


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



NEWSLETTER OF THE

385th BOMBARDMENT GROUP MEMORIAL ASSOCIATION



COMBAT UNITS

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

VOL. XV NO. 5
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SUPPORT UNITS

424th AIR SVS. GP.
 877th CHEM. CO. (AO)
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 31st STATION COMPLEMENT SQ.

JUNE 1988

ASSOCIATION OFFICERS

PRESIDENT

Earl L. Cole
 Box 289
 Barboursville, KY 40906

VICE PRESIDENT

Samuel E. Lyke
 4992 SE Princeton Dr.
 Bartlesville, OK 74003

A. L. Benefield Jr.
 601 Choctow Ave.
 Ozark, AL 36360

Mary Lyke
 4992 SE Princeton Dr.
 Bartlesville, OK 74003

SECRETARY

George S. Hruska
 7442 Ontario St.
 Omaha, NE 68124

TREASURER

John F. Pettenger
 Box 117
 Laurel, FL 34272-0117

EDITOR, BGMA NEWSLETTER

Ed Stern
 P.O. Box 2187
 Fargo, ND 58108

8th AF HISTORICAL UNIT CONTACT

Gerry Donnelly
 10770 SW 46th
 Miami, FL 33185

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Prez Sez:

Al Chealander has made arrangements so that those who so desire can attend the festivities in England for 1 week.

I just got out of the hospital for a few days vacation(?). I enjoyed it very much! On my release, the doctors told me that they saw no reason why I should not be able to attend the meeting in England, so Ruth and I have signed up.

If you can't join the whole tour, come for the 1st 7 days. Write or call Al Chealander at the following: 10491 Barbara Anne Street, Cypress, California 90630, (714) 761-1682.

Ruth and I are looking forward to the trip and hope to see you.

Several of our members have inquired about a shortened reunion tour in August since they or their spouses are still working or have other commitments and therefore cannot get away for the full 22 day tour. Some others want to participate in only the London and East Anglia portions of the tour for other reasons. After discussing this with David Wade, he has agreed to provide an extra coach for those who desire a shortened tour. Here are the details. The shortened tour will follow the same itinerary as the 22 day tour from Day 1, August 16th through Day 8, August 23rd. On Day 9, August 24th, the coach carrying the shortened tour people will return them to their London Hotel or the airport, at which time their tour will terminate. The cost for the short tour will be \$698 per person, based on the same exchange rate of \$1.60 per English Pound as for the long tour. Those who are interested in the short tour only, should immediately send their reservation forms and \$200 deposits to Al Chealander. Only one coach will be committed to the short tour so it will be filled in the sequence that the reservations are received. First come, first served.

EDITOR'S NOTES:

Word comes from Art Weigand about two associations that a number of us might be interested in:

First, The Aviation Cadet Alumni Assn, % Harry C. Bradshaw, RFD 1, Newmarket, NH 03857. They're going to put together a roster to help former cadets get in contact with each other. Write either Harry, or Robert C. Whie, 54 Seton Trail, Ormond Beach, FL 32074.

Second, a similar effort on behalf of airmen who were interned in Switzerland. Write James Goines, Broomall, PA 19008.

NOTICE

If you're no longer interested in receiving this Newsletter, save us some money by letting us know, *please!* Write Treas. John Pettenger or your Editor.

FARGO REUNION, 1989

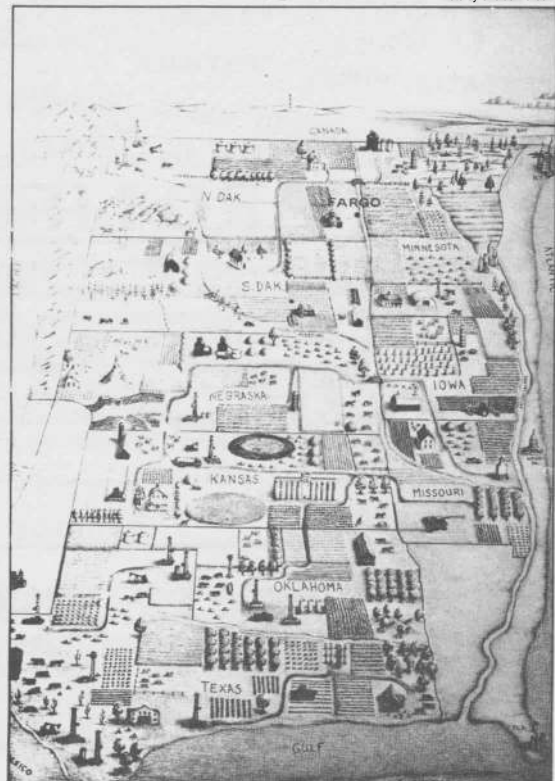
Start your planning! Our 385th 12th Reunion is taking shape — Fargo, ND — August 24-27, 1989.

Mark your calendar, get out your maps, see how easy it is — Fargo is almost exactly in the middle of the USA (East and West, that is). As for North and South, it's about in the middle of the Continent — and the weather is guaranteed perfect in August — averages 79 for a high, 55 for a low.

If it's to be your first Reunion, make sure it is! Don't miss the chance to re-establish contacts with old friends, make new ones, enjoy the nostalgic memories that will keep flooding back. We KNOW all of you who have been to one will be here. Those who haven't made their first, don't put it off. We aren't getting any younger!

Preliminary planning is going ahead, promising a great Reunion. You'll visit SAC's B-1 Bombers -- the Missile Wing - take part in North Dakota's 100th Anniversary enjoy Steak Fondue at historic Bonanzaville -- play Black Jack in North Dakota's legalized gambling - experience a Scandinavian Smorgasborg Brunch -- visit the Liquor and Lust historical presentation at the Hjemkomst Museum -- golf on any or all of 4 first-rate golf courses -- Roger Maris Museum - take side-trips to Classic Roadster assembly plant, world's largest 4 wheel drive tractor plant -- see nostalgic "12 O'clock High" or "War Lovers" at historic Fargo Theatre — your wives will be so busy they'll never want to leave.

Photo by Sheldon Green



Map of the United States from a North Dakotan's standpoint. For detailed travel reference, please refer to your AAA map.

And when it's over, take a week to relax in the Minnesota Lake country, fishing, swimming, golfing and sailing.

"WAR BRIDES"

Dear Ed:

I have been sitting here wondering what to write first. Yes, I was a war bride, I think one of the youngest ones. I am wondering if you were the same major I talked to when we got married. We have been married 44 years on June 17th, 1988. I hope you can send me Connie Gomberg's address as I used to live near her in Stowmarket. I have been going to write to you for a long time, but I really didn't know what to write. I also remember Captain Rickker and Chaplain Kincannon, but there are several names I cannot think of right now. I hope you can read this ok. My husband: name is Arthur Knapp and my maiden name was Southgate, I think Connie's was Flowers. Well there were several things I was going to ask you but I don't want to write a book. Art was on the ground crew so I never read anything much about them. I hope you will answer this letter and I really enjoy reading your paper. I get homesick even now sometimes.

Thanks for reading this,

wiive Knapp
P.O. Box 1, Hagar Shores, Mich 49039

A letter from Ian

Dear Buell,

I read your letter in the June Newsletter and can help with some information.

As you say, the Group history shows no crews lost for August 9th, 1944, but you're quite right you were shot down that day. If *you* can't remember a day like that, who could? Anyway, I have the MACR for your crew and it gives the following information.

The target was Furth. Germany and I show the B-17G you were flying as 43-38156 (did it have a name?) At 1035, position 49°30'N-07°30'E, this ship was reported as hit by flak - the number 2 engine burst into flames. The aircraft flew level for a minute or two and then went into a steep climb through the formation before stalling and going into a dive, breaking apart as it went down. Two chutes were seen when it was first hit, four more emerged just before it climbed through the formation and one appeared as the ship broke up. The crew were listed as follows:

- Pilot. Sterling W. Bristol, Jr., 2V2Lt. - KIA
- C/P, Billy H. Allison, 2/Lt., POW
- Nav. John F. Faulkner, 2/Lt., KIA
- Bomb. John H. Campbell, 2/Lt., POW
- TTG. Anthony Burroughs, S/Sgt., KIA
- ROP, Earl I. Hansen, S/Sgt., POW
- BTG, Anthony J. Mosca, Sgt., POW
- TG. Buell S. Martin, Sgt., POW
- WG, Julius L. King, Jr., Sgt., POW

If you could confirm what happened and let me have your recollections. I'd be very grateful and they would be added to my 385th archives I'd also like photographs of your crew and aircraft if you have any) could borrow and copy.

You mention two Paris trips at this period. According to my files, these two were 22nd June and 2nd August.

Reading the Narrative of Operations for 22nd June, the target is shown as Paris (Gennevilliers) and the 385th had an 'A' Lead Group and 'B' Low Group. Bombing was described as "Very Good". There is mention of, "New uncharted flak" but nothing is said about any unusual colour. Some P-51's came too close and in a threatening approach - one ball turret gunner fired at them. The 'A' Group put 260 bombs on target, 'B' Group, 250 - both groups comprised 13 aircraft. Clouds forced bombing from 2,000 feet lower than briefed at 22,900 and 21,500 respectively. 'B' Group described flak as "Intense and accurate" over the target.

McDonald is shown as flying aircraft 395W on an ASR sortie but no mention is made of a Ju 88 attack - perhaps someone else will remember this.

For the Paris mission of 2nd August, task force assembly was "Slightly screwed up" owing to a navigational error in Arch Benner's ship but the problem was resolved by the time they departed over Selsey Bill. Flak hit 42-31598, Lt. Luther P. Newcomer, on the bomb run - his ship was last seen making for the beach head. This attack was made in the late afternoon - the mission of 22nd June was early evening.

I hope this helps you and would be pleased if you'd be kind enough to help me with the additional information requested earlier, I'll look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,

Ian McLachlan

PS - Will copy this to Ed.

385th BGMA APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP

Please Print

LAST NAME, First, MI.

Spouse's Name

Street or P.O. Box #

()
Telephone Number

City, State, & Zip Code

Squadron or Support Unit

The annual dues are Eight Dollars (\$8.00)
Life-time memberships are one payment of \$100. 00 Date
Make out check to "385th BGMA" and mail to:
John F. Pettenger, Treas.
Box 117
Laurel, FL 33545

POW Capture Data
Place
Stalag Unit

Life-time memberships are used to perpetuate the memorial at All Saints Church in Great Ashfield, Suffolk County, England.

THE ARMAMENT SECTION

Dear Ed:

Enclosed is my best effort, to date, of putting to paper the story of the Armament Gang in the 385th ... I know Ernie Pyle would turn up his toes at the absence of NAMES and I agree but while I remember the names of the various Officers involved in the various sections and many of the Turret people (I started that section) even there I fail to have a balanced memory .. Beav, Bill Armstrong, Sidney White, Nugent Thompson, Harry Bohrer are all known to be deceased... Bill McInerney suffered a stroke and is out of it, my last letter to Den-tinger was returned ... so you can see that sources of information are limited ... I guess I'd better hurry!!!

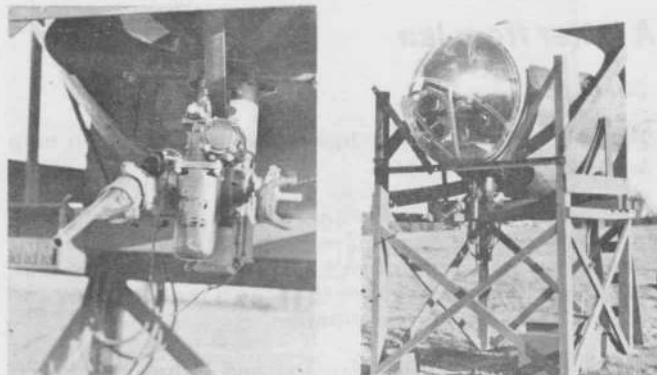
Tom Harrison

ARMORERS ... They also served who....

As the 385th was formed at Geiger Field in Spokane each Squadron had an Armament Section that was charged with the responsibility of providing maintenance service to all of the Armament equipment, both offensive and defensive, that made the B-17 the most effective combat aircraft of its time. This equipment included Bombsights and the allied Automatic Flight Control Equipment (AFCE), .50 calibre Machine Guns in the Tail, Nose, Waist and Radio Room. The Squadron Armament section had two Officers and about 30 technicians, some Armorers, some Bombsight and AFCE Technicians and some Turret Maintenance Technicians. Group Armament was a Staff Office which included only The Group Armament Officer, a Clerk and one Armament Inspector. Armament was under the Group S-4 as it was considered a "Maintenance Activity". So this is how we trained for our combat service.



Loading 85 G.P. fire bombs

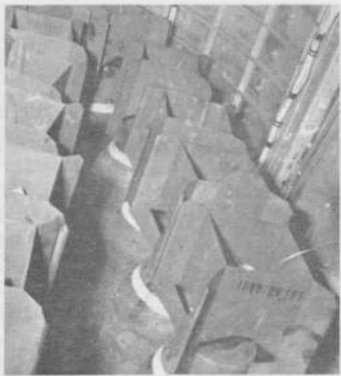


Chin Turret Skeet Trainer

Upon arrival at Great Ashfield in July 1943 we found that from the experience of Groups that had proceeded us in the theatre that this organization chart needed radical overhaul! While staying assigned to their Squadrons for administration, housing, etc. the Maintenance Specialists in Bombsight, AFCE, and Power Turrets were pooled into three Sections, a Group Turret Section, a Group Bombsight Maintenance Section and a Group AFCE Section. These Sections performed Maintenance on a Group wide basis and functioned under the Group Armament Office which no longer was strictly a staff section but was active in the supervision of these sections. The armorers stayed assigned to the individual Squadrons and maintained the bombracks and aided the gunners in maintenance of their machine guns. They also, in conjunction with the Ordnance section personnel, loaded and fused all bombs. This work performed during the night and early morning hours was difficult and dangerous ... but most of all it was extremely important. The timely release of bombs was the ultimate goal of our flight operations and it was completely dependent on the work of these armorers. It really didn't matter how well maintained the aircraft were from an engineering standpoint... it really didn't matter how well the Flight Crews were trained nor how well the mission was planned ... if the work of the Armorer was not performed to perfection all the rest meant



250 lb GP Bombs in racks



250 lb G.P. Bombs in rack

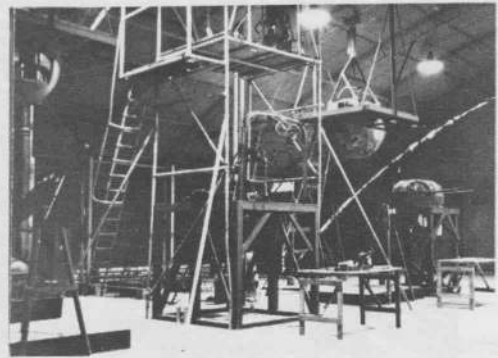
nothing... the mission would fail. We all remember the Revolutionary War story ... "for want of a nail the shoe was lost for want of a shoe the rider was lost for want of a rider the battle was lost!" The Armorers, for the most part unsung, were a vital part of the TEAM that made the 385th a vital part of our countries war machine. . . few people saw them, even fewer applauded them but the work that they did was a very real part of every combat mission.

In the Group Sections, Bombsights, AFCE, and Turrets the maintenance mission was also a vital link in insuring the success of each mission and The Group Armament Office became a communications link between Group Operations and the Squadron Armament Sections. It was manned 24 hours a day and when the Mission Order came down, notified the Squadrons of the Bombload, the fusing and which Aircraft were to be loaded.



Loading 85 gallon fire bombs

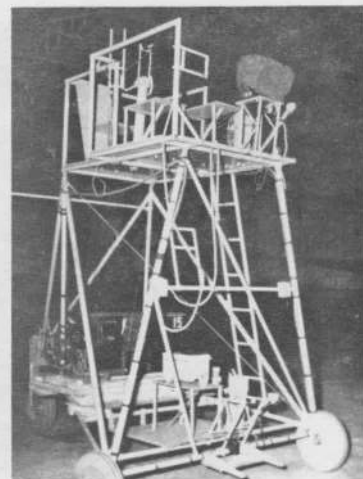
These Group Sections also soon were pressed into service in the training function and therefore became a part of the S-3 Operations Division as well as the S-4. The AFCE section built a mock-up that was used in training the Pilots and Bombardiers to coordinate that part of the Bomb Run where the lead Bombardier actually controlled the aircraft through the AFCE. This Ground training where the crewmembers could each see the machinery working on the mock-up greatly enhanced their ability to train and operate in the air. The Bombsight Maintenance Section worked closely with the Group Bombardier in operating Ground Training facilities. The Group Armament Section jumped full force into the S-3 Functions when it was renamed the Group Armament and Gunnery Training Office. The Turret Section built the equipment for Ground training of Turret Gunners and equipped power turrets with shotguns for training on the Skeet Range.



Interior-turret training bombs

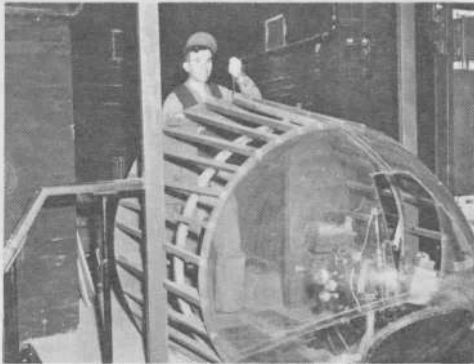


A.F.C.E. Trainer



Bombing trainer

Armament con't.

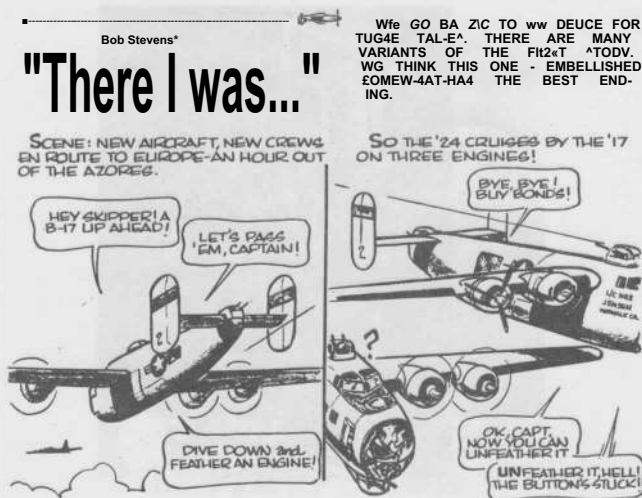


In writing this story of our Armament people in the 385th I have left out the most vital part of any such story the names of the people involved. I have done so for what I consider a valid reason ... I honestly can not remember the names of all the men who performed outstanding service in various sections, those who led others superbly, those who were brilliant technicians... I remember many of the names but to include some and exclude others would, to me, be inexcusable. I hope that some of you reading this will write in Letters to the Editor telling of some of your memories and you can help to fill in the names. Captain Richard Beavans, who was the man who formed and led this part of our Group initially and who I shall always remember as one of the best friends I ever had, is now deceased ... How I wish he was still here ... Beav could have written this much better than I.

Tom C. Harrison
303 Westfield Drive, Nashville, TN 37221

Editors Note:

We guess this was some B-24 humor back during WWII. They had very little going for them - - this was the best they could do!



Here is a complete list of 385th men buried in the Cambridge American Military Cemetery, as shown on the Wall of Missing.

If you get to England, a visit here is a MUST.

NAME	RANK	SQDN
BLACK, Guilford N.	2 Lt	551
BOYD, Lowery 1.	SSgt	549
BUSHEY, Derrell, C.	SSgt	548
CARPINATTE, Joseph J.	TSgt	550
CLIFT, William R.	TSgt	549
CORGRATI, Emilio M.	SSgt	550
CURTIS, Charles C.	2 Lt	550
DICKASON, Harold E.	SSgt	549
DRUCKER, Joseph E.	Sgt	551
EGBERT, Joseph E.	TSgt	550
EPPS, John E.	1Lt	550
FILTER, William F.	Capt	548
GINGERICH, Clyde C.	SSgt	550
KARR, Elmore L.	TSgt	548
KEELEY, John T. Jr.	1Lt	551
KERN, Lawrence C.	SSgt	551
KITNER, Roy C.	TSgt	550
KRENGULEC, Edward	2Lt	548
McCALL, Ben J.	1Lt	548
McKee, James D.	2 Lt	549
McMANN, Jack D.	TSgt	548
NAYLOR, Arthur C.	1Lt	551
PEASE, Warren J.	1Lt	549
PROCTOR, Richard S.	2 Lt	550
PROLOW, Robert C.H.	2Lt	548
ROTH, Walter J.	TSgt	550
RUBY, Billy E.	1Lt	548
SCOTT, James M. Jr.	2 Lt	548
STUEBGEN, Walter A.	SSgt	550
STURDIVANT, Joe P.	Sgt	548
TOTARO, Robert M.	2Lt	550
UNGAR, Nathan	1Lt	549
VOCKARATH, Philip J.	2Lt	549
WARDLE, Charles A.	2Lt	551
WIEGEL, Linus C.	TSgt	550
WHITE, Willard C.	TSgt	550
YANNELLO, Paul M.	1Lt	551

Wall of Missing

BARRETT, Edward A.	SSGT	550
BLANSIT, Roy H. Jr.	TSGT	548
BRETSCHNEIDER, Robert H.	TSGT	551
BRIDLE, Eugene R.	FLT0	548
BRITT, Thelton	SSGT	551
BROWN, Frederick H.	SSGT	548
BURCH, Jim F.	2Lt	549
CAMERON, Archie M.	SSgt	548
CHANDLER, Robert G.	2Lt	549
CONNORS, Raymond E.	TSgt	551
COOK, Charles J.	Sgt	548
CORNWELL, Harold R.	2 Lt	549
CORTEZ, John C.	Sgt	551
DAVIS, Otto S.	SSgt	548
DeMAR, Bruce E.	1Lt	551
DELO, James G.-	2Lt	550
DEWEY, John A.	Capt	HQSq
DiSABATO, Vito W.	SSGT	551

FINKBINER, William D.	TSgt	549
GRUBLE, Bernard T.	2 Lt	550
BUTIERREZ, Rodolfo	2Lt	548
HARBISON, James H.	SSgt	550
HEIMBUEGER, John A.	SSgt	548
HEUSER, Herbert A.	ILt	548
HIATT, Everett H.	2Lt	548
HOWLAND, Fred N.	SSgt	550
JONES, Lee V.	ILt	551
KEESEY, Clarences.	SSgt	548
KITE, Paul W.	ILt	551
KLUTCHARCH, Charles W.	Sgt	548
LAMONT, Charles Jr	2 Lt	548
LANCE, Lee A. Jr	SSgt	550
LANGLEY, Theodore, C.	TSgt	548
LEHR, William L.	2 Lt	548
LUCEY, John R.	Sgt	548
MADDEN, Henry K.	2 Lt	548
MARCINKO, John	TSgt	548
McCALLUM, Robert E.	2 Lt	549
MCCARTHY, John E.	2Lt	549
McKENNA, Joseph M.	Sgt	550
MERCER, Melvin A.	2Lt	548
MORRELL, Jessie W.	SSgt	551
MORSE, Robert W. Jr	ILt	551
MULLINS, James S.	ILt	548
MURPHY, James E.	Capt	550
NESEN, William R.	2 Lt	550
NOVETSKE, Alphonse J.	SSgt	549
PETERSON, Donald P.	2Lt	548
RIFAS, Leonard	ILt	549
ROBINSON, Earl R.	SSgt	548
ROBINSON, Stanley	TSgt	548
ROTH, Richard J.	ILt	548
SANCHEZ, Felix F.	SSgt	548
SANDERS, Edward C.	TSgt	551
SEAGRAVE, Alfred F.	Sgt	551
SHAFER, Lukey C.	SSgt	548
SHERWOOD, Wilmer W.	TSgt	549
SIMONICK, Joseph S.	Sgt	548
SLOOP, Howard F.	SSgt	548
SMART, Robert C.	SSgt	551
SWOPE, William L.	Capt	548
WARD, Lynn D.	SSGT	548
WASILEWSKI, Leonard W.	Sgt	551
WATSON, Van E.	2Lt	551
WEIDER, Norman L.	ILt	548
WILSON, Dawson E.	TSgt	551

Dear Mr. Hubert:

I am responding to your recent inquiry in the January issue of the 385th BGMA Newsletter. I imagine you have received other replies on "Rum Dum" for many crews flew her. However, I was privileged to fly her on 97th, 98th, 99th and 100th missions.

Rum Dum was the first B-17 to complete one hundred missions without an abort. She was assigned to the 550th Squadron. Her 100th mission was flown on March 31, 1945 to Brandenburg, Germany. We flew the mission at 25,000 feet where the temperature was -36 degrees Centigrade. Total mission time was seven hours and twenty minutes.

I am enclosing some xerox copies of original pictures I have of the occasion and a subsequent newspaper article. A year or so after the newspaper article, Forest Keen, Rum Dum's crew chief was killed in a farming accident. Hope this information will be of interest.

Sincerely,

Lewis A. Smith, O.D.
321 S. Hillside, Wichita, KS 67211-2194

cc: Mr. Ed Stern

Rum Dum war story jogs pilot's memories.

By Bob Heaton
Wichita Beacon staff

Dr. Lewis Smith hadn't even thought about Rum Dum for many years before Wednesday night.

When he last saw the big World War II bomber, it was cooling off after its 100th mission over Europe, on March 31, 1945. It was tired, worn.

Wednesday night. Smith spotted a story about Forrest Keen, who was Rum Dum's crew chief. Keen had announced that the 385th Bomb Group was holding a reunion April 22-24 in Las Vegas. The 385th was Smith's outfit, at Ashfield Air Base near Bury St. Edmunds, about 60 miles from London.

When Smith last saw Keen, the crew chief was worrying with Rum Dum's superchargers, which worked only intermittently at high altitudes. The bomber had just become the first Boeing B17 to complete 100 missions without a single abort for mechanical failure. Keen got a Bronze Star for helping Rum Dum make it.

He was quoted in the story, saying, "Maybe there are some 385th people around Wichita."

"I didn't know about the reunion until I saw the story," Smith said today. He said he will contact Keen and probably will attend the reunion.

Smith was born in Wichita, is a graduate of North High School and attended Friends University before going to war. He had flown 25 missions when he took command of Rum Dum for the 97th through 100th missions.



Kesn (left). Smith shake hands
... Occasion was B17's 100th run...

Lewis Smith
... Flew Rum Dum...

Rum Dum

Continued from Page U

"B *M a good plane," Smith said, rucking back in memory more than 50 years. "But it had some problems. I guess you'd call them idiosyncrasies."

"When you'd get that old rascal above 25,000 feet, the superchargers would cut out, then cut back in. We never did know why. But without the superchargers, the plane would lag back. And stragglers always attracted German fighter planes."

Rum Dum's superchargers always restarted eventually, and the big, titibiriiiiR bomber never fell far

enough behind the main body of planes to become easy pickings for enemy fighters.

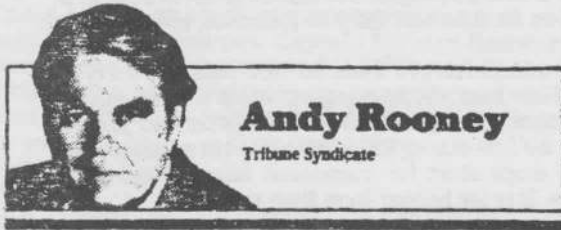
Smith was 21 when he flew Rum Dum on its 100th mission.

Most of his earlier missions were aboard a plane named Gypsy Princess and one named Stork Chib. He crash-landed the Gypsy Princess in France shortly before taking command of Rum Dum.

Smith is a past president of the Wichita Optometric Society and was named Kansas optometrist of the year last year. He is a member of the Wichita-Sedgwick County Board of Health and past president of Heart of America Contact Lens Society. The society named him man of the year in 1972.

Editors Note:

Andy flew with us in Oct., 1943, Bink's crew, a week before they were shot down.



Military Medals He Has; and Critics, Too

Mail takes a long while to reach me and I'm still reading letters from people who are angry over my remarks about Lt. Col. Oliver North.

Here are some of the nicer ones:

As far as we're concerned, you stink?" — E.B. Pendleton Jr., Richmond, Va.

"Lord only knows there is one thing this country doesn't need is another liberal columnist." — Kenneth Caidwell, Clearfield, Penn.

"Gutlibie writers like you are very hard for most of us to understand." — Luke H. Boykin Jr., Niceville, Fla.

"I'm taking your book, 'Pieces of my Mind,' off my bookshelf for a garage sale." — Duane M. Witte, Fort Walton Beach, Fla.

"You are a pit bull!" — Lloyd MacLeal, Richmond, Va.

"What Lt. Col. North did was nothing compared to what other countries do." — Howard C. Strand, Marshall, Mich.

"I'm canceling my subscription to the Maui News. Your boss should throw you out wiki wiki (very quickly)." — Anon, Honolulu.

"Your column about Col. North was a big mistake. I hope you get 20,000 letters telling you so.*" — Winifred Pushor, Indianapolis

"Obviously you do not have any military time worth the mention." — John C. Barth, Fort Walton Beach, Fla.

"It would be interesting to know what your military service has been." — George A. Bleyle, St. Augustine Shores, Fla.

"How many medals do you have for serving your country?" — Mrs. William Marter, Richmond, Va.

So many angry letter writers asked about my military service that I'm obliged to Tiote, with pride, that I served four years in the U.S. Army during WWII. During that time, much of which was under combat conditions, I flew on the first U.S. bombing mission into Germany, participated in the Normandy Invasion on D-4, moved with the 1st Army through France, entered Paris with the first troops the day it was liberated, crossed the Rhine River at Remagen with the first wave of the 9th Armored Division and continued on into Berlin as a correspondent for the Army newspaper, Stars and Stripes. Following my service in Europe, I was sent to the Far East and crossed the Himalayas from Burma, to Kunming, China.

During my service, I was given the Bronze Star With Oak Leaf Cluster, the Air Medal, Air Gunners' Wings and earned the right to wear a lot of other medals and ribbons. I angered many people by calling some of these "costume jewelry." That category, in my view, includes such purely decorative ribbons as the European Theater of Operations ribbon, the China/Burma/India ribbon, the Unit Citation Ribbon, the Good Conduct Ribbon and the Sharp Shooters Medal.

On my return home, I made sure I was discharged, wiki wiki.

Letters To The Editor:

Dear Mr. Stern:

In the newsletter of November 1987, on page 11, there is a photograph in the top right hand corner that includes a man I knew at one time. His name is Sgt. Jack Osborne (Bulldog) - Engineer and he is standing second from the right on the back row. I was with him in Pyote, Texas, first phase, and in Dalhart, Texas until I was assigned to the 385th bomb group in September of 1943. We were separated when pilot was killed in orientation flights.

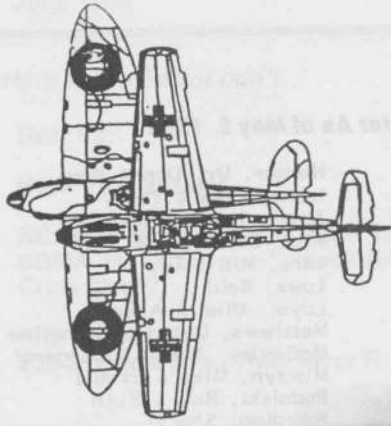
If anyone has any information on Jack (Bulldog) Osborne or knows of anyone who can help me find him, please contact me at the following address and telephone number:

#2 Atlanta Court
Longview, Texas 75604
214-757-4096

Any help you can give me will be greatly appreciated.

Thank you,

Mst. Sgt. Lowell T. Birdwell, Sr. (Retired)
Ball Turret Gunner — "Spirit of Chicago"



THE AVIATION ART OF RANDY GREEN



“When Mercy Was Victory Enough”

Limited edition print now available to our members

Artist Randy Green has completed the above oil painting while awaiting further word from our Group on the possibilities of painting an additional picture based on a specific 385th Bomb run. This should have been discussed at the Dayton Reunion, but it was forgotten.

A limited edition signed full color litho measuring 25" x 32" of the above will be made available if a member survey indicates enough interest. Also, Randy Green will do another oil painting for us, based on a particular mission — Munster, Regensburg, Berlin, or others.

Randy's letter to Clarence Abrahamson tells the story of the litho now available as shown. A similar story would accompany any new painting that we requested.

Please fill in the Request Form printed below, indicating your interest for the litho illustrated, and also your choice of missions should an additional painting be commissioned.

Dear Clarence,

I have continued to work on the assumption that the Group is interested in your presentation of the project I proposed last Spring. Since that time, I have painted a 31 x 4 foot oil painting depicting one of the 385th's B-17G's.

The title of the picture is "When Mercy was Victory Enough".

It is a very compassionate piece, showing two ME-109's flying on each wing of the 17C, which has been knocked down out of formation and was starting on her own for England. The 109's have made repeated attacks, setting the #1 and #3 engines afire and knocking pieces from the tail. All the Fortresses gun stations have spent their ammunition, as the bail-out bell finally sounds.

The pilot has lowered the flaps, slowing the bomber to lessen the shock of bail-out. The 109's have moved in close on the dying bomber, amazed that she is still flying and respectful of the airmen who are piloting her. The waist gunners and radio operator can be seen as having dived out of the bomb bay and are now deploying their chutes, which catch the slipstream.

Please submit this photo to your officers for their consideration. I would still be interested in painting an authentic mission for the Group (I have the files you sent) but until that is completed, perhaps the membership would be interested in obtaining signed Lithos of this painting? Please let me know your thoughts on this so a suitable price could be worked out.

My apologies for not having written sooner. I'm looking forward to hearing from you soon.

Randy Green

THE REUNION AT GREAT ASHFIELD

August 16 - Sept. 2, 1988

The 1988 reunion at Great Ashfield and tour of the United Kingdom is gaining momentum as eighty-four eager participants have signed up. For many, it will be their first trip back to Great Ashfield and the England they knew during the war years. Even though the bomb damage of the war has been cleaned up and new buildings constructed, they won't have any difficulty recognizing London, Ipswich, Stowmarket, or Elmswell. Only a couple buildings remain at AF Station 155, the airfield at Great Ashfield, better known by the air crews as "HARD LIFE". The main runway is fairly intact but some portions of the two short runways and a lot of the perimeter track have been removed. The famous three tree landmark is still there but there is now a fourth tree along side of the original three. Many air crew members will recall how good those three trees looked when they were groping around in low murky ceilings and misty drizzles, trying to find the base after a long mission. Ah yes, the Reunion at Great Ashfield will bring back a lot of nostalgic memories.

SHOPPING IN LONDON

Many who are fortunate enough to visit London, often shop for antiques, especially antique jewelry. How does one determine if that beautiful Victorian ring that you like is genuine, or that gold brooch at a roadside stand is really 22 carat? The foolproof way to separate the fake from the "real McCoy" is to look for the British Hallmark. The Hallmark is a set of four stamped marks on silver, gold, and platinum articles. It confirms that the piece has been assayed at a legal assay office and found to conform to specific legal requirements. Each separate item of a piece is stamped. Every link of a gold chain, for example, is punched. And the detachable lid of a silver coffee pot is stamped as well as the pot itself. The Hallmark is one of the earliest forms of consumer protection. For centuries, it has been illegal in Britain to sell any precious metal above a certain weight without the distinctive impression. Hallmarks first appeared on silver in 1238. The Hallmark can tell you the assay office where the piece was tested, the fineness of the metal, its carat, and the year of its assay. The fifth mark, if one appears, is the stamp of the maker. An excellent book that explains how to read the Hallmarks is "Hallmarks and Date Letters on Silver, Gold, and Platinum" by Eric Bruton (NAG Press, Ipswich, Suffolk, 1944), obtainable in any good British bookstore.

The Sign-up Roster As of May 6, 1988

Albrecht, Harold 8 Florence	Hunter, Dr. Don 8 Bev
Ayres, Edith	Irons, Clem 8 Terry
Audette, Albert 8 Priscilla	Jones, Henry 8 Martha
Bash, Geraldine 8	Kivi, Dr. Louis 8 Effie
Grandson Robert III	Lane, Milt 8 Ivy
Bember, John 8 Jean	Lowe, Reid
Bledsoe, Phyllis	Loyet, Mike 8 Allene
Carlson, Ted 8 Edna	Matthews, Dyton 8 Katherine
Chealander, Al 8 Ginny	McCawley, Frank 8 Margaret
Cole, Earl 8 Ruth	Murzyn, Mike 8 Estelle
Collins, Don 8 Pat	Podolski, Ray 8 Ruth
Colthorpe, Sid 8 Lee	Rawding, Sheryl
DeBerg, John 8 Dorothy	Reinken, Floyd
Dennis, Dave	Salvador, George 8 Alice
Dressier, Harold 8 Jeanette	Schulte, Walt 8 Norma
Framer, Dave 8 Rose	Schwartz, Howard 8 Rosemary
Gaul, Kay	Shalinsky, Milt 8 Anne
Gorchak, Joe 8 Pat	Siefert, Marty 8 Dot
Grabowski, Ed 8 Mildred	Struke, Andrew
Hair, Tom 8 Norma	Styler, Bill 8 Jane
Hart, Carter 8 Mozelle	Tulare, Willis 8 Doris
Heckel, Herman 8	Tunstall, Garnett 8 Helen
Elizabeth Hall	Walls, Frank 8 Winn
Herron, Vivian	Whitlow, Dick 8 Duffy
Howard, Pat 8 Gloria	

HOW TO FIND YOUR BRITISH ROOTS

Those wishing to trace their roots in Britain can begin by contacting these offices:

Population Censuses and Surveys
General Register Office,
St. Catherine's House
10 Kingsway, London WC2B 6JP

Society of Genealogists
37 Harrington Gardens
London SW7 4JX
(has a genealogy library)

Principal Registry of the Family Division
Somerset House, The Strand
London WC2R 4LB (for wills)

Public Records Office
Chancery Lane, London

College of Arms
Queen Victoria Street
London EC4V 4BT

SEND TO:

George Hruska
7442 Ontario Street
Omaha, Neb. 68124

COST OF PRINTS

Per print and shipping, handling.

If 200 or more ordered	\$20 + shipping
If 150 ordered	\$26 + shipping
If 100 ordered	\$38 + shipping
If 50 ordered	\$77 + shipping

Please circle highest price you would pay to give us an idea as to what quantity we will need for firm order.

I am interested in a 38" x 25" full color signed Litho of "When Mercy Was Victory Enough".

I would like us to commission Randy Green to do another painting using the _____ Raid for background.

Name _____

Address _____

Letters to the Editor con't.

Dear Ed:

Here's the answer,

RE: your request in the April 1988 issue of the 385th BGMA Newsletter — "Shack-N-Lady" 338553 548th Crew Chief?

R.C. Reeve
235 S. Maple Ave., Thief River Falls, MN 56701

Dear Ed:

I come to you once again for help. This time for addresses of 385th Bomb Group crew members who were aboard "Star Dust". They are;

Lt. Andrew Minkus	Bombardier
Capt. Swedlund	Pilot
2nd Lt. George Guseatt	Co-Pilot
2nd Lt. Fred Berlinger	Bombardier
T/Sgt Charles Day	Radio Operator
S/Sgt Ernie Meyer	Ball Turret Gunner
S/Sgt Chas. Thompson	Left Waist Gunner
Sgt Jack Brutenback	Right Waist Gunner
Sgt Jack Osborne	Engineer/Top Turret Gunner

Anything you can do will be greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

Russell J. Zorn
1561 Meadow Dr., Alden, NY 14004

Dear Ed:

Sorry I missed you when we went thru Fargo in Nov.

I found an old 5 x 7 of our crew next to our plane, had nine 3V2 x 5 prints made and want to send one to each member of the crew, plus a copy of the front page of the last newsletter to see if I can arouse an interest in them to plan to attend the '89 Reunion in Fargo. I have only three addresses — Maloy - Pilot, Suffin - Radio, and Zekins, Ball-Turret. Any way that one could find the old addresses of the others? The others are: Joe Hermann - Co-pilot, Mike Pierick - Nav., Bob Joiner - Bomb, Ralph Minter - Tall, Bill Gressett - Waist.

Art Wohl
Underwood, ND 58576

LIFE MEMBERS

177 Chester Brownlee

Dear Editor:

Mr. McLachlan sent me the negative to the original Dorsal Queen and I had it enlarged and printed, as you can see. He also sent me a 3 x 5 of the second DQ, to which Major Jones claims he does not recall, I guess they had left and gone to Pathfinders and a new 385th crew got a new airplane and used the DQ name. I am told that the second DQ was shot down during the Big Week of February 1944, I am waiting on the history from the USAFHRC at this writing.



I was glad to read about the success of the Dayton Reunion and hopefully you'll have a good time in England and then in North Dakota in 1989.

I'd like to call your attention to the shipping code for the original DQ to England, UGLY, I just wonder if that was a reflection on the beauty of the Air Crew??

I hope this finds you warm and healthy.

Sincerely,

Allen Holtman

Dear Ed:

Received a letter from Mrs. Margaret Search yesterday containing news of John Search's death in February

"Jocko", as we called him, was the youngest member of the Photo Lab Crew. He was a joy to us all. Somebody was all the time "pecking" on him, but one or two others would defend him. He married his first wife overseas. Several of us attended the wedding. I remember the visit to the home of the bride well. They had a plant growing, in bloom, on the front porch. They observed me smiling at it, and asked me what kind of plant (flower) it was. I told them it was a long way from home — a tobacco plant.

Best regards,

Moe
Homer Jones

Letters to the Editor con't.

Hello Ed:

"Keep e'm Flying" - photo enclosed show the men in front of Sleepytime Gal B17E, hardstand on the hill near armament hut, Feb. 1944 - Dykstra Crew Chief. There are many stories I bet the ground crew can write about. Anyone pre flight the plane alone? I did.

Sol & Ida Mann
6518 Lafayette, Omaha, NE 68132



Front — Cruse, Ellis, Sol Mann, Dykstra: Rear - Massari

Dear Ed:

I received your note that Ned Humphres Jr., Bombers Inc., in Michigan wanted to know the name of Turner's bombardier; all of whom went down on the 13th of July '44. I responded to him, regretting my inability to recall his name. It would be a real benefit if our Association had a roster.

I also received a very interesting letter from Buell S. Martin in Harwich, Massachusetts, the tailgunner on Lt. Fred Born's crew, flying his 11, 12, 13, and 14th missions on those dates in July '44. His comments were mainly on the White/McDonald collision of the 12th because he bunked with McDonald's crew, recounting the fact the McDonald's crew did not fly to Munich on the 11th because their pilot had gotten into a fight at the officer's club the evening of the 10th and he had been grounded.

That may well be, but there might be a bit of confusion, since I personally witnessed the Provost Marshal (Major) have two MP's take Mac into custody at the club on the night on the 11th. My navigator, in his cups, protested and the Major had him also taken along to the Major's office, where they both spent the night, "Without a bed!", as my navigator described it. It impressed me, because I personally felt at the time that, a lack of rest might have contributed to a lack of proficiency in flying the next day when the collision happened. Today, however, I would not place the blame on anyone, because there were too many factors

guiding anyone's destiny back then. I cannot say that McDonald was or was not in a fight the night of the 10th and grounded for it. I do know that he was taken into custody the night of the 11th and went down on the 12th.

What happened at the club on the night of the 11th was a dance (I believe, since there were girls there). I saw Mac leaning against the wall near the ladies room for the longest time and somebody told me he was waiting for a girl who was trying to ditch him. Finally, Mac just sort of leaned his way into the ladies room and much screaming was heard. The Provost summoned two MP's into the club to retrieve Mac and my navigator challenged the Major. I retired to quarters and shortly afterwards, I think it was Bombersbach came in, got his .45 and left saying he was going after that "God-damned Major". I heard one shot fired not too far away and assumed he'd gotten bogged down in the field separating our quarters from the club, and I wasn't about to go after him.

Like I said, Buell's letter was very interesting and enlightening. While he did not see White and McDonald collide, he said "It sounded like we were flying through a lot of tin cans", since his ship flew through "Shredded metal and some hatches swirled around our slipstream, along with an opened chute but *no one* was in the harness".

I had mistakenly identified both pilots as Lieutenants, but Buell pointed out that White as a Captain with the 551st Squadron, as well as reminding me that we were flying crews of ten at the time and not nine as I reported. What was most interesting is that Buell was shot down on his 21 and Vi mission. Captured, he was shipped by box car, four days, to Luft 4 in Pomerania, where quite by accident he met Sgt. Attilia (spelling unsure) from Brooklyn, who was one of McDonald's waist gunners and the only survivor of the accident; verifying it by the fact the Germans had taken him to the crash site.

Buell said that Attilia had started to call the impending collision to McDonald's attention when their ship was cut in half near the waist and he was free-falling with his chute attached to only one "D" ring. Buell says, "*I seem to remember Attilia telling me White's ship coming down on McDonald's.*"

In any case, 19 men seem to have been killed in that mishap and surely there are others who could add more details, depending on their point of view and recollection. As Buell wrote, "How Come, Department" — "I can remember 1944, but had to look up today's date?"

Truman Smith



John A. Johnson, May 1988

Tom W. Sherry, March 1988

Milton R. Coudyear, Feb. 1988

Letters to the Editor con't

Dear Ed:

I seem to be getting deeper into the history of the 385th all the time! I've just got 'the book', and there's one thing I really have to ask about. Does anyone out there know if Jesse Ashlock, your Flying Control Officer, was the same Jesse Ashlock who played fiddle before the war with the greatest of the 'Western Swing' bands, Bob Wills and the Texas Playboys?

The only information I have on Ashlock the violinist certainly fits. He played with Wills from about 1935 to 1940-41, leaving to join the Army Air Force. His subsequent career has always been something of a mystery to fans of the music, though he recorded briefly with Wills again in 1946 before, as the saying goes, 'disappearing into obscurity'.

If your Jesse Ashlock was the same guy then the 385th (perhaps unknowingly) hosted one of the greatest fiddle players in both the swing and hillbilly styles of his generation. This might not mean as much to most people as the 351st having Clark Gable or the 453rd having James Stewart and Walter Mathau, but it would certainly be something to be proud of!

Yours,

Paul Roberts
Flat 2, 2Hilton Road, Leeds, England LS8 4HB

Dear Ed:

I am doing research about the heavy bomber losses of the 8th Air Force in World War II, from September 1942 to May 1945. I request information on the 129 B-17's listed as MIA, beginning with the first one lost on 26 July, 1943 to the last one lost on 9 April, 1945. The type of information needed is: serial number, nickname, bomb squadron, pilot, what brought it down, and where it crashed.

An example of the information needed:

17 Aug, 43 B-17 "The Jolly Roger" 42-5886 385th 548BS 2nd Lt. Paul A. Sommers (Fighters) crashed Woensdrecht

Your help in this research would be appreciated.

Sincerely,

William H. Adams
10503 Huntley Place, Silver Spring, MD 20902

Editor's Note:

This is quite an order. Anyone want to help? Please write Bill direct.

Dear Editor:

A while after leaving 182nd Co. CCC's, I entered the United States Army Gunnery School in Wendover, Utah. I thought that it might be of interest to you to know that this school was built from a former 3C's barracks that was disassembled in Idaho and reassembled at Wendover. Capt. Keys, U.S.A.A.C., Commanded the operation and the Camp.

A poem was written about this happening and was titled "Capt. Keys and His Forty Thieves" (no disrespect intended). I have since lost my copy of it and if anyone still has a copy of it, I would appreciate receiving one.

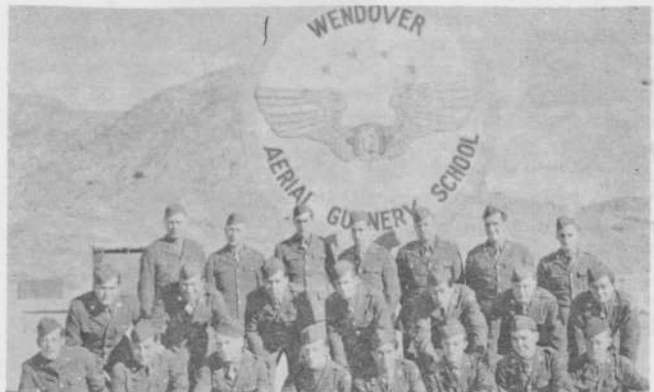
Thank you,

Ralph B. Joye

Dear Editor:

I thought that you might like this picture of the Wendover Gunnery School's graduating class, Spring (?) 1943 for the museum.

Along with the picture, goes another story of how the "Lone Wolf of the 549th" came into being.



I am not in the picture. Although everyone in the class passed the final exams, Capt. Keys was only allowed to graduate a percentage of the class. He lined us up and pointed out — you, you, you, (the number I have since forgotten), step out as you will not be graduated.

When I arrived in England assigned to Armament duties, I applied for re-entry into Gunnery School again. I was then sent to "The Wash", and passed easily. Then upon returning to my squadron I became "The Lone Wolf" who flew 13 missions as a waist gunner, 16 missions as a toggoleer, and 1 mission as a navigator.

When you start something, never give up. Some things cannot be done over night. The bigger the odds, the more satisfaction of accomplishment is realized when you beat them.

Thank you,

"The Lone Wolf of the 549th"
Ralph B. Joye
676 Carson Dr., Land O'Lakes, FL 34639

Letters to the Editor con't.

Dear Ed:

At the last reunion in Dayton Ohio, my father Harry Java and I had given you some pictures of his airplane and crew. The airplane was the HIT PARADE JR. You told us that you would publish the pictures in one of the up coming newsletters. We were just wondering what happened to them. My dad flew 30 missions with the same crew in the HIT PARADE Jr. from Oct. 1943 until May 1, 1944. He came home to the USA in July 1944 after being an instructor and a cleat track driver for recovery of B-17 that ran off the runways and hardstands. He flew his 30 missions as a top turret-gunner and flight engineer.

All the crew members of his plane survived all 30 missions. The only one who didn't come home was the Co-pilot, B.J. Booker Jr., he transferred to a fighter group and was never seen again.

Here is a list of the crew

Pilot-Moats
Co-pilot-Booker
Bomb.Franz
Navigator-Kappie
Rightwaist-Bymond
Ballturret-Smith
Leftwaist-Hartnett
Topturret-H.M. Java
Tailgunner-Dickerson
Radio-Baily



C.S. Moats & crews plane

The next reason for my letter is back in Aug. 23, 1987 at an air show a restored B-17 named the 909 crashed. The owner of the plane is doing the restoration at the Beaver County Airport. So my wife Joyce and I decided to go and see it and donate some money to a good cause. While we were there, we saw a book marked for crew members only. So we glanced thru it and found a name and address of a fellow 385th person; Floyd W. Montgomery, 102 Green Forest Dr., Baden, PA 15005.

He had written that he was with the 385th bomb group 549 bomber squadron. I am sure he would like to hear from you.

Sincerely,

Harry M. Java
Gregory J. Java Son
950 4th Ave #205, Coraopolie. PA 15108

Dear Mr. Ed:

What I want to learn is anything you have on "Raggedy Ann", a ship that flew from our base during 1943. I flew two missions in her and one more in another plane. Then I was relieved from flying status and rejoined my buddies on the ground at driving a truck.

When I use the term "Do you have anything", I am asking who the pilot was, what happened to it, who made up the crew, etc. This was the month of April, 1944. There were three missions flown - two in "R.A." and one in another ship.

Yours sincerely,

Robert C. Cribb
104 Granger Road, Spartanburg, SC 29301

Dear Sir:

Thank you very much for opening and reading my letter. I write you about my research work to a B-17 bomber that landed in our vicinity during World War II.

I am searching to the B-17 and the crew who where on their way to a target somewhere in Germany. In the area of Liege (Belgium; they had to contend with German Flak or fighters. Seconds later hit and all decided to turn back trying to get back to base, 'n the area of AARSCHOT (Belgium) the whole crew abandoned the plane, because it was loosing albtude very rapidly. They came down near a small village near Aarschot.

Suddenly, the lonely bomber once again turned back, the way it came from. Unmanned, it landed safely on a range of a hill near SCHERPENHEI. VEL, some 5 miles from Aarschot. Few hours later, some members of the crew came to the place looking how the plane looked like. This in company with British soldiers who ust liberated the neighborhood. It all happened in the second part of September. 1944.

Now, I want to ask you kindly, if possible, some members of your organization or archive records of the Bomb Group recognize themselves with this small story. Other informations about this all are always welcome.

Thanking you in advance for your kind attention and help on this letter and hoping soon to receive a small answer from you, I am, Dear Sir,

Yours faithfully,

JANSE Johnny
Halensebaan 63 bis
3386 Molebeek-Wersbeek Bm /u.,

Editor's Note: We wrote to as vm.fth', 3 'oil identification.

Letters to the Editor con't

Dear Ed:

"Fox Hotel", Elmswell, particularly the "Bar Parbur" on whose walls hung the paintings of the logos of the "Rabbit" Squadron and the "Wolf" Squadron. Both of which were sent to his daughter, Olive and me by Mr. Frank Blaker, manager, "Fox Hotel" (incidentally, I'm the husband of the daughter. Olive Blaker).



551st- 385th Wolf Sqdn. Logo

The "Rabbit" painting was given to Charles Huber, 548th Sqdrn, a very close friend of ours by us. Enclosed is a photograph of a painting of the "Wolf" logo done the past summer by a 16 year old family friend. Incidentally, there is no comparison of the "wolf" logo being used now and the original logo.

I was the flight engineer-top turret gunner of Ruel Weikert's crew and the "Mary Pat". Also, an original member of the 551 st Sqdn. We flew our planes from the States to the U.K. stopping en route to have the "wing-tip" gas tanks installed to extend the range of B-17's. My understanding, the 385th was one of the first groups to have these tanks installed. Also, among my collection, I have quite a group of "Escape" photos of 385th crew members. The thing about these; there are "faces" and very few names. I am wondering if names can be given to these "faces" through the help of the BGMA newsletter. Possibly, through sending you numbered prints of the photos and published for members to identify.

Thankx!

Darwin L. Mushrush
P.O. Box 521, Clayton St., Dagsboro, DE 19939

P.S. Olive Blaker and I were married in Elmswell Cafe, 21 June, 1944 with the reception at the Fox Hotel, Elmswell.



Ruel Weikert; Olive, my wife; and me at mini-reunion in Wash. D.C.

Hi Ed & Jane:

Hope that all the preparations I'm sure you two have been making in the past weeks are working out the way you planned them. Busy time, isn't it?

Can't wait for those great pictures that always show up with your cards. And that wonderful BIG family that sometimes comes with the picture.

Ed, a year ago in April, you wrote me a good letter, in which you wound up with a sentence, "Why don't you send me a 40 or 50 word biography to run in one of the newsletters?" Ed, I'm darned if I can think of a THING that would interest them. Most of them have had such exciting adventures, -- many of them related to flying, air activities, etc, of which we only have the one visit to Germany 10 years ago, with a brief trip out to Stowmarket, to be fed and "tea-d" by the women who used to send us girls for the dances. Would something that simple qualify?

Curt Osborn

Editor's Note: Our Special Services Officer who helped line up some of our recreation during those 2 years in England. Send more along, Curt.

Dear Ed:

I just came back from England after spending five weeks there staying with my sister in Stowmarket. It was enjoyable but I'm glad to be back. I cou;a not go back to live there again, everything has changed sb much. The changes just in the street of Stowmarket surprised me. One good thing was the Gateway Supermarket is outstanding and as far as I'm concerned has the supermarkets beat over here and how lovely the meat was displayed and fresh fish. I was quite impressed with that, also how much Ipswich has changed.

I did find everything so costly and the dollar did not go very far and felt that things are cheaper in the States.

I did go the Church at Great Ashfield but could not get in as it was locked up, but did take some pictures.

My friend Peggy from Stowmarket and I visited also her husband and we had alot to talk about while I was over to her house she said she was looking forward to all the guys coming back in Sept.

I was sorry I did not get to see him as that was the last night I was in Stowmarket but I had told him when he comes this way to give me a call as I don't think I can be there in Sept. I think he also knows Pettinger very well.

All the time I was home I could not get warm even though I took three fur coats with me. Norwich I found had not changed too much and the markets were still there.

I enjoyed the pubs also eating in them and found the food so good also the service.

Connie Gomberg
8066 Bayberry Court, Citrus Heights, CA 95610

Letters to the Editor con't.

Dear Mr. Stern:

The January '88 issue had some memory probing items, and one of them was on page 12 "Lil Audrey". My crew was a replacement crew to the 385th B.G., 551st Sqdn., on/about 24 June 1944. We were billeted in BOQ #102 with Capt. B. Thompson's crew.

All newly assigned crews had to fly practice missions which were critiqued prior to flying with the Group and we had to get checked out, so to speak. In three days we're strapping a B-17 to our back and flying formation in our first practice formation mission with the Group. Pilots included in this mission were: Hughes, Briggs and Hall - low sqdn; Benefield, Mellinger and Bush - lead SQDN. We flew at 19,000 feet in a three hour mission as our welcome to the 385th BG. Another practice mission came up on 2 July and this one was at 800 to 900 feet believe it or not. The 12 pilots names were: La Casse, Supplee, Neuman, Henderson, Bush, Davis, Masters, Elbert, Newcomer/Ferguson, Bashear, Kelly and Streimer in Purple Heart corner. The low altitude turbulence had several crewmem feeling pretty badly as I recall from the notes. We still couldn't figure why we were doing this at so low an altitude. Again we were scheduled for practice on the 3rd of July but the mission was "scrubbed". Pilots names were: White, Streimer, Fellers, Brashear, Ferguson and Jones.

The first combat mission was the Paris district. The 2nd was to Bremen but this was changed to hit the V-1 bases on the coast of France. I had now completed my indoctrination flights without my crew and was ready for combat with my assigned crew. This little background was supposed to make me an expert, I guess, but I still had lots to learn.

The crews 1st mission was as a spare. In event anyone "aborted" at the coast of France, we were supposed to fill his place. We were ordered back to base as there were no aborts. This certainly was an easy way to get into combat for no one felt any pressure at this time. The group went on to Leipzig.

We then flew a couple of well known group B-17's on the next two missions. 'Shack Bunny' on one mission as we brought the bombs back to base; and 'Little Lambsie Divey' which was flown to Munich. On 14 July we flew 'Lil Audrey' to southern France. We flew on Thompson's wing. I believe the tail number included 2008T. We still had to fly some more practice formation on the 22nd and 23rd of July and this is where I got a pretty good idea of how to fly lo-lead from the right seat.

On 24th July, we flew our own ship -893-S, a brand new G model right out of the factory and ready for combat. We were supposed to help the ground troops break-out from the Germans holding them in front of fortified hedge-rows and pill boxes. Cloud covered the panel markers so we had to wheel around and return with the bombs again. The next day was like a 3 ring circus over

this part of France. The entire stream of ships made a 360 degree turn and dropped to 9,000 feet to clear the cloud cover and identify the panel markers. This was a total success with carepet-bombing and the US troops were able to move out to gain ground with the invasion. The 551st was commended on their bombing results. It was like my top-turret engineer said on this day, "The Germans got repeaters on their ground." We were looking right down the barrells. So the ole B-17 is a ver-satile airplane after all what for dropping cannisters at low altitude and this of dropping bombs at low altitude like a medium bomber.

From the 24th of July to the 26th of October, our crew flew plus or minus 26 missions as low lead and one in the high lead. Our coordination was darned good by this time for we then knew what it was all about. We all got our graduation diploma — "Lucky Bastard Club" signed and endorsed.

One significant mission on the 29th of July for the 551st Sq. was on a mission to Leipzig-Luena Oil installation. Our Sqdn. led the Division and Col. Vandevanter was in the lead aircraft. As we neared the target area, the flak was intense and very accurate. We were boxed-in and locked on no matter which way we did our evasive action. No. 3 man still had his bombs as we had not reached the IP as yet and he took a direct hit in the bomb-bay area. He didn't have a chance. This No. 3 aircraft peeled off to his left and down towards our aircraft as he was obviously losing control of the airplane. I remember I had to pull up with all the power I could muster and steer clear of the lead planes. It was a very close near miss. I took some time to simmer down and get the squadron back in proper position for the bombrun. Both Streimer and Jarman had feathered engines on this mission.

I'm aware that these excerpts are not as thrilling as others have had, but one reads between the lines that much experience was gained in flying combat in a B-17. I often wonder, "How on earth did I ever live through it?" As most of the living pilots have now got grey hair, or little of it since those days, perhaps they have looked back and wondered what force gave them the power to handle an airplane through such battles!! The weather troops were not always right too, but in spite of hi and lo clouds mixing up the formations, we still got through at our assigned altitudes, well most of the time! It seems like the more we flew, the greater the odds were in favor of the dangerous situations.

I got an early out in 1945 due to points and spent time with the Reserves in Chicago-Orchard Place now known as O'Hare Field. But Korea came and I was recalled so I got back into the B-29, B-47 and B-52 before finally retiring in March of 1966. I retired as a Lt. Colonel, USAF.

Our crew members are as follows: Pilot - V.W. Ferguson; Co-pilot - A.E. Brower (deceased); Navigator - R.L. Hill; Bombardier - R.D. Dykins (Anyone know of his whereabouts?); Engr. - E.E. Snow; Gunner - J.F. Minco; Radio - T.R. Kemler; AROG - W.E. Salkeld; AEG - J.B. Harmon, Jr. (A Lt. Col. in USA); AG - F.E. Wolk (Reassigned to Lt. Lamberts Crew).

Letters to the Editor con't.

There was one mission I omitted August 9th when a Division recall brought us off the route to Furth. On our return we hit some of the worst flak barrages we had ever seen. The low lead No. 3 man took a direct hit and caught fire. The flak barrage was a complete surprise for it just wasn't supposed to be where we planned our route out of the target area. But it was there and this plane veered left clear of the formation. We counted seven men getting out before the plane lost control. We don't know if the 'forward' crew got out before the plane zoomed straight up on its tail, then took a hammer head dive out of control. I have no notes on the crew names, but indications were that it was either his first or second mission with his crew. Perhaps someone out there knows of this incident?

Sincerely,

Victor W. Ferguson, Lt. Col. USAF - Ret.
515 W 3rd St McGregor, TX 76657

Dear Mr. Stern:

I got your name and address from a Glasgow Courier published in November of 1986. We came across it while we are researching for a Community History book we are compiling to celebrate our State Centennial in 1989. Part of that book will cover past military installations. Very little is known about the World War II 817 base here at Glasgow. Any information or copies of pictures you may have would be deeply appreciated.

Sincerely,

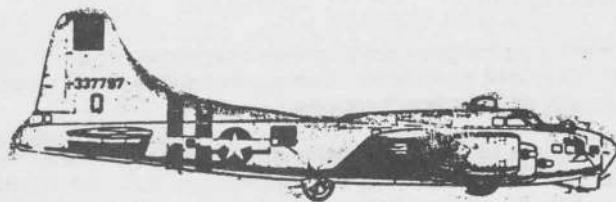
Doris Franzen, Chm.
Glasgow/Valley County Community History
Box 182, Glasgow, MT 59230

Editor's Note: You 549th guys — please send her copies of what you have.



LAST CHANCE:

Group History — a hard cover history of the 385th from inception to the end of WWII. If you don't have your copy, write Treas. John Pettenger, and send your check for \$20.



Dear Ed:

The purpose of this letter is to, belatedly, recommend my former co-pilot, Robert W. Wilson, for the Purple Heart.

Until recently I had no specific details such as dates, Mission No., and target — just a memory.

A few months ago it all came to light during a visit with my former toggelier, Jack Pullio, who lives in Baldwin Park, CA. I told Jack about the great experience I had in July of 1987 in attending the 385th BGMA Reunion in Dayton, OH and a later meeting with Bob Wilson and wife "Corky" in their Van Wert, Ohio home when Bob and I discussed the fact that he had been wounded. Much to my surprise Jack produced a small notebook of his mission notes and we discovered in Mission No. 5, his mention of the fact that our co-pilot had been hit that day, Oct. 9, 1944.

At the time of impact from probably an "88", Bob, who was taking his turn flying in tight formation signalled for me to takeover. As I took over the controls in wonderment, Bob pulled up his left pantleg exposing a bloody wound in the calf of his leg. Upon landing I insisted that Bob go for medical attention but he refused saying that he would medicate himself - he did, and fortunately suffered no ill after effects.

Please see the attached copy of Jack Pullio's handwritten notes on Mission No. 5 to Mainz, Germany on Oct. 9, 1944.

Admittedly Jack got a little carried away making notes in the heat of battle, when he said the flak "knocked out No. 1, 2 & 3 engines", we probably lost only two engines - would not have made it back on only one remaining engine.

Most of us in the fore part of our B-17 called "Sugar Jo" took a belt or two from flak or flying floorboard splinters but no one was wounded except for the wound suffered by Bob Wilson.

Ed, hopefully, you can pass this letter and enclosure thru the proper channels to bring about the award to Bob Wilson which I feel he rightfully deserves.

Thank you and best regards,

Sam D. St. Clair, P.O. Box 6881, Fullerton, CA 92634
(550th Bomb Squadron 385th Bomb Group 8th A.F.)

Editor's Note:

It's started through channels.

Dear Truman:

Thank you for the copies of our correspondence in the 385th BGMA newsletter. Corresponding to that I've got already some more response.

You wrote in your first letter of your trips to Munich in July 44. On the 77th, Major Hamilton was the Group Leader, 36 ships were put up and one, Lt. Henderson was lost. I promised you to ask one of my friends, an air war expert in Augsburg, if he knew some more. Here is the CRASH REPORT — it's all in German, I translated the most important things.

8th AF / 11th July 44 (Tuesday) / target — engine factory in Munich / 548 Bombardment Squadron/385 BG heavy, U. CBW / 3 BD / base — Great Ashfield, Suffolk, England / B-17 6 "Flying Fortress" / number — 42-9711 (45-BO) / take off — 7.30 to 0.07 / bombs — 5 x 1,000 lbs. 6.P. / crash — 11.7.44 / time — 13.08 (approx.) / in the heat of Augsburg, westwards on open country / because of flak from Munich / two engines damaged over Munich / pile* tried to make a forced LANDING / all crew members alive, are prisoners or war!

NAMES

1 Lt. - Henderson, I.L., Pilot
 2 Lt. - Schnaais, D.R., Co-pilot
 2 Lt. - Johnson, J.R., Navigator
 2 Lt. - Gray, G.H., Bombardier
 T/Sgt. - Panish, R., Gunner
 T/Sgt. - Nygard F.A., Wireless Telegraphist
 S/Sgt. - Wyatt, L.B. - Gunner
 Sgt. - Bible, H.C., Gunner
 S/Sgt. - Smith, J.L., Gunner
 S/Sgt. - Edwards, E.D., Gunner

I hope you are pleased with this information. Perhaps you are willing to find out some men of this very crew. It certainly would be interesting what they are telling.

Let me say goodbye for today and give my regards to your wife and your family,

Yours,

Truman

Dear Irma:

Your information on Lt. Henderson has clarified a point that has been in discussion with former Sgt. Buell Martin, now in Massachusetts, who was a tailgunner and shot down on his 21V2 mission, 9 Aug. '44. He had questioned my reporting that we were flying with crews of nine men in July; recalling that we had ten men on each crew. Your information shows him to be correct; Lt. Henderson's crew consisted of ten men.

Seven B-17's at Geneseo Airshow August 19, 20, 21, 1988

The 1988 "Wings of Eagles" airshow at the Geneseo, N.Y. Airport based National Warplane Museum will be highlighted by the appearances of seven flying fortresses from various points across the U.S. along with 70 to 100 other WWII aircraft. All warbirds will be flying throughout the 3 day show.

Dear Mr. Jones:

I am trying to put together a collection of insignia dealing with the 385th BG and would be very interested in a 548th or 551st Squadron patch. I need both of them and would very much appreciate it if you could help me.

Sincerely,

Mark D. Griffith, M.D.
 P.O. Box 13367, Roanoke, VA 24033

Editor's Note: If anyone can help, he has quite a museum going and it would be nice to help complete our Group's presentation.

385th BGM A

ED STERN, EDITOR
 P.O. Box 2187
 Fargo, ND 58108

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