8th Air Force. These people have been very helpful, but as yet I am still missing a lot of information I am sure is out there somewhere!

For your use, as needed, I am enclosing seven photographs of the "Portia" and various crew members. I don't know if they will be of value to you, but I thought they might add some additional documentation about the 385th to your files and might help others searching for information like I am:

If you have time, I would appreciate your help on the following items:

1) I recently read that there are 500 assorted photographs of the 385th in your archives. Please advise if there are any of my uncle's crew or ship, and if so, how I can arrange to purchase copies. Anything, including air to air shots, would be greatly appreciated. We have been unable to locate a photograph of the 2nd ship, "Portia's Revenge", and are particularly interested in finding one since it is the ship they were lost in.

2) I am most anxious to obtain the names and current addresses of any surviving relatives of the members of Keely's crew in particular, and of personnel of the 551st prior to 1944 in general. If this information is available, or if you can offer suggestions on how I can develop it on my own, please let me know. I believe someone in these families must have kept the photographs and letters from son's, husband's, or brother's like our family did.

3) I have stumbled upon a most interesting situation. In all of my research to date I have never come across any reference to the "Portia" by name. It has never been used in any of the books, unit histories, or personal accounts that I have studied.

In July of this year a co-worker of mine who is aware of my research on the 385th purchased a used paperback book, a fiction novel, entitled KG 200, written by J.D. Gilman and John Clive. It is an AVON Book, which is a division of the Hearst Corporation of New York. The book has a 1977 copyright, and was published by arrangement with Simon & Schuster, Inc., with a Library of Congress number of 77-21716.

The novel focuses around Germany's use of captured allied aircraft for infiltration of allied missions. On page 31 of the book occurs this passage:

"...the last time it took off from England wasn't the day it came back to crash. It was just five months ago, and it didn't return. Until last week, that is.

You mean, because of the serial number? said Shevlin. He took a sheet of paper from his briefcase and looked at it.

That's right, said Hamel. There's not much left, but the serial number's still stamped on the port engine. It belongs to a ship from the 97th Bombardment Group. 'Pregnant Portia' she was called."

The book is well worn and the passage underlined above was underlined in the book in pencil. This rather startled me to say the least, so I began trying to locate the authors to find out how they came by this name. Avon, Hearst, and Simon & Schuster all advised that this book is out of print and rights have reverted to:

Souvenir Press Ltd.
43 Great Russell St.
London WC1B 3PA
England

Since this is in your back yard more or less, would you see what you can find out about how I can reach the authors so I can ask how they came up with the name?

Along with Bill Nichol's letter of 31 March 1986 he sent me copies of the 10/85 and 1 /86 385th newsletters, and a copy of the 40th and 42nd anniversary reunion booklets. In the 10/85 newsletter you did an excellent article titled "Foto Fit". If it is possible I would appreciate your help in having the enclosed photos published in a similiar manner, along with a brief summary of what I'm trying to find, in a future edition of the newsletter and/or anywhere else you think appropriate. You have my permission to use all of this material as you see fit. You are the "resident expert" so I rely on your guidance!

Please let me know how I can assist you in this matter. Our family continues digging through the closets in search of more information and I will forward additional photos to you if they are discovered.

Sincerely,

C. Bruce Smith
3808 Alexandria Drive
Austin, Texas 78749
(512) 282-7253 Home
(512) 46305055 Office

Word from Ian on Pregnant Portia

Dear Bruce:

I'll take your letter from the top, so to speak, and comment as I read it.

For some time I've been compiling a list of serials of ships serving with the 385th and, where possible, linking them to names. Dealing with events on 26-9-43, I show the following aircraft as having been lost.

(Word from Ian cont.)

B-17 42-3290 Raunchy Wolf. All crew KIA.

Position Name

P Keeley, John C., Jr., I/Lt
CP Coomes, Harry P., I/Lt
N Moore, Arthur R., I/Lt
B Rouse, Theo. R., I/Lt
TTC Pontius, Ledger (NMI), T/Sgt.
ROC Rochester, Samuel B., T/Sgt.
BTC Banner, Robert L., S/Sgt.
TC Osborn, Edward (NMI), S/Sgt.
WCR Binford, Douglas (NMI), S/Sgt.
WCI Shepherd, Raymond H., S/Sgt.

Note that the aircraft they were flying was "Raunchy Wolf". I have a photograph of this which I'll copy and send over. Please give me a reminder when you reply, that way I won't forget. Now, what makes this business so fascinating and frustrating is that the 385th appears to have had two ships called, "Raunchy Wolf" because the pictures I've got of the nose arts are different and 385th records show that Lt. Irving H. Frank and crew of "Raunchy Wolf" were the first to complete their 25, in November, 1943 which is some time after 42-3290 went down. I'm stuck on the serial for Lt. Frank's, "Raunchy Wolf" but maybe a Newsletter reader will come to our help. The other crew killed in that collision was Paul Yannello's:

Position	Name
P	Yannello, Paul M., 1/Lt.
CP	Wilson, Fred E. Jr., 2/Lt.
N	Black, Guilford (NMI), 2/Lt.
B	Wardie, Charles A., 2/Lt.
TTC	McMillan, Walter F., T/Sgt.
ROG	Gula, Stanley J., T/Sgt.
BTG	Kern, Lawrence C., S/Sgt.
WGR	McGinnis, Marion E., S/Sgt.
SGL	Seitz, Edgar L., S/Sgt.
O	White, Sydney S., 1/Lt.

Moving back to Keeley's crew, from Group records I can tell they were one of the originals and were assigned B-17 42-5892 when they came overseas.

17-7-43 385th's first mission. Keeley flew '892. Target was Amsterdam. I have a full report but, in essence, the raid was uneventful although the first operation must have been a psychological high for the 385th. Overcast prevented bombs being dropped on target.

24- 7-43 Target Bergen, Norway, sub pens. As on 17th, thick overcast prevented bombs being dropped.

25- 7-43 Warnemunde. Heavy flak. No losses. 21 aircraft participating.

28- 7-43 The target was Oschersleben. Colonel Vandevanter led 21 ships while five others went with a composite group. Seven ships aborted including Keeley's '892. Reading the Navigator's report, I assume that an ascent through overcast contributed to the number of abortions because the Wing became dispersed and, while attempting to re-assemble, was subjected to fighter attack. Five changes of direction occurred and five ships became separated so returned to base. Off Heligoland there happened one of those tragedies that occurs in air combat when Robbin's ship, 42-30257, took a flak hit which threw it into Noel's 42-30285 (Roundtrip ticket) and Storr's 42-3316. All three B-17's went down.

29-7-43 Captain Richard led what Col. Van Called their most successful to date and your uncle was near the front of this in "A" flight, again with Keeley in '892. It was Warnemunde again and the diary optimistically reported that, "we doubt there'll ever be occasion to

go there again. The plant that was there early this morning, tonight is a smoking ruin." Four half-hearted fighter attacks occurred but caused no damage. Lt. Grodi had¹ to ditch 42-30270 on the way out when his No. 3 caught fire. They were picked up by ASR some eight hours later.

12-8-43 Keeley led "B" Flight in 42-30364. The target was a gas factory in Wesseling but overcast protected it and only 10 ships released over the primary. Eleven others took their bombs to Bonn. The 385th was the Lead Group. Your uncle flew as RWG.

17-8-43 Regensburg. S/Sgt. Douglas Binford flew right waist gun with Keeley on 42-5892 which, as I said, I have no name for but I will take to be "Pregnant Portia". I had "Pregnant Portia" listed against 42-30263 but this may have been "Portia's Revenge". As you know, they had to ditch in the Med. Much has been written elsewhere about this raid so I will not dwell on the broader aspects but pick out some detail relating to the 385th so you know something of what happened to your uncle that day. Briefing was set for 0230 hours with take-off planned for 0630 hours. Twenty-four ships took off, 3 aborted and there was one reserve. Lt. Paul Sommers, 42-5886 "The Jolly Roger" was hit by flak and went down near Zoersel and, later on, fighters got Lt. Leslie Reichardt's "Sack Time" 42-5914. The newspaper clipping you enclosed gives some brief details of the ditching and there exists a picture showing the very small speck of their ship on its way down. The diary for August 23rd records that the Keeley crew returned that day looking none the worse for their 20 hour bath.

6- 9-43 Their ship was 42-30262. A battery works at Stuttgart was the target but clouds prevented them from hitting the primary and they bombed an airfield near Dieppe.

7- 9- 43 '263 again. The target was a "V" site at Watten.

15- 9-43 '263. The target was the Hispano-Suiza works in Paris - the bombing was good. No losses.

16- 9-43 Your uncle flew ball turret on this occasion. Their ship was 42-30816 which later became Mary Ellen III because Jack Schley and his crew died this day when Mary Ellen II collided with the B-17 of another unit.

26-9-43 Their last mission. The formation plan shows Keeley leading "C" Flight in 42-3290 "Raunchy Wolf". The diary reads: "The target today was Reims - Champaing. Since all objectives were too overcast for effective bombing, none were dropped. On the return, over England, two of our finest crews - those of Lt. John Keeley and Lt. Paul Yannello - collided while they were letting down from altitude. S/Sgt. Adams of Yannello's crew alone parachuted to safety. Lt. Sidney White, 551st Operations Officer, who was on this mission as assistant bombardier on the Yannello crew was among those who went down. Both Lt.'s Keeley and Yannello had completed 11 operational missions, and they and their crews were considered among the most efficient and dependable in this group.

That's all I have about the collision but I'm sure others in the Group will be prompted by this to give you their recollections.

The only addresses I have for next-of-kin are wartime ones but you may be able to trace relatives in the area by making a small article for the nearest local paper, the address of which you should be able to find in any major library.

Keeley: Mrs. Dorothy Joan Keeley, 172-48 Grand Central Parkway, Jamaica, NY

(Word from Ian cont.)

Coomes: Mrs. Dorothy M. Coomes (wife) 2229 Date Street,
Louisville, Kentucky

Moore: Mrs. Doris J. Moore (wife) Route 5, Dallas, TX

Rouse: Thomas J. Rouse (father) 323 West Bijou,
Colorado Springs, CO

Ledger:

Rochester: Abraham L. Rochester (brother) 1938 East
Tremont Ave., NY

Banner: Robert H. Banner (father) White Cloud, Kansas

Osborn: Edward J. Osborn (father) 17 Tooker, Avenue
Oyster Bay, Long Island

Shepherd: Mrs. Mary J. Shepherd (mother) 1215 South
7th East, Salt Lake City, Utah.

I'll seach through my photographs for the next time I
write and, by then, I may have been able to sort
something out regarding Souvenir Press.

It's taken several hours to pull this together so I hope
you find it of interest and it helps with your quest.

Kindest regards,

Ian McLachlan

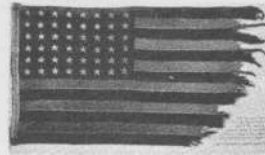


"Peter (Douglas Binford) and the Navigator in England
reading a Dallas Texas paper."



Only Known photograph of "Pregnant Portia" first ship
of this crew which was ditched in Mediterranean on the
way to N. Africa following the Regensburg raid on 17
Aug. 1943.

Crew returned to England and replacement B-17G was
named "Portia's Revenge". I have been unable to lo-
cate any photographs of this 2nd aircraft.



Flag flown at Pearl Harbor
Dec. 7. ifru



WWII Prisoner of War Exhibit

EDITORS NOTE: Here's a poem sent to-us by one of our
Navigators, Gilbert Goldberg, Box 16173, Phoenix, AZ.

*My thoughts had turned to Christmas in December '44
The war was going well for Satan and no one more.*

*The fox-holed men questioned Cod for the war they
didn't want
Then the fog closed in on the Bastogne front.*

*Till then our troops gained ground from France to
this damned place
And was it any wonder with our Air Corps in the race?*

*But now the fog would turn the tide, for birds could
hardly fly.
For Hitler's aim was desperate-his heil was do or die.*

*Then hell coughed contagion as the enemy out-flanked us.
Our airplane's engines slept, while the devil sneered
and thanked us.*

*Meanwhile, across the sea, I knew of this in my
anxious nissen place.
In an airfield somewhere in England my squadron had
its base.*

*The deadly mist took its grip on still another day
The bulge grew deep in my brother's blood;
men cursed or knelt to pray.*

*My eyes looked up but made no wish for skates, a car
or pie.
Imagine me, my Christmas wish-for just a cloudless sky.*

*Then, as if I'd gotten through somehow, as though I were
the one to thank,
I was hardly asleep that doubtful night when I awoke to
"Get Up, Yank".*

*With a beard for clothes, I rushed outside - "Thank God,
a Clearing Sky"
The rest, my friend,-is history - 'twas the day even
cowards could fly.*

*By dawn great flocks of metal birds began to swarm,
like the locusts of Salt Lake City.
The angry mass droned across the sea with an aire of
restrained pity.*

*My earphones spoke in German now, "Achtungis"
shrieked down below -
And then, when we knew the time was right, our pregnant
bomb bays let go.*

*The way I saw the battle then, that day was criteria.
In retrospect, I could have been there, or else Siberia.*

*In Peace, one stitch in time you save when you are still
alive.
Freedom's price is faith and strength if your creed is to
survive.*

*I manned a plane in yesterwar, but today I have a son.
Though I've aged, I'd fight again to see the boy lift books,
and not the cursed gun.*

EDITORS NOTE: Here's an article that strikes pretty close to home, in spite of no involvement with our Croup. It's being reprinted without permission. It's worth reading.

The Price of Patriotism Isn't Cheap

by Jim Fain

We stood on a knoll under short-needle pines and grieved. Our bowed heads were uniformly gray or bald, but, as the twin buglers sounded the ineffable communion of Taps, the ancient images inside were of apple-cheeked friends.

Fred Hinze and T. M. Jones are the faces I see first when I recall our dead from World War II. Fred ditched a B-24 to save those of his crew still alive despite 20-mm cannon fire that blasted off a foot and took away part of his face. T. M. died in a crash, and I had to tell the Australian nurse he intended to marry.

We lost half our bomber crews in the first six months, before the war started to turn. We were the 380th Bomb group, part of the Fifth Air Force, slogging from Northern Australia through New Guinea and the Philippines to Okinawa.

The 380th lived on after the war and is based here, near the Canadian border. Its skilled airmen fly the FB-111, the low-level supersonic bomber used recently against Libya. We old-timers, invited back for a reunion, held a memorial service in the base cemetery.

When the young commander complimented us on "always putting your bombs on target", a huge laugh went up. When one of today's fliers joked, "Did any of you guys ever fly an airplane?" one of ours yelled back, "No, we flew B-24's."

No need for any more myths about that last "good war." Not many of its Cis were ideologically motivated, for example. People forget how split the country was before the Japanese united us at Pearl Harbor. A strong isolationist movement nearly ended the draft just months before the attack.

Nor was victory sure, as people seem to think. World War II was a close-run affair. In the Pacific, the naval battles of Midway and Bismarck sea gave us a toehold. MacArthur chewed up two divisions holding in the Owen Stanley mountains of New Guinea. It was a miracle we did not lose Australia.

We seem to have decided that the only way to have defense is to make it painless. Discouraged by Vietnam, we look for easy, quick triumphs in minor skirmishes such as Grenada and Libya. We pay volunteers to do our fighting and then brag about "standing tall." In an era of fast bucks and stretch limos, we try to buy security without risk.

Won't work. As with anything precious, you get precisely the security you sacrifice for. There is no substitute for the citizen soldier. The finely honed men and women in today's 380th Bomb Wing know there's no bargain basement. They're ready to pay full price, but they are part of a tiny few to whom we owe too much.

Until we're ready to pay that price, mouthing patriotic slogans is a bad joke. True patriotism never comes cheap.



Japanese Cherry Tree and Tablet at Arlington.



Close up of Memorial Tablet unveiled at Arlington Mini-Reunion.



Jerry Ramaker in front of one remaining building at Great Ashfield.

AVERAGE

We got toward the end of the book, and Andy said, "Hell! We've told about a lot of people who were gunners of one sort or another, but they're all exceptions. That is, they are very odd, or very lucky, or very brave, or very something. We don't have a one that's just an average gunner."

In a way that was true, except, we figured, maybe those people as a whole made up the average gunner. Not quite, though. The average gunner, if there were one, probably had the usual number of things happen to him—ran out of oxygen once or twice, got one enemy fighter, flew home with one member of the crew dead—but all of those things in a degree just short of being news. So we decided to do a piece on the average gunner, because it would fall in the more somber, dull tones of the picture of an average combat man. It would not be colorful, but it was pretty necessary.

We figured the average ought to have about fourteen or fifteen hauls, one fighter confirmed, ought to be twenty-one years old or so—when we got that far we both said, "Jim Reed." He was a ball turret man with whom Bud flew on his first mission. This, then, is the story of James Reed, ball turret and average gunner. . . .

The earliest thing in his life Jim Reed could remember was a clean Sunday suit his mother let him wear one weekday when he was about five. It was a washable suit, with a wide, white collar, and Jim went out of the house in it and played on a slag pile not far from home. He was still there, late in the afternoon, when he saw his father coming back from work, swinging the chipped black lunch pail most of the coal miners carried. Jim could remember running down the street to meet his father, and walking the rest of the way home holding his dad's dust-grimed fingers.

Jim said he'd never forget the look in his mother's eyes when she saw his clean suit all smudged from playing on the slag heap, and she said, "I suppose he'll be in the mine, too, pretty soon."

Jim always remembered that; he wasn't just sure why. Probably, there on the combat station at which we first met him, that incident was a thing sane and steady onto which Jim's simple logical mind could hang and set itself in a mad world. I know the picture of his mother at the front door was in his mind most of the times he began the long, gentle letters home to Route One, Penncroft, Uniontown, Pa.

Ben and Ella Reed must be pretty nice folks, I guess, because they turned out a colossal job of humanity in Jim. He grew up and stopped playing on the slag pile and went to school, where he read *The House of the Seven Gables* and remembered it a long time. He began to fill out around the shoulders and finally he said he wanted to work with his dad.

In the Nissen hut at Site Six those autumn nights last year, Jim used to stretch out on the next bunk and talk about coal mining, and Pennsylvania hills and how they looked in October. He would talk about flak and fighters and gunners, and he would argue for B-17S against B-24S, but always his talk went back to home, and the coal vein he and his dad worked on what he called "the buddy system."

In those ways, Jim Reed was an average gunner. He looked pretty average too; sort of nondescript, straight brown hair; five feet ten or so; with square hands and an uneventful tone of speech. He had been an average kid at home; he was an average gunner here. He worked the ball turret of Warren Cerrone's Fortress, the *Lady Liz*. He was maybe a little more helpful about giving a hand to new gunners than the average. To balance that he was a little quieter than the average.

Jim's first mission was about normal for length, but a little rough. It was to Oschersleben, in central Germany, on July 28, 1943. He came up to that mission as a staff sergeant gunner no more afraid—but just as much—of what he would find than any other staff sergeant gunner. He saw his first vapor trails in combat that day, realized

(on the way home) that down there someone had been shooting with the more or less[^], deliberate intent of killing him, and he fired for the first time in anger the twin .50-caliber guns in their ball turret beneath the *Lady Liz*.

"Didn't hit a thing," he told the intelligence officer at interrogation when they got back. He didn't laugh about it; he felt he should have hit the Me 109, but he'd missed, and the only consoling thought was that his tracer might have helped to drive the German pilot away. Jim said he didn't feel so unhappy about it later when he talked to some of the other gunners on their first mission and found they too missed their first—and second and third—shots at Nazi planes. The gunner ate a big supper that night after the haul to Oschersleben and when he left the combat mess he was surprised to find that, in spite of what the time of the Woensdrecht haul, and Watten, eight days later, to begin to worry a little, but, too, enough of what his Fortress could do to be glad he'd volunteered for air gunnery.

On the morning of September 9, Jim heard for the first time the briefing-room instructions that, if his outfit could not for any reason hit the day's target bombs were to be brought back to base. The target was the Nazi airdrome at Beauvais-Tille, in occupied France, and Air Force standing orders forbade anything but dead accurate bombing to prevent unnecessary harm to the conquered French. It was a fairly easy haul, and Jim was delighted with his ball turret view from five miles up of the neat, precise squares of French farmland, compared to the uneven shapes of English fields. Jim noticed things like that. He especially remembered two long rows of trees beside a very straight road which stretched like a white ribbon in the sunshine.

The crew went on pass after Beauvais, and made the next mission to Kerlin-Bastard on September 23. About that time, Jim was awarded the Air Medal for completing five missions, and the rest of the crew each got one, too. Colonel Vandevanter, the group's commander, pinned Jim's Air Medal on, and the base photographer took a picture. The Colonel came out a little blurred in the picture, and Jim thought his own salute was a little stiff, but he was pretty proud of it and sent it home to Ella and Ben.

The attack on the Luftwaffe airdrome at Rheims-Champagne, also in France, rounded out September operations for *Lady Liz* on the 26th.

October was the big month of Jim Reed's war. He went on five major missions in October, shot down an enemy fighter and had the victory confirmed officially, and in the process became what the Air Force considered a veteran combat flier.

On October 2, Jim made his first trip to Emden, a place he was to visit again a little more than two months later. There was a lot of flak at Emden; Jim damaged a fighter. The trip took exactly six hours. Two days later, Cerrone came into the gunners' hut and said they'd have a new left waist gunner on the next mission and would the boys look after him; Cerrone turned his gaze to Jim when he said that, and Jim looked after the new gunner.

It was that first week in October that was, possibly, the toughest time Reed spent in England, and it wasn't battle that made it difficult to go through. Autumn chill was in the wind, and on the far slope of a valley behind the squadron site, Jim watched a farmer getting the fall plowing done. He wished pretty hard he were home, maybe going out for a day after pheasants in the Pennsylvania hills. Jim talked with the new gunner, who had owned a farm in Pennsylvania.

"Sometimes, in the evening, you can smell wood smoke drifting down from that farmhouse," Jim said. "It makes all this war stuff wrong in some way, that wood smoke does. How long do you think it will last?"

The new gunner understood the question was of the war, but said he didn't know either. The wood smoke made them both silent for a while, and then they sat up late talking about farming and coal mining and about things that had happened when they were kids.

On October 8, Jim went to Bremen. The new gunner turned out to be fair, so Jim didn't have much to worry about except his own job, although there was more than an hour of bitter dogfighting up in the clouds.

That night, Jim learned Cerrone's crew wasn't scheduled to go on the next day's mission for which the group already had been alerted, so he volunteered to fly as a spare if anyone else was shy a ball turret gunner. The mission turned out to be 1,800 miles to Marienburg, in East Prussia, longest of the war in Europe, and Jim came home from the ten-hour-and-forty-minute flight more tired than he ever had been. A few hours after they had landed in the evening dusk, photographs of the bombing were printed and in the intelligence officers' hands, and word slipped around the base that the raid had been almost phenomenally successful. Jim felt proud of that. Mostly, raids were simply raids, one more gone and one less to do; but that one had been a solid stroke, and he would always remember the flak rising up from the airplane factory standing alone out in the country near Marienburg, and how their bombs had hammered down into geysers of smoke and debris in the center of the plant.

Jim was ready for another flight the next day, tired though he was, and he got it. On October 10, he flew with his own crew to Muenster, the transportation center in western Germany, and that was his third mission in three successive days. It was his twelfth raid, and he got credit for an enemy fighter damaged? although he always thought he'd actually destroyed the craft. Still, it hadn't exploded or gone down in flames; his tracer had gone into the pilot's cockpit, and the plane had plunged straight down, but the gunners had been too busy with other fighters to see if it hit the ground and so confirm the victory.

Thirty planes were lost at Muenster. There had been twenty-nine lost the day before at Marienburg, thirty the day before that at Bremen. Jim permitted himself a few moments of feeling lucky, and then, very early in the morning of October 14, he went to briefing and learned that the day's target was Schweinfurt.

"That place!" Jim whispered to Pete Bobulsky, the right waist gunner.

Jim, and everyone else in the room, remembered that the vital ball-bearing works at Schweinfurt, deep in southwestern Germany, had been one of two targets on August 17, the day half the Air Force hit Regensburg and went on to Africa, while the other half hit Schweinfurt and flew back to England. Jim and the others had heard gunners in another Air Division talk of what happened at Schweinfurt, of Nazi fighters actually queuing up to get a shot at the bombers, of endless attacks all across Europe.

So, with the others that morning, Jim stared a long time at the red tape on the target map as it stretched half across the Continent. They listened more attentively than ever before as the intelligence officers described the flak they would see, the probable number of enemy fighter planes based along their route. It was a very large number. Once in a while, as the briefing went on, you could hear someone whisper, "Schweinfurt." The gunners whispered it solemnly, and the word seemed to slip in softly ominous S sounds around the room. Jim said he was impressed when the Colonel, himself, came into the gunners' briefing room and told them how important the target was—nearly half the ball bearings used by Germany's mechanized Wehrmacht were made there.

"I got a feeling about this one," Jim told Harry Edgins as they hauled their flying kits to the truck. It was a most average remark; probably ninety per cent of the men briefed for Schweinfurt felt that way.

Lady Liz took off, flew through seven hours and forty-five minutes of nightmare and came home. Sixty other planes didn't come home that day—nearly six hundred men—but the ball-bearing plant was smashed and Jim realized in a vague way that they had done a big job.

But Schweinfurt had taken a piece out of James Reed and he never could regain it; a little of the kindness, the easy gentleness in him went away somewhere along the fighter-lined route.

From the steel-and-glass ball in which he flew, Jim that day saw almost endless waves of German fighters slash at the bombers, peel off, and come back to slash again. All the way from the Franco-German border to the flak-umbrellaed target and back again to the very Channel, the bomber gunners fought the fighters. Just before they started their bombing run, a Nazi fighter pilot pulled his Messerschmitt 210 out of a vertical bank off to the side of

Jim's group and headed straight in for *Lady Liz*. All the other gunners were busy with other fighters, and Jim realized in a quick moment that it was the Luftwaffe flier or the *Lady Liz*. He waited as the plane came inside a thousand yards, and framed the reticules of his Sperry sight on the fighter.

Just as the Messerschmitt's wings began to blaze with the fire of its cannon and machine guns, Jim put pressure on his own triggers. From the muzzles of the twin-mounted 50-caliber guns a burst of some twenty rounds streaked into the path of the Messerschmitt. Jim fired again, a short burst, and it caught the enemy fighter squarely in the nacelle centered between the two engines. The fighter disintegrated as Jim started to fire a third burst. The enemy's fire went over *Lady Liz*, and Jim barely had time to see bits of exploded debris whirling down as he turned to meet another attack.

"I didn't feel, very excited, I guess," he said afterward. "We were too busy."

Jim also damaged an Me 210 that day, used up all his oxygen and had to fly on an emergency bottle of oxygen part of the way home. It was a hell of a day, but it turned out to be just about average because a lot of people had a hell of a day at Schweinfurt.

They gave Cerrone's crew a leave after Schweinfurt, and in the next twenty days Jim Reed rested, lost a little of the worried look about his eyes, and did a lot of thinking.

For one thing, the hut was beginning to take on a different appearance. A lot of new faces had come into it since that first trip on July 28. The "Mole" had gone down—Jim hated that phrase, "gone down," but it was the one the gunners used; and the other word was too final—the "Mole" had gone, and Ginger and Whitey. Pop Brown and Bundy were lost in that crash. One gunner had quit, refused to fly more combat after nine missions. As a matter of fact, Jim thought, looking around the hut in the evening, only three crews were left—eighteen men of the original thirty-six. It was about average.

While he was grounded, Jim was awarded his first Oak Leaf Cluster to the Air Medal; that was for the second five missions, ending with Bremen on October 8. It always took a couple of weeks for the papers to go through on awards. Gramps Jewel, Dixon's wise old top turret gunner, was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross, having been credited with three enemy fighters, totaling fifteen points, and having enough missions to his credit to pass the required mark of twenty-five points for a DFC. Jim wrote home, explaining the awards system. One point for each mission, five points for an enemy aircraft destroyed; five points necessary for the Air Medal and each subsequent Cluster, and twenty-five points for the DFC. The letter started him thinking about awards, and the two dollars a month extra pay a fellow got with the DFC, and he figured it was all cut and dried but maybe it was just as well that way; you knew where you stood, at least as far as the awards went.

Jim went to London on leave, drank a moderate amount of light ale, which he didn't particularly like, went to a movie with a friendly girl of the Women's Auxiliary Air Force, spent some time at the Eagle Club, and went back to the station for the Wilhelmshaven raid on November 3.

Wilhelmshaven wasn't too bad, although it was a little difficult for the crew to get back to flying after the layoff. The next day was a good one in the hut. It turned out that the gunner who had flown in *Lady Liz* to Bremen on October 8 was a writer, and when the Special Services GI brought the *Stars and Stripes* around to the combat mess at noon, Jim and the rest of the crew found there was a two-page article about them called "Sweating." They read it in the mess during chow, and just about everyone in the hut sent a copy of the paper home. As John Kelley said after they had talked about the story: "I don't know whether it's good journalism, or whatever you call it, but it's like things really are. I want the folks to know how they are."

Being a figure in one newspaper story was about average. Some gunners never were, until the hometown paper had a piece that they had either finished a tour of ops or were missing, while some gunners figured in two or three

stories, depending on how good a public relations officer they had at the base and on how far they were from London where the correspondents lived.

Two days after Wilhelmshaven, Jim flew to Gelsenkirchen, and afterward said he "could qualify as an expert on Central Germany all right, by now." That was his fifteenth mission, entitling him to his third Cluster to the Air Medal, since the fighter he got at Schweinfurt was good for five points and a Cluster.

The night of November 10 the gunners sat around the hut for a long time and talked about the war and the Armistice anniversary on the next day. No one made any very profound observations. After thinking about it for a while, though, Jim used one of the rare vulgar phrases he allowed himself. He thought about the fact that the Armistice ending World War I had been signed just a quarter of a century before, and he thought about Pop Brown and Bundy and Ginger, and he said, "I'm pissed off proper," and went to bed.

In the morning, though, Armistice Day seemed different, possibly because they were going to Muenster. "It's one way to celebrate Armistice Day," Harry Edgins opined. But when they had crossed the fields of Europe and bombed their target and come home, Jim said it hadn't been a celebration and he hoped he'd never see another Armistice Day like that one. Muenster was Number Sixteen for him.

Whereas, up to Schweinfurt, Jim had been counting how many raids he "had in," as the gunners phrased it, now each mission was counted as one less "to go." A gunner had "ten to go," or "six to go," before he finished his tour of operations and could go home to the States for a rest.

About that time, Jim Reed felt a growing loneliness. The hut had seemed different for a long time, but now, in spite of the fact that new faces always came to fill the empty bunks, it was lonely. Sam Dixon's crew—Gramps and Mundy and Meservy and the rest—was transferred out of the group on a special assignment, and that left only the Cerrone crew of the original six units of six gunners each.

"Come home to some damn new face after every haul," growled Harry Edgins, and Jim laughed a little. That was how Jim had changed—he laughed. Three months before he would not have laughed; he would have thought without saying so that Harry was being a little rough about it.

The heavy bombers made the long overwater haul to Norway on November 16, a ten-hour job which Jim liked in spite of the fatigue that tightened his cramped muscles in the turret. It was all at comparatively low altitude, except the bombing run itself over the Nazi plants at Rjukan, and Jim liked a raid with a minimum of flying time on oxygen. He didn't stop to analyze the feeling about oxygen, but that feeling grew out of a normal human aversion to conduct he couldn't explain. Like most gunners, Jim was unusually exuberant on oxygen, extremely depressed after using it. He couldn't explain those feelings, and so didn't like them.

The winter-mantled Norwegian land had intrigued Jim, and set him off on one of his rare periods of deep melancholy. "Those snowy hills," Jim said. "They're about like the high hills at home this time of year. More snow, though, I guess, up in Norway." For three or four days Jim was even quieter than usual; a mood of aching for something he could not name was all through him.

After Norway, which had been Number Seventeen, there was an administrative shuffle in the squadron, and operations broke up Cerrone's crew, sending Jim Reed and John Kelley, the Massachusetts radio-gunner, to fill out two vacancies in Lieutenant Ted Jennings's crew. Jim and the others didn't want to be separated, but someone told them it wasn't permanent, and anyway Jennings was a good pilot, one of the best.

On December 5, Jim and Kelley made their first mission with Jennings. They went to the M6rignac airfield, near Bordeaux, in southwestern France. It was a long trip—eight hours and forty-five minutes—most of it over the ocean, and Jim found himself more tired than after any other raid. That was Number Eighteen, a long haul but

little fighter or flak opposition, thus balancing up the average qualities. Jim felt somehow it had been too easy.

That was where we stood with the chapter on the average gunner xi December 10. We got that far and Andy said he guessed he'd work on something else, maybe the chapter on Roscovich. Bud said that was a good idea, he'd work on the chapter about leave. He didn't say anything more about the "average gunner" chapter, either.

On December 11, Jim Reed flew in Jennings's ball turret to Ertiden, the German port. Only five bombers of a vast air armada were reported missing that day. Ted Jennings's Fortress was one of them.

Other crews came back to base and said they'd seen the ship hit and start a long, lumbering spin toward the enemy earth below. It turned all the way down. They didn't see any parachutes.

The raid on Emden, December 11, was Jim Reed's nineteenth mission. From it, he is listed as missing in action.

You will understand, then, why we didn't want to go on with the chapter on an average gunner after Jim Reed's eighteenth haul.

EDITOR'S NOTE: John Kelly, the Radio Operator referred to in the above story survived the mission. He's attended a number of our Reunions, now lives in Beverly Mass, with his wife, who wrote:

"I did not meet John until he returned home from the service. He would not talk about his war experiences to his family or later on even to his sons. When he mentioned it to me, he simply said he was a guest of the German government for 17 months. He never seemed bitter or depressed about what happened.

Lately I have been asking him a few questions. He did say that when he parachuted from the plane and landed in the sea (North Sea in December), he was picked up by a German patrol boat and taken to a hospital where they worked on him for two days trying to warm him up. During that time, they constantly interrogated him, but he was so cold and his teeth chattered so he couldn't talk.

Then a German soldier who could speak some English took him by public transportation to an interrogation center. The soldier wasn't in any hurry getting there, even stopping occasionally at a few bars.

After a few days, he was put on a railroad car to the POW camp. He did say that he thought he would never come out of there alive. So it was a happy day when he was liberated in May 1945.

John and I always enjoyed attending the 385th reunions, but John's health isn't good now and we will have to see how it goes for the next reunion."

Geraldine Kelly



John Kelly and Col. Van



Rex Lee & Col. Van



Jim Reed & Col. Van



Harry Edgins & Col. Van



Kneeling: (L to R) Bob Selby, Bombadier
Warren Cerrone, Pilot
Bill Flager, Co-Pilot
Dick Proctor, Navigator
Standing: (L to R) Jim Reed, Ball Turret
Pete Bobulsky, waist
John Kelly, Radio
Harry Edgins, Tail
Bill McDaniel, Engr. top
Rex Lee, Waist (not shown)



Left to Right: S/Sgt. Peter Bobulsky, M/Sgt.
Bud Hutton.

Obituaries

Harvey C. Helme 12/17/85
Fred Maracich
Les Norgard 9/23/83
William P. Dorney 11/2/86

LIFE MEMBERS #146

Lori Massari
Robert C. Smith
John J. Logan
Walton E. Hayes
John C. Birrell
Cheryl Jean Horn
John O'Donell
George H. Salkeld

385th BGMA

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