

HARDLIFE HERALD

Newsletter of the 385th Bombardment Group
Association



548th



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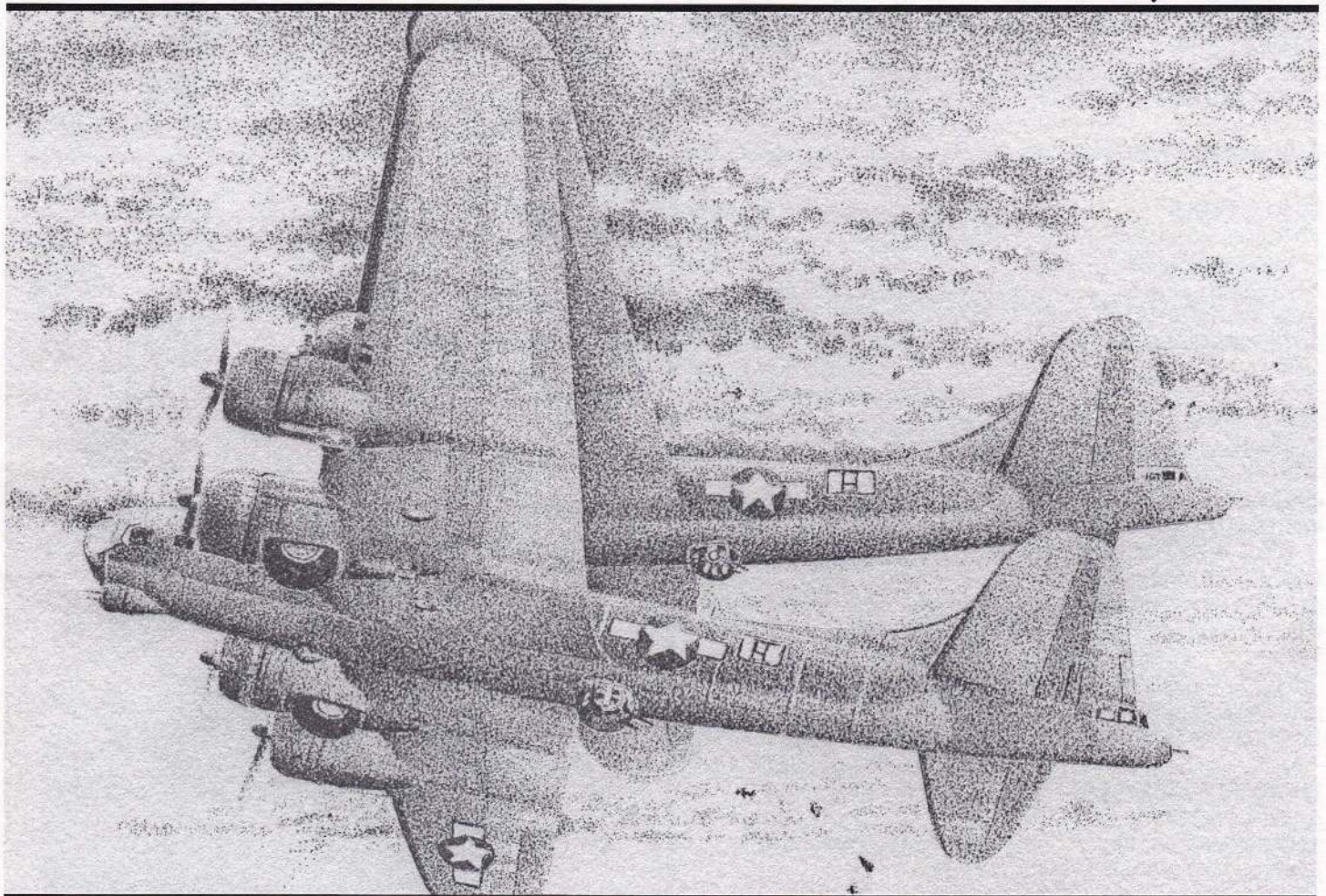
551st



1942 - 1945 Great Ashfield - Suffolk, England Station 155 - The Mighty Eighth

Volume 31 - Number 2

July 2014



385th BGA REUNION - NASHVILLE, TN - October 2014

HARDLIFE HERALD

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

PAGE

- 02....Officers and Directors / Cover Credits
03....President's Message
04....One To Go - Ian McLachlan
16....Pin-Up - Watch the Birdie
17....Featured Pin-Up Artist - Vaughan Bass
17....Hotel Information
18.... Reunion Information
20.... Reunion Schedule
22....Family Mystery Solved - Elizabeth Pyles
25....385th TAPS
28.... Mid-air Crash Over Luxembourg
30....No Ordinary Life - Sue Johnpeter
31...."There I was..." - Bob Stevens Cartoons

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Front Cover: Collision Final Flights

Back Cover: 42-31378 "RumDum"

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1942 - 1945 Great Ashfield - Suffolk, England Station 155 - The Mighty Eighth
Volume 31 - Number 1 February 2014



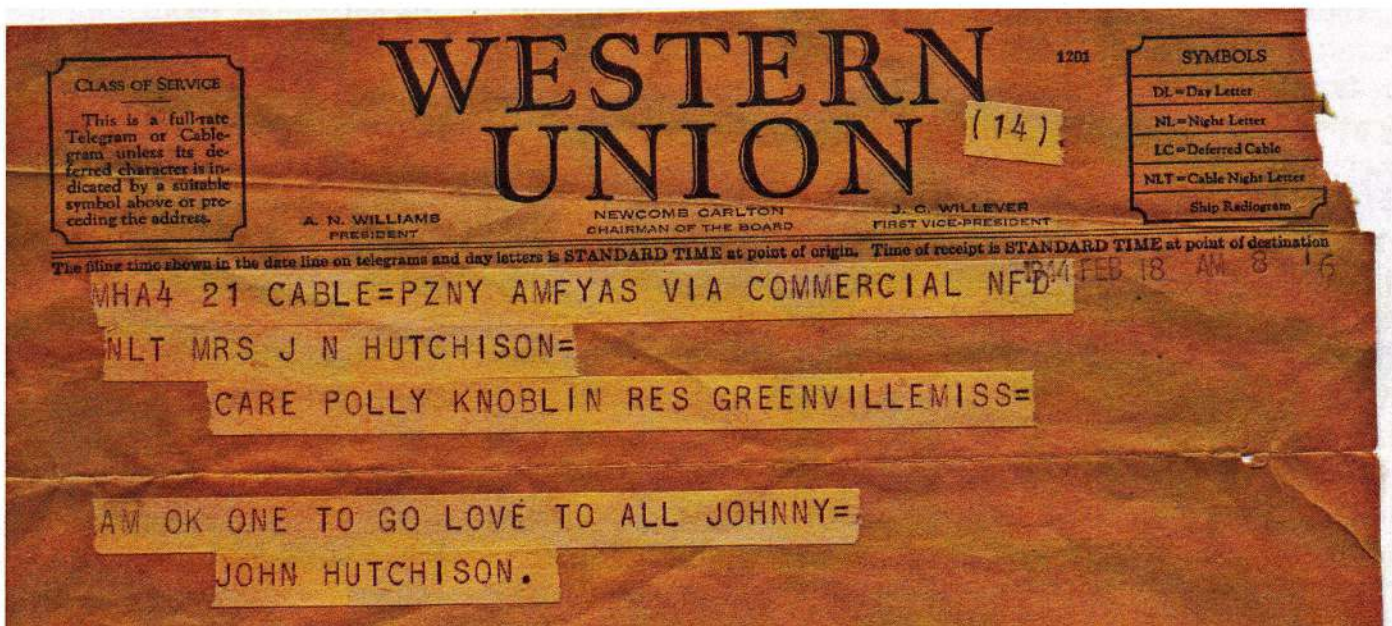
385th BGA REUNION - NASHVILLE, TN - October 2014

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

I am writing this message on the evening of July 12th in Perlé, Luxembourg where I have just finished participating in a 70th Anniversary Memorial Service commemorating the horrific mid-air collision of two 385th BG aircraft in the skies over Perlé. The ceremony was attended by the Deputy Chief of Mission from the U.S. Embassy in Luxembourg, the British Ambassador to Luxembourg, two bus loads of active duty Air Force, one from Ramstein AFB and other from Spahgdalem AFB, including a Lt. General, several Colonels and many Lt. Colonels. Had it been a sunny day, we would have needed to shade our eyes from the reflection from all that brass! It was my pleasure to attend this ceremony and to bring a message from the 385th Bomb Group Association. My remarks were as follows:

"To our hosts from the 385th Bomb Group Memorial Museum, honored guests, and people of Perlé...I am honored to represent the 385th Bomb Group Association today in remembrance of our comrades who made the ultimate sacrifice here in Perlé 70 years ago today. We honor them; We grieve them; We give thanks for them --- and for the many thousands of others like them who left their homes and families and ventured far and wide to defend freedom and fight tyranny. But I would be remiss if I did not also acknowledge the special bond between the 385th Bomb Group Association and the people of Perlé. What you did 70 years ago for the crews of Off-Spring and Curley's Kids and for others lost in that war --- and your continuing dedication to their memories forever assures you a special place in our hearts. On behalf of the 385th Bomb Group Association, our veterans and their families, I salute you...and I thank you."

In return, I bring you all a message of thanks from Roger Feller and our friends in Perlé. Those of you who have been to Perlé will recall the gratitude felt and oft-expressed by the people of Perlé for the U. S. Armed Forces' liberation of their country - once before the Battle of the Bulge and once again after it! Their gratitude continues, unabated - and is being taught to the younger generations. Just as the officers of our Association are now second and third generation, the 385th Bomb Group Memorial Museum Association is now in the able hands of "next gens" as well. Oh, Roger Feller remains involved as the organization's principle ambassador, but the management succession is taking place and looks to be well on its way.



ONE TO GO

BY IAN MCLACHLAN ©

Aircraft archaeology is not entirely about bits of bent metal. Fascinating though the historical mechanics of a bygone aircraft might be, it is about using the artefacts as reminders of the airmen they represent.

In the days before the British Government introduced the Protection of Military Remains Act (1986), all you needed was landowner's consent, cash to fund the work and the dedication to dig, by hand if necessary. Crash sites could be investigated before there was any idea of the aircraft's type – identification was often the objective. During the 1970s, the Ministry of Defence produced "Notes of Guidance" for those involved in aviation archaeology but, following concerns raised in Parliament about interference with military remains, most notably Royal Navy vessels, the Act was introduced and broadened to encompass aircraft crash sites so, today, one has to provide full identification of an aircraft and meet other criteria before a licence will be granted

Such was not the case in January, 1964, when I pursued the rumour of two German bombers believed to still be buried on marshland near the Norfolk village of Reedham. Local inhabitants quickly confirmed that remains of two aircraft were extant on remote sites and

that two planes had collided but they were American, not German. We were guided to the farthest site over a series of "leggers" – planks across the marshland's many dykes. On a desolate stretch of windswept marshland alongside Mill Dyke, we found a water-filled crater surrounded by bits of bomber protruding through the turf and even an oxygen bottle still floating forlornly amidst the reeds. The type of aircraft was unknown but parts recovered soon established both as Flying Fortresses – one had fallen near Decoy Carr and the other at Mill Dyke. Our recovery efforts focused on Mill Dyke because we felt the site still held more of the lost bomber.

Initially, all digging was by hand because of access difficulties for heavy machinery plus the costs involved. During 1965, the discovery of an engine cowling panel bearing the serial number 42-31370 provided the key to unlocking a wartime drama and, gaining in research experience, I established contact with historians, veterans and families of some of those involved. From this emerged the story of one airman's heroism and sacrifice as, through wartime documents and personal letters, I followed his career to its tragic denouement.

A native of Hollandale in

Washington County, Mississippi, John Neal Hutchison Jr., came from a cotton farming community and grew up helping out on his father's farm. Educated at Riversdale High School and Sunflower Junior College, he, like many other Americans, put his educational ambitions on hold in response to Pearl Harbour and relinquished a more rustic lifestyle to enlist in the Army Air Force.

Following pre-flight training at Maxwell Field, Alabama, Cadet Hutchison flew 31 hours, 51 minutes dual in the ubiquitous PT 17 Stearman before accruing a further 28 hours and nine minutes solo at Carlstrom Field near Arcadia in Florida. Relinquishing the delights of his open-cockpit biplane, he graduated to George Field, Illinois and the more serious North American AT-6 – both types remain popular in the war-bird community today. Transition to twin engines occurred on the Curtiss AT-9 for less than an hour before moving swiftly to the Beechcraft AT-10. He accumulated over 37 hours on the wooden Wichita before encountering some seriously heavy metal when posted to train on B-17s at Smyrna Air Force Base in Tennessee.

Activity in Smyrna was intense and he logged 21 B-17F flights from 19 to 31 December and training continued relentlessly during

January 1943 with 60 further Fortress flights. Johnny mastered the mighty Boeing through a mixture of 'touch and go's' interspersed with triangular trips of longer duration to such as Oklahoma City, Tinker Field, Memphis, Miami and elsewhere, with every sortie adding experience.

Swapping seaboard in March, Johnny joined the 34th Bombardment Group at Blythe Army Air Base in California. The 34th served as a training outfit for replacement aircrews before eventually moving to Mendlesham in Suffolk as a combat unit. Johnny's own destiny saw him in Suffolk long before the 34th and his next posting to the 383rd BG in Rapid City, South Dakota preceded an overseas posting via the 1st Processing Group for he and the crew he had now acquired.

The build up of bombardment groups and early casualties in the ETO - European Theatre of Operations - escalated demands for replacement aircrews and one organisation in need of new blood was the 385th BG commanded by Colonel Elliott Vandevanter based at Great Ashfield in Suffolk. Having arrived in June 1943, the 385th had lost 9 of its original crews in combat by August and Lt Hutchison and crew were amongst the unit's early replacements. Before entering combat, Johnny and his men underwent theatre indoctrination and a

series of training and area familiarisation flights during July. Now known as "Hutch" to his new comrades, Johnny had amassed some 546 flying hours in training and, on 12 August, added 5 more but this time in combat.

Piloting B-17F 42-3347, Charlene, he participated in a 385th force sent to bomb Bonn. Opposition was light but, near the target, a single Me 109 came out of the sun in classic style. An exchange of fire proved inconclusive either way although the Charlene crew later noted a B-17 struggling to maintain altitude but blessed by two accompanying Spitfires. All 385th aircraft returned safely and were complimentary about their fighter escort although overall losses for the Eighth Air Force had been serious with 25 bombers failing to return. German tactics at this time generally entailed waiting for the fighter protection to withdraw before attacking the bombers - Allied fighters lacked the range and numbers for continual escort.

On 15 August, the Eighth took direct action against fighter opposition and bombed a series of enemy aerodromes in France and the Low Countries. The 385th attacked Vitry En Artois but prodding the hornet's nest provoked a fierce reaction and some 50 enemy aircraft were seen, mostly Me 109s and Fw 190s plus some unrecognised twin-engined machines. The Spitfire escort

became heavily engaged but were unable to prevent two German fighters from penetrating the 385th formation and making frontal attacks out of the sun. Two Fortresses were hit and fell from formation. 1/Lt Edward S Stone's aircraft was repeatedly hit by fighters then struck by flak from Dunkirk. Stone was apparently trying to ditch his burning bomber when one wing disintegrated and the aircraft exploded in the sea - there were no survivors. 1/Lt Jerome H Mudge had also been damaged and dropped from formation trying to protect Stone's ship but Mudge eventually landed his crippled bomber at Kingsnorth. Hutch and crew returned safely with an additional five hours operational experience, this time using the veteran B-17 42-3388 Sleepytime Girl - an aircraft he came to prefer.

Other pilots also had preferences and 1/Lt John D 'Jack' Schley's regular ship 42-30278 Sly Fox played on his name and he was a little upset over the treatment it received while in Hutch's hands on 17 August 1943. This date ranks high in the history of aerial combat - the Schweinfurt/Regensburg missions. USAAF planners hoped for deception with a two-pronged assault attacking both the ball-bearing works in Schweinfurt and the centre of Messerschmitt manufacturing in Regensburg. The First Air Division would hit Schweinfurt

furt and return to England while the Third Air Division would hopefully dupe German defences by continuing over the Alps to North Africa. Bad weather at the outset thwarted the scheme and, while the B-17s of the Third Air Division took off – albeit spending too long assembling – the First Air Division was delayed by fog that stubbornly refused to disperse so, instead of a coordinated assault, the forces were split from the outset and the numerical benefits diluted.

Puzzled by previous instructions to pack toiletries and their canteens, Hutch and his crew sat down for the briefing at 0230 hours when the daring concept was revealed. He would be in the low slot in 'D' Flight of the Low Group – a most unenviable position. After taking off at 0730, the 385th assembled over Great Ashfield at 6,000 feet before flying the short distance to join the 94th over Bury St Edmunds. Circling in the region, the gathering formations used 'Splasher' radio beacons as they ascended until leaving at 17000 feet over Lowestoft at 0942 hours.

German radar tracked the inbound bombers and the fighter reaction was swift and savage. Taking advantage of gaps in the bomber train Fw 190s ripped into the B-17s and the first of many Fortresses to fall went down. 385th losses were lighter than in some Groups – two

were shot down and another ditched in the Mediterranean. Twenty-four B-17s were lost from the Regensburg attack and 36 succumbed in the skies surrounding Schweinfurt.

Hutch could at least be pleased with the bombing results. Smoke from the preceding force obscured the objective, hiding the MPI – Mean Point of Impact – but by referencing photographs and buildings on either side of the target, Captain O B Ross properly positioned the cross-hairs on his bombsight and the formation released on target. 1/Lt Edmond J Gamble, Hutch's bombardier, was equally satisfied but would never know they had destroyed manufacturing jigs vital for assembling the Messerschmitt 262 jet fighter and helping to delay its combat debut.

Setting course for North Africa, navigator, 2/Lt John E Epps was relieved by the reduction in fighter interceptions and this aspect of the attack had at least confused the enemy. Fuel conservation was essential and T/Sgt Roy C Kitner carefully husbanded consumption as Sly Fox slid in steady descent towards the runway at Bone. Exhausted after almost 11 hours, the aircrew waited for the rumble of tires on PSP – Pierced Steel Planking – but, as Sly Fox settled, it blew a tire. Fighting to avoid a catastrophe, Hutch and copilot, 2/Lt Charles G Curtis were unable to prevent the

bomber from slewing off the PSP and sinking into the soft sand, its tail still projecting dangerously over the runway. Too low on gas to go round and too close to avoid them, the next B-17 sliced the fin and rudder off Sly Fox but luckily there were no injuries. Tail gunner, S/Sgt Joe J Carpinetti might have been even more affronted when he lost his cherished Mars bar. Coveted and kept cold by the icy temperatures at altitude, it was a treat he eagerly anticipated as he slumped wearily in the shade beneath their bomber. As he lifted the treat to his lips, a wiry Arab boy sped past, snatched it from his grasp and vanished across the hot sand.

On 16 September, Hutch was again flying Sleepytime Girl for an intended raid on Stuttgart but it was a fiasco. Frustrated by clouds concealing their objectives, B-17s scattered bombs on various opportunity targets and the 385th gifted theirs to, "What looked like an airfield" near Dieppe but at least returned without loss. Other units fared badly and 45 Fortresses were posted as Missing in Action.

The following day, Hutch and crew took the 2000lb bombs borne by Sleepytime Girl to a V-weapons site at Watten and used her again on 9 September to deposit fragmentation bombs on the enemy airfield at Beauvais/Tille. Following a lull in activities, Sleepytime Girl

faced the flak over Paris on 14 September to strike the Hispano-Suiza factory with 500lb General Purpose bombs. France was again on the agenda for 16 September with a late afternoon sortie to the airbase at Chateau Bernard. Returning at dusk, the descending bombers faced appalling weather conditions and a mid-air collision close to Great Ashfield cost the lives of Jack Schley and his crew but the other aircraft, from the 95th BG, landed safely.

For their next operation on 23 September, Hutch took B-17F 42-3290 Raunchy Wolf to the aerodrome at Kerlin/Bastard and three days later flew 42-3544 Stars and Stripes against Reims/Champagne airfield. Cloud conditions prevented release of their 100lb bombs and they reluctantly carried them back to Great Ashfield. Fate dealt another cruel blow when the crews of Keeley, flying Raunchy Wolf, and Yanello, flying Dorsal Queen, collided during the descent – there was only one survivor. Hutch used Stars and Stripes again to bomb Emden on 27 September. This operation saw the debut of H2S radar bombing and they released through cloud on the pathfinder's marker flares.

Hutch had now accumulated over 675 flying hours and felt the strain as evidenced in a letter dated 1 October to his brother, Thomas.

Dear Bub [the brothers used this term for each other]

"...So you've been talking to my gal... have you? I don't like that at all, you know. Only kidding, of course. As a matter of fact, she hasn't answered any of my letters although she told Mom that she had written several of them but it seems that I should have gotten at least one of them by now. My love life is sort of lagging right now. It is too far to the States and mail is so slow in getting back & forth. Then I don't have enough time off to do any good over here. I met a gal in St Louis when I was going back to the processing center from home. She surprised me by sending a couple of letters and a cable. They had to trail me all over the world to finally get here.

I have now made 10 trips – "12B" will be coming up soon. My third "vehicle" is now out of commission and I think I'm going to get a new one. Can't tell you anything about it, but something new has been added. I don't think the trips have hurt me at all so far. Maybe its because I got put with a bunch of guys I didn't know. Of course it hurts like hell to see anyone get it but it isn't so bad if you don't have to watch your best friends going...

Yours – Bub"

Some friends were to fall during the month as the intensity of daylight aerial conflict increased. On 14 October, the Eighth returned to Schweinfurt hoping this time

to annihilate the plant's capacity for ball-bearing production. General Le May's message to his crews optimistically stated that success would shorten the war by several months. This was relayed by Col Vandevanter during the briefing at Great Ashfield and he added his own, rousing words, "This is a tough job and I know you can do it. Good luck, good bombing and good hunting". From amidst the assembled aircrews came the cheeky return, "And goodbye" but it eased the tension as Hutch and crew were taken to their ship, 42-3556 Mayfly. It was the dreaded "12B" but Mayfly did fly and took them through the tormented heavens for eight and a half hours. All 385th aircraft returned having lost only one crew member but elsewhere the results were disastrous – 60 bombers, 600 men, failed to return.

Anxious to avoid burdening his family and aware of censorship regulations, Hutch said little and wrote to Bub: "Just got through No. 13. Boy, did I sweat that thing out. It was a rugged trip too – but I feel as if I'm over the hump now. I have my own crate back now. It has been out of circulation for the last few days. Now, it has had two new wings, two new stabilizers, and three noses, not to mention engines and surfaces, but it is still one of the best ones on the field. My crew chief is behind us 100% and he usually keeps

her on initial station. Sometimes I have to go to another base to get him some odds or ends so he can get it off the red diagonal. No matter what we are flying, he always goes to the ship to see us off when we have to take somebody else's. Once, he rode all the way across the field on his bike just to see if the ship was O.K. and to tell us goodbye. I'll never forget the guy.

I am enclosing a picture taken from "Stars and Stripes", the E.T.O. newspaper. The specks in the sky are flak. I've seen it so thick you about had to go on instruments and it looks much bigger than in the picture, but that gives you an idea what it looks like.

I wish there were some way we could stop the folks at home from worrying about us but guess it is impossible...

I haven't been on pass in some time now. I never know when I'm going to be off, so can't make any plans beforehand. I have three girls that I try to keep in contact with. One is an English actress, one an American nurse, and the other an American Red Cross girl. I know a married English girl in London who has a very nice apartment. She is good looking and a lot of fun, but her husband is in service and I feel sort of guilty, so I don't see much of her.

From all reports I'm getting, you are doing alright in Texas. Just be careful and don't

get hitched. I want to be the best man when that happens. Keep the good work up and write often.

Yours - Bub

Circumstances did not always enable Hutch to fly Sleepytime Girl so he took 42-5902 "Lady Liz" to Duren on 18 October and returned unscathed. On 5 November he was on his favourite mount for a six hour session to bomb the marshalling yards in Gilsenkirchen where intense flak distributed damage to almost the entire 385th force. Fortunately, all landed safely although Sleepytime Girl again required attention from her hard pressed ground crew under T/Sgt August H Dykstra about whom Hutch had written so positively. Dykstra was dedicated to his work and slept under canvas close to Sleepytime Girl. His team of specialist mechanics comprised Sgt Russell C Kranz with Cpls James C Cruse, Joseph A Lemza and Joseph De Mario. Together, they had fitted the tent with electricity, built a planked floor from salvaged bomb cases and equipped it with tool cabinets and a workshop. The affection felt by August for Hutch was recalled many years later when he wrote, "...The plane was shot up quite badly on different missions and was grounded quite a lot, but when it was able to go out Hutchinson [sic] flew it...Hutch and myself had modified the "Gal" quite a lot. Each time he flew

he would report on what was good and what needed to be fixed or worked on. One thing we did...was to modify the supercharger, which... was controlled by hydraulics. It was slow to respond at high altitude because of the temperature when flying in formation. We fixed it so that instead of flying with the throttle, he flew with the supercharger throttle...He was one pilot that every ground crew liked and respected..." Hutch had mentioned to his brother that he was expecting another "vehicle" with something new added and his flight records show 5 hours on November in a B-17G. This variant carried a chin turret to improve forward defence against the Luftwaffe's fearsome frontal assaults.

For his next mission on 16 November, Hutch flew 42-30816 Mary Ellen III for a gruelling nine hours over the North Sea to bomb a generating facility at Rjukan in Norway. The Allies believed this was linked to Nazi nuclear weapon development. Earlier, he had written to his parents:

"Dear Mom & Dad

I haven't gone to the rest home yet, but expect to go in a week or so. I don't really have to have a rest, but sometimes after I lose a lot of sleep and do a lot of flying, I get a little bit nervous, so it won't hurt me to go.

All my crew is still intact. The four officers sleep together and the six enlisted men

are in the same barracks. The only difference is that the men's barracks is more crowded than ours is, and we have orderlies to clean the place up, make beds etc. It is very comfortable here. We have a radio in our barracks, and usually plenty of books and magazines to read, though the magazines are usually pretty old. We have a good officers' club where there is a good bar and games and more magazines.

I am a flight commander now and may get a promotion soon. I am not worried about promotions though. I can get them after I get back to the States. Just now my greatest concern is doing my job and coming back for twelve more times, then I'm going to set sails for Mississippi.

It is going to be practically impossible for me to send any Christmas gifts this year because everything is pretty strictly rationed and I can't get the British coupons. We are allowed ten V-mail Christmas cards of three different designs...I wrote you about the German propaganda broadcasts, didn't I? We listen to them sometimes. They really have some very good music. This morning they were playing, "The Yanks are Coming". They didn't know how right they were.

Keep writing - Yours Johnny"

Far from resting, Hutch returned to Gilsenkirchen in

Sleepytime Gal on 19 November. It was an inauspicious attack thwarted by failure of the Oboe system at such a distance. Results were more positive over Paris on 26 November when he took 42-3355 Nan-B to bomb ball bearing industry targets. He and his crew were clearly exhausted and the rest home couldn't come soon enough.

On 11 December, he again wrote to his parents,

"Just got back from the rest home... We stayed at a large hotel that has been taken over by the Red Cross. The town is Southport on the West Coast of England. It is a resort town and a lot of wealthy businessmen retired there before the war. It has a lot of beautiful homes and interesting things to see. One of them is Lord Street, the main street there. Before the war it was always decorated with colored lights hanging over the tall trees on either side. The town is kept spotless, even now. It is the cleanest city I've ever seen.

They have the prettiest girls in England there and they are all friendly to Americans. There are several good dancing places, not to mention a theatre and several motion picture cinemas. I ran around with a pretty blonde Red Cross girl from California a lot. She was a lot of fun and one of the nicest girls I've ever met. I only had a week and I didn't spend much of that in get-

ting physical rest but had a swell time.

Now I'm back to the old grind, and it is a big let-down. The drainage on the base is very poor and it is awfully muddy. You always have to wear GI shoes...regardless of how long the sun shines.

I know now what a "London fog" really is. I'd heard of them before I came over here, but you have to get in one in a blackout to really appreciate it. You can't see a thing in the world and you run into all kinds of people on the streets without being able to see them at all. Sometimes the fog lasts for days and days without lifting and it can rain and fog all of the same time. I can get lost in a well-lighted city, so you can imagine how it is in one like London when you can't see anything. I always get on the subway and go to a station near where I want to go and then ask people till I find it or I'll take a taxi. How the taxi drivers know where they are and how to go anywhere else I'll never know. It's one of the unsolved mysteries of London...They scare me every time I get in one but they never seem to have an accident.

To get back to the rest home, I had a swell time and never got drunk a single time, though most of my crew was usually soused. Whiskey is one thing they seem to have a lot of over here...Mom, our mess hall is always crowded so anything that you can

send in the way of candy or cakes can certainly be put to good use.

Love to all – Johnny.”

His return to combat occurred on 13 December when B-17 42-31117 Night Mare was flown to bomb port installations in Kiel. Some 50 enemy aircraft were observed and the 385th were attacked by 'Me 210s and Ju 88s' whose tactics included creeping up using contrails for cover before firing rockets, but their accuracy was poor. Fortresses were seen dropping from nearby formations but, after bombing through a complete overcast, the 385th returned without loss.

Three days later it was more port facilities but this time in Bremen using B-17 42-31102. It was heavy flak over the same target on 20 December but flying Night Mare again.

On 18 December, Hutch had written to his brother, Hiya Kid,

I have a "Sleepytime Gal II" now. The first one (my second ship) is in a sad shape. The new one is a G and a sweet handling job. I like it much better than the first one. I have 18 missions now and am a squadron leader. It worries the hell out of me for fear I'll do something that'll cause someone behind me to get hurt. I'll get my captaincy soon, but rank doesn't mean much over here. Of course you find a few rank-happy guys, but most of us have too much to think about

already to worry about such minor things as whether you are Lt. or Capt...I have a Triumph motorcycle now. It is an English built single cylinder job. We overhauled it and put airplane bearings in it. I use 100 octane in it. Boy, we really get up and go places. Can't take it off the base but it is a lot of fun on the base. It belonged to a pal of mine. I helped him fix it up, then he borrowed 14 pounds from me (\$56.00) and then he didn't get back one day so I took over the bike...None of my crew is up with me on raids and they have never flown with any other pilot and refuse to do it. I don't know what they'll do when I finish mine. I'd like to go on till they are all through but can't do it...

Take it easy.

Yours, Bub.”

On the same day he wrote to his parents,

"...Dad, I'm glad you are finally about through getting your cotton out. It must be a relief to have it safe with labor the way it is now. I imagine the German prisoners are pretty poor excuses as cotton pickers. Do they ever have any trouble with them? I don't imagine they do because they say the German soldier's discipline that it still holds out even when they are prisoners of war..

I am a squadron leader now and am up for captaincy. That doesn't mean that I'm squadron commander. It just means that I lead my squadron on flights. The ad-

ditional responsibility is a pretty heavy load. Formerly, I only had 10 men and one ship to worry about and now it is 60 men and six ships. I have 18 trips now so it won't be so very long till the happy day comes, but don't think I'll come home right away. They need some ferry pilots here in the Isles and it should be a pretty good job for me as I'll get to see all of England as well as check out different types of planes.

Mom, I wrote you about receiving the Air Medal. I've also received two oak leaf clusters for the Air Medal and may get the Distinguished Flying Cross soon. I had a large colour portrait made to send you, but it came out horribly. Guess I'll send it anyway, but please don't think that combat has caused that expression to be on my face all the time.

Love to all,

Johnny”

On New Year's Eve, Hutch edged closer to completion of his tour when he flew 42-31349 Stars & Stripes 2nd Edition against airfields in the Cognac region. Despite expecting the operational arrival of his B-17G "Sleepytime Gal II" – thought to be 42-31370 – Hutch used 42-37966 Swinging Door for Osnabruck on 11 January. The intended target was Brunswick but Group records relate that the weather, "completely ruined" the mission. A recall was issued and the 385th used Osnabruck as a "Target of Opportunity". For-

tunately the flak was inaccurate and fighter opposition desultory. Elsewhere it was a different story and 19 bombers were lost.

Flying as Lead Crew meant greater gaps between missions but stretched the time for a combat tour so it was 29 January before Hutch took B-17G 42-31378 Rum Dum to Frankfurt where they encountered ferocious fighter attacks. The Group historian recounted, "All Squadrons in this group were attacked by approximately 125 enemy aircraft...The first attacks were pressed very vigorously from level and below in all directions. The attacks were pressed so close that aircraft 251 in the low squadron... was reported as, 'might have been rammed by an Me 109' The enemy aircraft made good use of the sun...As the attacks increased in ferocity, yellow-nosed Me 109s and Fw 190s started attacking in groups of sixteen, eight abreast, one squadron of eight behind the other. Most attacks came high and out of the sun..." Their assailants were JG26 and three 385th Fortresses succumbed with others damaged before the attacks ceased and an exhausted Hutch returned Rum Dum to base. This Fortress was destined to achieve over 100 missions before being salvaged after a belly landing at the war's end.

Hutch was in hospital during early February when around 90 flying personnel were suffering from respiratory

infections. On 5 February he wrote,

"Dear Mom & Dad, I am taking things easy in the hospital now. I had too good a time on pass recently, and as a result, I have a bad cold or the flu or something. It isn't serious - it's just that this is the best place to get well quick.

Two more missions to go! It won't be long now. I think I can finish in February and should get home some time not many months from now...

There are two cute young nurses in my ward in the infirmary. I'm getting such a pleasant interlude from the war, I don't know whether I want to get ungrounded right away. (Kidding, of course). Just got a letter from Thelma [?] Mom, she says you and she have big things planned for me after I get back. My curiosity is all aroused. Maybe you'd better let me in on the secret.

My co-pilot and I met a swell bunch of English girls in London. There are four of them living together in a house of their own. They are all nice-looking and they are broad-minded and have a real sense of humour. The one I go with is the only English girl I've met that I thought would get along in the States. I'm not thinking of bringing her of course, but she could adapt herself to America in nothing flat. When we go on pass, we usually take them out, then they put us up and we don't have to worry about finding

a place to sleep. You can't imagine how much good it does to spend a day or two in a home after a couple of straight weeks on an army base.

I don't have any definite plans about what to do when I get back. Am trying to get into A.T.C., preferably in the States, but am not sure I'll get that. (The ideal thing would be to fly a run from St Louis to New Orleans, via Memphis and Greenville).

Have thought a lot about getting married, but decided it's out, at least until the war is over. What do you think? I haven't thought much about who the unhappy bride would be. Oh, well...It is sort of hard to write in bed, so until later (and always),

I love you,
Johnny"

Feeling a little refreshed, Hutch had what was expected to be a relatively easy mission for his return to combat on 13 February when he took 42-31370 Sleepy-time Gal II to bomb V sites in the Pas De Calais. German anti-aircraft gunners were now adept at their art and the 385th lost two aircraft. 1/Lt Ed Herron ditched Dragon Lady in the channel and, limping over the coast, Star Dust piled into a pill box at RAF Detling.

For Hutch and crew, the war was almost over. Indeed, two of his gunners, Johnny J Fulgieri and S/Sgt J R O'Malley, had already completed their tours. On 18 February, Hutch cabled

home, "Am OK. One to go. Love to All. Johnny".

His 25th and final mission looked like a "Milk Run" diversionary raid on the Diepholz aircraft depot in North West Germany, while the main force would penetrate to an aircraft component works in Brunswick. Allied plans were now well advanced to take the war to ground level in Western Europe and both missions were part of the "Big Week" operations when the RAF and USAAF combined in a concerted series of round-the-clock raids against the German aircraft industry. It was intended that these operations would so reduce the Luftwaffe's strength that it would be impotent during Operation Overlord, the invasion of Europe.

Opposition was light as predicted and severe damage was inflicted on the aircraft park. The only 385th casualties were Captain Gerald D Binks and 2/Lt Joel D Panches who were lost flying in the 482nd BG pathfinder aircraft which suffered engine failure, forcing the crew to bail out.

During the return journey, continuing adverse weather conditions forced the bombers North of their planned route. At 15.37 hours the B-17s were approaching the East Anglian coastline at 8,000 feet. Two minutes later they crossed the coast just North of Great Yarmouth descending in preparation for landing. Hutch was

leading one element of three aircraft in a loose vee formation as they entered cloud at some 4,000 feet. Lt Warren J Pease and crew flew on his starboard side while Lt John A Terrace and crew were to port. Terrace gave control to co-pilot, Lt Eugene St John, who had a clearer view of their leader.

When the formation emerged, St John looked right and Hutch was very close, grinning broadly and smoking a large cigar, perhaps for the benefit of 385th photographer, Sgt Bud Creegan who had been sent to cover the occasion of their jubilant return. But something was wrong - there was no B-17 on the starboard side of the formation - where was Pease? As Gene searched, the missing B-17 suddenly broke cloud in a very steep dive astern of Hutchison's ship. Their altitude was now less than 1,000 feet. Passing beneath and perhaps not seeing his Leader, Pease pulled up sharply into the path of the on-coming Fortress. Hutch had no chance of taking avoiding action, his right inner engine tore into the other B-17's spine, completely severing the tail section which tumbled earthwards with gunner, Junior M Falls trapped inside.

Debris filled the sky as instinctive reaction from St John saved the third bomber - he banked hard left, away from the aerial spillage. S/Sgt Robert L Goldsmith had been watching from

the waist as St John swung away but he would never forget those final agonizing moments. Continuing upwards, the front two-thirds of the Pease aircraft reared uncontrollably over Hutch's bomber before cutting back into it, breaking the other Fortress in half. Bob Goldsmith saw debris and bodies blown into the sky but no parachutes as the shattered remnants of both bombers plunged to earth. Twenty-one young men had perished in as many seconds.

Having received the cable from her son, Mom Hutchison must have eagerly anticipated his safe return. The next Western Union telegram to arrive on 5th March shattered the family, "The Secretary of War desires me to express his deepest regret that your son Captain John N Hutchison Jr was killed in action in defense of his country on twenty one February over Reedham England. Letter follows. Ulio The Adjutant General".

Letters of condolence from official sources followed and some unfortunately misspelt his name - Hutchinson, not Hutchison - an easy mistake that repeatedly permeated the records but still unintentionally hurtful to his family. A very moving tribute came from Johnnie Fulgieri:

"Dear Mom Hutchison, I hope you don't mind this. You see, John and I used to talk about you so very much...I was the oldest one on the crew.

Mom, there is one thing I want to make clear to everyone and I am telling you from the bottom of my heart. Your boy was one of the very best pilots the army has ever had. His death was a terrible shock to everyone who ever knew him. For the first time in all my combat experience I saw all the ground crews, even fellows that never worked on our plane, sit down and cry when they found out that Hutch did not come back from the mission. The truck drivers who used to ride us from the barracks to the plane why, to them, Hutch was a God...The men that flew with him and came in contact with him admired, loved and respected him for the man he was. I know that because I would always fly with Hutch, any place, any time, any plane.

Mom, we of the crew always told Hutch that he was our boy and anything he done was OK by us, we always knew that Hutch was looking out for us...Please believe me. You may have been John's Mom in flesh and blood, but you were also the crew Mom. We always knew when Hutch received mail from you so we would all yell, 'How you there, Hutch, did you hear from Mom... Closing with my deepest regards and love to our Mom.' I made sporadic visits to the crash sites over many years and parts recovered found their way into museums both here and in America, most notably a parachute

presented to the USAF Museum at Wright-Patterson. These finds inspired my first book, "Final Flights" which later prompted interest from the archaeological TV series, "Time Team" and we developed the idea of their first foray into aviation archaeology.

Some work had occurred on the Pease site in 1976 and a propeller recovered but efforts were abandoned when the digger sank into the quagmire. During discussions with Time Team, I wanted the programme to illustrate discoveries on both sites but they argued that this would confuse the audience so efforts focused on the Pease plane at Decoy Carr. Filming occurred during June 1998 and, for the programme's regular cameo, the 385th's British wartime artist Anne Gordon (nee Haywood) created a nose-art representation of a Sleepy Time Gal.

The excavations proved disappointing with the most significant finds being the two ball turret machine guns pulled from the peat some sixteen feet down. The planned late appearance of propellers recovered from previous excavations created some controversy for the programme but Air Crash Investigator, Bernie Forward, noted that one had been feathered. This was indicative of engine failure and a possible cause for the disaster. It was surmised that the loss of an engine in

cloud could have distracted Pease and, preoccupied with the feathering process, his attention had been diverted and control lost with catastrophic consequences.

Aired on the 55th anniversary, the programme attracted the highest number of viewers to date so it was satisfaction all round. Well, almost - I still wanted to clear Hutchison's aircraft from Mill Dyke and see a memorial established.

In September 1999, I returned to the site, now fully aware of its history and significance. Conditions were ideal and the marshland drier than on any previous occasion. Early finds included the inevitable ammunition plus personal equipment - oxygen masks, throat microphones, an intact morphine bottle and parts of an electrically heated suit. Probing deeper, we exposed the cylinders of a Cyclone engine with its propeller still attached and both were carefully recovered along with a second propeller. With no further detector readings at depth, we commenced back filling while exploring areas of detritus nearer the surface. One discovery made our hearts leap - Bud Creegan's hand-held K20 camera! Sifting through the spoil, my son Rowan made this remarkable find. Nearly six decades earlier, the last images recorded through its lens were of a jubilant bomber crew, almost home. Protruding from the edge of

the camera body was a fragment of film. Was it just possible that a few frames had survived? Swiftly placed in a black bag, it was taken to the Imperial War Museum, Duxford and cleaned in their dark room. Aspirations for those final images faded when inspection revealed that the back of the camera had been gutted and burnt leaving only one fragment of empty film.

For thirty-five years I had sought to perpetuate the memory of the 21 airmen who died over Reedham and, supported by families and friends of those lost, Time Team, Reedham Parish Council and fellow enthusiasts, a memorial was planned. Original intentions of incorporating finds proved impractical owing to requirements for long-term maintenance so a grey, marble plaque was chosen. This would be recessed into an embankment by Reedham village's own war memorial and, on 17 June 2000, some seventy 385th veterans and family members attended a dedication ceremony. With the unveiling of the memorial plus distributing items discovered as museum exhibits honouring the crews, I felt that aviation archaeology had saved them from historical obscurity – the least I could do.

On 21st February 2014, 70 years to the day, I placed a wreath on the memorial on behalf of the 385th Bomb Group Association and its

British friends. I am now privileged yet saddened to have the original of that fateful, final telegram, "Am OK. One to go. Love Johnny".

Captain John N Hutchison's crew – 550th Bomb Squadron

Pilot: Capt. John N Hutchison Jr

Co-pilot: 2/Lt Charles G Curtis

Navigator: 1/Lt John E Epps

Bombardier: 1/Lt Edmond J Gamble

Top Turret: T/Sgt Roy C Kitner

Tail Gunner: S/Sgt Joseph J Carpinetti

Radio Operator: T/Sgt William J Dukes

Ball Turret: S/Sgt John H Erhardt

Left Waist: S/Sgt Emilio M Corgnatti

Right Waist: S/Sgt Peter Bobulsky, Jr

Photographer: S/Sgt Frank L Creegan, Jr

1/Lt Warren J Pease's crew – 549th Bomb Squadron

Pilot: 1/Lt Warren J Pease

Co-pilot: 2/Lt Edward B Brown

Navigator: 2/Lt Bernard Kaplan

Bombardier: 2/Lt Robert E Jenkins

Top Turret: T/Sgt William R Clift

Radio Operator: T/Sgt William Gill, Jr

Ball Turret: S/Sgt Franklin C Owsley

Tail Gunner: S/Sgt Junior M Falls

Left Waist: S/Sgt Harold E Dickason

Right Waist: S/Sgt Gail F Bruner

Page 15 Photos (L-R, Top to Bottom): Hutch Site 2000 Prop; Carpinetti, Flugieri, Kitner; Tail of 370; Michael Nice with Bud's Camera; Hutch and Curtis; Hutch Site 1965 chute; Dukes, O'Malley, Corgnatti - Dec43; Hutch Grave.





VAUGHAN BASS

FEATURED PIN-UP ARTIST

Vaughan Alden Bass was a Chicago artist who began his pin-up career during the 1930s. He appears to have been strongly influenced by the circle of artists that grew up around Haddon Sudblom.

Bass created his own pinups for for Brown & Bigelow, but he was then employed by the Louis F. Dow Company as a "paint-over" artist, commissioned to redo the work that Gil Elvgren had previously created for the company. Dow was motivated by economic interests, hoping to earn more money from such "re designed" Elvgrens. Fortunately, Bass was a skilled and sensitive artist: he strove to leave the faces, hands, skin, and other key areas of the Elvgrens essentially untouched. However, he occasionally had to repaint an arm or hand because it had to be repositioned to accommodate a new over painted image.

His painting style was often compared to that of Elvgren, Al Buell, and Joyce Ballantyne. He worked in oil on canvas in almost the same sizes as the others.

In the 1950s, the versatile Bass did a series of spectacular oils depicting wrestling scenes that clearly demonstrated his ability to be comfortable with any subject matter. He created the "Wonder Bread Girl" in the 1950s using his daughter Nancy as his model. His portrait of President Dwight D. Eisenhower is in the Smithsonian institution in Washington D.C.

Vaughan Alden Bass biography borrowed from The Great American Pin-up by Charles G. Martignette & Louis K. Meisel.

SHERATON MUSIC CITY HOTEL – NASHVILLE, TN (615) 885-2200

<https://www.starwoodmeeting.com/StarGroupsWeb/res?id=1402066861&key=30784>

Location

777 McGavock Pike, Nashville, TN 37214

Located within minutes of downtown Nashville, the Sheraton offers easy access to many of Nashville's attractions. Several restaurants and stores are within a couple miles of the hotel.

Reservation Information

Call the number above and reference the 8th Air Force Historical Society or you can use the link below to make reservations <https://www.starwoodmeeting.com/StarGroupsWeb/res?id=1402066861&key=30784> . You may also click on hotel link found on the AFR registration page at www.afr-reg.com/8afhs2014 .

Group Name: Eighth Air Force Historical Society

Reunion Dates: October 9-13, 2014

Rate: \$109 + tax (currently 15.25% + \$2.50 per night). Group rate is offered 3 days before and 3 days after the reunion dates, based on group-block availability.

Cut-off Date: 09/8/14. Late reservations will be processed based on space availability at a higher rate.

Cancellation Policy: Deposit is refundable if reservation is canceled 48 hours prior to the day of arrival. Call 615-885-2200 should you need to cancel your room reservation. All reservations must be guaranteed by credit card or first night's deposit, enclosed. There is an early departure fee of one night's room/tax if the reservation holder checks out of the hotel earlier than agreed upon date. If you must check out earlier than planned, please notify the front desk at the time of hotel check-in or before arrival. Family and medical emergencies are excused.

Parking & Shuttle Information

Complimentary airport shuttle service is provided to and from the Nashville International Airport. The shuttle runs from 5:00am-11:00pm. From baggage claim, proceed to the phone bank and press button #46 to request pickup. Then proceed to the pickup area which in one level down at ground transportation. The hotel also offers complimentary parking for guests staying in the hotel.

Hospitality Suites

The hotel offers executive suites to be used for group hospitality rooms. They range in size from 450-600 square feet and each one has a terrace or balcony where people may socialize as well. Suites include restrooms and small (dorm size) refrigerators. The cost is \$125/night, payable directly to the Society. The hotel will deliver ice each day for a one-time charge of \$100 plus tax/service charge. Hospitality hosts will be pre-assigned to nearby rooms, but not necessarily connecting. Please contact Donna with Armed Forces Reunions, Inc. at DonnaLee@afri.com to make arrangements.

Wheelchair Rental

ScotAround rents both manual and power wheelchairs by the day and week. Call (888) 441-7575 for details.

**8th AIR FORCE HISTORICAL SOCIETY ANNUAL REUNION
SHERATON MUSIC CITY
OCTOBER 9 – 13, 2014**

REGISTRATION INSTRUCTIONS

See choices below and complete the Registration Form noting your event choices and personal information. By "WWII GROUP," we're asking for the group or unit in which you served (specific Bomb Group, Fighter Group, PRG, HQ, etc.). We use this information for tallying totals for each group, nametags, and seating arrangements. If you prefer to sit with a different group, please give us that information too. We do not need your squadron. Remit by mail with check or money order payable to Armed Forces Reunions by September 8, 2014. You may also register and pay with credit card online at www.afr-reg.com/8afhs2014. A 3% convenience fee will be added to online credit card reservations. Forms received after September 8 will be accepted on a space available basis only. Hotel reservations should also be made by September 8, 2014.

ARMED FORCES REUNIONS, INC. CANCELLATION POLICY

For attendees canceling reunion activities prior to the cut-off date, Armed Forces Reunions, Inc. (AFR) shall process a full refund less a \$5 per person processing fee. Attendees canceling reunion activities after the cut-off date will be refunded to the fullest extent that AFR's vendor commitments and guarantees will allow, less a \$5 processing fee. Cancellations will only be taken Monday through Friday from 9:00am until 4:00pm Eastern Time, excluding holidays. Please call (757) 625-6401 to cancel reunion activities and obtain a cancellation code. Refunds processed 4-6 weeks after reunion. Canceling your hotel reservation doesn't cancel your reunion activities.

MEALS / EVENTS CHOICES

MEAL PACKAGE 1 \$212

Package includes 7 hotel food functions beginning with breakfast on Friday (4 breakfasts, 3 dinners).

MEAL PACKAGE 2 \$148

Package includes 5 hotel food functions beginning with breakfast on Saturday (3 breakfasts, 2 dinners).

The continental breakfast buffets include juice, fruit, cereals/milk, yogurt, breakfast breads, and coffee. The full breakfast buffets include juice, fruit, eggs, meat, potatoes, pancakes or French toast, biscuits, and coffee.

CHOICE #3 INDIVIDUAL EVENTS

Saturday Rendezvous Dinner at \$45, and Sunday Banquet at \$45 can be purchased separately, but are included in both packages above.

TOUR OPTIONS

Tours and trips are described on the Reunion Highlights Pages. Prices are listed on the registration form. Driver and Guide gratuities are not included in the tour prices.

8th AFHS ACTIVITY REGISTRATION FORM – OCTOBER 9-13, 2014

Listed below are all registration, tour, and meal costs for the reunion. Please enter how many people will be participating in each event and total the amount. Send that amount payable to ARMED FORCES REUNIONS, INC. in the form of check or money order. Your cancelled check will serve as your confirmation. You may also register online and pay by credit card at www.afr-reg.com/8afhs2014 (3% will be added to total). All registration forms and payments must be received on or before September 8, 2014. After that date, reservations will be accepted on a space available basis. We suggest you make a copy of this form before mailing. Please do not staple or tape your payment to this form. Returned checks will be charged a \$20 fee.

Armed Forces Reunions, Inc.
322 Madison Mews
Norfolk, VA 23510
ATTN: 8th AFHS

OFFICE USE ONLY

Check # _____ Date Received _____
 Inputted _____ Nametag Completed _____

CUT-OFF DATE IS 9/8/2014

	Price Per	# of People	Total
REGISTRATION FEE			
Includes meeting expenses and other reunion expenses.	\$40		\$
Reg. Fee for children ages 8-16 attending more than 1 function & staying at hotel	\$25		\$
MEAL PACKAGES			
<i>Package #1 includes 7 hotel meals beginning with breakfast on Friday</i>	\$212		\$
<i>Package #2 includes 5 hotel meals beginning with breakfast on Saturday</i>	\$148		\$
Please select your entrée choice(s) for the Banquet:			
Chef's Choice Steak with Cabernet Demi Glace		#	
Tilapia with Lemon Caper Sauce		#	
SEPARATELY PRICED MEALS (if not purchasing a package)			
Saturday, 10/11: Rendezvous Dinner (Chicken Marsala)	\$45		\$
Sunday, 10/12: Banquet (please select your entrée)			
Chef's Choice Steak with Cabernet Demi Glace	\$45		\$
Tilapia with Lemon Caper Sauce	\$45		\$
SYMPOSIUM BOX LUNCH			
The symposium is free to attendees. Because of the short lunch break, box lunches are available for purchase in advance.	\$8		\$
TOURS			
Please choose one of the following two tours:			
Friday, 10/10: City Tour	\$49		\$
Friday, 10/10: Memphis Belle & The Red Nose	\$26		\$
Friday, 10/10: Grand Ole Opry	\$63		\$
Sunday, 10/12: Nashville NightLife Lunch & Matinee	\$65		\$
Total Amount Payable to <u>Armed Forces Reunions, Inc.</u>			\$

Please Print

MEMBER NAME (for nametag) _____

VET NEXT GEN OTHER WWII GROUP (please list BG, not BS) _____

SPOUSE NAME (if attending) _____

GUEST NAMES _____ NEXT GEN

PHONE # (____) _____ - _____ EMAIL ADDRESS _____ @ _____

ADDRESS _____ CITY _____ ST _____ ZIP _____

DISABILITY/DIETARY RESTRICTIONS _____

MUST YOU BE LIFTED HYDRAULICALLY ONTO THE BUS WHILE SEATED IN YOUR WHEELCHAIR IN ORDER TO PARTICIPATE IN BUS TRIPS? YES NO (PLEASE NOTE THAT WE CANNOT GUARANTEE AVAILABILITY).

EMERGENCY CONTACT _____ PH. NUMBER (____) _____ - _____

**8th AIR FORCE HISTORICAL SOCIETY ANNUAL REUNION
SHERATON MUSIC CITY – NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE
OCTOBER 9 – 13, 2014**

Thursday, October 9

Memphis Belle & The Red Nose available for tours & rides.

- 1:00pm - 6:00pm **Reunion Registration open**
2:00pm - 6:00pm 8AFHS Board Meeting
6:00pm - 7:00pm Welcome Reception

Friday, October 10

- 7:30am - 8:30am Full Breakfast for Meal Package #1 participants
Tbd - Tbd Memorabilia / Gathering Room open throughout the reunion.
8:00am - 10:00am **Reunion Registration open**
9:00am - 2:00pm CITY TOUR
9:30am - 12:00pm MEMPHIS BELLE & THE RED NOSE
1:00pm - 5:00pm **Reunion Registration open**
2:30pm - 3:30pm Chapter/Unit Development AND Next Generation Meeting
4:00pm - 5:30pm Dinner Buffet (Pork BBQ and catfish as entrees) for Meal Package #1 participants. Laura Edge will speak during dinner of her father's experiences.
6:00pm - 10:00pm GRAND OLE OPRY

Saturday, October 11

- 7:30am - 8:30am Continental Breakfast for Meal Package participants
8:30am - 10:00am **Reunion Registration open**
8:30am - 10:00am Individual Group Meetings
10:30am - 5:30pm Symposium: Behind the Wire and Mask
2:00pm - 6:00pm **Reunion Registration open**
6:30pm - 7:00pm 8AFHS Cash Bar Reception
7:00pm - 9:30pm Rendezvous Dinners

Sunday, October 12

- 7:30am - 8:30am Full Breakfast for Meal Package participants
8:30am - 10:00am General Membership Meeting
11:00am - 4:00pm 8AFHS Board Meeting
11:00am - 2:30pm NASHVILLE NIGHTLIFE LUNCH AND MATINEE
5:00pm - 5:30pm **Reunion Registration open**
6:00pm - 7:00pm 8AFHS Cash Bar Reception
7:00pm - 10:00pm Banquet Dinner, followed by guest speaker and dancing.

Monday, October 13

- 7:00am - 8:30am Continental Breakfast Buffet for Meal Package participants

Please plan to be at the bus boarding area at least five minutes prior to the scheduled time.
All trips require a minimum of thirty-five people, unless otherwise stated.
Driver and Guide gratuities are not included in the tour prices.

CITY TOUR

Friday, October 10

Begin a tour of Nashville with trained professional guides who will entertain your group with interesting facts, colorful legends, and amusing anecdotes of Nashville and her people. Drive through Centennial Park and view the Parthenon, a full-scale replica of the original in Greece. Visit the Ryman Auditorium, where the Grand Ole Opry got its start. Originally a church, the Ryman is now home to numerous musical productions. Stop on 2nd Avenue for lunch on your own at one of several different restaurants. Your guide will make suggestions.

9:00am board bus, 2:00pm back at hotel

\$49/Person includes bus, guide, and admission. Lunch on your own.

**** OR ****

MEMPHIS BELLE & THE RED NOSE

Friday, October 10

The Boeing B-17F Flying Fortress, Memphis Belle and the Red Nose, P-51 Mustang will be on location at a local Nashville airport during the reunion. Today's trip is scheduled for those without transportation or wanting to go as part of a group. The planes will be available to view (and ride) at other times during the reunion as well. More details to come or elsewhere in the newsletter.

9:30am board bus, 12:00pm back at hotel

\$26/Person includes bus and escort.

GRAND OLE OPRY

Friday, October 10

During any given Opry show, audiences can expect the best in country, bluegrass, comedy, gospel, and more by Country Music Hall of Famers, cast members who helped establish the Opry as the home of country music, revered superstars, and young artists just starting to make names for themselves. It is the longest-running live radio show in the world. Sit back and enjoy an American Institution at its entertaining best.

6:00pm board bus, 10:00pm back at hotel

\$63/Person includes bus, escort, and show.

SYMPOSIUM: BEHIND THE WIRE AND MASK

Saturday, October 11

During WWII, airmen downed behind enemy lines had few options: if they survived the crash or bail out they faced almost certain capture and interment in a Stalag Luft as a POW; or they could try and get back to friendly territory with aid from the "Helpers" through an elaborate underground network of American sympathizers—Escape and Evasion. Either way, the stories of hardship, courage, sacrifice, and patriotism have been carefully researched, collected, and will be presented in a powerfully dynamic and emotionally charged symposium by renowned researchers and veterans who will share their personal experiences with you. We invite YOU to share your experiences during this interactive forum as well.

10:30am Symposium starts, 5:30pm Adjourn

There is no charge for the Symposium; however, if you want a box lunch during the short lunch break, cost is \$8.

NASHVILLE NIGHTLIFE LUNCH AND MATINEE

Sunday, October 12

Come and experience a celebration of Country Music from both the past and present. Hear songs from many of the great artists of country music history. Enjoy the music from late-greats such as Patsy Cline and Hank Williams, Sr. to the superstars of today, Sara Evans and Toby Keith. But first – be sure to bring your appetite – there is a full lunch buffet with salads, vegetables, meats, pasta, rolls, beverages, and fruit cobblers for dessert! **Note: A minimum of 70 people is required for this trip.**

11:00am board bus, 2:30pm back at hotel

\$65/Person includes bus, escort, and lunch cruise.

8th AIR FORCE HISTORICAL SOCIETY ANNUAL BANQUET

Sunday, October 12

Assemble in the ballroom for the Posting of the Colors and Memorial Service. Dinner will be a choice of Steak or Tilapia with the usual accompaniments. The guest speaker, **Yvonne Daley Brusselmans** will follow, and then the music turns up a bit for some dancing if you'd like!

FAMILY MYSTERY SOLVED

BY ELIZABETH PYLES - MAY 15, 2014

All we knew about grandma's brother was that he died in a mid-air plane collision over England. No other details were known until Thanksgiving of 2013 when I started to research. Ten days after turning 23 years old, William Jerry Dukes was named after his grandfather and great grandfather Jeremiah Dukes of Caroline County, MD. He was involved in a midair B17G collision over Reedham England. He was an ordinary farm boy from Illinois far from home, but an extraordinary part of "Big Week" to destroy the German Air Force in order to invade and end World War II. He was radio operator in Pilot John N. Hutchison's B17G Flying fortress Sleepy Time Gal 2. They were part of the 550th Bomb Squadron, The Mighty Eighth Air Force assigned to Great Ashfield Airbase in Suffolk, England. On February 21, 1944 they were returning from their final mission, their 25th mission. Their bags were packed to come home. The pilot Hutch had sent a telegram to his mom saying "One more to go. All my love, Johnny." The war would be over for the 10 person crew.

After bombing Diepholz Germany, they crossed the English Channel, Pilot Hutchison lit a nearly foot long cigar in celebration. An extra crew member, a photographer,

Frank L Creegan Jr. was flying with them to document their final mission. This camera was also found in later excavations of the site, but no images of the final mission of its crew survived. They were in let down, preparing to land at Great Ashfield air base when a bomber in their 3 plane formation had engine problems, and fell behind. This bomber was flown by First Lt. Warren Pease. He apparently, started to dive while he was feathering his engine then accelerated to catch up with the formation, and pulled up right in the path of Hutchison's plane. There was also heavy cloud cover which must have also been a cause in the collision. Both crashed in Reedham marshes, England 800 yards from each other. After surviving 25 bombing missions, German anti aircraft artillery, the high altitude cold, and a North African mishap in the desert on the runway with another B17 named Sly Fox, they were erased from this earth in mere seconds due to a senseless mistake, only minutes from the safety of their base.

Both planes hit the ground and exploded. A letter sent to Hutchison's mom from a crew member who had not been on board that day explained how much Hutch and the crew were admired and everyone couldn't be-

lieve they hadn't returned to base. Mechanics and fellow crew members back at base sat down and cried that day when they realized their "final" mission was truly their last at Great Ashfield Air Base. The Air Force recovered the remains but the planes sank into the marsh and were moved by English farmers and thrown into the water in the dyke.

I can't imagine the pain and suffering endured by his father, my great grandfather William Lester Dukes, a rural farmer outside Danville, Illinois. He had already lost his wife shortly after the youngest child, Carroll had been born in 1930. He had been left to raise a 12 year old daughter (Norma), 9 year old son (William J.), a 7 year old daughter (June), another 5 year old daughter (my grandma Mabre) and an infant son Carroll (5 months). How much could one family endure?

Almost a month after the collision, as the Dukes family were gathered in mourning the loss of William Lester Dukes' first grandson at only one year old to a tragic drowning accident, my great grandfather received the dreaded telegram. "The Secretary of War desires me to express his deep regret that your son Technical Sergeant William J Dukes was killed in action in defense of

his country on twenty one of February in Reedham, England period letter follows." His son would not be coming home to farm the family farm after the war as was planned. The Rossville, Illinois American Legion Post No. 31 was named Spears-Dukes after the first two boys lost from the area in World War II.

In 1964 in England, twenty years after the crash, a 16 year old named Ian Mclachlan and his buddies heard of a "German" plane crash wreckage and decided to investigate. They found some things such as oxygen tanks in the water and mud so they returned with adults. They found a parachute from William's bomber which Ian donated in 1969 to Wright Patterson Air Force base in Ohio. I went there as a kid and my family never knew it was there. We just learned of this story over Thanksgiving 2013. I probably stood in front of the parachute in the sealed case never knowing it came from my great uncle's tragic midair collision Feb. 21, 1944 over Reedham, England. The parachute had been submerged for 20 years when Ian found it.

This story is featured in Ian Maclachlan's books Final Flights and Eighth Air Force Bomber Stories- A New Selection. He is an aviation archeologist and writer, as well as historian for the 385th

Bomb Group Association. These two bombers involved in the crash were both from the 385th at Great Ashfield Air base, England part of the Mighty Eighth.

Ian Mclachlan continued to excavate realizing it was not a German plane after all. When part of the plane was found with a serial number, he was able to identify it and the crew. Many artifacts were found and parts of the plane were donated to various museums in England and America. He went back in 1975 to excavate Hutch's plane further. The extra crew member, Creegan's camera was found which recorded their final mission, but all images had been erased by the heat of the fire. He also contacted Time Team, a popular British TV show which ran for 20 seasons to go back and excavate both bomber crash sites. Pease's plane had not been excavated as much as Hutch's. They filmed in 1998 and the program aired in 1999. This can be seen on Youtube under Time Team Reedham Marshes Season 6 episode 8.

In 2000, again thanks to Ian Mclachlan, the 385th Bomb Group Association, and the Reedham, England Parrish (Town) Council a nice commemorative Plaque was placed next to the War Memorial. I wish we had known then because William's younger siblings would have most likely gone, my grand-

ma Mabre and great uncle Carroll Dukes.

In January 2014, a candy box filled with letters was handed to me. It was a box my grandma had kept in her bedroom closet for decades since she was a teenager. It was a collection of letters she had kept for over 60 years! The box had been missed when my grandfather was moved out, but the house had been bought by his niece. She had found the box way in the back of the closet. It contained letters William J. had written to his sister, my grandma. It was an older brother writing home to a teenage sister, one of the last two children left at home on the family farm. I read how thoughtful he was to remember his younger sister and brother's birthdays. He wrote of his desire to get into gunnery school and how hard it was learning all the codes to be a radio operator. He gave his little sister advice on love and relationships. He also wrote after his 20th mission how he was getting nervous before each mission and the lack of sleep he suffered between missions.

But the candy box also contained an unexpected surprise: two letters from another crew member. Roy C. Kitner from Pennsylvania was William's best buddy on the base at Great Ashfield. He was engineer and manned the top turret on

the B17G bomber. He had seen a picture of William's younger sister, my grandma, when they were sharing photos one day and remembering their families back home. The last letters William and Roy wrote to my grandma were postmarked three weeks before their last mission. Roy C. Kitner was also on board that fateful day and perished. They could be the last letters they wrote home. I found a family member of Roy C. Kitner in Hawaii and gave him a copy of these two letters.

In Spring of 2014, my family traveled to the Air Force Museum in Dayton, Ohio. I took my 10 year old daughter, 2 1/2 year old daughter, and 13 month old twin sons. My dad, my children, and myself got to see the parachute recovered from the Reedham England Crashsite and B-17G they have on display there.

We took a picture of all of us in front of my father's uncle, my great uncle and the kids great great uncle's parachute. A parachute which do to the low altitude, would not have been able to save any of the 11 US servicemen onboard Sleepy Time Gal 2, but it survived 20 years foot deep in the mud and clay in silence on the desolate, wind blown marshes in Reedham, England waiting to be rediscovered, to tell it's story and take its place of honor in American Air Force history. It is a story worthy to be told and remembered in the hearts of family members who take the time to research and appreciate the story and sacrifice of each of our ancestor's lives.

24 HARDLIFE HERALD

It is a story worthy to be told and remembered in the hearts of family members who take the time to research and appreciate the story and sacrifice of each of our ancestor's lives.

One of William's classmates wrote this poem for him:

One Star up in the dark blue sky

Shone brighter than the rest.

It shone with such a radiance

My heart swelled in my breast.

Then I heard a voice from afar

Somehow it seemed to say

I'll shine over my country

Until the Victory Day.

Again my heart swelled within me

And I knew with all my soul

That this one star shone for a Rossville boy

Upon God's Service Honor Roll.

By: Dorothea Yeoman Rossville, Illinois 1944

In Memory of the two crews who completed their mission but lost their lives on February 21, 1944.



John S. Pickett, Jr.

Funeral Services for John S. Pickett, Jr., 93, of Many, LA, were on Friday, February 07, 2014 at 2:00 PM at First Baptist Church Of Many with G. "Rod" Smith and Rev. Francis Hooten officiating. Burial followed in the Many Cemetery. Visitation was on Thursday, February 06, 2014, at 5:30 PM at the Warren Meadows Funeral Home Chapel in Many, LA.

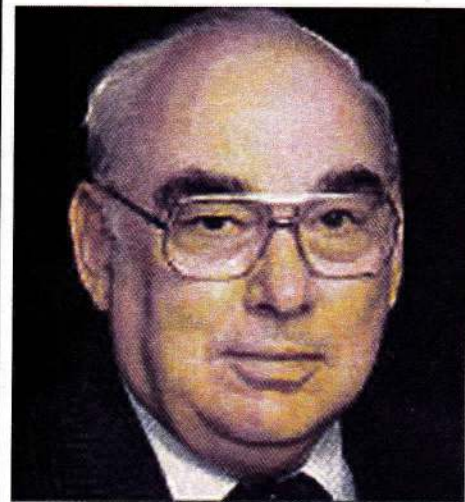
John S. Pickett, Jr. was born on Saturday, June 12, 1920 in Fisher, LA. He passed away on Wednesday, February 05, 2014 at his residence in Many, LA.

John S. Pickett, Jr. served in WWII with the 8th U.S. Army Air Corp, 385th bomb group, 50th squadron. He was an Engineer and Top Turret Gunner on a B-17 and flew 29 missions over Europe.

Mr. Pickett was a member of the Sabine Parish School Board from 1960-1968. He served in the LA. State Legislature as a State Representative. From 1972-1990, Mr. Pickett served as District Judge for the 11th Judicial District. He was also a long time member of the Many Rotary Club and a founding member of the Many V.F.F. Chapter.

He was preceded in death by his parents, John Samuel Pickett, Sr. and Margaret Cecilia Hatcher and two sisters, Margaret Cecilia Pickett and Mary Charlotte Pickett Ruffing.

He is survived by his wife, Joanne Hopkins Pickett of Many, La.; two daughters, Pamela Pickett Johnson and husband Tim of Many, LA; Judge Elizabeth A. Pickett of Many, LA; three sons, John W. Pickett and wife Karen of Mt. Carmel, LA; James M. Pickett of Shreveport, LA; Robert D. Pickett and wife Susan of Andersonville, TN; one sister, Joy Pickett Phillips of Ingleside, TX; one brother-in-law, W.C. Ruffin of Minden, LA; eight grandchildren, Bradley Pickett and wife Andrea, Rachel Pickett Randolph and husband Cory, Morgan Pickett and wife LaQuin; Aubrey Pickett and wife Magon; Lea Pickett Smith and husband Jeremy; Micah Pickett, Kathryn Pickett and Rebecca Pickett; eleven great-grandchildren, Meghan, Kilee, Cole, Gage Dean, Camron, Caleb, Gage, Walker Lane, Walker Pierce, Libby and Emma; along with a host of nieces, nephews and friends.

Donald R. Baker

Robert Harris INDIAN TRAIL - Mr. Robert Harris, 91, died Saturday, June 14, 2014 at Novant Health Medical Center Matthews. Funeral services will be held 10:00 a.m. Wednesday at First Baptist Church Indian Trail, 732 Indian Trail-Fairview Road, Indian Trail, with Pastor Mike Whitson officiating. Interment will follow at 2:00 p.m. at Salisbury National Cemetery, 501 Statesville Blvd., Salisbury, NC 28144. The family will receive friends one hour prior to the service at the church. Mr. Harris was born on February 18, 1923 in Lilly, Pennsylvania, a son of the late Henry and Rowena Rowe Harris. In 1948, he married Dolores Reiter of Sykesville, Pennsylvania. Mr. Harris served in the Pennsylvania State Police for 28 years and at the National Bank of the Commonwealth for 10 years in Clearfield, Pennsylvania. He was an active member of First Baptist Church, Indian Trail since 1999. He enjoyed various hobbies, including hunting, fishing, woodworking and ham radio (call sign, W3ZMR). During World War II,

he served as a Technical Sergeant in the Army Air Corps, 3508th Army Air Forces Base Unit. From September 1944 to February 1945, his crew flew 33 combat missions over Germany in the B-17, "Sugar Joe." They were part of the 550th Squadron, 385th Bomb Group of the 8th Air Force and were stationed at Great Ashfield in Suffolk, England. In addition to his wife, he is survived by three children, Alan Harris of Baltimore, MD, David Harris of Pittsburgh, PA, and Lynnette Peterson of Matthews, NC. He loved deeply his seven grandchildren and ten great-grandchildren. In lieu of flowers, the family suggests that memorial contributions be made to Helping Hands Sunday School Class, c/o First Baptist Church Indian Trail, P. O. Box 2550, Indian Trail, NC 28079

Donald R. Baker

BAKER - Donald R. 83 of Bath, NY died Sunday, April 20, 2014. Born May 20, 1930 in East Aurora, NY to James H. and Mildred M. Baker. After 43 years of service with NYSEG, Don retired in 1991. A Marine Corps veteran of the Korean Era, he was life member and chaplain of the Marine Corps League, Raider Detachment. He held board positions with Corning Crossroads, Three Rivers Development Corp., Campbell Central School, Corning Hospital, Founders Pavilion and Corning Bank & Trust Co. He was active in the East Aurora Kiwanis, American Legion Post 362 and Rotary Clubs in Corning and Sullivan Co., NY. He is survived by his loving

wife of 60 years, Nancy (Almeter) of Bath, children, Margaret of Arkport, NY, Michael of Fairview, NC, Patrick of Glenwood Springs, CO, Mary Pengelley of West Palm Beach, FL, Kathleen Starkey of Manitou Springs, CO and Dennis of Lakeside, CA, daughter-in-law, Deborah of Painted Post, NY, 16 grandchildren, sister, Janet Schonblom of Penfield, NY, and many nieces and nephews. He was predeceased by son, Timothy, and siblings, Elizabeth Bellinger, Eleanor Wokasien, James, Raymond and Roger. Visitation were held Friday, April 25, 2014, 10:00 AM at his church, St. Joseph's Roman Catholic Church in Campbell, NY, followed by Mass of Christian Burial at 11:00. Burial with military honors were held in Hope Cemetery, Campbell, NY. Online condolences may be made at www.fagansfuneralhome.com. In lieu of flowers, Don requested donations be made to the Marine Corps League Scholarship Fund @ National Headquarters, PO Box 3070, Merrifield, VA 22116-3070.



Jack Koerner

Koerner, Jack Passed away on Sunday, December 29, 2013 after a brief illness. Born Joseph Fredrick Koerner on July 3, 1921 in Los Angeles, California, he was an extraordinary salesman who had a generous and kind heart. He had the ability to converse with anyone, sharing His love for life and of course, golf. Growing up in Los Angeles, he was an accomplished golfer whose dream was to play professionally. However, World War II interrupted that pursuit and he was called to active duty. He joined the Army Air Corps, serving with the Eighth Air Force stationed with the 385th Bomb Group in England. He flew 35 missions as a B-17 bombardier and was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross with four Oak Leaf Clusters. After the war, he met the love of his life, Janet and they were married in 1946. He and Janet moved to Dallas where he became a manufacturer's representative, officing in the Dallas Trade Mart. Together they raised three sons. After retirement, he and Janet enjoyed many great times together and in his spare time he furthered his love of golf, collecting and selling golf art and memorabilia. Jack will be missed by his wife of 67 years, Janet; his sons Tim (Virginia), Gary (Kay) and Jeff; his 8 grandchildren and 7 great-grandchildren. A memorial service will be held at 2 p.m. on Monday, January 6, 2014 at King of Glory Lutheran Church, 6411 LBJ Freeway, Dallas, Texas.

John H. Stansfield

John H. Stansfield passed away at age 92 at Liberty Manor, Colorado Springs, on August 30, 2013. He was born in Worcester, MA, May 13, 1921, to Jane Hicks Stansfield and Dr. Oliver H. Stansfield. On January 26, 1946, in Worcester, he married Sally H. Crimmins, his wife for 65 years. John grew up spending lots of time outdoors, playing in fields and ponds and hiking in woods near home. He and his family spent summers sailing and swimming at their rustic cabin on Cape Rosier, Penobscot Bay, Maine. In the Boy Scouts, he achieved the rank of Eagle Scout and participated in the national Boy Scout Jamboree held at Washington, D.C. In 1937. During World War II, John enlisted in the U.S. Army Air Force, achieving the rank of first lieutenant. He served as a navigator on B-17s with the 385th Bomb Group of the Eighth Air Force, completing 29 combat and two humanitarian missions. On January 2, 1945, he and his crew successfully parachuted from their disabled

plane into liberated France and soon returned to combat. In 1947, John graduated from Washington and Lee University, Lexington, VA, followed by a career with several insurance companies in Massachusetts and Texas. He retired as senior home office underwriter for Lone Star Life Insurance Co., Dallas, TX in 1988. After retirement, John and his wife settled in Paradise, CA, becoming active members of Saint Thomas More Catholic Church. For many years, including six as president, he worked with the St. Vincent dePaul Society, providing a variety of social services for the community. From childhood, John was a devoted gardener, with yards filled with fruit trees, colorful flowers, and vegetable beds. His friends called him a true gentleman. He is survived by his son and daughter-in-law, John and Carol Stansfield of Larkspur, CO, and numerous nieces and nephews. He was preceded in death by his wife, parents, his sister, Ruth S. Peterson, and brother, Oliver H. Stansfield, Jr. John's life was celebrated with a funeral mass on Wednesday, September 11, 2013 at 11:00 am at Holy Trinity Catholic Church, 3122 Poinsetta Dr., Colorado Springs, CO 80907. A reception followed at 12:30 pm at MacKenzie Place, 1605 Elm Creek View, Colorado Springs. In lieu of flowers, the family requests donations to Pikes Peak Group of Sierra Club, 522 N. Royer, Colorado Springs, CO 80903 or the National Museum of World War II Aviation, 755 Aviation Way, Colorado Springs, CO 80916.

James Bruce Carroll

of Mobile, AL, passed away February, 2013. He was a Ball Turret Gunner on the Dunlap Crew, 385th BG.

High Flight

*"Oh, I have slipped the surly bonds of earth,
And danced the skies on laughter-silvered wings;
Sunward I've climbed and joined the tumbling mirth
of sun-split clouds - and done a hundred things
You have not dreamed of
- wheeled and soared and swung
high in the sunlit silence.
Hovering there I've chased the shouting wind along
and flung my eager craft through footless halls of air.*

*"Up, up the long delirious burning blue
I've topped the wind-swept heights with easy grace,
where never lark, or even eagle, flew;
and, while with silent, lifting mind I've trod
the high untrespassed sanctity of space,
put out my hand and touched the face of God."*

John Gillespie Magee, Jr.

MID-AIR CRASH OVER LUXEMBOURG

On July 12th 1944 at about 11:50, a formation of American Bombers coming from Great Britain and whose mission was the city of Munich in Germany, flew over the small village of Perlé in the North of Luxembourg. Some of the bombers were B-17s belonging to the 385th Bomb Group, 8th Air Force. The 385th BG flew its 150th mission that day.

For reasons unknown, two of the B-17s collided, and crashed. The two Flying Fortresses were B-17 number 42-31917 "Curley's Kids" and number 42-102606 "Off Spring". From 385th Bomb Group records, it seems that B-17 "Off Spring", flown by Captain White, was caught in the propwash of the preceding aircraft. It nosed up and hit "Curley's Kids", which was flown by First Lieutenant McDonald. Only two of the 20 crewmembers survived the impact by parachuting to safety, one from each plane. Sgt. Larry Atiyeh, left waist gunner on "Curley's Kids", was shortly captured by the Germans after the crash and became a POW. Sergeant Robert McPherson, from "Off Spring", crossed the nearby Belgian border and escaped with the help of the Belgian Resistance. The other 18 crewmembers all died in the crash.

The back part of "Off Spring" fell 180 feet behind the Bertemes farm in Perlé. The fuselage, with three engines

attached, crashed 650 yard north-west of Perlé in a potato field. Due to the exploding ammunition as the wreckage caught fire, it was impossible to get near the plane. When these plane parts were examined by the Germans the next day, they found four bodies burned beyond recognition inside the wreckage. In an area of 600 yards, six other bodies were found. One of the engines, which detached at the moment of the mid-air collision, fell in the pool of Geschleid in Haut-Martelange and was recovered after the liberation.

The wings and the four engines of the second plane, "Curley's Kids", fell near Wolwelange in a field. It is estimated that most of the crewmembers were ejected from their plane at the moment of the collision because bodies were found scattered in the area between Perlé and Wolwelange. The bodies were transported to the old school of Perlé, today's actual 385th Bomb Group Memorial Museum, in order to be identified. Most of the crewmembers were identified with help of the personal items and a dog tag they wore.

A search party with police dogs was organized by the custom officer in Holtz for Sergeant Robert McPherson, who parachuted from the plane, but the search was unsuccessful. The police of

Perlé, under the orders of First Sergeant Frantz collected all weapons and ammunition from the wreckage and put them in safe keeping. Some bombs from the planes were defused on site by military engineers of the German army.

"OFF SPRING" B-17 G No. 42-31917

Capt. Richard B. WHITE, age 26, Pennsylvania
2nd Lt. Patrick J. FLANAGAN, Michigan
2nd Lt. Clarence E. GITTINS, age 21, Arkansas
F/O James W. JOHNSTON, age 21, Pennsylvania
S/Sgt. Marvin W. NIEMAN, age 21, Michigan
S/Sgt. Harry E. FITZWATER, age 24, Oklahoma
S/Sgt. William LORD Jr., age 27, Ohio
S/Sgt. Homer COMEGYS, age 26, Iowa
S/Sgt. Samuel L. CANTER, age 20, Iowa
S/Sgt. Robert P. McPHERSON survived

"CURLEY'S KID'S" B-17 G No. 42-102606

1st Lt. Robert L. McDONALD, Georgia
2nd Lt. Stephen F. RYAN, age 22, Pennsylvania
2nd Lt. William T. HENRY, age 24, Maine
F/O Francis M. CHRISMAN, age 23, California
S/Sgt. Russel HALE, age 22,

Kentucky

S/Sgt. Peter J. HEFFERNAN, age 29, New York

S/Sgt. Walter R. BEROSE, age 20, Pennsylvania

S/Sgt. Peter LINTON, age 21, Mississippi

T/Sgt. George E. BROWN, age 21, Illinois

S/Sgt. Larry ATIYEH, New York survived

Since it was impossible to celebrate a requiem during the Nazi occupation of Luxembourg for the B-17 crewmembers that died, a ceremony took place in the church of Perlé after the liberation on October 17th 1944 at 18:30. Eighteen candles and eighteen helmets, one for each airman, were placed in the church to honor those crewmembers which died.

In 1997, plans came up for a monument dedicated to the eighteen airmen. For the dedication ceremony, a small exhibition with parts of the two B-17s was set up. With the great support of the US Air Force, the dedication of the monument on June 21st 1998 was an outstanding success. Many veterans of the 385th Bomb Group attended. The museum's exhibition, first shown at the dedication ceremony only, soon grew with many interesting parts being donated to complete the collection. Personal items, material and uniforms donated by veterans of the 385th Bomb Group as well as parts from B-17s and other plane

crash sites all over Luxembourg made the collection even more valuable.

The collection was installed for permanent display in the old school building of Perlé in 1999. The museum, as well as the 385th Bomb Group Memorial Association was born. During the following years, more donated items made the collection fill up the three rooms and the need for a larger showroom became obvious. Generous donations were made by the Nysether family, Maurice and Eldon Nysether helped the museum all over the years with their support as donators and friends. Plans for new, larger showrooms were made and work began on the renovation and eventual transformation of the building by the end of 2000.

Extraordinary items found their way to Perlé and these items make the actual museum collection a fascinating visit. With the outstanding help of many supporters and donors, the collection may be one of the finest Air Force collections in Luxembourg and in Europe. Some items on display in the museum are: a 1943 Link trainer, a Norden bomb sight, B-17 Wright engines, an F-16 cockpit trainer, as well as many rare personal items.

Today the museum is still growing and the board members work hard to keep the memory alive. Recently new projects have installed additional lightning, built a

new website online, as well as new showcases. Every year in September an Open House day is organized; many Air Force visitor groups from Spangdahlem and Ramstein Air Bases travel to receive guided tours. The museum's next major event will be the commemoration ceremony held on July 12th 2014. We will be commemorating the 70th anniversary of the mid-air crash of "Curley's Kids" and "Off Spring". Many important guests will be attending; Ambassadors, Ministers and most importantly military veterans. A fly-by of the USAF is planned, as well as a convoy and exhibition of WWII vehicles. There will be performances by a local music band, food, drinks, as well as a religious ceremony and a memorial wreath-laying is planned.

For more information about the museum and its activities, please visit www.385bg.com and/or contact the board at museum385bg@yahoo.com.



NO ORDINARY LIFE: MEMOIR OF A WORLD WAR II BOMBARDIER
BY SUE JOHNPETER

No Ordinary Life

Memoir of a World War II Bombarrier



Sue Johnpeter

A new book, *No Ordinary Life: Memoir of a World War II Bombarrier*, profiles the life of Glenn W. King, who flew with the 385th Bombardment Group (550th Squadron).

Glenn was shot down on his 23rd mission and parachuted into Germany on March 2, 1944. He was picked up by the German Army and placed in a POW camp at Nuremberg. Starvation and unspeakable sanitary conditions were constant. When Allied prisoners were forced to march more than one hundred miles to Stalag Luft VIIA in Moosburg, Glenn and his fellow officers began to "liberate" potatoes and turnips (and the occasional chicken) from the farmers along the roadway. A can of tuna, part of a Red Cross food parcel, was tucked into his sodden

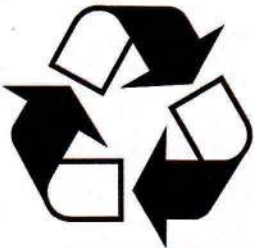
coat pocket. Every morning, he vowed to hold on to it for just one more day.

No Ordinary Life is Glenn's incredible story of resilience in the waning days of the Second World War and his safe return home to complete college and pursue an engineering career in the petroleum industry. Bombarrier, roustabout, roughneck, student, husband, father, oil executive, public speaker, arbitrator, crime fighter, and car guy. His has been no ordinary life.

This riveting memoir, written by Sue Johnpeter, is published by CreateSpace and now available on Amazon.com.

"There I was..." The cartoons of Bob Stevens

YOU'VE SEEN 'EM IN EVERY CLUB FROM WILLY TO WIESBADEN --- PICK OUT THE (A) FIGHTER JOCK (B) BOMBER PILOT (C) TRANSPORT DRIVER (D) SPECIAL MISSION TYPE (E) BORED BARTENDER (F) GUY WHO GOT THERE EARLY



BEFORE YOU RECYCLE THIS NEWSLETTER...

Please consider donating it to your local School, VFW, or American Legion.



HARDLIFE HERALD

Newsletter of the 385th Bombardment Group Association



1942 - 1945 Great Ashfield - Suffolk, England Station 155 - The Mighty Eighth
Volume 51 - Number 1 February 2014



385th BGA REUNION - NASHVILLE, TN - October 2014

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Previous issue pictured at left