

OHIO AIR FORCE GOLDEN GOOSE THUNDERBIRD WANDERING DUCHESS CURLY'S KIDS  
 SKY GODDESS OL' WAR HORSE PICCADILLY QUEEN BLUE CHAMPAGNE MARY ELLEN  
 SALLY B ROUNDTRIP TICKET RAUNCHY WOLF CHOWHOUND YANK GELDING WINNIE THE POOH  
 HONKY TONK SAL "HAYBAG" ANNIE MISS AMERICA STARS AND STRIPES DORSAL QUEEN WAR WEARY  
 HESITATIN' HUSSY LIBERTY BELLE HUSTLIN' HUSSY PREGNANT PORTIA LEADING LADY ALEXANDER'S RAGTIME BAND  
 BIG GAS BIRD ANGELS SISTER LI'L AUDREY LONESOME POLECAT HARES BREADTH  
 STAR DUST **HARD LIFE**  **HERALD** MARY PAT SLY FOX  
 SKY CHIEF MR. LUCKY PERRY'S PIRATES SLO JO TARGET FOR TONIGHT SHACK N LADY  
 MADAME SHOO SHOO GIZMO SACK TIME JUNIOR OL' DOODLE BUG  
 PAT PENDING POSSIBLE STRAIGHT MICKY ROGER THE DODGER IMPATIENT VIRGIN RAGGED BUT RIGHT SWEET CHARIOT  
 ROUNDTRIP JACK HOMESICK ANGEL HALF AND HALF SLEEPYTIME GAL RUBY'S RAIDERS SWINGING DOOR  
 SHACK BUNNY MY GAL SAL LATEST RUMOR MAIDEN AMERICA MISSISSIPPI MISS  
 SPIRIT OF CHICAGO BIG STINKY VIBRANT VIRGIN MISSION BELLE LULU BELLE  
 SOUTHERN BELLE RAGGEDY ANNE OL' RUM DUM FOOLISH VIRGIN

We're making room for some more "Names". First come--first printed.

Send us your request!



NEWSLETTER OF THE

**385th BOMBARDMENT GROUP MEMORIAL ASSOCIATION**



**COMBAT UNITS**

HQ. SQUADRON  
 548th BOMB SQ.  
 549th BOMB SQ.  
 550th BOMB SQ.  
 551st BOMB SQ.

**VOL. XVIII, NO. 4**  
 Editor: Ed Stern  
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 Fargo, North Dakota

**JULY 1991**

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424th AIR SVS. GP.  
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**PREZ SEZ:**

First, I want to thank you for giving me the honour of being your president and serving you for the next two years. I'll do my best to do a good job. I know the fine group of officers you also elected, have the same feelings and will do a great job. Again thanks for the privilege of serving such a wonderful and illustrious gang.

It was a great reunion in Tulsa, 'course that's what we always expect and always get. George and Marie Menkoff sure kept the tradition going with the great time they showed us.

Meeting all the new members at the reunion was really sensational--welcome back to the old 385th Group. Don't forget to write Ed Stern with any facts, stories, or personal history that he will be able to use for the "Hardlife Herald". Thanks, Sam and George for finding our lost buddies. Let's keep the drive going.

Hope a lot of you are planning on making the trip back to England and Great Ashfield next spring. Lee and I are.

Sid

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**50th Anniversary Reunion--Spokane, WA - 1993**

**EDITOR'S NOTE:**

This issue of Hardlife Herald is being printed before we have complete information and pictures on the Tulsa Reunion. Here are a few of the Highlights.

Watch for the next issue for pictures (which I hope you're sending) and details.

There were around 50 "First-timers" who added much to the proceedings as they renewed friendships from 46 or more years ago.

Over 450 attended the Saturday night banquet.

Treasurer John Pettenger reported about the same balance in the Treasury as 2 years ago-\$15,000.

Yearly dues increase to \$10 was approved.

A contribution of \$2,000 to the stained glass window at All Saints Church was approved. The total cost will be about \$12,000 and we are all encouraged to send donations to John.

A committee was selected to screen 1995 Reunion locations.

The Spokane Convention and Tourist Bureau had a very attractive display and representative to inform members on our 1993 Reunion site.

For the first time in the history of our Reunions, it "rained on our parade"--Friday night's outdoor barbecue and performance of Oklahoma drew a good rain--gentle, but wet.

General Buck Shuler, scheduled to speak at the Saturday night dinner, cancelled out. WE didn't miss him. Great entertainment by a very colorful Native-American group of dancers.

Joe Jones, our candidate for "the Luckiest Man Alive" was the first winner of a raffle prize, maintaining his reputation.

The election produced no surprises, nor any volunteers for Editor of the Hardlife.

Tulsa has a great bronze statue in front of the Air Terminal, in memory of 16,000 pilots who trained there during WW2.

A selection committee was named to pick a site for depositing 385th memorabilia. Savannah and Omaha were among the suggestions.

Frank Sutter was appointed to follow up on a possible medal for "Maquis drop" flyers.

We voted to continue support for the Sally B.

New information is coming soon on the projected 1992 trip to England.

Chaplain Jim (Vance) informed us that we are "Chronologically Gifted people" rather than AARP or Senior Citizens or just plain old folks.

**ROSTER CORRECTIONS**

George J. Behl  
51 Winsor Rd.  
Springfield, IL 62702  
(Life Member)

**PLANE INFORMATION**

#235049 was named "Golden Goose (P. 25)  
"Miss D Day" was not missinglp. 26). She was repaired and flown home with Martin.

"Miss Fickle Finger of ?" should be "Fickle Finger of Fate" (p. 24).

#210V name was "Angel's Sister" (p. 26).

Date of Dist Unit Citation shown in Brief History on Page 8, May Hardlife, should be 1943 (not 1954).

**CHAPLAIN JIM SEZ:**

Future Hardlife's will run a Chaplain Jim column. For starters we're printing a part of the poem Chaplain Jim read at the Tulsa Reunion as his first contribution.

We are the Men of America  
The Men of the city and farm  
We are the men who built you  
And sheltered you from all harm;  
We are the men from the bombers,  
The men from the tanks and the ships-  
Will you not pause and pray for a moment  
To heed the cry of our lips&

We are the lame and the crippled.  
The men who have given their blood;  
We are the old and young of the nation,  
And war has left us with many scars;  
But love and freedom we cherished  
Not medals or battle stars.  
The bullets and shrapnel dug deep  
And every wound was hard-gotten  
But the deepest wounds of all  
Would be to come home and be forgotten.

**□ □ □ □ LIFE MEMBERS^ □ □ □**

Dan Riva	241
Raymond E. Baer	242
Gordon W. Parker	243

Life member 0. Vernon Roskey has signed up 6 new members-all children and grandchildren. Edward, Vernon, Julie, Mark Edward, Mary, Paula and Vernon-all Kisingers. They do it in a big way in Texas.



James LaPenna	March 1990
Victor Iverson	1988
Frances L. Coughenow	May 1991
John McKinnon	June 1990
R.O. (Mickey) Purnell	June 1990
Chester Brownlee	
John R. Murray	April 1991

**Chester Brownlee Jr.**

Chester E. Brownlee Jr., 72, of Atascadero, California, died Wednesday, May 22, 1991, in a San Luis Obispo hospital. Visitation will be today at the Atascadero Kiwanis Club, and a member of several other service organizations.

Mr. Brownlee was born Oct. 4, 1918, in Berkeley. He was a teacher at Atascadero High School from 1960 to 1982 and taught in Santa Barbara from 1953 to 1960. He graduated from UC Santa Barbara in 1952 and received his master's degree from Long Beach State University in 1955.

He served in the U.S. Army Air Corps from 1942 to 1948 and received the Distinguished Flying Cross and the Purple Heart. He is a past master of the Atascadero

Mr. Brownlee is survived by his wife of 38 years, Kathleen Brownlee of Atascadero; three daughters and their husbands, Erin and Robert Dally Jr. of Redlands, Colleen and Howard Arnold of Arroyo Grande and Sheila and Simon Smith of Arroyo Grande; three grandsons; and three granddaughters.

Donations in his memory may be made to the Community Church of Atascadero, P.O. Box 688, Atascadero, CA 93423. ->

**J. LaPenna loses battle with cancer**

Former Metro Councilman James J. LaPenna, 67, died yesterday afternoon at his home, 821 Dresden Court, of cancer.

One of Mr. LaPenna's favorite community involvements stemmed from a personal tragedy: the mental retardation that institutionalized a daughter Pamela Jean LaPenna. As a result of his personal interest in the subject, he campaigned long and hard for improved services for the mentally retarded.

"Mr LaPenna served in the Metro Council from 1966-71, representing the 24th District, covering the Horton Heights, Hill wood and West Meade areas.

A native of Long Island, N.Y., Mr. LaPenna was a son of John and Georgiana LaPenna. He enlisted in the Army during World War II and later became a squadron and group leader with a B17 Flying Fortress group, flying 35 missions over Germany and occupied Europe. The 8th Air



Force awarded turn the Distinguished Flying Cross and the Air Medal with four Oak Leaf Clusters.

At the time of his death, he was a retired colonel in the U.S. Air Force Reserve. He was also retired from the state government of Tennessee. Mr. LaPenna graduated from Vanderbilt University with a bachelor's degree and held a law degree from Vanderbilt School of Law. He was a practicing attorney in Nashville from 1954-70.

He was a past president of the Nashville Junior Chamber of Commerce, Delta Theta Phi legal fraternity, Eta Sigma Phi classical fraternity and Martha Vaught School Men's Club. He also formerly served as vice president of the board of trustees of Nashville Public Library, and was a former member of the board of Planned Parenthood Association of Nashville.

**Late Information on Maquis Croix de Guerre Effort**

Triggered by the San Francisco Chronicle story about Croix de Guerre awards being made to a Bomb Group that participated in the drops to the Maquis, we had a good deal of discussion at the Tulsa Reunion about possibilities of our Group being recognized for drops we participated in on June 25, July 14, and Aug. 1, 1944.

Frank Sutter was asked to spearhead the effort to followup. Gene Silberberg and Truman Smith have sent information, and Elmer Snow contacted his US Representative with information he received from HQ USAF, but he has not heard back.

After receiving the info from Elmer, your Editor walked it over to U.S. Senator Quentin Burdick's office. Those of you who attended the Fargo Reunion may remember that the Senator spoke briefly at the Opening Ceremonies. He has contacted the Military Attache at the French Embassy in Washington and has been assured that the matter will be looked into. The Senator's office asks us to give them corroborating information that we have, so any of you who wish can send us any information you have.

Senator Burdick did NOT have to look the Maquis up in any history books-and he has a good deal of Seniority in the Senate and will be of maximum assistance to us.

**NOTICE**

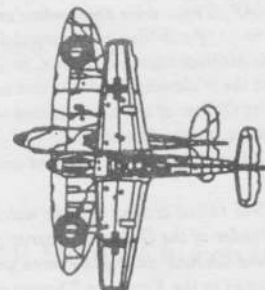
Anyone desiring Cassette Tapes of "Big Band" music and songs may write to:

Russ Baril  
212 Forest Lane  
Cheshire, CT 06410

Russ who is a member of the 94th B.G. has over 800 tapes in his collection. Tell him which Band, Songs, or Vocalists you want and he will make the tapes for you.

The cost per tape is VERY, VERY reasonable. Write or call him for further Information.

His Phone is: (203) 272-6300.





United States  
of America

# Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE <sup>nd</sup>102 CONGRESS, FIRST SESSION

Vol 137

WASHINGTON, THURSDAY, MARCH 21, 1991

No. 49

## House of Representatives

### A TRIBUTE TO THE 8TH AIR FORCE

**MR. FAZIO.** Mr. Speaker, the recent victory in the Persian Gulf should remind us all of the debt and the gratitude that we owe to all of our Nation's veterans. With this in mind, I want to take a moment to recognize a special group of veterans who are quickly approaching an important milestone. In 1992, the 'Mighty 8th Air Force,' 650,000 members strong since World War n, will be celebrating their 50th anniversary. The brave men who make up the 8th Air Force have served with distinction and honor, and it is my privilege to recognize them on their 50th anniversary by submitting a brief history of the 8th Air Force written by Dr. Eric Hawkinson -- a member of the 8th Air Force, the current chairman of the 8th Air Force Historical Society Unit Advisory Committee, and my constituent I recommend the article to my colleagues and congratulate the members of the 8th Air Force on this special occasion. The article follows.

#### WHEN DID WE QUIT - 8TH AIR FORCE? (BY ERIC HAWKINSON)

*We began as the 8th Army Air Force in 1942, but when did we quit? We didn't. The 8th Air Force lives today with headquarters at Barksdale Air Force Base, Shreveport, Louisiana. Well then, when did we wrap it up in England following World War II?*

*The Mighty Eighth Army Air Force began on 19 January 1942 and was activated on 28 January 1942 at the Chatham Armory in Savannah, Georgia. Located at Hunter Field, Colonel Asa N. Duncan was the first commander. Pearl Harbor had just been bombed about a month and a half earlier.*

*Brigadier General Ira C. Eaker took the Eighth Air Force Bomber Command Headquarters to England the next month and located at High Wycombe, about 40 miles west of London and on the road to Oxford. In May 1942, Command of the 8th Air Force was assumed by Major General Carl A. "Tooney" Spaatz. He established the 8th Air Force Headquarters as Bushy Park (Teddington, Middlesex), 15 miles west southwest of the center of London on 25 June 1942. Shortly after the birth of the 8th AAF at Savannah, one of our own, Joseph A. 'Joe' Stenglein, 1st Lieutenant and pilot, in the 8th Bomber Command was on the way to the United Kingdom and in charge of 1000 officers and men making the transition from Georgia into the United Kingdom as staff for the 8th Air Force. Joe knew the High Wycombe Abbey well as the main Headquarters building of the 8th AAF. There were times when socially he was over at Maidenhead in the home of a British governmental minister with Joe's friend. Pleasant J. McNeel. McNeel later, as did Joe, joined the staff of the 325th Recon Wing. Joe served at the Widewing headquarters in the London area and then became Commanding Officer of the organization which was to become the 25th Bomb Group at Walton, north of London.*

*General James H. Doolittle assumed command of the 8th AAF on 6 January 1944.*

*Before 1945 rolled around and the war in Europe was over (May 7, 1945) with the surrender of the Germans, approximately 350000 officers and men had served in the 8th AAF during the three year or so period in which the Americans participated in the European Theater of Operations.*

*The British had suffered the war many more years, having had various degrees of involvement from 1939 on. Many of their men had gone overseas to distant lands, while the Americans had left the United States which had directly seen little war and were now seeing overseas duty in the British homeland. Some of the children took to the Yanks with their familiar coveen of "Any gum chum?" The older Britons complained that the Yanks were "Overpaid, over-fed, oversexed and over here." As the Americans fraternized with the British women, they also retaliated by saying to the Britons, "Britons are underpaid, undersexed and under Eisenhower."*

*Our brash warm beer drinking, cigar smoking and gum chewing G J J were basically a friendly bunch even as they communicated with the hungry Britons living with rationing, war weariness and a longing for their own troops away in the wars. The Britons eventually felt the Yanks to be less of a threat and invited them into their homes. Their daughters dated them and many married them, 50000 to be nearly exact!*

*General James H. Doolittle left the UX. Base for Okinawa with the 8th Air Force flag in July of 1945 with the intent of bringing the 8th Air Force there for the final thrust on Japan. Various combat crews returned to the States following their prescribed number of missions for their tour of duty. The ground crews remained from the time of their arrival to the United Kingdom until it became possible for them to return home. The dropping of the atom bombs (August 6 and 9) on Japan brought the war (Japan accepted terms of surrender on September 2) in the Pacific to a close and the 8th AAF personnel did not have to transfer en mass to the Pacific Theater of Operations.*

*Major General William E. Kepner, relatively little known probably to many GJs, was the 8th AAF commander 10 May 1945 and Major General Westside T. Larson assumed command on 21 June 1945. General James H Doolittle returned on 19 July 1945 to assume command.*

*Units were sent to the States for deactivation, officers and men were temporarily assigned to some units going home as an official means of moving them from the UK to the Zone of the Interior (Army talk for the United States), some stayed for purposes of closing bases or carrying out other assignments, such as housekeeping of base closures. Some units and individual officers and men were sent to the Continent for follow-up chores, such as bomb assessment surveys and photographic details, reproduction and interpretation.*

*Many 8th AAF officers and men were missing in action and never accounted for as to their whereabouts. The 8th AAF suffered 26 000 deaths out of the 350000 officers and men. (The US Navy suffered 37000 deaths out of the 4.1 million in the WW II Navy.) Many bodies were exhumed and returned to the US. at the request of families and many families opted to allow their loved ones to remain in US. Military and other cemeteries in the United Kingdom and the Continent. A number of prisoners of war from the 8th AF needed medical treatments both in the European Theater and then in the United States. A considerable number needed various kinds of rehabilitation. Many of the veterans of the ETO chose to remain in the service, some chose to remain in Europe, some with the women they had married and others were employed in that Theater.*

*Whereas probably the bulk of the living from the original 350000 chose civilian life, many chose the military as a career. Some upon entering civilian life, opted to return to the military service.*

*The 8th Air Force just did not quit. When the Army Air Force became a separate service from the Army on 18 September 1947, the 8th Air Force continued and currently remains an effective strategic force. It did not quit. It just changed hands! An estimated 650000 have served in it since WW II!*



**Two Thousand Veterans of World War II Mighty Eighth Air Force will meet in New Orleans in September IT-22,1991.**

Two thousand veterans of General Jimmy Doolittle's World War II Mighty Eighth Air Force will meet in the Marriott Hotel at the French Quarter of New Orleans on September 17-22. This will be the 17th annual reunion of this senior citizen group, many individuals bringing wives, family and friends.

The original 8th Army Air Force was born in 1942 and prior to 1945,350,000 men and women served in this greatest air armada ever known. After the war an estimated 650,000 persons served in the 8th Air Force, for a total of over one million service men and women.

Half of the USAAF casualties in WWII were suffered by the 8th Air force (over 47,000 including 26,000 dead). Mighty Eighth Air Force personnel were awarded 17 medals of Honor in WWII. In addition there were 2210 Distinguished Service Crosses, 850 Silver Stars, 7,000 Purple Hearts, 46,000 Distinguished Flying Crosses and 442,300 Air Medals.

There were 261 fighter aces in the 8th AF in WWII, 31 having more than 15 aircraft kills. Expected to attend the reunion will be one of the greatest aces of all time, Francis Gabrieski of Dix Hills, New York. Other aces will also be present.

This serious gathering will share the World War II oriented speeches and motion picture films, tours of New Orleans and a highlight will be a memorial service at Chalmette Battlefield.



**THURSDAY**

MARCH 14,1991  
THE STATE JOURNAL-REGISTER  
SPRINGFIELD, ILLINOIS  
PAGE 9

# St. Patrick's Day parade to be led by WWII veteran

**By SEAN NOBLE**

STAFF WRITER

A decorated World War II veteran involved in veteran education will lead Saturday's St. Patrick's Day parade, which might turn into a celebration more closely resembling the Fourth of July.

The selection of George Behl as citizen grand marshal of the celebration "really is appropriate because of the Persian Gulf crisis," Springfield Mayor Ossie Langfelder said in making the announcement Wednesday afternoon.

"There's a lot of people much more deserving of (the recognition) than I am," Behl said. "But the veterans will all remember you selected someone to represent them on this occasion."

The citizen grand marshal designa-

tion goes to an individual who's made significant but often unheralded contributions to the community, said Pat O'Grady, president of the St. Patrick's Day Marching Band Parade, Inc.

Among Behl's accomplishments are 30 years of state service as a veteran education adviser, assisting veterans with job training, and 15 years of work with the Interveteran Burial Detail of Sangamon County, providing military funerals for about 200 veterans a year.

Behl, an Air Force tailgunner and radio operator in Europe in World War II, has been awarded a dozen medals, including the Distinguished Civina Cross and a Purple Heart.

**385th BGMA APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP**

Please Print

\_\_\_\_\_  
LAST NAME, First, MI.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Spouse's Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Street or P.O. Box #

(     ) \_\_\_\_\_  
Telephone Number

\_\_\_\_\_  
City, State, & Zip Code

\_\_\_\_\_  
Squadron or Support Unit

The annual dues are Ten Dollars (\$10.00)  
Life-time memberships are one payment of \$100. 00 Date  
Make Check out to "385th BGMA" and mail to:  
John F. Pettenger, Treas.  
Box 117  
Laurel, FL 34272-0117

\_\_\_\_\_  
POW Capture Data  
  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Place  
Stalag Unit

Life-time memberships are used to perpetuate the  
Ashfield, Suffolk County, England.

memorial at All Saints Church in Great



State Journal-Register/Chris Youi

## •Snappy salute

**St. Patrick's Day parade grand marshal George Behl salutes a passing American flag while watching from the reviewing stand Saturday. Area troops serving in the Persian Gulf were designated**

**VETS DAY:** A steady wave of applause followed World War II veteran **GEORGE BEHL** and just-returned Persian Gulf War vet **DAVID BREDEMEYER**, who shared citizen grand marshal duties, as they moved along the parade route atop a military vehicle. Ditto for the group of Vietnam War vets marching in the parade.

Dear Editor Ed,

Just received the May 91 Hardlife Herald and as usual I dropped everything to catch up on what I've missed by not make all the roll calls.

In line with your request to report mistakes, it appears that my name is missing again. Alphabetically my name should appear between Beecro\$t and Behr. Status of membership is a Life member which I have been for some time now. I was a member of the George Czerwinski crew. My initial mission was at (#45) Munster on Dec. 22, 1943, my last free trip to Europe was on that scenic view of Nantes, France June 8, 1944. (#130).

**honorary grand marshals by parade organizers. Behl was joined on the reviewing stand by Lt. David Bredemeyer of Springfield, who recently returned from duty in the gulf.**

Up to now I have resisted sending you the enclosed newspaper items, however since my existence may be in doubt I submit the proof supplied by our local paper. Now remember it's me and Abe Lincoln who claim to live here in the great midwest.

In case my humor was not TOO thinly veiled, all is in jest except, I live.

Maybe you could help me get two or three of the 385th Group auto window decals. I've written to the PX address a couple of times and included a twenty dollar check once to no avail. My telecalls to Arkey Huber also failed to produce the desired results. The Decals will go nice with my truck license plate which is 385th BFA. If anyone happens to see me pass them please give me a double honk!

Sincerely,

George J. Behl

## Letters to Ian

Dear Ian,

I want to say how very much we veterans of the 385th Bomb Group appreciate your researches!

I have taken the list you published in the June 1989 (Vol. XVI, No. 3) issue of the Hardlife Herald, and gone back through all the old issues, as well as later ones, and attempted to fill in blanks. The results are enclosed.

One problem I had was inconsistency in the way serial numbers are given by various sources. Some list the entire number (ex. 42-23335), others only the portion painted on the tail (ex. 223335.) Some serial numbers contained fewer digits than others, and it is often not clear if an initial 2, 3 or 4 is part of the 42-, 43- or 44; or if it follows the. For example, is 297235 properly 42-297235 or 42-97235? Therefore, my list of serial number may well contain errors.

I am writing up the history of our Crew, which was in the 550th Squadron of the 385th from January 1945, and flew back after the war. I had 26 missions. The other surviving crew members are adding to the enclosed draft, which only contains my memories. When it is complete, I promise you a copy. Can you add anything to my mission number 3, Group mission number 261 on the 2nd March, 1945? I understand it was the 551 st that lost the 4 aircraft, but I am not that sure of their positions in the formation, and exactly where I was, or which B-17's the radio operator and I were in?

I hope you find my small efforts useful in getting the "whole picture."

Sincerely,

W. W. Varnedoe, Jr.

Dear Bill,

Sorry for taking so long to follow up my letter of 12 September. I guess I completely under-estimated the time I needed to finish the book and the publisher then threw a googly at me by asking for the appendix earlier than anticipated.

In response to your request for information about the mission of 2 March, 1945, I can offer the following which may help. I'll also copy this letter to Hardlife to try and stir up some other recollections.

### Losses of 2.3.45. 385th Mission 261 to Dresden

B-17G 44-8417. 550th. 1022 Hours. 5110N 1310E.

Pilot Tipton, Kenneth G. 2LT MIA  
Copilot Craig, Edward M. 2LT MIA  
Nav. Waller, Jack M. 2LT MIA  
Bomb King, Glenn W. 2LT MIA  
TTG Maul, Rodger C. SGT MIA  
Radio Mang, Frank E. SGT MIA  
BTG Childress, Glenn R. SGT MIA  
TG Nostin, John, SGT KIA  
WG Eckert, Charles C., SGT, MIA

Hit by e/a cannon fire, fell back from formation and blew up almost immediately. Fell into cloud tops at 18,000. Although no chutes were seen, I believe all the MIA survived.

B-17G 43-37871. 551st. 1021 Hours. Over target.

Pilot Krahn, Robert A., 1 LT, MIA  
Copilot Lundy, Oris E., 1 LT, MIA  
Nav Hull, Glynn D., 2LT, MIA  
Bomb Fritzingler, Russell W. Sr. 1 LT, MIA  
TTG Williams, Flem E., T/Sgt, MIA  
Radio Klimko, Paul C., S% Sgt, MIA  
BTG Green, Doyle  
BTG Green, Doyle, S'A Sgt, MIA  
TG Werner, Roy O. S'z Sgt, MIA  
WG Brown, Lester R., S'2 Sgt, MIA

Hit by e/a cannon fire and went into cloud, under control, at 18,000. No chutes seen but an aircraft, possibly 43-37871, was last seen at 1045, all engines going, wheels down, and trailing smoke in the direction of the Russian lines. I believe all the crew survived.

B-17G 43-38148. 549th. 1023 Hours. 5110N1310E.

Pilot Tripp, Leon E., 1 LT, KIA  
Copilot Batz, Edward L.C., 2LT, MIA  
Nav. Gildea, Edward J. F% O, KIA  
CTG Walters, Richard J., Sft, MIA  
TTG Mackiewicz, Daniel J., SGT, KIA  
ROG Deziel, Leon G., Sgt, KIA  
BGT Wiemerslage, Francis W. Sgt, KIA  
TG Koshenina, Henry G., Sgt, KIA  
WG Macaulay, Robert J., Sft, KIA

Approx 15 to 20 e/a attacked from tail on low squadron. This ship hit and dove into clouds out of control. No chutes were seen. Some reports say a/c on fire.

Statement from E.L.C. Batz: "There were several fires on the ship and the controls were evidently shot out because the ship would not respond. The bail out order was given both by bell and interphone. After the crew had had ample to get out, I went down to the nose escape hatch, finding the engineer sitting beside it because it was jammed. I reached over to pull the emergency release handle when the ship rolled over and blew up. The explosion knocked me unconscious. When I recovered I was falling free. I waited and pulled my chute. I was taken prisoner two hours later".

B-17G 42-97979. 550th. 1025 hours. 5125N1345E.

Vaadi, Eugene J., 1 LT, MIA  
Copilot Brown, Jesse R., 2LT, MIA  
Nav. Conway, Thomas J. Jr, 2LT, MIA  
CTG Duell, Neil G., T/Sgt, MIA  
TTG Anthony, Henry R., Sgt, MIA  
ROG Glitz, Clarence A., S/Sgt, MIA  
BTG DiFonzo, Jino O., Sgt, MIA  
TG Penchi, Philip P., Sgt, MIA  
WG Marshall, Burke L., Sgt, MIA  
WG Marshall, Burke L., Sgt, MIA

Hit by e/a cannon fire, caught fire and glided to cloud tops at 18,000 then exploded. Three chuted from waist door, one from tail. One chute from waist reported on fire - possible five chutes total.

Happily, all the crew survived and Jesse Brown gave me his account some years ago. "We were on fire and control was almost impossible/dueto control surface damage. The bail out order was given and no response was heard on the intercom. We saw the navigator, Tom Conway, engineer, Ray Anthony and chin gunner, Neil Duell, bail out. I went back thru the bomb bay to see if everyone had left the rear of the aircraft and no one was seen. I came back up to the flight deck and told Gene that everyone was out. I then started toward the front escape hatch when Gene turned loose the controls, the aircraft started a descending slow roll. I had to pull myself thru the escape hatch as the aircraft was now upside down. The slipstream forced me against the wing and I was caught between the fuselage and engine and held tightly against the wing by the air stream. I then saw and heard an explosion - the next thing I knew I was floating down in my parachute with pieces of the plane falling all around me...."

For background to the mission, I suggest you refer to the July 1986 newsletter and my letter in it to Russell Fritzing. I don't have the crew lists but you can get these from your National Archives - please don't forget me if you do. I'd also like to thank you for sending me the history of your crew and I'm looking forward to seeing what the other surviving crew members can add. When complete, I'm sure your combined recollections will make a fascinating feature for *Hardlife Herald*. Maybe others will be encouraged when they see what your crew has done to place on record your memories and experiences.

Take care and many thanks for your support and encouragement regarding my 385th research work.

Best wishes,

Ian McLachlan

Dear Stan,

Sorry to have been so long getting back to you but here's some more 385th info continuing on from where I stopped last time and following your list.

42-3551. 13.12.43. Lt. Jack E. Fowles. Kiel. Left formation under control just before bomb run. 1 KIA.  
 42-3097. 30.12.43. Lt. Reuben H. Eckhardt. Ludwigshaven. Left formation after target with no apparent reason. 2 KIA.  
 42-30249. 30.12.43. Lt. Earl T. Frye. Ludwigshaven. Left formation, no reason, prior to target. 1 KIA.  
 42-40046. 4.1.44. Lt. Ashley R. Bean. Kiel. Last seen with #2 feathered and having trouble with #3. Details of why ship went down are lacking - not under fighter attack. Crew survived.  
 42-30251. 29.1.44. Lt. Raymond E. Notestein. Frankfurt. Violently attacked by e/a between target and RP. Whole leading edge of wing blown off and some report said MEI 09 rammed this A/C head-on. 6 KIA.  
 42-30354. 29.1.44. Lt. Ralph H. Palmer, Frankfurt. Last seen 1130, #4 feathered, dropping from formation. 1 KIA.  
 42-97506. 29.1.44. Lt. Robert L. Bostick. Frankfurt. Damaged by e/a after bomb release. Peeled from formation near RP. Last seen heading for France -1 to 10 chutes counted, crew survived.

42-31181. 30.1.44. Lt. Robert I. Lojinger. Braunscheig. Disappeared into cloud after bombing. Crew POW.  
 42-39952. 3.2.44. Lt Robert . Morse Jr. Wilhelmshaven. Shortly after crossing out en route to home, this A/C pulled up then nosed into a dive and hit 42-39938 knocking off the latter's stabilizer and tail guns. #952 dived 5,000 feet then pulled out and was last seen entering undercast. Crew KIA.  
 42-39938. Lt. Herbert A. Heuser. See above. Last seen at 2,000 over North Sea 50 miles ENE of Cromer. Crew KIA.  
 42-31295. Lt. Billy N. Horstman. Frankfurt. 4.2.44. Shot down by Pul90,s, crashed in Munsterbilzen near Maastricht. Crew POW.  
 42-31355. 4.2.44 Lt. Robert L. McAdams. Frankfurt. Take-off delayed by engine trouble, tacked on to another group. Shortly after bombing A/C lost power in #2 & #4 plus nose hit by flak. Crew survived.  
 42-31380. 8.2.44. Lt. Fancis F. Pabich. Wiesbaden. A/C turned back to France, cause unknown. Crew survived.  
 42-30836. "Dragon Lady" 13.2.44. Lt. E. R. Herron. Hit by flak attacking noball - ditched - 3 KIA.  
 42-30662. 24.2.44. (Rostock) Lt. John A. Terrace Jr. Shot down by e/a - crew baled out.  
 42-31349. 24.2.44. Rostock. Capt. Clarence S. McIveen. Hit by Ju 88 rocket attack and dropped from formation. Jumped by three e/a and -3 on fire. Last seen gliding for cloud with a Ju88 and Mel 10 following. 7 chutes seen.  
 42-3422. Lt. Nelson H. Davis. 25.2.44. Regensburg. Direct hit by flak on #1. Spun in. Davis KIA. Crew survived.  
 42-30822. 25.2.44. Lt. Salter S. Clark. Noball. Hit by flak and disintegrated. 1 chute seen. 2 survivors.  
 42-38121. As above. Lt. Gilbert O. Kemman. Flak blew tail off. 8 KIA.  
 42-31203. Not 100% sure on this but I think this ship was flown by Lt. Willard G. Schnieder and crew. Lost #2 and 3, possibly flak. Ditched. Crew rescued.  
 42-30737. 16.3.44. Lt. Wesley H. Krause. Augsburg, e/a. 2 KIA.  
 42-38195. As above. Lt. Vincent P. McLaughlin. In trouble after e/a attack. Bombed with group then headed for Switzerland. Interned.  
 42-38160. as above. Lt. Robert W. Meyer. A/C headed for Switzerland after being hit in #4 during attack by e/a. Crew survived.  
 42-31102. 23.3.44. Lt. John A. Salyards. Brunswick. Flak, Crew OK.  
 42-39908. As above. Lt. Frederick P. Fulton. Hit by e/a. ship broke in two. 8 KIA. RWG Sgt. Vance E. Travelstead evaded with Dutch underground.  
 42-37959. As above. Lt. Eugene F. Stubler, Jr. Hit by fighters, A/C went into dive with #2 on fire and disintegrating as it entered undercast. 3/4 chutes. 6 KIA.

Regarding another query. On 4.10.43, I can confirm that Carl Dawurske brought 42-3308 home from Frankfurt with its controls damaged. The crew parachuted safely - Dawurkse was picked up from the sea. A propeller thought to be from this aircraft was trawled up off Southwold in 1988.

"Lulu Belle" ditched coming home from the shuttle on 24.8.43. Major Preston Piper was Command Pilot - I've enclosed some extra info from August '78 newsletter, hope this helps. I'll also copy this letter to *Hardlife Herald* because it may prompt some memories, pictures or correction. I do



have crew lists for nearly all the above losses if you need more detail.

All the best for now,

Ian McLachlan

Dear Ed,

Just to show I haven't been asleep I've enclosed copies of some recent 385BG correspondence. The epistle to "Stan" is for a friend and fellow historian who's been researching the USAAF in the UK for a great many years.

One 385th incident has me stumped and i'm hoping you'll find space for this in HH because I'd like to find out what happened and the names of those on board B-17G 42-31554 which crashed on 24 May 1944. The only information I have is that this was one of 19 ships which took off for a raid on Berlin. Two engines failed and it crash landed at 0745 hours on Range Field near the village of Fornham-All-Saints in Suffolk. Six of the crew baled out and two of the remaining four were injured when it hit a tree and caught fire during the crash-landing. Twenty minutes later, one of the ten 5001b bombs exploded injuring 3 firemen and a civilian. I believe it came from the 551st. If anyone can come up with a crew list, survivor account and relevant photographs. I'd be extremely grateful.

On 19th May I'll be representing the 385th during the annual commemorative service held at the American Military Cemetery near Cambrige. As on previous years, I'll lay a wreath for the group and pay my respects to those of your comrades who rest beneath English soil. There are many of us over here who haven't forgotten.

Kindest regards,

Ian

Dear Dme,

Many thanks for yours of November 9th, it was a pleasure to hear from you again.

I've copied the sketch for Ed Stern so he has it available for the nearest Hardlife Herald to next Christmas. When your letter arrived, I was knee deep in finishing off my second book, "8th Air Force Bomber Stories" and was way behind with my 385th activities. However, I did submit the somewhat naughty pictures which appeared in the February issue. On a more serious note. I'll be laying a wreath on behalf of the group at Cambridge again this year and I'm involved with the East Anglian Tourist Board and their plans for promoting memories of the 8th for 1992. One way and another, it keeps me busy.

By the way, I use your POW sketch in a slide show I give about the 385th, I hope you don't mind.

All the best for now,

Ian

# HEY SOLDIER!

IF YOU SERVED IN WORLD WAR II, WE'RE INTERESTED IN YOUR PHOTOGRAPHS AND MEMOIRS.

THE JEWISH MONTHLY IS PLANNING A SPECIAL SECTION TO MARK THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF AMERICA'S ENTRANCE INTO THE WAR THIS DECEMBER. SEND US YOUR STORIES FROM THE WAR FRONT AND HOME FRONT: WHAT DID YOU DO DURING THE WAR? WHAT WAS YOUR MOST VIVID MEMORY? HOW DID THE WAR CHANGE YOU LIFE? DID YOU HAVE ANY UNIQUE JEWISH EXPERIENCES? WHAT WAS YOUR MOST HUMOROUS EXPERIENCE?

PLEASE LIMIT YOUR SUBMISSION TO 1,000 WORDS. ALL ITEMS MUST BE POSTMARKED NO LATER THAN SEPTEMBER 1. WE WILL RETURN ALL MANUSCRIPTS AND PHOTOGRAPHS.



SEND YOUR MATERIAL TO:  
THE B'NAI B'RITH INTERNATIONAL JEWISH MONTHLY,  
1640 RHODE ISLAND AVE., N.W., WASHINGTON, D.C. 20036

## Your Assistance Please Information on Marienburg Raid Sought

"Yesterday my wife and I were having dinner in a restaurant called *94th Bomb Group* in Fairfield NJ. It was a great and pleasant surprise for us to find among many others, photos and maps connected with the 94th Bomb Group's action on Marienburg, East Prussia on 9 October 1943.

"Let me explain why. We are both from Poland, and Marienburg is now a Polish city. There is a magnificent castle from the 14th century which was headquarters for a German Knights Order. Marienburg - now called Malbork - is situated in a very interesting land near the sea coast, and not far from the biggest Polish lake country. This land for many centuries was under strong influences from many cultures: native, Polish, German and Dutch. It made this part of Poland very attractive.

"We are really in love with it - so to find in New Jersey such new information about Malbork history was for us a great pleasure. The American war effort over Poland is not known well, and as we understand, the 94th Bomb Group's action on Marienburg was some kind of military masterpiece.

"Did you know in 1943 about the castle in Marienburg and what kind of monument it is?

"Did you have any orders to avoid bombing the castle?

"Maybe you can send us any information about this action or about any books where we can find it? Please contact: Anna Boczkowska & Jan Peche, 213 Delaware Ave, Jersey City NJ 07306."

## Letters to the Editor:

Dear Ed,

I'm particularly glad that you corrected the command structure of our Group as reported erroneously in the "Official History" of the group published in a recent edition.

Of course, as a "Paddlefoot", I was never in command of the 385th. However, as accurately reported in an earlier edition of *Hardlife*, I did bring the remaining ground echelon (with the exception of Frank Marano's holding party) back to the United States on the Queen Elizabeth in the middle of August 1945.

Best regards,

Totton Anderson

Dear Ed:

Just noticed when I wrote the above date, 48 years ago today was my first day in the military at Fort Sheridan, just outside Chicago, which was my home then. Again thanks very much for the newsletters. I have forwarded them on to Chicago to my friend and hopefully his son-in-law can find someone in your outfit that knew Capt. George Lea, pilot.

Regarding the microfilm I procured from Maxwell, the address to write is:

USAF  
Historical Research Center  
Maxwell Air Force Base  
Alabama 36112-6678

As I stated I made a personal visit last spring and they were very accomodating. I spent 1 1/2 days reading the files on the 452nd B.G. (square L) and then purchased the microfilm relative to the period (May '44 thru Aug. '44) when I was there. Each film will cost \$20.00 and the other 3 on the 452nd I intend to purchase to complete the history. All the pages ARE NOT legible, (approx. 20%) but the 80% remaining is a real education. It includes mission reports, formations, battle casualties, court martials, etc. Contact Tim Johnson at Maxwell for info on the 385th. Hope this info is of value to your outfit.

Best regards,

Han Motts  
901 Poleng Dr.  
Columbus, Ohio 43224

Dear Mr. Stern:

I have just received my copy of the June *Hardlife Herald*, a bit battered it looks as if it had been in the mail for a very long time. I do appreciate receiving the Newsletter and read it from cover to cover.

We are having a hard winter at the moment sharp frost; and a foot of snow and drifting. Transport has come to a standstill.

Inclosed is a copy from the East Anglian Daily Times Newspaper about the 1992 reunion and the stained glass window for Great Ashfield church. Also some shots I took of the 385th last return to England after the memorial service in Great Ashfield Church.

It was great to see Earl Cole and Ronald Norland again. I last saw Ronald Noland in 1976 when he was making the film of the reunion and some 94th members came over with them. Some of the film was taken on Rougham Airfield.

I last saw Earl and Ruth Cole in 1978 when he, John Ford and John Pettenger attended the 94th Memorial dedication in Bury St. Edmunds.

Kind regards.

Cliff Hall



Earl Cole, Cliff Hall, on Airfield



Great Ashfield Church  
Ruth Cole, Ronald Noland, Earl Cole



Outside Great Ashfield Church  
Earl Cole, Ronald Noland, Rowley Miles

Dear Ed,

The article on P. 16 in the Feb. 91 Hard Life Herald sent to you by Fred Nestler & described as "Cheap tabloid headlines," may be just that; but the reminder of a "French Special" brought back a flood of vivid recollections.

Between 29 June & 25 October, '44, I flew 34 missions with the 550th Squadron as radioman. That's barely 4 months, & it's no wonder that it's blurred in memory. I've never thought about it much since, but I recently ran across my old & yellowed form 5 flight records & matched them with the combat & special missions booklet the association published a few years ago.

My crew started combat missions with Earl Hall as pilot for the first 3 or 4 trips. After he left us, most of the crew flew with Don Doame as pilot. A number of these were flown in "Rum Dum" including its 100th mission. I've never heard from any of these good people or seen their names in the Herald.

Ted Klosz was co-pilot, with Koerner-Bombardier, the stalwart "Gus" Gaustad-Navigator (We're not going to Sweden, we can make it home" and we did), the estimable & gutsy Foster Myers-engineer (air sick on every flight Et never thought about quitting), "Junior" Armatis was one waist gunner, & the renowned Rex George Youngblood-tail gunner. He flew 50 missions in North Africa before joining us. There was a high turn over at ball turret (understandable) & the other waist gun positions, but we pretty much hung together until after we reached 31 or so. After that I think my eyes glazed over & the flight surgeon must have caught me -having the blind staggers Et sinking spells. Probably resulted from having skipped the "REST HOME". When you think you're on a roll there's no way you want to break the charm.

To return to the supply-drop trip, it was our 8th mission (385th #162) 1 Aug. '44 - 31 aircraft led by Col. Tesla. The form 5 shows a flight time of 9 hours, 25 minutes, the longest trip I flew in combat. By comparison, one mission to Berlin took only 8:05 (385th #194) 6 Oc. '44) Et another to Munich 9:15 (385th #151, 13 July '44). There were valid reasons for the extraordinary length of time on this trip.

As I recall, there was a lot of delay over the drop area which I believe was high in the Haute Savoie Alps. I understand that's a fashionable ski area now.

Some of this was caused by MEI 09's attacking the Maquis waiting to pick up the supplies. That's always puzzled me, as I would think the 17's would have made more productive targets during a low-level drop. At any rate, we made at least two passes over the drop area with bomb bay doors open and dropped on the 3rd pass. After the 2nd try, I opened up the door to the bay to be greeted by a face full of shroud line Et cotton parachute material which had poached out of the rear of the supply cannisters. I did my best to stuff that material back into place, but there wasn't much for it, as the British like to say.

I think it was Youngblood who told me later that the cannisters were traveling at a spectacular speed, when they hit the ground in the clearing. It figures, since most of the shroud lines were wound around the shafts Et gears on both

sides and the bomb bay doors stuck in the open position. I've always hoped that the brave French resistance people were able to salvage some useable material. Myers Et myself spent what seemed like a month crawling around in the bay cutting Et untangling that mess before the doors were finally closed. It was a "one hand for the ship, one hand for yourself" situation.

The "French Special" was a unique experience, probably why it stands out in my memory. I heard rumbles about this shortly after Et a couple of times since, but tell me, where does the line form for the Croix de Guerre?

Seriously, I enjoy reading the Herald & hope someday to attend one of the reunions (at the Oshkosh EAA?) Was glad to see Glen Huf-Schmidt's name as a life member. Glen was with the 550th, but was gone before I arrived. We met after the war Et the fact we were both part of the 385th happened to come up in conversation while beating up wind across Milwaukee bay in a small sailboat.

Best regards,

John Hickey  
1840 Westmoor T r.  
Elm Grove, WI 53122

Dear Ed,

The past few weeks have brought back some pleasant memories. First, as I was reading the paper, I saw I the notice of the reunion of the 385th. This was the first time in 45 years that I heard anything pertaining to the 385th Bomb Group. I wrote a note to Sam Lyke asking for more information and a couple of days ago, I received a letter from him which included a copy of the "Hard Life " in it. I was surprised to see an article and a picture of Lt. Charles Smith, who happened to be my transportation officer. I had been with him at Geiger Field and Glasgow, Montana Et then Great Ashfield.

Sincerely,

Ray Baer

Dear Ed,

Was pleased to read the letter from Henry Dworshak in the Feb issue of "Hard Life Herald." Big H. was 548 Adjutant at the same time I was Sq. Ord. Officer. And that brings back memories!

Have also wondered about Tom Kenny. Also two other old friends. Namely, Bob Belcher Et S.G. Bowen. Both were friends of Henry so perhaps he might have some info. Did maintain contact with Bob for many years after the war but then, unfortunately, lost contact.

Been living here in Austria since 1980. Spend my winters skiing and my summers climbing and biking. Enjoy the life here.

Sincerest regards  
Bill Housman

Dear Ed,

I've noticed that there has seemed to be an interest in the 2 March 1945 mission to Dresden.

I have corresponded with Neil Duell of Vaadi's crew, Ed Pickett of Platt's crew and Ed Craig of Tipton's crew and put this together with my own memories and what Bill Kozosky my late Radio Operator told me. Then I took the official mission report filed at the time by the 385th, and now in the archives at Maxwell AFB, to put together the enclosed story of that raid. Use it in the Hardlife Herald if you wish.

Yours,

W.W. Varnedoe, Jr.

### The 2 March 1945 Mission to Dresden

On the 2nd March 1945, the 385th Bomb Group went on its 261st mission. The 550th Squadron was low squadron. The primary target was a Ruhland oil refinery, but 10/10 clouds diverted the Group to the secondary target, a railroad marshalling yard on the outskirts of Dresden. The bomb load was 20, 2501b General Purpose bombs in each Fort. Intervalometer setting was minimum. Bombing altitude was 25,000 ft.

Crow's crew did not fly as a crew on this one. However, the 550th Squadron was short of Navigators and Radio Operators so Bill Kozosky, the radio operator, and Bill Varnedoe, the navigator, were awakened and sent to the briefing, although neither knew the other was flying (in different aircraft) until after the mission was over. This was mission No. 3 for both of them.

In Platt's crew, the normal navigator, Francis L. Aires, had been promoted to a lead navigator and was not with his crew. He was in the lead element of the low flight of the low squadron in Aircraft (a/c) No. 43-38566. Platt's Bombardier was also absent and was in A/C 44-8361, the lead of the squadron. Bill Varnedoe was assigned to Platt's crew. The

Pilot - Robert A. Platt  
 Co-Pilot - Not Known  
 Navigator - (Francis L. Aires) but W.W. Varnedoe, Jr. This day.  
 Bombardier - William J. Amis, in lead A/C not with crew today  
 Engineer - John S. Pickett, Jr.  
 Radio Op. - James J. Fitzpatrick  
 Waist Gun. - Johnnie P. Bevilacqua  
 Waist Gun. - Roland A. Picard  
 Ball Gun. - Thomas C. Johnston  
 Tail Gun. - Marvin L. Joseph

Platt was assigned right wing off of low Flight in a Fortress named "Haybag Annie," serial No. 42-97280. The low Flight had Vaadi on the left wing in "Leading Lady", No 42-97979.

His full crew was:

Pilot - Eugene J. Vaadi  
 Co-Pilot - Jesse R. Brown  
 Navigator - Thomas J. Conway, Jr.  
 Chin G. - Neil G. Duell  
 Engineer - Henry R. Anthony

Radio Op. - Clarence A. Glitz  
 Ball G. - Jino O. DiFonzo  
 Waist G. - Burke L. Marshall  
 Tail G. - Philip P. Penchi

Tripp filled in the diamond in the tail end Charlie spot with\* 43-38148. His crew was:

Pilot - Leon E. Tripp  
 Co-Pilot - Edward L. C. Batz  
 Navigator - Edward J. Gildea  
 Engineer - Daniel J. Mackiewicz  
 Chin G. - Richard J. Walters  
 Radio Op. - Leon G. Deziel  
 Ball G. - Francis W. Wiemerslage  
 Waist G. - Robert J. Macauley  
 Tail G. - Henry G. Koshenina

The lead Flight had two elements, stacked down. Right wing of the low element of the lead flight was Tipton in A/C No. 44-8417. Tipton was on his 2nd mission, his first as a crew. Tipton's crew and Crow's crew had trained together at Avon Park, FL; both flew over the Atlantic at the same time and were both assigned to the 385th and 550th on the same orders.

His crew was:

Pilot - Kenneth G. Tipton  
 Co-Pilot - Edward M. Craig  
 Navigator - Jack M. Waller  
 Bombardier - Glenn W. King (assgn'd today, not a regular crew mem.)  
 Engineer - Roger C. Maul  
 Radio Op. - Frank C. Mang  
 Ball G. - Glenn R. Childress  
 Waist G. - Charles C. Eckert  
 Tail G. - John Nostin

The High Flight of the low squadron had one element, making a total of 13 planes for the 550th. The group had 37 A/C.

Col. G. Y. Jumper, the 385th CO was leading the Group, which was leading the 93rd wing, and the 3rd Division on this one.

The lead Navigator, R. E. Pittis, reported a wind shift near Hanover and the loss of his flux gate compass. However, the Group made the IP OK.

Although not leading the 8th Air Force, and not at the head of the bomber stream, our IP differed from the Group ahead, since we had a different target. This left a gap in front of our Group, and to make matters worse, the low squadron was lagging behind. Jerry was quick to take advantage in the break in the Fortress' covering firepower, and attacked 30 seconds before the IP.

The Group Bombardier, E.J. Maloney, reported that the Mickey Operator picked up the target and the rate checks were made from 14 to 5 miles. Bombs away at 1027 hours with results believed good.

The 550th Radar Navigator, R. W. Law, picked up the target 40 miles away, but he then had difficulty with the Mickey set and no returns were obtainable. The 550th bombed on the lead squadron's smoke bombs. In any case, the Squadron Leader had ordered Group bombing when the fighters attacked.



On the bomb run. Bill Varnedoe, in Platts crew, noticed what he thought was unusual flack bursts close by. Normal flack was a black smoke elongated vertically. These were light gray, rather small, and elongated horizontally. He had just started to describe them in the log when the chin gunner started firing his guns and he realized that there was an attack by fighters. By then, numerous gunners were firing, but no one had ever called out bandits on the intercom. Those "odd flack" bursts were 20 mm cannon shells fired by the fighters.

An ME 109 seemed to pull up and stall at about 2 o'clock high. Bill lined up the right cheek gun, remembering the correct angle to aim, and pushed the firing lever. Nothing. He recharged (cocked) the gun and tried again. Again nothing happened. He opened up the 50 Cal. machine gun and found a crooked link in the ammo chain, took it out and once more charged the gun-by, by now they were gone and the fight over.

The Germans first came in on a "company front," what the Germans called their STURMM formation, but then turned and attacked from the rear also and then continued the attack, coming in from several points. The escorting P-51's engaged them and accounted for several enemies shot down.

Sometime during all of this, probably after most had dropped their bombs on the lead, Platt had ordered the bombs salvoed, and Bill did. He has no idea where they landed. The official report states that most bombs fell in the middle of town.

On the bomb run, Tipton's B-17 was hit by flack in the radio room and the tail section, then sustained a burst in the main fuel tank. No.'s 1 and 4 were on fire, the turbos out and the controls were half shot away. They began a split-S, but the auto pilot held them level enough for all to jump. The Tail gunner, John, was killed on impact with the ground, but all the others were captured and sent to a prisoner camp. On the way to interrogation, Jack, the navigator was hit in the mouth by a brick thrown by a civilian and had a tooth knocked out. Ed, the copilot, and Glenn, the Bombardier were captured near Oschatz, then sent to Frankfort for interrogation before being sent to a POW camp.

HEADQUARTERS  
305TM) OMDAJHIZn' GROUP (II)  
GROUP FOR & TION FLOWN

2 MARCH 1945

385th <2 Squadron Formation  
Data: J?  
Group 93A  
Squadron position

ores largely  
low flying 'ty' u . n ^ e .  
31st Div

USbf)

Also shot down  
from 1st Spln (A),  
Krahn  
47-3771/ aU.fcCMrfc  
Hil"\* 5\*<sup>k</sup>

In the Lead Squadron, Krahn was shot down. He was right wing of the second element of the lead flight in A/C No. 43-37871, "Slick Chick". His crew was:

- Pilot - Robert A. Krahn
- Co-Pilot - Oris E. Lundy
- Navigator - Glynn D. Hull
- Bombardier - Russel W. Fritzinger
- Engineer - Flem E. Williams
- Radio Op. - Paul G. Klimko
- Ball G. - Doyle Green
- Tail G. - Roy O. Werner

They were all listed as missing.

Francis Aires, Navigator from Platt's crew, but in the low element lead on this raid, was shot four times, and badly wounded, yet continued to navigate back to Great Ashfield. He was awarded the Silver Star.

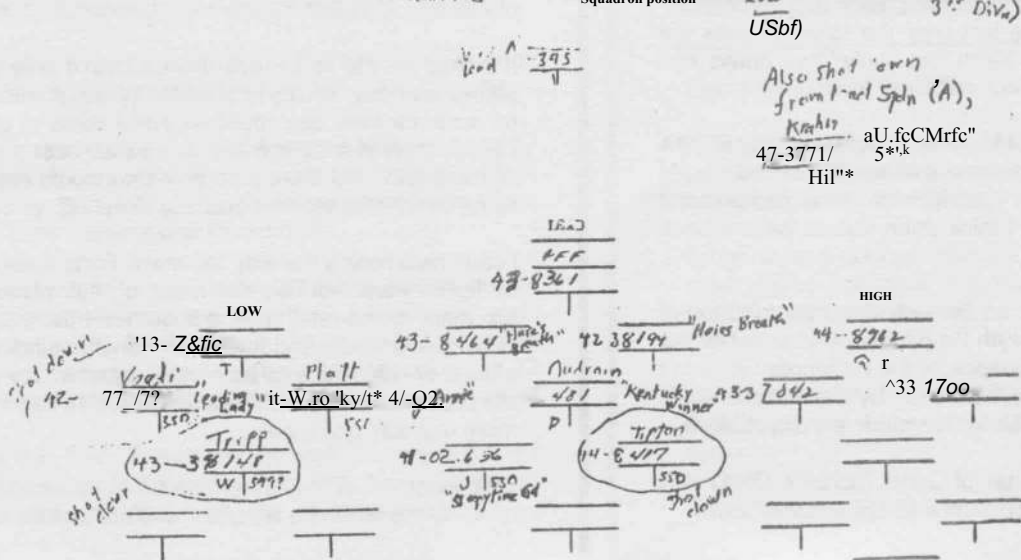
After the target, the low squadron was even further behind and therefore it headed for a different Rendevous Point (RP), cutting a corner, to rejoin the Group. The Group then made it back to Great Ashfield without further losses.

The British had bombed Dresden the night before and this was the raid that started the well-known firestorm in Dresden.

Vaadi's A/C was hit in the left wing tank at No. 2. All jumped O.K. before the Leading Lady blew up. Neil says Henry got a FW from the top turret after they left the formation. Neil's chute hadn't opened when the 17 blew, but the whole crew survived, although Jino broke an ankle and Neil broke both his neck and back and was completely paralyzed in his POW camp at Oschatz for a month. He fully recovered. Oddly enough, this same Oschatz was the IP for the mission.

After the turn off the target and Germans had left, Bill looked about to see who was left. In addition to Vaadi and Tipton, Tail End Charlie, Tripp, was missing.

In Tripp's crew both of the Leon's and Ed, Dan, Francis Henry and Robert were killed. Only Ed Batz and Richard were listed as missing.



**EDITOR'S NOTE:**

Tom Helman sent us this great story about the Oct. 10, 1943 Munster Raid. We printed % of his letter-inadvertently skipped page 2. Here it is complete, along with our apologies to Tom for goofing up the 1 st try.

Dear Ed:

I have just finished reading Ian Hawkin's updated and second edition book *The Munster Raid: Bloody Skies Over Germany*.

It is a great one, and should be a must read for anybody with normal corpuscles and ample adrenalin and a bit of curiosity as to a lot if not all that went on that day of October 10, 1954; from start to finish and then some.

Can we forget this was the day the Jerry hotshots tried so desperately to turn us four-motor boys back (Ian says they called us terrorists), busting guts to keep us away from pooping our eggs into their nests? Needless to say (it was) at one helluva cost to BOTH sides.

Of course the main characters of their part of the show were mostly those men and boys of the 13th Combat Wing, the 95th the 100th and the 390th BG's. And what a beating they all took.

And just as I did when viewing the movie *MEMPHIS BELLE* the other day, I bawled all the way through. Even puckered a bit, too, here and there.

I especially appreciated Ian's unique formatting the action of not only the blood scenes of battle, but much of the grievous and sometimes comedic consequentials by way of acutal personal witness accounts.

We heard from all kinds of participants: the BombERS, the bombeES, the pea shooters both sides, the jumpers, the evaders and the pows, even the underground.

And Ian, after completing what had to be a momentous piece of research, tied it all together with a superb job of writing. I liked it all.

To us of the 385th it is of particular interest that three 385th participants were recognized, although we of the 4th Combat Wing were I think the last over the target as was the 13th the first. (We of the 385th lost "only" two crews that day, Pettenger and Whitlow.)

John Pettenger, who we all know as our present day BGMA Treasurer, was shot down from out of our lead squadron. He contributed some graphic descriptions of his capture and prison camp experiences. I think John should write a book and tell us more.

A large part of the chapter on Evaders was a contribution of one William Whitlow, a 549th Sq pilot shot from out of our low squadron as a consequence of the Pettenger hit. Don't know why, but in those days he went by the name of Dick, and he should also write a book. It would be a dilly. (Dilly?)

The third mention was that of John Richey's OHIO AIR FORCE confirmed claim of a record 12 fighters shot own.

My own personal interest in all three mentions is that:

One, I was Richey's copilot, and this mission was the fifth out of the 221 flew with him.

And two, I considered Whitlow a special sort of friend, mainly because the previous month or so we had been bunk neighbors as his cot was next to mine.

And three, it was a fast ripcord jumper from the Pettenger Fort that forced Low Squadron B Flight Leader Jerry Mudge to dive hard left, leaving his two wingmen Richey and Whitlow suddenly panting like in heat she-dogs, chased by a thousand frothing studs, all wild to get on at once.

Whitlow's story was in several parts, beginning with losing his ball turret and its gunner (KIA), his tail gunner hurt bad, ending with pulling the plug when he lost his third engine. Then continuing with the ride down, agitated a bit by reason of his forgetting to buckle on his chest pack before he jumped. And shook up some more when he pulled the cord to find he didn't have his crotch straps buckled. (And this guy grew up to be undoubtable a very successful practicing attorney in Southern California, oh my!).

From the beginning I guess things get better for Dick as he played the life of an evader, finding friends and other things from Belgium through France and then Spain. And my log book says we had lunch together at Great Ashes on 20 January 1944. Anyone would agree, this guy should write a book, especially if he includes the good parts.

What frosts me not a little bit is that gunners that ended up getting shot down had no way to claim and get credit for fighters they messed up. I note one gunner claimed "at least eleven", and there were enumerable others. In our group. Whitlow claimed five downed with two damaged.

I have no trouble believing that gunners for the most part actually got the ones they claimed, particularly in the Whitlow claim and, too, the twelve confirmed of the Ohio Air Force. For much of that I was an eye-witness.

The inflight part of the Whitlow drama took place maybe a hundred feet off our right wing just aside my cockpit window, and I say he could have gotten more if he'd had a fly swatter, they came that close. And our crew had solid claims on I think 24!

It's hard for me to believe the German's only put up 250 planes that day. It was impossible to get any kind of count for sure, for who can count an awful mess of goosey hornets? I swear there were that many trying their best to mug just us of the 385th, and there's no way they could have been the same bunch that worked over the 13th.

I can't help noting the way too many Forts were shot down, by fighters and not flak, the result of their oh so futile (and too many times fatal) duking it out with Jerry, one on one. What a mismatch, and formation notwithstanding. Ever see a flock of ma-hens in a barn yard, squattin' for a hop in by the papa rooster? Sad. There should have been a whole lot more o' jinkin' going on!

Last thing. Ian comes up with a bit of information that was news to me when he reports the Munster raid was the first

for a new policy of (our) bombing the German women and kids and old folks. The lead bomb got a shack, the historic medieval cathedral in the center of town, and other bombs fell on a good many homes nearby.

Not that it made any difference, we were told I think the 385th was bombing the railway marshalling yards, and I guess we did. I find it hard to believe the USA would target a prized piece of architecture, especially a church (of any kind) without more provocation than that given. Maybe Fat Herrman had goodies stored there, who knows.

As I remember, we were allowed to bomb indiscriminately in Germany, but in occupied areas, no wholesaling be sure. And in all my twenty five missions, I don't recall a concern one whit of what went on, on or upon, the earth five miles down. The immediate air space of the place upstairs was all we could handle.

Ed this is a great book. And if Pettenger hasn't made arrangements with Ian's publisher for a supply, the 95th BG already has. Just send \$15 to Ellis Scripture, 1636 Wyntre Brooke N., York PA 17403.

A thought Ed. Wouldn't it be nice if we could hear from, and about, any or all of 385th members who were short time members by way of a parachute trip to a career change, like evasion, or pow? For starters, the names Pettenger and Whitlow come to mind. We already know both can write, and both have something to say. Tell 'em Ed.

Tom Helman

Dear Ed;

Yesterday I was gifted with the April '91 copy of the 385th BGMA News Letter from an old High School friend who, incidentally, was a crew chief in the 549th Sqd. I met Dick Whiting, who I knew in High School, on my first night at the 385th, in (of all places) the NCO Club. REUNION TIME!! Dick looked after me and steered me to the Mostyn Club in London which was managed at that time by Adeline Bostleman ARC, who we had known at home before the war. She managed to locate a lot of the boys from Cortland County and we could always count on seeing some of our home town buddies each time we got a pass to London.

I was only over there for about 6 months but it was wonderful to be able to talk with old friends in Jolly Olde England.

I was totally shocked to see Fred Nestler's letter on page 17 of your April '91 issue with the listing of the original crew of the Heavenly Body! To see my name along with these memories from the past was incredible!

I was a waist gunner on that crew but when we got caught up in the ten to nine man crew situation, John Ranges and I were left behind to finish up our "Numbers". I thereafter flew Ball with anyone I could get a ride with and after 32 missions was rotated back home in Dec. 1944.

As I write this, I am looking on the wall over my desk at a picture of us taken at Pyote, Texas in May 1944. I never expected to make contact with any of them ever again. I

signed up for the 8th AF newsletter several years ago but wasn't made aware of your publication. I have just now sent my membership to John Pettenger and looking forward to receiving future news letters.

Thank you so very much

Bob Brow  
7 Yong St.  
Cortland, NY 13045

Dear Ed,

Am enclosing a picture of Veterans License plate for Louisiana. I have them on our two cars. There is a \$5.50 charge for special processing over regular fees.

There could be many states who do not honor veterans. Am also enclosing a detail of applying for them in our state. It's very essential to put pressure on Legislators for action.

Sincerely,

Bill Koon

**EDITOR'S NOTE:**

If you want information on Louisiana's authorization law, write to:

W. H. Koon  
104 Wedgewood Dr.  
Lafayette, LA 70503



Dear Members of the 385th:

I deeply appreciate your kind invitation to attend your reunion, and the many contacts I have had recently with some members of the 385th.

It opens up a door of memory and heartaches as well as a great deal of nostalgia - the few happy days Jim and I and our two babies had when he returned from England, and before he became so ill.

I wish you well in your lives this 40 years later, and would be with you today, if possible. Best of luck to each of you in the future.

Auda Kincannon Porterfield

**EDITOR'S NOTE:**

A great picture of Col. VanDevanter and Major Preston Piper (Group Bombardier) sent us from Auda Kincannon Porterfield.





Dear Mr. Stern:

I am sending a poem to you that I wrote a long time ago. My brother in law, Earl Dean Martin, of Ft. Smith, Arkansas, was in the 385th Air Squadron.

My poem is true, I grew up in Russelville, Ar. and the First Baptist Church did have a bell and the young people did take turns walking to the church to ring the bell.

I would like for you to review my poem and consider publishing it for all the 385th Air Squadron to enjoy. I know they never knew that the town of Russelville, Arkansas cared about them and the people were reminded to pray for them each evening at six.

My sister and Earl Dean will be at the reunion they are having in Tulsa in June and they have invited me and my husband to attend the banquet, the OKLAHOMA PLAY, and the farewell breakfast. We are looking forward to meeting some of the soldiers that fought for us. My husband served in the Korean War.

Thank you for reading my letter and I would appreciate hearing from you.

Very sincerely yours,

Lee O. Minor

FOR YOU THE BELL TOLLED

BY Lee Minor

The First Baptist Church had a bell in the steeple.  
They wanted it tolled to tell all the people.

The young people were chosen to toll the bell.  
So, now, I have a story to tell.

When you were a soldier boy, serving in the war.  
Whether you were near or whether you were far.

Each day, for you, our whole town prayed.  
Oh, soldier boy of yesterday.

During the war, I was a child.  
When it came my turn, I'd walk that mile.

I'd climb those steps, up to the steeple.  
I'd toll that bell to tell the people.

Its time to pray for our soldier boys.  
I know they remembered, because that bell made a noise.

I'd toll that bell for five whole minutes.  
I'd pull that rope and really spin it.

That was a long, long time ago.  
But somehow, I knew that you never did know.

Each evening at six, our whole town prayed.  
Whether you were near or far away.

I hope your wartime dreams have all come true.  
I tolled that bell, especially for you.

Dear Ed,

The May-91 issue of the 385th Newsletter, page 7, regarding the letter from Truman Smith in regards to the supply drops in Southern France to the French Underground.

He mentioned Alan Goldman, and the members of his Bomb Group!?) receiving the Croix de Guerre from the French Government for these supply drops.

I had heard of this before, many times, and am very upset that the 385th was passed up, and left out in the cold. Why? I am in full agreement with Truman Smith's proposal and stand behind him 100%.

The French Underground kept 2 German Panzer Divisions, busy as hell, away from Normandy, chasing through the French Alps. Moreso after the drops.

The dates of our drops in 1944 were June 25, July 14, (Bastille Day) and Aug. 1.1 made 2 of them, the 1 st and last. Our Ball Turret gunner, George Hunter flew all 3.

We radio operators were issued machetes to cut loose any of the canisters (held by ropes in the bomb racks) that might have got hung up.

I remember tossing packs of cigarettes and K rations out of the open bomb bay and waving to those valiant people below. They waved back. All this in broad daylight. Dog and goat carts, small farm wagons with human or horse power to cart off and hide the cannisters. I could see the faces of women, children, and the elderly, we were that low. Many waved the "V" for victory sign.

Meanwhile, in the French Alps above us, the very versatile German 88's were shooting down on us, depressed below horizontal.

These missions were so top secret that they were unknown until late in 1947 when "Life" magazine released the story to the public. I had no idea of their importance until then, and what we had done for the French Underground.

It was a place in time for those who flew those missions.

Those of us left surviving, who flew those 3 missions should gather to a man behind Truman Smith and his proposal. To those of us already passed on, the awarding of the Croix de Guerre to those flying those 3 missions, posthumously, would be very meaningful to their wives, families, and descendants.

Please lets hear from ALL OF YOU, who made those 3 missions.

Very Sincerely,

Gene Silberberg  
550 Bm Sqd'n

Dear Ed:

The story by Charles Smith suggests to me that some of our readers might enjoy info on the early days of the 385th.

I too was one of the first to join the outfit in its embryonic stage. Initially I was CO of the 548th. When we left the States I was Grp. Opr. When I finished my 25 lead missions I was Dep. CO under Pete V. After R&R I returned for a 2nd tour and was the C/S of the 4th Combat wing, (of which the 385th was one of the 5 groups under the wing.)

The above is prologue and sets the framework for the following 4 items which, (should you so choose), can be published however you deem appropriate.

Item 1. Jean and Paul Ryan wrote about Pete leading an early mission and circling to make a successful 2nd run. Believe me that was the last 2nd run ever made by a 3AD unit!

Pete came back from debriefing Gen. (then Col.) LeMay, and told me he thought he (Pete) was going to be fired! The Gen. had reamed him inside and out - told Pete, "No one makes a 2nd run."

I was the ops officer and we had no guidance on this matter but we did from that time on!!

Item 2. Perhaps some wondered why Pete retired when he was on the threshold of significant advancement. I visited him in Paris where he was Gen. Harstad's top planner in NATO.

A week before Pete had had his annual physical. The doctors detected a heart problem and grounded him. He had had the problem SINCE BIRTH!!

Since non-rated officers never were assigned top jobs in the AF, he knew his illustrious career had ended. He retired.

Item 3: Elmer Snow writes about the 14 Jul., '44 mission in which we dropped supplies to the Free French. We (the 385th) were special on that mission, which I led.

Special because the 8th AF got the mission, (which we didn't like because the drop was low level into a horse shoe shaped bowl and we weren't sure we could make the turn without hitting mountains), because the British couldn't figure a way to drop the supplies from their aircraft.

The 8th AF gave us the mission of developing methods and equipment. Also to do the drop.

Several months later there was a formation of American officers at the 3 AD hdqtrs. A French Gen. decorated about 30 people. I don't know if all the awards were the Croix de Guerre AVEC Palme - but I received one. No one explained the exact reason. I didn't know then and I don't know now why! I believe general phraseology was used and assumed it was for the successful drop to the Free French! It could have been for the Le Bouget mission when we were the only group in the 8th AF to get to the target. All others aborted the mission because of weather! More on Le Bouget mission. We did not have VHF - on the "Coffee grinder" system. We were last in a string of perhaps 10 BG's from

the 1st & 3rd Div's. All were pulling heavy contrails as we reached altitude over the UK. It was rough but my tail gunner told me that one of our A/C from the Hi Sqdn was way above the formation but, wonder of wonders, he was NOT pulling contrails! We climbed to his altitude and we were out of trouble.

Meanwhile the groups up front had to abort. We frantically tried to get out info thru the ground stations and back to the 8th leader. Couldn't. So we sailed to Paris alone. No clouds. All our friendly fighters concentrated on us, we hit the target and were escorted back again by the fighter. Luck beats skill everytime!!

Item 4: Many wonder why our neighbor the 100th BG sustained the heaviest losses in the UK. I have a clue.

On my first mission leading the 385th we were to meet the 100th over the North Sea. We identified the 100's green flares and joined as Ctre Low group. Col. Thorpe and the 94th B.F. joined as the High group. Then to our surprise the 100th turned north instead of SE toward our target of Wilhelmshafer.

I decided not to follow and tried to give the lead to the 94th which had more experience. They wouldn't take it - so we had the job.

Sequel: Col LeMay, had the 3 leaders in for a debriefing. It was held in a 10' by 5' room at the 3AD. The Col was a desk width away from our knees - it was uncomfortable but the questions and answers by the C.O. "Chick", (of the 100th were much more disconcerting.) you should know that Chick ranked LeMay). Col. LeMay to "Chick", why did you go North when the target was SE&

Chick: I thought the groups I was to lead were up there.

LeMay: Did you send them? Reply "No".

LeMay: "What did you do then?"

Reply: "I turned toward the target but I was too far behind."

LeMay: What did you do then?

Reply: "We dropped the bombs on a convoy of ships off the Freisen Islands."

LeMay: "Ours or theirs?"

Reply: "I don't know."

LeMay: Did you hit one?

Reply: No.

About 6 months later Chick became ill and was hospitalized in the States.

As ever.

Jim McDonald



Dear Ed,

In the latest April 1991 Newsletter on page 10, there is an article about Annie Gordon "Nose artist" and a letter from a F.R. Reggie Fuller. I have been trying to get a picture of our ship "Ragged But Right" as I want to have a couple of jackets painted for my 2 grandsons who are 10 & 6 years old. Would appreciate a mailing address or maybe someone in the organization knows where I can get a picture that can be copied.

By the way, my bookkeeping isn't the best but if I owe you money, please drop me a line. I'll try to be more diligent in the future. Sorry we can't make the convention - it's my wife's birthday. Maybe next time.

Regards and thoughts,

Jerry Leuthers



Dear Ed,

Here is another picture of Caroline in the Aero club with the boys from Maryland in the 385th. That's me second from left. I lived in Maryland at the time. I moved to W. Va. about 20 years ago. I thought maybe someone would know the other fellows.

Since I won't be able to attend the reunion because of family health reasons, I wish you would tell everyone I said Hi.

Ed, I hope you all have a great time at the reunion. I wish I could be there just to shake everyones hand. That would really make my day. Sorry, my hand doesn't always go the way its supposed to. Old age I guess!

Thank you,

Lester Miller



Dear Ed,

A Happy New Year to you, your family and all the members of the 385th Mem. Association.

Now the excitement of Christmas is all over I must get down to some letters and your's is the one on top of the pile. So without more ado a BIG THANK YOU for sending a copy of "Hardlife Herald", what a great newsletter and what a great job you do, getting it out month after month. It was read quietly when I could get away from family duties and I found it very educating - for any student of 8th Air Force history in Europe. The amount of detail contained in articles and letters, simply astounding.

I had to chuckle over the way the Group's ships' names head your newsletter and I read out some of them to my grandson when he came for Christmas dinner (well, the ones that didn't have to be explained,) especially "Winnie the Pooh" as he loves the cartoons we have of this bear and his friends, on video. When the boy stays the night we have to show at least one. Is there a chance of having a copy of the photo where the name is displayed on the ship? I would gladly pay all expenses and to explain to the young lad that the name has gone all over Europe, all those years ago. I think it brings history alive for youngsters.

Yours very sincerely,

Ron Durand

**EDITOR'S NOTE:**

We were able to find a picture for Ron.



Dear Ed:

While doing some research among old papers in preparation for writing my memoirs for the benefit of my heirs and successors, I ran across an article in the December 23, 1943 edition of Stars and Stripes. Lt. Ink and Lt. Frank were flying combat missions about the same period as my own crew and had the same high regard for the ground crew support as I did. Hence, I am including excerpts in my book, and thought that perhaps you might find a place for this piece in the Hard Life Herald.

Thoroughly enjoyed the great hospitality of the Fargo folds and hope that I can sample that of Tulsa this summer.

Best regards,

Robert S. Vindiver  
Pilot, Latest Rumor

### They Also Serve Who Watch and Wait

With heads turned eastward to scan the skies and ears attuned and straining to hear the drone of distant engines, the coverall clad mechanics, armorers, supply specialists, cooks, medics and entire station support personnel loiter aimlessly in the shadows of the control tower, awaiting anxiously to learn the fate of their very own combat crew and Flying Fortress.

"Here they come!" sounds the cry as tiny specks begin to appear against the lowering sky. 1,2,3,4,5.....13, 14, 15..... "My God, is that all?" Six out of twenty-one ships missing. Low squadron begins to peel off for landing, with the third ship firing Red-Red flares, indicating the presence of wounded aboard. The meat wagon shifts into high gear, tracking the ship down the runway onto the taxi perimeter where the medics quickly attend the wounded being carefully handed down by the remaining combat crew.

From the desolate moping of several ground crews, it becomes quite obvious as to what ships failed to return....However, in some cases, waiting pays off. Failure to return doesn't always mean that the ship is completely lost. In my case, I made an emergency landing of the Latest Rumor at an RAF base from the Schweinfurt Mission and didn't return to Great Ashfield until the following day. However, this chapter is intended to describe the major part played by the ground personnel in the aerial war against Germany. One of the best descriptions (which I can personally verify) is written by Charles Kiley, Staff Writer, for the Stars and Stripes published December 23, 1943, the main excerpts of which are contained below:

To most people the U.S. Army Air Force means dashing, carefree fliers with Congressional Medals of Honor, Silver Stars, DFC's, and Air Medals; handsome heroes in silk mufflers with a way with women; young, nerveless Frank Merriwells who take part in spectacular air battles, fight through hordes of enemy fighters that "came in at nine o'clock and blew up after Tgave him a burst at 500 yards."

True, that may be part of an exaggerated picture. But the Air Force also means something else.

to fliers, whose chances to safely complete an operational mission depends as much as anything on the men who ser-

vice their ships, the Air Force means their unspectacular ground crews whose contributions to successful aerial combat are as unsung as an unwritten tune.

Still, it took another war to make even the fliers reopen their eyes to the fact that able ground crews go hand in glove with able airmen. Pick out a combat crew with a crack record and behind it you usually find a highly capable and efficient ground crew.

Peace-time condescension of the flier to the "paddle-foot" on the ground has disappeared because in war time fliers soon learn how much the grease-monkeys mean to them.

How much five mechanics meant to one combat crew came to light one day last month when a lone Fortress broke formation over England on its way back from a raid, took a short cut to its home base and brazenly buzzed the field before landing. In the control tower the Old Man silently swore, but he was glad to see that particular ship get back.

A few seconds later the big bomber trundled to a stop at its hardstand, where a score of well wishers crowded around to pump the pilot's hand when he dropped from the nose hatch. He was the first of his group to finish his tour of operations-Bremen-Kiel-Schweinfurt-Regensburg-Bordeaux-Munster-Hanover-Trondheim-Oschersleben-Wilhemshaven-Marienburg-Kerlin-Bastard-all the tough ones and the milk runs as well. He finished up without an abortive mission and without a Purple Heart in his crew.

Reason: "We had the best ground crew in the business."

Not because he was a crack pilot or because he had an infallible navigator. Not because his gunners were more eagle-eyed than thousands of others. But because his ground crew was the "best in the business."

That was Lt. Irving Frank, boss of the Raunchy Wolf and looked upon by fellow fliers as one of the top Pilots of the Eighth Air Force, talking about and giving credit where it was due to M/Sgt George Fleet and his four aides who as far as Frank was concerned, contributed as much blood and sweat in getting the Wolf over enemy targets and safely back as any member of the combat crew.

The story of staunch friendship and faith between the combat and ground crews of the Raunchy Wolf may not be typical. It is better described as unusual because you will not often find a pilot who will disregard two dead engines and a leaky oxygen system to continue a mission rather than abort and spoil his ground crew's perfect record.

You won't often see combat and ground crews going on pass either or all 15 of the Raunchy Wolf "family" attending church services-the pilot leading the Jews, the navigator shepherding the Catholics to Mass, and the co-pilot with the Protestants taking up the chapel's first row-praying for the ship and crew to get through the tour OK.

The raunchy Wolf family life, however, does conform with the close alliance now existing between fliers and the men who keep them in the air.



Another bomber pilot whose faith in his five mechanics paid dividends is Lt. Avery Ink. A replacement pilot without a ship of his own, Ink was button-holed one day by a crew chief who literally begged him to take a nameless B-17 that had been idle for months. The fort in question was a "hangar queen" so badly shot up before it was repaired that no pilot on base wanted it.

Ink was warned by veteran fliers not to take it. But he was quick to see that the crew chief, M/Sergeant Donald Goble, was full of mechanical know-how and strung along with him. Ink promised he would take the "hangar queen" off the shelf if Goble and his men made certain modifications, including the major job of changing the entire oxygen system.

Overjoyed, the ground crew worked feverishly day and night for a week, and when the ship was ready, Ink was so impressed that he asked Goble and his crew to name the ship. They called her the Ground Hog, and she not only let Ink take her off the ground and live to bring her back, but saw him finish his tour without a single abortive mission.

There is little reward for ground crews. Their tour of operations is for the duration plus like most of the American Sad Sacks. There is no glory in their work. Nobody hands out medals for guarding bombers by night and grooming them by day.

When their ships take off they don't even know where they are going. But they can tell how long the trip will be from the amount of gas in the tanks.

From the time the combat crews are alerted, sometimes as much as 16 to 17 hours before takeoff, the groundings are with the ship getting everything in perfect order....changing sparkplugs, checking superchargers, servicing hydraulic systems, carefully testing 225 feet of oxygen lines with soap and water for leaks, preflighting engines....a hundred and one other things.

They line the runway during takeoff, staying to the last to be certain their "queens" got a flying start on their mission. Then, bereft, they turn towards their huts for a few hours until the ships are due back.

You have to be a part of a ground crew to know what it is to lose a ship. To some it merely means a different plane and a new crew-"too bad, they were nice guys." But to many the loss is greater than that. They may have worked on the bomber for months, since it came off the assembly line. It's reasonable to believe that men become attached to planes as well as dogs and women.

One of the biggest jobs done by ground crews in the war was that of the men who serviced the Liberators in Brig. Gen. Ted Timberlake's "Flying Circus" while it was in Africa. And the General made it plain that the mission would have flopped if it wasn't for the mechanics' "ingenuity" as he called it-but there must be a better word than that.

The Circus fliers flew their ground crews from Britain to Africa a year ago. It was to be a ten-day mission, but it turned into a campaign of three months-hammering at Rommel's rear guards, paving the way for Eighth Army's gallop to Tunisia, then opening the door for the Sicilian invasion by

attacking enemy airfields across the Mediterranean. The ground crews had taken along only the equipment needed for the "ten day mission" but somehow made it stretch for three months.

As far as medals go they are few and far between for ground crews. Some, like Fabian Folmer and Bill Futchik, are decorated for outstanding work as crew chiefs.

To earn the Legion of Merit all Folmer had to do was to supervise the servicing of Hell's Angels through 40 missions without having it once to turn back because of mechanical failure. For a bomber operating in the Big League, so called by the fliers in comparing it with other theaters, Folmer's feat was incredible.

His reaction to the award was typical of the unspectacular ground crew. "I don't know why they gave me the medal," he said. "The boys who work with me did it all."

Futchik was decorated with the Legion of Merit for servicing a fortress that took part in 25 raids without suffering mechanical difficulties.

M/Sgt. Bob Wilson proved a good ground crew will get results with any plane. He and his men serviced three different ships for a total of 20 missions without abortives.

The work done by ground crews doesn't always stop with the servicing of planes according to the book. They are responsible for numerous improvements made on combat planes. It may only be a modified gun mount, but it will help the gunners do better shooting, and is a small but valuable contribution to the progress of their Air Force.

Ground crews may not be so handsome with complexions dry and red from long, cold sleepless hours spend grooming planes. They may not be glamorous without wings on their greasy coveralls but they are as much a part of the Air Force entrusted with tremendously important jobs, as any flier in combat.

A faulty mechanism carelessly overlooked on the ground can send a Fortress, Liberator, Marauder, Thunderbolt, or Lightning to its doom over enemy territory as surely as a battery of flak guns or 20mm shells from Nazi fighters. Ask one who flies.

□ □ □ □ □ □

The foregoing description of the rapport between ground crew and air crew could certainly apply to that of the Latest Rumor. Sergeants Towne, Crawford, Koon and Stretch were identified with the Latest Rumor as its ground component in the same way the combat crew was as its air component. In fact, many a friendly argument was raised as to which component owned the ship, with valid and substantial reasons offered by both teams. However, final judgement ruled that both components had equal claim and the Latest Rumor was always referred to as "our" ship when similar discussions with outsiders arose.

The ground crew took great pride in painting another bomb on the aircraft nose, following a successful mission completion, or another swastika following confirmation of another Nazi aircraft kill. Occasionally, the bombardier and

armorers would devise simple profane messages to be chalked on the bombs for the erudition of Adolph Hitler.

Next to the hardstand where the Latest Rumor was parked, the ground crew had erected a tent for shelter against the dreary, English mist and rain. Oftentimes when the combat crew was excused from training and no missions were scheduled, you would find them down at the tent exchanging gossip with the ground crew or going over their combat station in the aircraft to be assured that every detail was exactly as it had been left after the last mission cleanup. From this informal exchange of ideas would often come more efficient methods of trouble-shooting potential causes of system malfunctions. Certainly, our oxygen backup system was augmented by additional walkaround bottles.

Come to think about it, I had the very best of two worlds-a first class combat crew supported by and melded with a first class ground crew!!!



Left to right:  
Lt. Frank Marano - 549th, Maj. Archie Benner - 549th  
Capt. Gail Shears - AC supply  
Fall of 1943



Hq. officers lined up for Memorial Day Parade.  
Col., Major, Captain- you name it.  
Lewis, Anderson, McWilliams, Leonard Huff, Monfort,  
Chaplains Scherer & Kincannon.



Ashebono NC  
Joe Jones - Navigator  
Charley Coughlin - Ball Gunner  
Mar. 15, 1991  
First meeting in 47 years  
385th B.G.-551 st B.S.

Dear Ed;

A real pleasure to receive "Hard Life Herald" earlier this week. Thank you very much for thinking of me and much better than bills appearing through the letter box, I can tell you.

The photos and accomp. letters really interest me as they are LIVING history, they relate to people. The ones of the Windmill girls made me smile and I am sure your lady readers will not be shocked, as you relate these "statues" of the '40s to what you see on T.V. As a schoolboy with an

enquiring mind (not for subjects to learn in the class!) during the war years I knew that the stage show was kept going throughout those years, with me only being envious as in my teens I would not have had the guts to pay and enter the theatre to ogle at these beauties.

Sincerely,  
Ron Durand

Dear Ed,

Received your letter and package of the Heralds and am very thankful to you. Am slowly going thru them and enjoying them immensely. You have really taken on a job as Editor.

Don't know if I had told you or not, but I married the girl I was dating in London. Had to wait until '44 before she could get a ship since she wasn't a war bride. We were married April '47 and are still at it. Mary's sister just buried her husband today. We had planned on going back this year, so now we will be leaving late this month, so I can't make the Tulsa trip. Have talked to Joe Brocker a couple times, also Lou Massari and told Lou I couldn't make it.

I don't know what happened to Touvell. I wrote to him several times at his address in Zanesville, Ohio and neve, got a reply to letters or Xmas cards.

My writing is terrible as I am shaky (mothers side of family) and am on medication for it. Guess a typewriter is my answer.

I did go back in Service, Jan. '49 (Army). Shortly after discharge AF officer came to house and wanted me to take recruiting job in home town. Should have taken it with no loss of stripes. Anyway, got sent to Guam and was routed to Japan. Spent Korean war there. From there went to Signal School at San Luis Obispo then to Ft. George Wright in Spokane as Army Reserve advisor. Went to Munich, Germany for 4 years then to Ft. Ord, Ft. Lee and Korea. From Korea (promoted to Commend Sgt Major) to ROTC at San

Jose State college where I retired Oct. '66. Got job at Lockheed Missile and Space Co in Sunnyville as security officer and retired again in Jan. '83. Now in small town between San Luis Obispo and Santa Maria on 40 acres. If they don't ease up on building moratorium and high prices of homes in this area, I might have to sell and I sure don't want to. The weather is about the best I have ever seen and Mary loves it. Have a son in Oregon and my daughter built a new home on our property.

Guess that is about up to date - would sure like to see and talk with the fellows. God willing I will make the one in Spokane.

It was great getting your letter and all the Heralds. Am sending in the membership application now. I would like the garment bag. Let me know the cost and shipping and will send you a check.

Maybe if I had stayed in AF I might have met some of ones who stayed in and heard about reunions. Anyway, I appreciate all your work and effort and will keep in touch from now on. Thanks again Ed.

Best to you and yours,

Stan and Mary Halstead

P.S. Am telling Pettenger of our interest in '92. England Trip.

**EDITOR'S NOTE:**

Stan was 1 st Sgt. of the 550th.

**AIRMEN MEMORIAL MUSEUM RENEWS  
MAJOR RESEARCH PROJECT TO TELL THE  
STORY OF EVERYDAY LIFE IN  
U.S. AIR FORCES**

Suitland, MD - The airmen Memorial Museum announced today that it is continuing its survey of veteran airmen from World War II and the Korean War eras.

The museum's ongoing research effort is principally designed to document the contributions of airmen during the Second World War. The research will be focused on the humanistic facets of training, armed conflict, heroism, and everyday duty. The questionnaires are directed at enlisted airmen in order to identify candidates for oral history interviews, and locate materials for the growing museum. The museum wants to capture the human experiences and preserve the long overlooked but vital role of non-commissioned airmen. The resulting research will ultimately become a part of the institutions Research and Reference Center, an emerging historical service activity for the general public.

The initial airman research project began in June 1989 and was a tremendous success. At that time some 60,000 surveys were distributed to veterans in an effort to document personal roles in the massive war effort. Responses received

to date have been evaluated and placed in the museum's growing data base. Museum Director, George E. Hicks commented that "responses have ranged from the factual to the down-right hilarious. Then, too, some veterans have shared emotional experiences with us that have lain dormant for years." The project will culminate in narrative histories and museum exhibits which will focus on the more personal perspective of men and women in uniform at a time of war.

The airmen Memorial Museum, founded in 1986, stands as a tribute to enlisted airmen who have served in the United States Air Force and its predecessor organizations, the Army Air Forces and the Army Air Corps. The museum activity is located at 5211 Auth Road in Suitland, Maryland, just eight miles from Washington, D.C. near the Smithsonian Institution's Paul Garber Preservation, Restoration and Storage Facility and Andrews Air Force Base. The museum is open 8 a.m. until 5 p.m. weekdays and during specially scheduled events. For more information, contact George E. Hicks, Museum Director, at toll-free 1-800-638-0594 or (302) 899-8386.

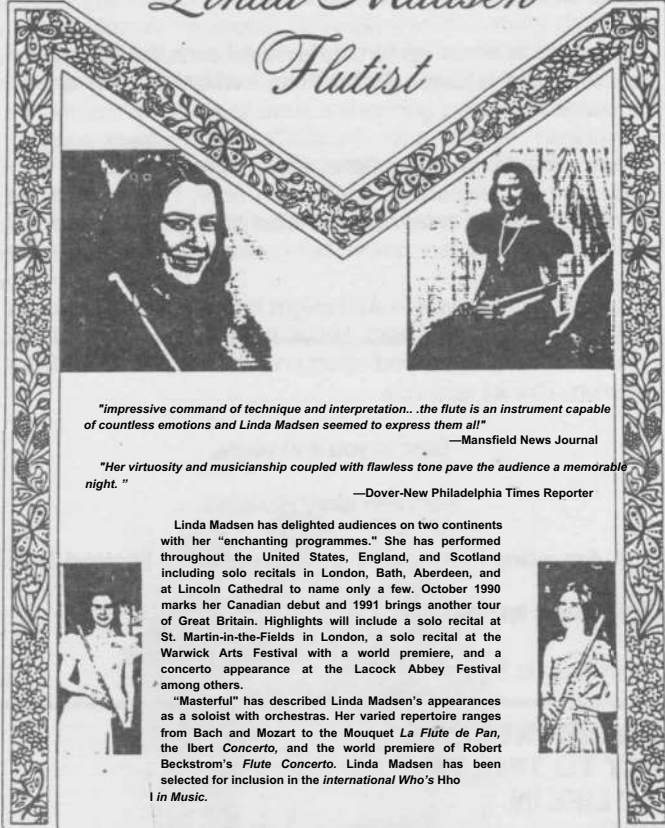
**EDITOR'S NOTE:**

Call, get a questionnaire form and give them your story. They're NOT looking for contributions.

**EDITOR'S NOTE:**

Our own Classical Flutist, daughter of the Norman Madsens' of Stow, OH, is performing in England this summer. She entertained at the Ladies Saturday breakfast in Fargo. Maybe some of our English friends can hear her.

*Linda Madsen*  
*Flutist*



*"impressive command of technique and interpretation.. the flute is an instrument capable of countless emotions and Linda Madsen seemed to express them all"*  
—Mansfield News Journal

*"Her virtuosity and musicianship coupled with flawless tone pave the audience a memorable night."*  
—Dover-New Philadelphia Times Reporter

Linda Madsen has delighted audiences on two continents with her "enchanting programmes." She has performed throughout the United States, England, and Scotland including solo recitals in London, Bath, Aberdeen, and at Lincoln Cathedral to name only a few. October 1990 marks her Canadian debut and 1991 brings another tour of Great Britain. Highlights will include a solo recital at St. Martin-in-the-Fields in London, a solo recital at the Warwick Arts Festival with a world premiere, and a concerto appearance at the Lacock Abbey Festival among others.

"Masterful" has described Linda Madsen's appearances as a soloist with orchestras. Her varied repertoire ranges from Bach and Mozart to the Mouquet *La Flute de Pan*, the Ibert *Concerto*, and the world premiere of Robert Beckstrom's *Flute Concerto*. Linda Madsen has been selected for inclusion in the *international Who's Who in Music*.

Linda Madsen is available for formal and informal recitals, chamber music concerts, solo appearances with orchestras, radio and television broadcasts, lecture-recitals, master classes, and residencies. Fee structure is adjustable to any size budget For further information and booking, contact:

**LINDA MADSEN'S 1991 ENGLAND TOUR ITINERARY**  
(as of April 7, 1991)

- July 4 All Saints' Church, Great Ashfield  
recital featuring world premiere
- July 5 Felbrigg Hall, Norwich  
chamber music concert
- July 6 St. Mary's Church, Tittleshall  
chamber music concert
- July 8 Warwick Arts Festival, Warwick  
recital featuring world premiere
- July 9 St. Martin-within-Ludgate, London  
recital
- July 12 Church of St. Anne and St. Agnes, London  
recital
- July 13 Thaxted Festival, Thaxted  
concerto appearance
- July 16 St. Martin-within-Ludgate, London  
recital
- July 18 St. Olave's, London  
recital
- July 23 St. Martin-in-the-Fields, London  
recital
- July 24 Lincoln Cathedral, Lincoln  
recital
- July 26 Lacock Abbey Festival, Lacock  
concerto appearance
- July 27 Lacock Abbey Festival, Lacock  
chamber music concert
- July 30 St. Martin-within-Ludgate, London  
recital
- July 31 St. Lawrence Jewry, London  
recital

**385<sup>th</sup> BGMA**

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