

BACK TO THE SACK  
OHIO AIR FORCE  
SKY GODDESS  
HONKY TONK SAL  
HESITATIN' HUSSY  
GROUND HOG  
BIG GAS BIRD  
STAR DUST  
LIBERTY BELLE  
ANGELS SISTER  
GREMLIN BUGGY II  
THOROBRED

HIT PARADE JR  
GOLDEN GOOSE  
WAR HORSE  
RAUNCHY WOLF  
"HAYBAG" ANNIE  
LIL AUDREY  
HUSTLIN' HUSSY  
LEADING LADY  
OLD SHILLEAGH I

THE BLACKJACKER  
THUNDERBIRD  
PICCADILLY QUEEN  
WANDERING DUCHESS  
MARY ELLEN  
DRAGON LADY  
WINNIE THE POOH  
MR WEARY  
MARY PIT  
SUGAR JO

OFF SPRING  
BLUE CHAMPAGNE  
GELDING  
STARS AND STRIPES  
DORSAL QUEEN  
HARES BREATH  
SLY FOX  
MR. SMITH

HEAVENLY BODY  
CHOWHOUND  
MISS AMERICA  
PREGNANT PORTIA  
ALEXANDER'S RAGTIME BAND  
LONESOME POLECAT

THE HERALD  
KENTUCKY WINNER  
PISTOL PACKIN MAMA  
TARGET FOR TONIGHT  
JUNIOR  
OL' DOODLE BUG  
SWEET CHARIOT  
SWINGING DOOR  
MISSISSIPPI MISS  
SATAN'S MATE  
KITTYS REVENGE

SKY CHIEF  
OLD SHILLEAGH II  
PERRY'S PIRATES  
GIZMO  
SLO JO  
ROGER THE DODGER  
MICKY  
HALF AND HALF  
MICKY II

MR. LUCKY  
BARBARA B  
MADAME SHOO SHOO  
PAT PENDING  
POSSIBLE STRAGGET  
HOMESICK ANGEL  
LATEST RUMOR  
MAIDEN AMERICA  
MISSION BELLE  
OL' RUM DUM

SHACK HUNNY  
ROUNDTRIP JACK  
SPIRIT OF CHICAGO  
SOUTHERN BELLE  
WIT 69  
HOT CHOCOLATE  
VIBRANT VIRGIN  
RAGGEDY ANNE  
STORK CLUB  
MAC'S HACK  
CRASH WAGON III  
IMPATIENT VIRGIN

MR. SMITH  
SUGAR JO  
SHACK N LADY  
SACK TIME  
RELUCTANT LADY  
FOOLISH VIRGIN  
RAGGED BUT RIGHT  
LULU BELLE  
SLACK CHICK  
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AIN'T MISBEHAVIN'  
MARY ELLEN II

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SLACK CHICK  
THE JOKER  
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MARY ELLEN II



NEWSLETTER OF THE  
385th BOMBARDMENT GROUP MEMORIAL ASSOCIATION



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July 2000

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**18th Biennial Reunion  
385th BGMA**

**Albuquerque, NM  
April 4-8, 2001**

**With Post Reunion Tour  
of Santa Fe  
April 8-9, 2001**

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# Chaplain Sez

Hi!

I am writing this on Memorial weekend so it will be along that theme.

My brother, Dr. R.E. Vance, Jr. is a retired History Professor and he wrote me about their local historical society's meeting. It featured six people that gave personal experiences about the home front during World War II. Russ, my brother, was in the army during the war but he had written a book in 1976 on the history of the University in Pennsylvania. In his speech he described the cadet nurses program. One of the young nurses told how she had enjoyed hearing the program described because she had been in the program. My brother asked her if she was in a combat area. She was not and then asked why he had asked. My brother's answer was "any time a gal tells me that she was a combat nurse I "have" to give her a hug because I spent 14 months in army hospitals and I owe several nurses my life".

I know you will be reading this long after Memorial Day but I want to emphasize our need to remember the young men and women in the military.

In my last "Chaplain Sez" I emphasized "Love" and how we need to continue to carry out God's directives. In Mark 12:30 and 31 Jesus tells us "You must love him (God) with all your heart, soul, mind and strength." "Love others as much as you love yourself". There are many ways we can express this love and remembering our military personnel is one of those ways.

Sincerely with love,  
Jim Vance



Plaque from the Battle of the Bulge

5

# President's Report

By the time you receive this copy of the Hardlife Herald the tour group will have returned from our trip to Great Ashfield, Paris and Perle Luxembourg. Now our next big plans are for the reunion to be held next year in April, 4-8 in Albuquerque, NM. Make your plans now to attend and mark the dates down on your calendar. Hal Goetsch our Albuquerque host is going all out to make this reunion one that you will remember. A great program is being planned that will be enjoyed by all.

It seems there is more mention of W.W.II lately than there was for many years with the Washington D.C. memorial in the making and the opening in June of the museum in New Orleans. The author Stephen Ambrose has spearheaded the drive to build the museum. Have you read Stephen Ambrose' book, Citizen Soldier? A W.W.II book from D-day to the surrender of Germany. I would recommend it, worth reading. From what I have heard about the New Orleans museum it is worth a trip to see. Maybe a reunion there could be possible or D.C. in 2003. We need some local host for the 2003 reunion. Please step forward and present a proposal to the executive committee as soon as possible so we can present it to the group in Albuquerque.

Dues: Now it is my duty to talk about our dues. The publication and distribution of the Hardlife Herald is the main expense of the group. It is so important for us to have this wonderful communication media, it is our groups life blood and is our top priority. At our last reunion our treasurer reported that our expenses were exceeding our income and our small reserve is being depleted. After discussion it was voted to increase the dues to \$20.00 per year and to request the life members to donate another \$100.00, or if they prefer pay a donation of \$20.00 per year. To determine if your dues are current look at your address label on your Hardlife Herald and after your name they will be an R and two numbers. The numbers represent the year you paid through. If you have a 99, 98, 97, 96, etc., your dues are due. Life Members will have a LM999 after their name. If your dues are due or delinquent, please pay your dues and delinquency or life member donation to our Treasurer, Verne Phillips, PO Drawer 5970, Austin, TX 78763.

From your grateful heart flood us with your proposals for the 2003 reunion.

Tom Newton



# BULLETIN BOARD

## PLEASE HELP!!!

I am Pat Flanagan, son to Lt. Pat Flanagan and father of Tony, your contact person for our family. Tony and I are planning to attend the Memorial on June 24 and 25 in Perle. We need to make arrangements and are asking your help. Where is the best airport to get a flight into Luxembourg and or Perle? What type of accommodations are there in Perle for us to spend possibly a week visiting the area? Since this will be our first trip overseas any help you can give will be greatly appreciated. We also want to visit the Henri-Cahpelle Cemetery and visit Dad's gravesite. Please forward any information you can to my e-mail account. I will be in contact with Tony. My e-mail is patnsanf@hoosierlink.net. I look forward to meeting you and seeing the museum. Thank you for your help

Patrick Flanagan

## CAN YOU HELP????

**EDITOR'S NOTE:** We had several stories in the past about our shuttle mission that landed in Africa...Schweinfurt the target. Can anyone write us about the shuttle mission that landed in Russia (or Poland)? We remember it as being something of a disaster, but can't come up with anything solid.

## GREAT NEWSLETTER

I just rec'd my first copy of the Hardlife Herald. What a great newsletter. Bill Varnedoe put a copy of his email to me in this addition of the Hardlife. The pilot of my brothers plane, Mario Persechini, saw the note called Bill who emailed me and I called Mario. We talked for a long time. This only happened because of the newsletter.

Dave McKee

~~EDIHUB' NUIE! Herete A deteited letter TrorYi Prudent~~  
Tom (to the executive committee) about our finances. Any comments you have will be in future issues.

The Executive Committee agrees that we should support Ian in his effort to establish a memorial, but it's hoped the funds will come from direct donations from individual members to Ian for this project. The need is for \$2,000.00. It's suggested that anything raised above that go to the Savannah Museum.

To 385th Executive Committee Members:  
A large majority of the Executive Committee Members are

In favor of assisting Ian McLachlan in establishing a monument to Hutchison and Pease crews, 385th and 8th Airforce at Reedham. However after several e-mails and telephone conversations concerning our financial situation with our treasurer, Vern Phillips, it was determined that the 385th does not have sufficient funds to make any donations or any other extraordinary expenses. Our income and expense statement for the year 1999 shows a net income of \$1,040.49, and for the 4 month period ending April 20, 2000, a net loss of \$2317.95. The only expenses the group has paid since the closing of the Savannah reunion are the Hardlife Herald newsletter expenses. We currently have 6,539.65 in checking and savings. We have five editions of the Hardlife Herald to pay for this year and roughly \$2,000.00 for each edition for a total of \$10,000.00. Assuming the dues income is similar to last years, for the next 8 months we should receive approximately \$6,500.00 in dues. Add the \$6,500.00 in dues to cash on hand of approximately \$6,500.00 for a total of \$13,000.00, less the expenses of \$10,000.00 would leave us a balance of \$3,000.00 for a net loss in checking and savings of \$3,500.00.

At our last business meeting in Savannah we discussed our diminishing financial situation and voted to increase our dues to \$20.00 per year and request the life members to donate another \$100.00. Some of our present financial problem is due to the life members dues being allocated to the endowment fund of the church at Great Ashfield. As our group gets older and fewer, we have less annual dues payers to support the groups financial needs. In the February 2000 issue of the HH we were still showing in the application for membership a \$15.00 annual dues. I have asked Ed to correct this oversight. I will write an article for the HH requesting the members to pay the \$20.00 fee and the life members to make another \$100.00 donation. We need to get our cash flow turned around. It is too late to get any articles in the April issue of the HH. The next issue will be the June issue and the members would probably receive it in July. It is taking two to four weeks for delivery of the HH to our members after being posted, talk about snail mail. I will not write the dues article until I receive your thoughts and suggestions.

As for the Reedham memorial I will write Ian McLachlan a letter expressing our regrets that the association is unable to make a financial donation. However we will have an article in the HH about the Reedham memorial. In the HH article we could request a contribution of \$10.00 to \$20.00 from our members to establish a fund for making contributions and donations such as the Reedham memorial.

Tom Newton

EDITOR'S NOTE: Thanks to Jack Baugh for sending this story.

It was on a nice, sunny day in May 45 years ago that Edwin Pollock was sitting outside his bunk, hungrily whipping up a mixture of powdered milk, margarine and jelly in a tin.

His concentration on his food was broken by a pair of shiny boots that suddenly stepped into his field of vision.

Still mixing his meal, Pollock looked up — from the boots to the neat riding pants to a pair of ivory-handled pistols.

Having been liberated from a German POW camp two days earlier by the 14th Armored Division of the 3rd Army, Pollock knew that the distinctive boots, pants, and pistols before him could only belong to Gen. George S. Patton.

He jumped up and saluted.

"What are you doing, soldier?" asked Patton, then commander of the 3rd Army.

"Making Kriegie whip, sir," Pollock answered. "Kriegie" was short for Kriegsgefangenen, the German word for prisoner of war. The "whip" was a thick mixture made from the contents of Red Cross parcels — dried milk, called "klim" (milk spelled backwards); margarine; jam or jelly, and whatever else from the parcel that looked good.

"Let me taste that," Patton said. Pollock handed over the tin.

The general had a taste. "Uh! How can you eat that filth?" he said, and walked away.

That was May 1, 1945, two days after Patton's army liberated Pollock and 110,000 Allied soldiers from a large prisoner of war camp in Moosburg, Germany. Pollock, a 1st lieutenant and pilot with the 385th Bomb Group of the 8th Air Force, was among a group of POWs that, five months before, had been transferred to that camp from one called Stalag Luft III in Sagan, Germany.

Though Gen. Patton found the Kriegie whip distasteful, Pollock, who was imprisoned for a total of 11 months, credits the Red Cross parcels with saving the lives of many POWs.

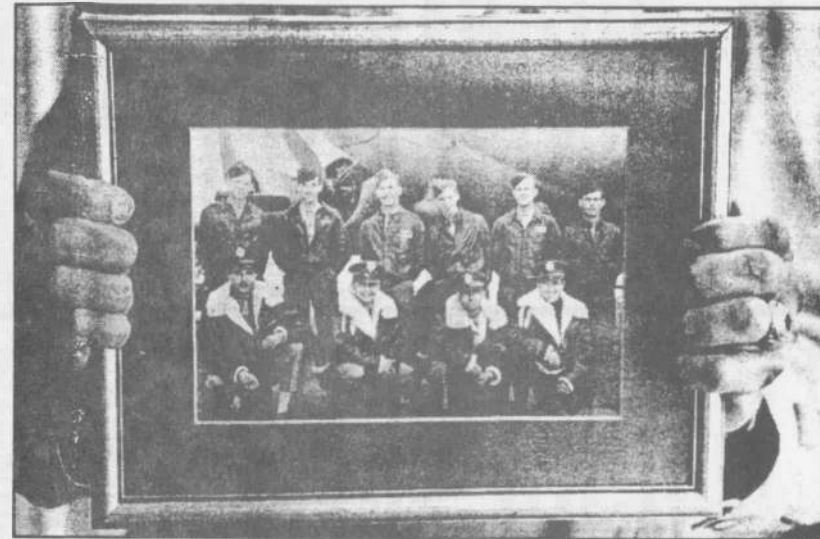
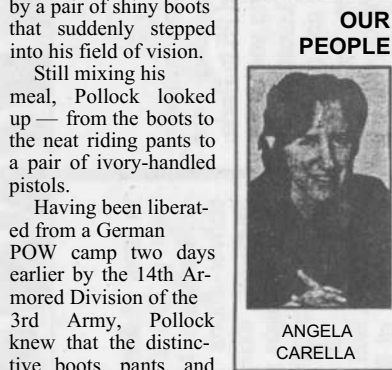
"There we were, way the hell out in eastern Germany, and we were getting these 2-foot by 1-foot by 6-inch Red Cross boxes," said Pollock, now 73 and a Darien resident, retired from a New York City investment banking firm.

Each week, each man received a parcel that typically included one can each of powdered milk, spam, corned beef, salmon; cheese, margarine, coffee, jam, prunes or raisins, and a bar each of chocolate and soap.

In Stalag Luft III, on the German/Polish border, there were four compounds; each room housed up to 14 POWs.

"We had triple-decker bunks and stoves made out of milk cans. We would combine the food parcels — there was a designated cook, a cook's helper, a dishwasher. By doing that we would have enough food to get through a week."

Pollock is a staunch defender of the Red Cross, which has been widely criticized,



■ Pollock still keeps a picture of his WWII flight crew. Pollock, the pilot, is pictured bottom left.

especially by GIs stationed in England, for its policy of charging for doughnuts, coffee and other services.

In fact, the Red Cross at first provided these at no charge but changed its policy at the U.S. Army's request. The request came in response to complaints by the British high command, which required *its* servicemen to pay for their own off-base food and lodging and didn't want the Red Cross to set a new precedent.

But, Pollock said, the complaints about the Red Cross came from servicemen who had the luxury of complaining, not from those in dire need.

"The only thing the Germans gave the POWs were potatoes — half of them were rotten and not fit to eat — and bread that had a good deal of sawdust in it. I think if we didn't have the Red Cross parcels we would have starved to death."

Please turn to WAR, Page B8



# War

H' Continued from Page B7

In fact, for one month in the fall of 1944, the German lines of transportation broke down and the Red Cross parcels couldn't get through to Stalag Luft III.

For that month we lived on potatoes and bread. We were on the verge of starvation," Pollock said. "When you're that way, all you can think of is food. Your thoughts are completely centered on it — it was all we talked about. There was no talk of girls. We made up recipes. Everybody wanted to open a restaurant when they got home."

For Pollock, home was Grove City, Pa., a town just north of Pittsburgh. Growing up there, he always had one interest — flying. He was enrolled in a Civilian Pilot Training Program when, in June 1942, he enlisted in the U.S. Army Air Forces. He got called up in August, at age 25. "They needed pilots pretty badly at that time," he said.

In the spring of 1943 he became a first pilot and got a crew: co-pilot, navigator, bombardier, radio operator, tail gunner, ball turret gunner, and two waist gunners.

In October of that year, Pollock and his crew were sent to England and assigned to the 385th Bomb Group of the 8th Air Force — the force that, from August 1942 to May 1945, attacked targets in Nazi Germany in daylight raids from air bases in England.

The tour of duty for crew members was 25 missions, "but nobody expected they'd make 25," Pollock said.

Many didn't. Pollock and his crew were shot down on their third mission.

"We were on a mission to Emden, on the Dutch/German border. It was supposed to be a milk run — a piece of cake. But we were hit by flak just as we dropped our bombs."

Their B-17, the "Flying Fortress" that flew most of the missions out of England, was badly damaged.

"We lost the No. 4 engine, the

leading edge of the right wing was hit badly, we were knocked out of formation. I decided to dive down to get in cloud cover."

They were met by six German fighter planes.

"They hit us real hard," Pollock said, remembering his crew. "The ball turret gunner was killed, one of the waist gunners was killed, the tail gunner lost an eye, the radio operator was hurt, the navigator got a bullet through his cheeks."

The controls were shot out. "The airplane was in a dive. We had to bail out."

Pollock came down in Holland about 12:30 on a Saturday afternoon. He was met by a group of civilians, members of the Dutch underground.

"I gave them my chute — they used to make wedding dresses out of it." He also gave them his .45 pistol, "I knew they needed it," and his inflatable "Mae West" jacket.

They hid him in a school; then, when it got dark, they took him to a farm house. He met a young woman named Tiny Mulder, who was helping to hide Allied airmen in Holland and trying to get them back to England. After the war was over, Mulder would receive the Medal of Freedom — the United States' highest honor to a civilian — for her work in the Dutch resistance.

The underground was also hiding Pollock's co-pilot, who soon joined him. Mulder had to get them through Belgium on the route back to England, but she knew that the Nazis were offering 20,000 francs for each flier caught, and the Belgians were turning them in.

Pollock and his co-pilot were underground almost five months when Mulder decided it was safe to try the trip. They made it onto a trolley headed for Antwerp when they were turned in by a Belgian couple who'd helped them get there.

Mulder later told Pollock that, after the war ended, the couple "was taken care of." I assume they were executed by resistance fighters," Pollock said.

He and his co-pilot were taken to a civilian prison in Antwerp, where they were questioned by the Gestapo, who turned them over to the Luftwaffe, the German air force. They were joined by their bombardier. From there they were put on a prison train to Stalag Luft III on the Oder River. It was June 1944.

In October 1944, Pollock was again helped by the Red Cross. The senior officer in the prison camp, an American colonel, asked Pollock to come and see him. When Pollock got there, the colonel had a stranger with him.

"It was a guy from the Swedish Red Cross. He said he would get word back to my father that I was in prison and I was OK. All my parents knew at that point was that I was missing in action." They got the word.

One day in late January 1945 the POWs heard the Russians bombing on the other side of the Oder River. That night the Germans marched the POWs, during a blizzard, to an old factory 30 miles away. From there they were put on a train to the big prison camp at Moosburg.

"There was still no food; we continued to get boxes from the Red Cross," Pollock said. "We had guys in that prison who were skilled at most everything. They made radios out of I don't know what. We heard Roosevelt died. A guy, another prisoner, would come around and tell us how the war was going, how badly the Germans were doing. The German propaganda line was, 'We have retreated to previously prepared positions.'"

On April 29, 1945 the POWs got the ultimate sign of just how badly the Germans were doing. Two U.S. P-51 fighter planes did a slow roll in close formation over the prison camp.

"When they came right over us and were fooling around like that we knew they were giving us a message," Pollock remembered with emotion. "We knew we'd be out."

A few hours later, the prisoners hid in their bunks as the black-uniformed SS soldiers and the German army regulars in the camp argued, fought and shot at each other. The SS

wanted to stay and fight the invading Americans and the regulars wanted to surrender.

"About a half-hour after that American tanks rolled right through the gates," Pollock said.

About a week later, on May 8, victory in Europe was declared. Pollock's wife, Madeleine, heard about it aboard a ship bound for England. She was a volunteer in the Red Cross Cub Mobile Division. Though she didn't know her husband at the time, she was and is just as staunch a defender of the Red Cross.

"We had a huge bus fixed up with a record player, magazines, books, and things, and we made coffee and doughnuts. We served anyone. And we never charged," she said.

On his way back to the United States Ed Pollock met up with his waist gunner, who told him that they had been able to shoot down three of the German fighter planes that had attacked them. He also said that the Germans had repatriated the tail gunner and radio operator because they were badly injured.

Since the war, the Pollocks have become good friends with Tiny Mulder and her husband, who have made several trips to the United States, including one during which the couple rented a van and traveled around this country and Canada, visiting some of the hundreds of airmen Tiny once protected in Holland. She is writing a book about the experience.

Pollock told of his experience because he wanted to help set the record straight about the Red Cross (a topic that has been debated recently in the Ann Landers column), and not as a story about his stint in World War II.

"In the war, everybody had their story," he said.

□ □



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**Missions of 1<sup>st</sup> Lt. Adolph "Abe" F. Keskes  
385<sup>th</sup> BG 551<sup>st</sup> Squadron Great Ashfield,  
England**

The 385th flew 297 missions consisting of 8,265 sorties and dropped 18,494 tons of bombs

**1<sup>st</sup> Lt. Adolph Keskes and Crew**



**Crew members :** Timothy Strada (Co-Pilot), Karl Moravek (Waist Gunner ana assistant Engineer), Pat Hall, Bill Moebius, Joseph W. Kubr, William J. Coseo (Radio Operator), Wilbert T. Crawley (Engineer), John R. Parr (Tail Gunner), Bryan ? (Navigator).



# Proclamation



Whereas: The Eighth Air Force was formed and dispatched to England in 1942 to become the largest military unit in World War 11, and the largest bomber force of all time. Over 350,000 served in Europe and

Whereas: The Eighth Air Force has continued as an operational combat unit to this day with over one million serving the country in war and in peace and

Whereas: No Mighty Eighth mission was ever turned back due to enemy action. The cost was 26,000 killed in action, and over 28,000 prisoners of war. The number of missing in action and wounded have not been counted and

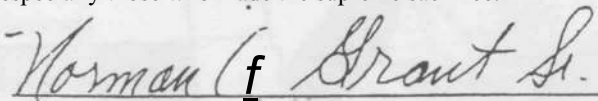
Whereas: In a one week period of October 8 - 14,1943, the Eighth Air Force lost over 100 Heavy Bombers to enemy action over the skies of Europe, and despite heavy losses, many feel that this was the turning point for daylight strategic bombing. Targets during this week were:

October 8,1943	Bremen, Germany	14 Bombers lost, 3 Fighters
October 9,1943	Anken, Germany	6 Bombers lost
October 10,1943	Munster, Germany	30 Bombers lost, 1 Fighter
October 14,1943	Schweinfurt, Germany	60 Bombers lost, 1 Fighter

Whereas: The Eighth Air Force Historical Society, the largest single military unit veterans group in history, holds its annual reunions in the month of October and

Whereas: Today 20,000 Eighth Air Force Historical Society members are seeking to inform later generations of the contribution and sacrifice made by our generation to perpetuate America's freedom and way of life and

Whereas: Every year during the week of October 8 - 14, we will ask every Eighth Air Force Veteran and friend of the Eighth to wear and display items identifying them with The Mighty Eighth to honor and remember our comrades and especially those who made the supreme sacrifice.

NOW, THEREFORE,   
President

Do hereby proclaim every October 8-14 to be

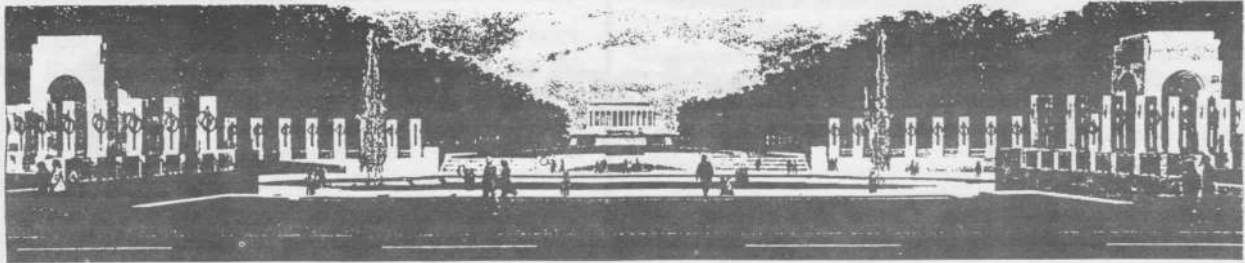
## MIGHTY EIGHTH AIR FORCE WEEK

-fS"

**EDITOR'S NOTE:** Our 385th took losses on the above raids: October 8 to Bremen-no losses; October 9 to Marienberg-lost Bell crew; October 10 to Munster-lostPettengerS Whitlow crews; October 14 to Schweinfurt-lost Vockerath crew.



EDITOR'S NOTE: Anyone with a little political clout may want to help with this effort.



### YOUR GIFT WILL HELP BUILD THE WORLD WAR II MEMORIAL!

That means for every net dollar donated to the VFW WWII Memorial Program, an extra 50 cents will be added from VFW's WWII Memorial Matching Gift Fund. For example, your gift of \$20 will become \$30 - your gift of \$50 will become \$75. It is the most effective way you and I can make this project a reality. A bold step that no other veterans group dared to take.

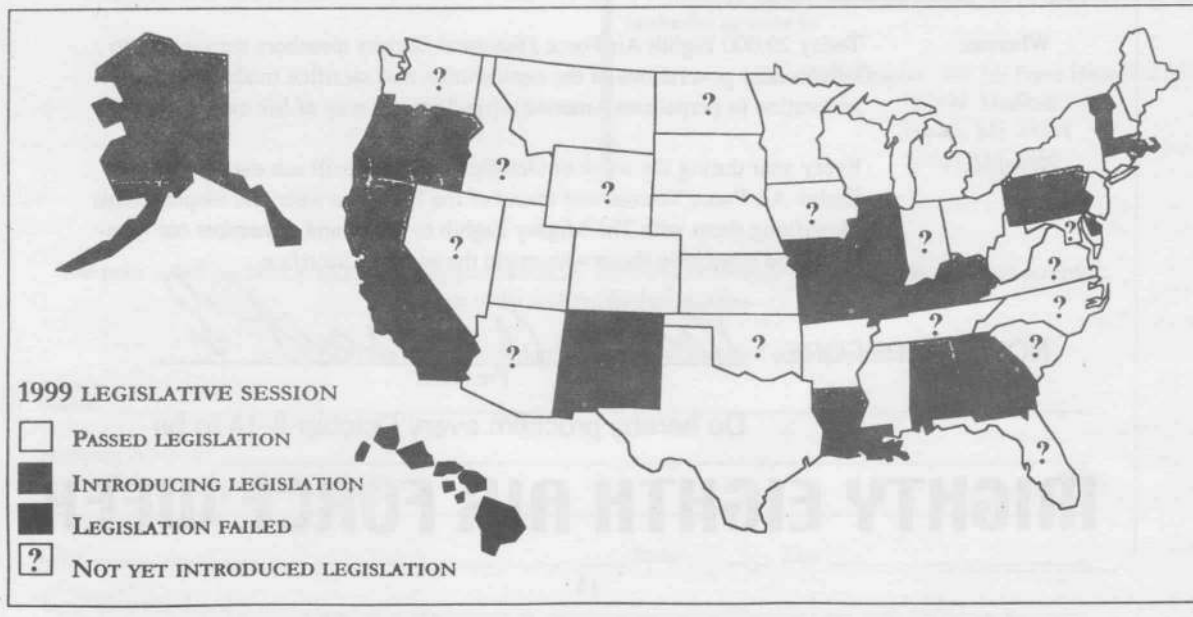


VFW SPECIAL PROJECTS  
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Kansas City, MO 64111

## STATES CONTINUE TO GIVE!

The State Campaign program has met with great success the last few months. As you can see from the map below, a lot of movement has occurred since the last newsletter. The movement is due primarily to readers who have taken the time to ask their legislators to support the legislation in their home state. But we still need help in the states coded green, red and with a question mark. To date, five states have declined to introduce the legislation which would honor men and women who served in the armed forces during the Second World War: Idaho, Indiana, Nevada, Florida, and Tennessee. The legislation tailed in six states where it was introduced and either died in committee or the governor did not sign it: Illinois, Vermont, New Mexico, Georgia, Hawaii, and Missouri.

If your state is in the process of passing similar legislation or if you would like more information on the legislation, please contact Carol Lindamood (800) 639-4992 or e-mail her at: [lindamoodc@wwiimemorial.com](mailto:lindamoodc@wwiimemorial.com).





made by Group Captain Hamish Mahaddie at an RAF Bomber Command reunion in London in April 1983: the speech was LONG—his wind-up is very moving.

Wilst I have no words to make into a requiem, let me borrow words from Noel Coward, the famous actor and playwright. He lived in the Albany Hotel, Piccadilly, and he heard the bombers routed over the centre of London by our Commander in Chief to give the Londoners some feeling that retribution was at hand. He wrote these words:

Lie in the dark and listen...It's clear tonight, they're flying high, Hundreds of them, thousands perhaps, riding an icy, moonlit sky. Men, machinery, bombs, maps, altimeters, guns, charts and coffee. Sandwiches, fleece-lined boots, bones, muscles, minds and hearts. Young saplings, with young roots deep in the earth they've left below. Lie in the dark, let them go. Lie in the dark and listen... They're going over in waves and waves, high above villages, hills and streams, country churches, little graves.

Very soon they'll reach the sea and far below will lie the bays, the cliffs, the sands, where they used to be taken for summer holidays. Lie in the dark, let them go, theirs is a world you'll never, ever know. Lie in the dark and listen...you city magnates, you steel contractors, factory workers, politicians, soft, hysterical little actors. Ballet dancers, reserve musicians, safe in your warm civilian beds. Count your profits, count your sheep, life is passing above your heads. Just turn over try, try to sleep. Lie in the dark, let them go. There's one debt you'll for ever, ever owe. Lie in and dark and listen...

---

Dear Ed:

I waited to hear from Ian McLachlan, our Rep at F.O.T.E., but no news. He was having his problems last fall when I contacted him - moving, looking for a job, etc.

After talking to you about where to send Lew Swedlunds wartime album (black & white, copy his family had sent me) I contacted Ian for possibly sending to American Museum in Britain. He was going to look into it, but nothing came of it, from his silence.

I recently contacted The National Military Database-8th A.F. Section in Milwaukee, WI. They agreed to handle the recording of the album in a website-to-be for the 385th Group.

Enjoy the Hardlife Herald very much. It gets better each issue.

My wish for good health

Arthur Wiegand  
6120 River Run Dr  
Sebastian FL 32958-4779

Thank you for your interest in the National Military Heritage Database. This project is dedicated to all who served in W. W. II. Currently all missions flown by the 379th Bomb Group have been recorded, this includes over 11,000 individual aircraft sorties and the military records of over 5,300 group members.

The 44th Bomb Group has now been completed, this includes over 8,000 individual aircraft sorties and the military records of over 6,000 group member. Additional groups are being added as time and money permits.

#### CURRENT DATABASE STATISTICS

GROUP	MEMBERS
44TH	6,234
379TH	5,377
384TH	4,921
390TH	6,746
392ND	221
466TH	2,357

Total names in the database now exceed 25,800. Some interesting statistics about World War II.

Participants	16,535,000
Deaths in Service	406,000
Living Veterans	6,319,000

Our intention is to create a Master Database of national historical significance. We need your help. The time is short, many members of the 8th Air Force during W.W. II are no longer with us. We need to collect this information before it is too late.

If you would like to purchase a copy of the Military Heritage Database (\$150.00) or if you would just like to make a contribution, please send your check to:

National Military Heritage Database Foundation  
8605 Servite Drive  
Milwaukee, WI 53223  
Attn: Web Sales

To have a personal biography entered into the Military Heritage Database, please fill out the attached form along with your contribution to the above address.

Thank you for your support.

Sincerely,  
Peter Bartsch  
[Sales@8thAirForce.com](mailto:Sales@8thAirForce.com)

**EDITOR'S NOTE: The above is in answer to Art Wiegand's request.**

121 Wing

Fortress, No. 42/31378

landed at B. 100 with

and No. 1 Engine on seat

A guard of the F.  
mounted on the aircraft



**From:** Bill Varnedoe <[billvar@bellsouth.net](mailto:billvar@bellsouth.net)>  
**To:** Ed Stern <[straus@fargoweb.com](mailto:straus@fargoweb.com)>  
**Sent:** Sunday, May 28, 2000 9:20 PM  
**Attach:** Scanned Picture 1 .jpg  
**Subject:** Rum Dum Receipt

Ed,

That receipt for Rum Dum that I sent you was a bit small. Here is a bigger version. The full story about Lt. Muchow and the last Rum Dum mission is on page 78 of the book, *History of the 385th*.

Bill

Air Force  
1st Lt. Muchow)  
hrs. flight - damage  
- 1713 hrs today  
Regt has been  
Tom O'Keefe

From Art Wiegand  
To Peter Bartsch  
Subject: Personal Records

Peter, I sent that request to you to find an answer to a problem.. In 1999, a groupmate of mine passed away up in Minnesota.. He had never gone to reunions and was not a member of the 385th Bomb Group Memorial Society.. He got all the info needed from library books and I kept him advised by passing news on during lunches with him and forwarding group info that he would be interested in occasionally.. His last years were a fight against Parkinson's Disease ending in his demise last year.. At his Memorial service, his album of his wartime service was on display and after viewing it I remarked that it or a copy of it should go to a museum somewhere as it was the best record I'd seen of a life in the Air Corps from Cadet to Captain... Three months later a black and white copy arrived at my home with the license to take it to the impending 385th B.G. Reunion in Savannah, GA. In talking to the group news editor, it was decided to present it to an organization such as yours or perhaps the 8th Air Force Museum in GA. Or the new American Air Force Museum in Britain.. However, contacting our representative at "FOTE" (Friends of the Eighth) did not have any results.. My question is, can you find a place for this album in your organization? If not do you have the e-mail address of the Savannah, GA museum? At 82 it's time for me to get this problem solved, so your help will be appreciated.. Art Wiegand, 550th Squadron, 385th Bomb Group.

From: Peter Bartsch  
To Art Wiegand  
Subject: Personal Records

Hello Art,

We would be honored to have this album, I promise that we will preserve his memories, and make sure that others will have the chance to view his album. These are the type of stories and memories that need to be passed down to the next generations. Hopefully we will be entering the 385th information into our database soon. However we can start entering some of the personal information now.

If you would like to send his album please mail it to:  
National Military Heritage Data:  
C/O Peter Bartsch  
756 N Milwaukee St  
Port Washington, WI 53074

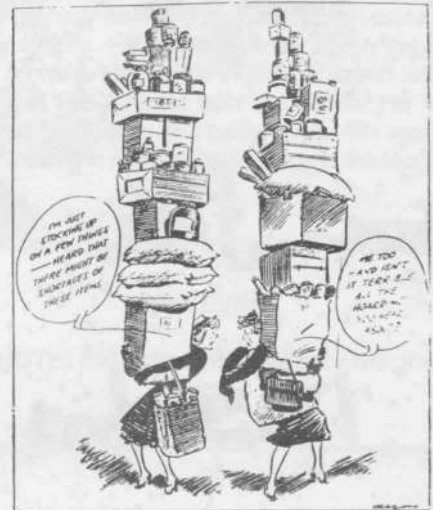
Thank you,

Peter Bartsch  
[8thAirForce.com](http://8thAirForce.com)

**CARTOONS FROM '43 & '45  
Jesse Brown sent them.**



After All It Said and Done  
IT'S ALWAYS "SOMEBODY ELSE"



'Have either of you gentlemen a cigaret?'



# Letters to the Editor

Hi Ed:

I just received your letter regarding "Adolph from Berlin". I appreciate it. I noticed that you were sending a copy to Bill Varnedoe, so I thought that I better give you a list of names that I have been corresponding with about my research.

Bill Varnedoe, Warren Cerrone, Karl Moravek, Bill Moebius, Joe Kubr, and I just sent a letter to Timothy Strada (my fathers co-pilot). Bill Varnedoe has been VERY helpful to date, but we still are coming up empty handed on the fort "Adolph from Berlin".

Again, I appreciate any and all assistance!

Best Regards,  
Jeff Keskes

Dear Ed,

I'm sorry I didn't respond sooner with a letter but a dozen projects surfaced that I had to handle right away.

It was very nice talking to you about the old base in Elmswell. I forgot to ask if you have a layout of the whole airfield.

I took my family to Elmswell about seven years ago and hardly anything has changed in Elmswell, even the old pub where we used to have a few warm beers before boarding the train for our three day pass in London. The owner of the pub has kept an excellent log of airmen who returned to the village for a visit.

I can't remember the exact date when we flew over to England, but my 1st mission was on Oct. 30 '44 to Meresburg, Germany. Before we started flying our missions, we had to fly familiarization flights during the day and nite around Great Ashfield. This is when we belly landed our plane after the pilot dropped the plane about 50 ft and the landing gear collapsed and we skidded off the runway into a wooded area. Do you recall this incident and the date? I'm trying to get some compensation from the V.A. for injuries to my knees in the tail position. I had both knees replaced after suffering for 55 years. On my 19th birthday and 5th mission we were shot down in Brussels, Belgium and again in LeHavre, France. I did complete 35 missions on March 11, '45.

The enclosed picture is of the enlisted men of our crew. Standing Left to right is myself, Mario Batuello, Lindsay Jacobson, Lower left Robert Malkmus, Jack Lance and Stanley odworny. I haven't heard from any of my crew except Podworny who passed away about 20 years ago.



1

Just to bring you up to date after I left the service, I went to the University of Connecticut & University of Hartford where I got my Mechanical & Design Engineering degrees. I worked for Pratt & Whitney aircraft & Hamilton Standard. They are divisions of United Technologies. At Hamilton Std, I was in the aerospace division, my most memorable phase of a very varied engineering career. Our group designed the Apollo Moon program space suit & Portable Life Support System "Back Pack". I took the first flyable space suit and went back to Houston, Texas for President Lyndon Johnson to review. I also set up the test facilities for checking the suit and back pack at Cape Kennedy, Florida. In addition I trained the Apollo Astronauts how to operate the back pack. I have a space book that I gave my daughter with all or most of the signatures of the astronauts I trained. I made a copy of the autographs for you.

With test wishes,

Ted Dubril  
PO Box 5506  
Weirs Beach, NH 03246  
603-366-5704



These are the signatures of the Astronauts given to Ted & wife.

DEDICATION

To my wonderful wife Pat

Bill Anders

Neil Armstrong  
GEMINI VII

Michael Collins

Gene Cernan  
GEMINI IX

BEST WISHES

Jim Lovell

John Young  
GEMINI IX

James A. McDivitt

Fusty Schweickart

Kathleen Nancy Dubiel '68

Frank Borman  
GEMINI VII

Buzz Aldrin  
GEMINI VII

Janice  
07/12

Alan Shepard

Michael Collins  
GEMINI IX

Jerry Carr

Ed Mitchell

Dear Jerry,

My name is Joe Marks. I flew with the 351st B.G. I'm a life member of the 8th AF Historical Society and also of the Florida Chapter.

Until 1936 I lived in the small town of Morrisville, PA. My best friend was named Alex Rusecky. After the war I heard that Alex was a Bomber Pilot and was lost when his plane collided with another plane.

For 55 years I have often wondered what happened to Alex and Lu and behold I finally found out.

While traveling back from New Jersey last week I stopped at the 8th AF Museum in Georgia. I inquired in the library if they had any missing crew reports. They looked up Alex and said that he had been KIA on March 1, 1945 with the 385th BG. They gave me the enclosed 385th write up of the mission. Alex's name is misspelled in the report. It should be Rusecky.

I take it from the report that the surviving waist gunner from Alex's crew was Bill Varnedoe. As unit contact for the 385th BG, could you possibly put me in contact with Varnedoe as I would appreciate some more info about Alex.

Yours truly

Joe Marks

Dear Ed,

Thru correspondence with Jerry Donnelly, 385th BG Group contact, he suggested I contact you in connection with a mid-air collision of two 385th B-17s on March 1, 1945.

I've enclosed a copy of my letter of January 3, 2000 to Jerry which explains my interest in the collision. Also enclosed is a copy of the description of the collision which I obtained from the library of the 8th Air Force Museum in Georgia.

I would appreciate it if you could insert in the next edition of the Hardlife Herald that I would appreciate hearing from anyone who was on that mission or was acquainted with Alex Rusecky.

Yours truly

Joseph Marks  
4391 Maple St NE  
St Petersburg, FL 33703  
727-821-1338

**EDITOR'S NOTE:** Lots of us remember this awful event. We've had Joe Jones story in a previous issue. He was to be at our Savannah reunion. Last year he died unexpectedly.

### ▼ The next mid-air collision generated an unbelievable but true story.

Although this was our first as a full crew, we didn't have a bombardier and F/0 Morton W. Cousens was assigned to fly with us on this one. This time the target was another railroad marshalling yard at Ulm, which caught 1,300 pounds of bombs that day. We flew in No. 42-31922.

We were Left Wing of Rusecki's crew who was in the Lead of the Low element of the Lead Flight of the Lead Squadron in No. 43-38273. Left Wing of the Lead Element was Armbruster's crew in a Fort named "Mr. Lucky," No. 43-38035. This put Mr. Lucky above and to the right of us.

After assembly over England on March 1 >, 1945, we headed out over the channel and began to climb to our cruising altitude en route. As we approached the Belgian coast, we also reached 10,000 feet and went on oxygen according to Standard Operating Procedures (SOP). There was a cloud deck just below the Group, It was mostly flat and smooth on top, except there were occasional humps of cloud here and there.

Just as we reached the Belgian coast, the Low Element and Rusecki passed into one of these humps. Suddenly, Rusecki came up out of it in a steep climb. He came up just over us and into Armbruster. Mr. Lucky was contacted by Numbers 1 and 2 engines and Rusecki's B-17, which cut into Mr. Lucky about the rear of the Radio Room. Rusecki slid back, chewing up the waist section of Armbruster's plane which was now in two separate pieces. I lost sight of Rusecki's Fort and the tail of Mr. Lucky, as I focused on the front half, which was sliding to the left and dropping and was

now mighty close to us on our level. I could clearly see Chuck Armbruster looking back over his shoulder, trying to see what was happening. As he continued to slide toward us, Crow pulled us left out of formation or there would have been three planes in the collision. Armbruster's front half went into a flat spin and disappeared into the clouds, so near below. We then edged back into the lead slot, where Rusecki had been moments before. I believe the whole thing was over in less than 15 seconds but that sequence is very vivid in my memory to this day!

It was very eerie, seeing all that metal ripping apart only yards away, but without making a sound as if in a silent movie. Of course it was making noise, but the constant, deafening roar of our own engines drowned out everything. We were so used to our engines that the impression was one of silence. Another lasting image was the sight of the Radio Operator falling out of Armbruster's plane, without his parachute.

On B-17s, crew members generally wore a parachute harness, but not the chute itself. These chest packs had snaps which could be quickly attached to our harness. However, after this incident, and seeing that tumbling crewman, several of us wore our parachutes all the time while in the air, cumbersome or not.

We later learned that there were only two survivors. The waist gunner of Rusecki's crew, who bailed out, and the tail gunner of Armbruster's crew. This has become a unique and classic air story of the war in B-17s and in fact, any aircraft.

Joe Jones was on his 22nd mission as tail gunner in Mr. Lucky with Armbruster's crew when he knew something was terribly wrong. The intercom was dead and there was no contact with the rest of the crew. He tried to bail out the tail hatch, but it was jammed shut. He tried to go to the waist, but twisted metal blocked the way, so he sat back down in the tail. Joe re-

membered a new technique some airplanes were experimenting with, namely, using a drogue parachute as a brake. So he popped his chute and tried to stuff it out of a broken window, but the air rushing by was too strong and this came to naught. In the end, he says just sat down and had a smoke, waiting. Six days later he woke up in a British hospital.

The tail of Mr. Lucky had landed in a cow pasture on a farm near Slijpe. A Belgian ferryboat steward, beached by the war, named Gilbert Deschepper, found him, cut him out of the tail with an axe, and evading German sympathizers, took him to that British hospital. He fully recovered.

Vamedoe met Joe Jones at a 385th reunion in Atlanta many years later and exchanged stories. He hadn't known how the collision occurred and Bill learned of his 10,000-foot ride to earth in a severed B-17 tail.

To be truthful, no one knows to this day why that Fortress came up abruptly like that. It is speculated that the cloud hump may have had an updraft, or perhaps Rusecki in flying formation, concentrating on the plane he was flying off of, didn't see the cloud coming. Then suddenly losing visibility, he got vertigo. We'll never know.

Some of the debris struck the Fort in the low diamond and it dove straight down to nearly the water. But, although there were oxygen leaks, two guns out of commission and the rudder jammed, it re-joined the formation and finished the mission.

**▼ Some crew members kept a diary. They weren't supposed to, but some did. Here are quotes from a couple written during the war.**

20 Feb 44, Sunday, UP at 0330,  
briefed 0415 to Tutow—75 miles northeast



of Berlin. Logged 10 hr. 15 min. What a ride. I am beat! We went in from the Baltic and back the same. They threw the usual bunch of junk at us. We flew No. 4 low squad behind Gregg. Lost Ruby this morning, he caught on fire after takeoff. No. 19 for me. (Post note made Tuesday the 22nd: Ed Krengulec was Ruby copilot.)

21 Feb. 44, Monday. Up at 0500, briefed to Diephol, airfield north of Osnabruck. Fight support better, but not to hurt their damned ground guns. Lost Binks. And Hutch and Pease cracked up. Let down was too fast and somebody didn't get their cockpit windows open and they iced up I bet. Form 1:6 hr 10 min. No. 20 for me. Gregg and Graszyk (his nav.) finished. Big 25. Altitude burst Gregg's hip pocket scotch flask, soaking his shorts et cetera. He figured on celebrating on the ride home, but with frozen balls? So far no voice change.

22 Feb. 44, Tuesday. Up at 0400. I flew tail gun—Major Kennig, Richey, Grabowski, Obrien leading A Group to Schweinfurt but scrubbed mid channel. Form 1:5 hr 05 min. Drats, tail gun's nice. What a view.

23 Feb. 44, Wednesday, Up at 0300. Schweinfurt again but scrubbed at alert time after an hour time setback. Somebody's playing games. Weather ain't that bad.'

24 Feb. 44 Thursday. Another 0300. To Tutow again, flying lead of low low group. Hit hard by TE's 210 110 and 88s. Lost McIlveen and Terrace. Johnnie Lap (Lapcyinski) was with Mac. We flew Bailey's 977 for 9 hr 40 min. Moats flew No. 4 in tow. Descognets, Watske and Winnerman finished today—Lucky Bastards! No. 21 for me. Hope Lap's okay.

25 Feb. 44 Friday. Up at 0400, flew 10 hr 05 min. high squadron lead to Regensburg. Fighter support good, but no effect (none!) on flak. Lost Gray and Davis of 551st over the target direct hit (Jimmy

Dear Ed,

My name is Bob Hach. I was a waist gunner on our B-17, the "Latest Rumor". In the February issue of the Hardlife Herald I noted that Carl Hannon requested from Bill Varnedoe any information on the plane and crew of the "Blue Champagne".

I carried on correspondence with Drue Gillis, ball turret gunner of the "Blue Champagne" for a while. His address at the time was: 9409 Pin Oak Drive, Silver Springs, MD 20910. Perhaps he can give Carl information on the rest of the crew.

Gillis and I argued over who painted the nose art on the "Latest Rumor" and the "Blue Champagne" which consisted of a comely young lady holding a telephone to her ear. I maintained that I painted her on the "Latest rumor". When we completed our twenty-five missions and turned the plane over to Drue Gillis' crew, he, being an excellent artist, painted her panties and bra black, drew a champagne cup around her and erased our shark's teeth on the nose turret. Gillis, however, claims that he painted the young lady in the champagne glass in its entirety on his plane.

I am enclosing photos of the nose art of the two B-17s so you might print them, if possible.

I always enjoy reading the articles in the Hardlife Herald. Thanks for all you do to keep us informed.

Bob Hach  
987 NE 96th St  
Miami Shore, FL 33138

2



3



Dear Ed Stern,

You have one happy pilot from your 550th Bomb Squadron

For years I have been reading the fine war stories you publish in the Hardlife Herald. My wife kids me occasionally about my lack of exposure in the 385th newsletter. She insists I should have done something a little more heroic than just flying back and forth to Germany 35 times. Some little act above the ordinary that might have made its way into print—but no such luck

But, now, I have been vindicated. The insert covering our June 2000 reunion tour to England in your February 2000 issue of the Hardlife Herald shows my plane the "Barbara B" in all her combat glory (bomb bay doors open ready to release our gifts to Hitler)! If the picture was taken sometime from October 1944 to February 1945, yours truly would be at the controls.

But, my wife says, your name isn't even mentioned. Hey! That's not the issue. It's the airplane that counts. The great, ole, Barbara B. A lean, mean, fighting machine. Oil streaked, dirty, patches in her skin and all the other evidence of willing combat.

In this photo the Barbara B is doing her job and that is all we can ask of these beautiful planes. By the way, Bill Varnedoe has confirmed the serial number 42-32078. Looking forward to England and the continent in June and Albuquerque in April 2001.

Sincerely,

Bob Wilson Pilot, 550th Bomb Sq.  
339 N Washington St  
Van Wert, Ohio 45891

Dear Mr. Stern,

I am writing to enquire to say thank you for my copy of your excellent newsletter which I receive regularly. I am disappointed that I can't pay any dues as I've not had a job since 1992 due to me having high blood pressure. I was wondering if you could give me any information about the Tuskegee pilots who never lost a B-17 they escorted on raids. I have a copy of the excellent film called the Tuskegee Airmen on video.

I would also like a copy of the books Tuskegee Heroes by Cooper & Cooper and Only a Paper Moon but I can't afford to buy any of them. Maybe you could let me know about the books and I'd like to contact any Tuskegee Vets or Crew Chiefs still living and maybe they would, could contact me if you send them my name, address, etc. I think the Tuskegee Airmen first started as the 99th Pursuit Squadron and later became the 332nd F.G., which was based firstly in North Africa and later moved to the E.T.O. in Ramatelli in Northern Italy flying, I think, with the 15th AF.

Not much more to say except thanks once again for the newsletter and I hope that you can help me with my requests about the Tuskegee Airmen. I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,

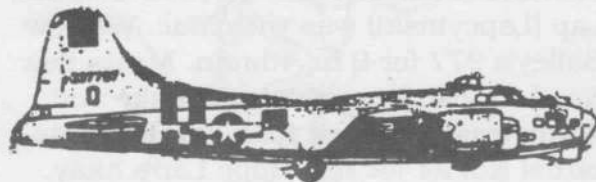
Tom Simpson  
19, Keir Hardie Crescent  
Galston Kaf 8JL  
Ayrshire Scotland

Thanks so much for the picture of my borther's plane. I received an email from Bill Varnedoe advising who to contact for a subscription to the Hardlife Herald. I will be sending \$15 to Vern Phillips in Audtin, Texas. Bill said if this amount is not correct Vern would let me know. I have found so much about my brother since we installed this computer at Christmas. Last weekend I even talked to Sidney Colthorpe who flew his second mission with my brother and knew him well. He also remembered in great detail when the Liberty Belle went down and my brother was the co-pilot. My son is a Lt. Col. In the AF. When he was commissioned the 2nd Lt. Bars used for the pinning were my brothers which came back with his personal effects. He wants to know when the next 385th reunion will be held. He is now in the pentagon and if it were close he would like to chat with the 385th. He was a sqd commander at Barksdale and being in the 8th was a big thrill for him. His field now is comptroller. Again thanks for the picture.

P.S.: Where would you be located. I'm in Myrtle Beach, SC

Dave McKee

**EDITOR'S NOTE:** Sid Colthorpe's obituary is in this issue.



**EDITOR'S NOTE:** Here's word to John DeBerg about "Lil Audrey."

Dear John,

I am writing in response to your letter in the last issue of the HHH. In it you requested information about anyone who had flown missions in "Lil Audrey". I believe that our crew, the E. N. White Crew, was the first combat crew assigned to this airplane after it came to the group. I believe this since the 1st pilot, Lt. White, named the ship after his wife, Audrey. So far as I knew then, no other crew had flown missions in it. My first mission was on 3-18-44, and my last one, 6-7-44—30 missions. So far as I can remember, all or MOST of them were flown in 432008. I was co-pilot on the E.N. White Crew and after Captain White finished his missions I finished my tour as first pilot. I believe that a Lieutenant Peterson and his crew were assigned this aircraft after I finished my missions and that would have been about the middle of June 1944. I met him at one of the reunions, but I don't have his address.

I left the group in September of 1944 and lost track of what happened to the airplane after the war. I heard at one time that it was in the Smithsonian Institute but I am sure that was a rumor. I, too, would like to know what happened to it in view of its exceptional record during the war. I can't remember how many abortions we had in this particular aircraft, but I believe it was one or two. That is just a guess.

Incidentally, at one of the reunions, we ran together and I introduced myself to you, but unfortunately, you had no recollection of my being on any crew in your aircraft. However, I remembered you well and do to this date. I have pictures of you and the corporal that worked with you but I have forgotten his name. If you would like to review these, I would be happy to send them under separate cover.

In the meantime, if I can be of further help in answering any of your questions, please write. I missed the last reunion and regret it very much and as much as I would like to have visited the Savannah Museum. Everyone who has been there states that it is a memorable experience. Maybe sometime in the future.

Incidentally again, I believe that our crew was the first one to be assigned to that aircraft (432008) in as much as it was named after the pilots wife.

Sincerely yours,

Frank B. Crawford, M.D.  
Broadway Professional Bldg  
2421 Broadway  
Paducah Kentucky 42001  
442-8272-3

Dear Ed,

In response to your "More about Rum Dum":

I flew "Rum Dum" on it's 97th, 98th, 99th and 100th mission. It was the 1st B-17 to make 100 missions without an about (in the E.T.O.).

The photos enclosed were taken on the occasion of the 100th mission to Brandenburg on March 31, 1945. I am congratulating Forest Keen, 'Rum Dum's' crew chief.

Forest and I grew up about 30 miles from each other in Kansas but never realized it until 30 years later when an article on him appeared in the Wichita newspaper and we got together. He was killed the next year (1972) in a farm accident.

There was some pressure on those last few missions since the squadron wanted to set a record. As I recall Major Thrift and Capt. Hasher both had a little visit with me - had something to do with "you will not abort!"

For those who flew "Rum Dum" - they will recall that her super chargers had a will of their own and would suddenly cut out. You would start to lag back and then they would cut in again. The ground crew could never figure out why. A bit nerve racking - but they always came back on.

Rum Dum was a good plane - but old. In early 1945 I received a great new 'G' model that I named "Gypsy Princess" and commissioned appropriate nose art.

Have recently fixed up a new flight jacket that I'm quite proud of!

If you should want to publish any of the photo's of Rum Dum I can send you some actual photos. The enclosed one I made on my computer.

Sincerely,

Lewis A Smith  
1702 North Clarence  
Wichita, Kansas 67203  
316-943-8336



7



8



9



Captain

Smith, December, 1999

Lewis

**EDITOR'S NOTE:** Bob Silver sent us a copy of the following from member Frank Mays.

Just a short note to let you know I made the ceremony. I will send better information later.

Thought you might like to read my part in the ceremony. More next time. Frank.

As I look upon this gathering - I see the faces of many veterans - I remind myself - this ceremony **IS NOT ABOUT US** - rather those that made the ultimate sacrifice.

56 years ago - I was in England - 90 miles north of London - near Cambridge - at Great Ashfield - and 8th Air Force Base - home of the 385th Heavy Bomb Group.

Imagine - this young boy from the Blue Ridge Mountains of Virginia - in a foreign land - healthy - patriotic - one soldier among many - a teenager - about to become a man.

My duty was a Ball Turret Gunner on a B-17 Flying Fortress. For those not familiar with just what that was - there was a gun turret hung beneath the belly of the Bomber - two 50 caliber machine guns were my weapons. Through the glass between my feet - I could observe everything taking place below my plane. It was a typical British-early-morning - cool - damp - and no moonlight. Roused from sleep - without conversation - Airmen made their way from their huts to the mess hall - then to a briefing for today's mission.

The briefing officer's words are as clear in my ears today as they were at zero two-thirty hours that morning - "OK, boys - this is it. " "D-Day" - "Disembarkation day." - A loud cheer rose from every man in the room as they realized what was about to happen. The rumors of an invasion were true!

While that briefing was taking place - paratroopers had been jumping into France. Later, as our formation of 35 B-17s flew out of the slow moving, watery clouds that was making their way toward Normandy, I thought about them - the possibility of rain - and about the thousands of guys in the landing crafts I watched beneath us.

People on the ground were in for a tough day.

Compressed in the ball turret of the "War Horse" - the name of our B-17, I alternately surveyed its underbelly for FLAK hits and the surrounding sky for German fighters. Our target was the concrete and steel barriers running along the Normandy shore line -17,000 feet below.

FLAK homed in on our formation - the War Horse bucked and yawed from the concussions. Explosions up and down the beach told me the Navy gunners had found their targets. A moment later we had too - the Pilot gave the airplane to the bombardier. The bomb bay doors opened - 38-100-pounders dropped from our plane along with over 1300



From the other 34 bombers. I remember looking at my watch - it was zero six fifteen hours.

Below, thousands of warships - troop transports - and landing craft crowded the channel. Rotating my turret - I glanced back toward England. As far as I could see - hundreds and hundreds of bombers darkened the sky. Coming back around, I was greeted by a burst of flak that rolled the plane - and sent a chunk of hot shrapnel into my turret - it ricocheted off one of my machine guns - before lodging itself with pile driving force - in the thick side of my fur-lined boot. The pain was secondary to my duty. The shard of steel - a souvenir - I keep to this day.

I thought, *"The bastards are trying to kill me."* Oddly - I had not taken it so personally - when a burst - a moment earlier - had shut down our number three engine and sent a stream of black fluid gushing from the underside of the wing.

The fighters we had expected never showed up - and as we turned back toward England - the FLAK stopped as suddenly as it had begun.

Little over an hour later we were on the ground at our base. In less than another hour - repaired - refueled - and re-armed - we were in the air again - on our way back to Normandy. Once over the armada on the channel below - I saw the low sky black from the guns of the big war ships. Over the beach I could see the troops were not making much headway. I had to be pure hell for the guys down there.

Suddenly, screaming in on us at 10 o'clock high - there were 10 MME-109s. The War Horse convulsed as the top turret and waist gunners engaged them. None came within my gun sights. A B-17 from an upper element of the formation fell away at four o'clock, its number two and three engines on fire. As the bomber passed beneath me it began to roll and disappeared in a ball of fire and debris as it exploded. There were no parachutes - all 10 men were lost. A second bomber - its number three engine blazing - drifted below by turret. I watched one of its crew bail out of the waist door. The man's chute filled with air as he fell away from the falling airplane. The chute of a second man jumping behind him - snagged on the horizontal elevator - and he was dragged along like a tail on a kite - until the fire spewing from the number three engine consumed his chute. Spinning end over end the man fell toward the earth and disappeared. The B-17 - and full load of bombs exploded. Another nine buddies - gone.

As the bombardier released our payload over the target - the German fighters reappeared. I engaged one without success and as quickly as they appeared - they were gone.

I could see Cherbourg at nine o'clock as we turned home through the FLAK. I watched the explosions along the edge of town. We touched down at Great Ashfield to prepare for our third run - but the plane's shrapnel-damaged landing gear

collapsed. Skidding along crazily and spewing fuel and sparks - the War Horse finally stopped when the right wing and propellers jammed into the ground alongside the runway. A mist of rain began to fall.

Two combat-missions - a crash landing - and some twelve hours after the morning briefing - "D-Day" had come to an end for the crew of the War Horse.

Thank you for listening.



Our Plaque

15



Our tree in the middle- New memorial to the left 16



Time planted

17

Dear Ed:

The Mississippi Chapter, 8th AFHS has published a book concerning the Mississippi members stationed with the 8th AF during WW II. Each of our members were asked to submit their experiences while they were members of the Eighth in England. Our Editor and his volunteer staff reviewed all of the letters and cleaned up the entries where necessary. The final book was published in December 1999. A copy showing the picture of the outside page and a brief description is attached for your information.

We are busy selling the books and all of the profits will be sent to the Mighty Eighth Air Force Museum in Savannah. We have ordered a second printing. If anyone is interested in a copy, send \$45.00 plus \$3.00 for shipping and handling to:

Mississippi Chapter 8th AFHS  
214 North Madison  
Tupelo, MS 38804  
(662) 844-1553

Our Editor who did most of the work is Kenneth Nail who was a navigator with the 457th Bomb Gp., Glatton, England. Kenneth is also treasurer of the Eighth Air Force Historical Society.

I am also enclosing a list of surviving B-17 Flying Fortresses' which might be of interest and may be published in one of the future newsletters.

Sincerely,

Howard Richardson  
Pilot "B-17G Mississippi Miss"  
548th B. Sq. 385th Bomb. Gp.

Here it is, at last!

Mississippians in the Mighty Eighth.

The actual stories, poems and letters home by the young men from Mississippi who served in the Eighth Air Force during World War II. This highly acclaimed volume contains authentic accounts of what it was like to fly in the skies over Nazi-controlled Europe during 1942-1945. Here is the history of the men who lived it. It is dedicated to their brothers who did not survive to tell their stories.

During World War II, the Eighth Air Force became "the greatest air armada" in history - the "Mighty Eighth." At its best, the Eighth Air Force could send more than 2,000 four-engine bombers and more than 1,000 fighters on a single mission. Many Mississippians played an important role in forming the Mighty Eighth.

It is all here - the cold at high altitude, the bad weather flying, the enemy fighter attacks, the antiaircraft fire (or flak), the engine failures, the fires in the engine nacelles or in the bomb bay, the explosions, the narrow escape by parachute over enemy territory, escape and evasion, prison camp, wounds and loss of limbs, loss of friends and comrades who were closer than brothers.

There are stories by those valued persons who served in ground jobs - loading the bombs and ammunition, readying the planes for the mission, repairing damaged planes, supporting and sustaining the fliers in every way and always sweating them out as time came for their return from the missions.

There are stories here from those in Mississippi who prayed for their men, who sent them letters and CARE packages, who made the difficult times bearable because they were waiting at home.

And, it's all about Mississippians by Mississippians. Young men from Grenada, Jackson, Hattiesburg, Meridian, Natchez and Tupelo - boys from farms, villages, towns and cities.

This is a must-read. It is also something to study, something to refer to over and over, something to keep - Mississippi's history at its best.

To get a copy of Mississippians in the Mighty Eighth, ask your local bookseller or write to:

Mississippi Chapter - Sth Air Force Historical Society  
214 N. Madison  
Tupelo, MS 38804  
(662)844-155.3

The price is \$45 per book plus \$3 shipping and handling. Send checks or money order. Credit cards are accepted.  
Your order will be filled promptly.

Schools and libraries may deduct 20% and will be billed with shipment.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Shipping Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City:State: Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone number: () \_\_\_\_\_

Check Money Order Credit Card: MC or VISA (circle one)

Credit Card Number: Exp.: \_\_\_\_\_

# Surviving B-17 Flying Fortresses



Updated 6 December 1999

New! What's New

Pictures and information on surviving B-17s in museums and still flying

Serial #	Location	Model
<b>B-17D</b>		
40-3097	NASM, Paul E. Garber Facility, Suitland, Maryland. Swoose is in storage.	
<b>B-17E</b>		
41-2446	Abandoned in a swamp in Papua, New Guinea. Numerous unsuccessful attempts at recovery.	
41-9234	Abandoned on a mountain side in Papua, New Guinea. Current condition is unknown.	
41-2595	Owned by Mike Kellner of Lake Bluff, Illinois. Under restoration to a B-17E, Desert Rat.	
41-9032	Tillamook Air Museum, Tillamook, Oregon. Mv Gal Sal is in storage.	
41-9101	Buried under 250 feet of ice in Greenland.	
41-9105	Buried under 250 feet of ice in Greenland.	
41-9210	Recently acquired by the Flying Heritage Collection. Under further restoration in Arlington, Washington.	
<b>B-17F</b>		
41-24485	Mud Island, Memphis, Tennessee. Memphis Belle static display.	
42-29782	Museum of Flight, Boeing Field, Seattle, Washington. Flies as 229782, Boeing Bee.	
42-3374	Offutt AFB, Omaha Nebraska. Displayed as 230230, Homesick Angel.	
<b>B-17G</b>		
42-32076	USAF Museum, Wright-Patterson AFB, Ohio. Shoo Shoo Baby static display.	
43-38635	Castle Air Museum, Atwater, California. Displayed as 38635, Virgin's Delight.	
44-6393	March Air Museum, Riverside, California. Displayed as Remm to Glory.	
44-8543	Vintage Flying Museum, Fort Worth, Texas. Flies as 48543 Chuckie.	
44-8846	Association Forteresse Toujours Volante, Paris, France. Flies as Pink Lady.	
44-8889	On display at Musee de l'Air at Le Bourget near Paris. Current condition of 44-8889 is unknown.	
44-83316	Kermit Weeks Collection. Partial airframe at Aero Trader's storage area, Borrego Springs, California.	
44-83512	Lackland AFB, San Antonio, Texas. Displayed as 483512, Heavens Above.	
44-83514	Confederate Air Force Arizona Wing, Mesa, Arizona. Flies as 483514, Sentimental Journey.	
44-83525	Kermit Weeks Collection. Suzy Q under restoration by Tom Reilly in Kissimmee, Florida.	
44-83542	Fantasy of Flight Museum, Polk City, Florida. On display as 237994, Piccadilly Princess.	



44-83546	Owned by David Tallichet. Flies as 124485, <u>Memphis Belle Replica</u> .
44-83559	Strategic Air Command Museum, Ashland, Nebraska. Displayed as 483559.
44-83563	National Warplane Museum, Elmira, New York. Flies as 297400, <u>Fuddv Duddv</u> .
44-83575	Collings Foundation, Stowe, Massachusetts. Flies as 231909, <u>Nine-O-Nine</u> .
44-83624	Dover AFB Museum. Dover. Delaware. Displayed as <u>Sleepv Time Gal</u> .
44-83663	Hill AFB Museum, Ogden, Utah. Displayed as 483663, <u>Short Bier</u> .
44-83684	Planes of Fame, Chino, California. Displayed as 483684, <u>Piccadilly Lilly 11</u> .
44-83690	Grissom Air Museum, Grissom AFB, Indiana. Displayed as 231255, <u>Miss Liberty Belie</u> .
44-83718	Museu Aeroespacial, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. Curent condition of 483718 is unknown.
44-83722	Kermit Weeks Collection. <u>Stored in pieces</u> at Aero Trader's storage area, Borrego Springs, California.
44-83735	Imperial War Museum, Duxford, England. Displayed as 231983, <u>Marv Alice</u> .
44-83785	Evergreen Aviation Educational Center, McMinnville, Oregon. Flies as 483785.
44-83790	Abandoned in Newfoundland. Canada. <u>Possible recovery</u> in the future.
44-83814	NASM. 44-83814 is in storage at Dulles International Airport, Virginia.
44-83863	Air Force Armament Museum, Eglin AFB. Florida. Displayed as 46106, <u>Gremlin's Hideout, i</u>
44-83868	RAE Museum, Hendon, England. Displayed as 483868.
44-83872	Confederate Air Force Gulf Coast Wing, Houston, Texas. Flies as 483872, <u>Texas Raiders</u> .
44-83884	Eighth Air Force Museum, Barksdale AFB. Louisiana. Displayed as 483884. <u>Yankee Doodle II</u> .
44-85583	On display at Base area de Recife in Brazil. Current condition of 485583 is unknown.
44-85599	Dyess Linear Air Park, Dyess AFB. Abilene. Texas. Displayed as 238133. <u>Reluctant Dragon</u> .
44-85718	Lone Star Flight Museum. Galveston, Texas. Flies as 238050, <u>fhunderbird</u> .
44-85734	Tom Reilly Vintage Aircraft, Kissimmee, Florida. Under restoration, will tly as 231636, <u>Outhouse Mouse</u> .
44-85738	On display with AMVETS, Tulare, California. Displayed as <u>Preston's Pride</u> .
44-85740	EAA Aviation Foundation, Oshkosh, Wisconsin. Flies as 85740, <u>Aluminum Overcast</u> .
44-85778	Palm Springs Air Museum, Palm Springs, California. Flies as 4485778, <u>Miss Angela</u> .
44-85784	B-17 Preservation Trust, Duxford, England. Flies as 124485, <u>Sally B</u> .
44-85790i	Displayed in front of <u>Tacey's Romber Inn and Restaurant</u> , Milwaukee, Oregon. <u>Lacev Lady</u> is under restoration.
44-85813	Tom Reilly Vintage Aircraft, Kissimmee, Florida. <u>Parts are being used</u> tor restoration of Outhouse Mouse.
44-85828	390th Memorial Museum, Tucson, Arizona. Displayed as 231892, <u>I'll Be Around</u> .
44-85829	Yankee Air Force, Willow Run Airport, Ypsilanti, Michigan. Flies as 485829, <u>Yankee Lady</u> .

- Want to keep up to date on B-17 news and books? [Aero Vintage Books](#) maintains a site with a B-17 information page packed with news and a B-17 locator.
- [Tony's B-17 Page](#) is another great place for the B-17 enthusiast. Tony's page is loaded with photos, information, references, and also has a list of survivors.
- [HeawBombers.com](#) has a complete list of list of survivors complete with pictures.

**EDITOR'S NOTE:** This article probably from 1939 or 1940.

We remember enlisting in 1941 at \$21.00 a month for a few months. Then it was raised to \$30.00. As we remember, insurance was \$6.70 a month.

Went to O.C.S. and 2nd Lt. Pay was \$150.00 a month - raised to \$165.00 later on.

Got married with 3 weeks of O.C.S. to go (and almost flunked out because I didn't pay attention that last 3 weeks of class. Would you?)

## The Soldier and His \$21

By HENRY McLEMORE

New York, March 10.

WILL ALL of those who are against raising the pay of our soldiers please raise their hands?

Now, if you happen to have your hand raised, will you please stand up and tell me and a lot of other people who would like to know just what your objections are? I cannot possibly imagine what your objection or objections can possibly be.

Everyone in our alfout war effort seems to be getting nicely taken care of excer the soldiers. Industrialists are doing all right with their contracts. Labor is getting its share with time, time and a half and overtime.

But the soldier—well, wfe have found the real Forgotten Man at last. The man in Khaki is the real thing along the Forgotten Man line. He is the real McCoy in the way of overlooked gentlemen.

He volunteers or he is inducted into the Army and off he goes to a camp, building (dreams of what he can do with hts handsome salary of \$21 a month. As he rides along toward the camp or during the first,few days in the camp, he spins a few more castles in the air. The \$21 a month is all his. At last he is in the dough. For nothing more than risking his life his Government has put him on easy .street. .

Twenty-one dollars 'a month—boy; oh, boy!

Disillusionment, hoWever, pays

him a visit while the inoculation shots are still hurting his arm. AU of a sudden he learns that the \$21 a month is not aU -his to throw around with a free hand like a Cy-rano de Bergerac in khaki.

The Government starts putting the bite on him. A nibble here, a nibble there, until finally it's a pretty good-sized P?ite, and a man making only \$21 a month can't stand too many nibbles.

Nosing around Army camps all over the country I have found that this is the least that happens to the pay check of the \$21 a month private.

The specter of old age is shown to him right away by the 23-cent deduction that goes for the upkeep of old soldiers' homes. If our Army goes to the five or seven million men you hear about, we should have some real fancy old soldiers' homes before long. If I were a soldier and didn't find a swimming pool and badminton court on the grounds, I'd let some one ha/e it over the head with my cane. Laundry accounts for \$2.85 of the private's monthly pay check. The rule book demands that he stay well starched, well creased and generaUy clean and neat. So clean and neat, in fact, that in addition to his laundry he must foot a tailoring and dry-cleaning bill that averages around \$3 a month.

The Government gives a private a razor, five blades, a tooth brush,

and tooth paste when h\$ arrives in camp, with some vague idea that this equipment win last him for the duration of the war. Because they don't give him any more of these things, when the original grant is gone he must restock out of his own pocket. He must buy his own toilet soap, too.

Add all of these things, plus bus fare back and forth from the camp to the nearest town, and you see what the soldier has left out of his tremendous salary.

As a nation we are great on raising money for anything and 'everything away from home. We will throw in all sorts of money to further the happiness of distant folk, no matter what their race, color or creed. That's fine. That's commendable. -

But, before we buy rattlers for the children of Khyber Pass, beljs for the cats of Belgium, shawls for the shahs of Persia, wouldn't it be a nice thing, and a smart thing, to take care of the men who have picked up guns for our own defense, and let them have a little more fun, a little more security, a little more peace of mind before they go out and face bullets for us? -

If a soldier doesn't deserve the best in time of war, who in heaven's name does?

You, with your hand up. I'm still listening for your reasons to keep the soldier on starvation wages.

*Editor's note: We went \$21 a month for the 1st 2 or 3 months of our enlistment back in Dec 1941. The raise to \$30 was significant at the time.*

2606 Jimmy Winters Rd.  
Bon Air, VA . 23235  
May 29, 2000

Mr. Ed Stern, Editor  
Hardlife Herald  
P.O. Box 9466  
Fargo, ND 58106

Dear Ed:

First let me congratulate you for the outstanding job you have done for the many years you have been responsible for the Hard Life Herald. I have kept every single issue for my children and their children to peruse forever.

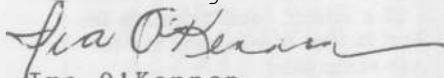
I was prompted to write concerning the list of 385th losses submitted by Jeff Keskes, attributed to his father and others. I am always interested in anything related to the Eight Air Force and especially the 385th Bomb Group.

I am also interested in accuracy of significant subject matter such as Mr. Keskes offered, especially as it pertains to data of which I am well acquainted; specifically the Jena mission which occurred on March 19, 1945. You see I consider that date among the most significant of my life.

When I was aroused on March 19, 1945 I was informed of the gas load of the impending mission which was basic procedure by those who awakened us before each mission. This information gave us some clue as to the length of the mission without divulging the target.

On this date it carried added significance since it would be our 35th and last mission. Then we could return to the states. It was equally significant that Jena had only nine anti-aircraft guns. As it happened, Jena was literally our last mission. In fact, it was only half of our last mission since we could not complete it. The rest, as they say, is history. We baled out and remained guests of Hitler until liberation. For the record we were Lowry's crew.

Personal regards.

  
Ira O'Kennon

cc: Jeff Keskes



Dear Ed:

It is with much sadness that I must inform you that Sid has passed Away. I have enclosed the obituary.

He was very proud to be a member of the 385th BGMA and eagerly looked forward to seeing his B-17 buddies at the reunions.

Sincerely,

Lee Colthorpe  
May 15, 2000

**EDITOR'S NOTE: Sid was one of our Past Presidents – at the last few reunions he was in a wheel chair– but still full of pep.**



## Sidney E. Colthorpe

### HAMPTON

Retired U.S.A.F. Lt. Col. Sidney Ernest "Fuzz" Colthorpe, 80, died at Riverside Regional Convalescent Center Tuesday, May 2, 2000.

Born in Montreal, Canada, he was a naturalized U.S. citizen and had lived in Hampton since 1968, when he was assigned to Langley Air Force Base. He retired from the Air Force at Langley in 1970 after 28 years of military service.

During World War II, Lt. Col. Colthorpe completed 25 B-17 combat missions with the 8th Air Force (including Schweinfurt and Marienberg raids). He was the navigator for the first USAF aircraft over the North Pole and completed 59 combat missions in the Korean War.

The Mercury Space Program saw him develop and coordinate plans for contingency recovery of Mercury astronauts, and he served on aircraft carriers picking up astronauts from 1960 until 1963.

After retiring from the Air Force, Lt. Col. Colthorpe joined the Hampton School System, where he set up the first data processing system and became director of data processing, retiring again in 1981.

Survivors include his wife, Lena M. Colthorpe; one daughter, Terrie L. Stong of Toledo, Ohio; three sons, Eric A. Colthorpe of Richmond, Randall E. Colthorpe of Virginia Beach and Russell A. Colthorpe of Largo, Fla.; two brothers, Kenneth G. Colthorpe of Toledo and Donald C. Venters of Pinehurst, N.C.; and eight grandchildren and two great-grandchildren.

A funeral service will be conducted at 2 p.m. Friday at R. Hayden Smith Funeral Home Chapel by Dr. Richard Keever. Interment with military honors will be at 2 p.m. Thursday, May 11, in Arlington National Cemetery.

The family will receive friends from 7 to 9 p.m. Thursday, May 4, at the funeral home. They will be home at other times.

Memorials may be made to the American Heart Association, 360 Southport Circle, Suite 104, Virginia Beach, VA 23452; the American Diabetes Association, 6340 Center Drive, Bldg. 7, Suite 129, Norfolk, VA 23502; or to a charity of choice.



Past President Sid Colthorpe  
Dino DiFonzo

May, 2000  
May, 2000

