



**CHAPLAIN JIM SEZ:**

Dear Fellow Veterans,

I am writing this "Chaplain Sez" a few days after the horrible bombing in Oklahoma City. My heart aches for those people that are suffering so much pain and the loss of loved ones. But my heart aches also for those that have caused this awful devastation. I can not really know what the victims of the bombing are going through nor can I imagine what went through the minds of the perpetrators.

There are two things I feel each of us should remember and keep in mind regarding the mistakes we made 50 some years ago.

1. The terrible injustice we rendered on our own citizens of Japanese descent. 2. The way we overlooked the threat of "hate" Hitler and his band of radicals spewed.

We must not allow ourselves nor our government to repeat these mistakes. I pray that EACH OF US will discipline ourselves so that our actions and conversations will help others to respond in love.

There are two threads that run through both the Old Testament and the New Testament. They are love and moderation. We must do what we can to perpetuate our understanding of freedom that we fought so hard to preserve.

May God Bless us all.

And I hope to see you all in Omaha in September.

Sincerely,

Jim



## OBITUARIES

James O. Dillon	October 1994
Fred J. Salemme	December 1994
Charles Pease	February 1 1995
William B.(Dick) Whitlow	March 1995
Raymond E. Baer	April 1995
K. Lynn White	May 1995



The April Hardlife Herald listed the death of V. Manley Cottongim Jr., along with an abbreviated obituary. We neglected to list his survivors including his wife Rosalie, one son Lorn and daughter-in-law Karen, and two grandchildren.

Rosalie called this to our attention, and we apologized for the mistake. We had a nice visit - they'd been married for 52 years, he was shot down on this third mission, which was on their first anniversary. Had a wonderful life together. When he came back from POW camp after the War, they got together at Ft. Smith, Arkansas. She couldn't get the security lock on the Hotel door to open at first. Lots of fond memories.

**LIFE MEMBERS**

Eldred L. Harrington	300
Alvin Vaira	301

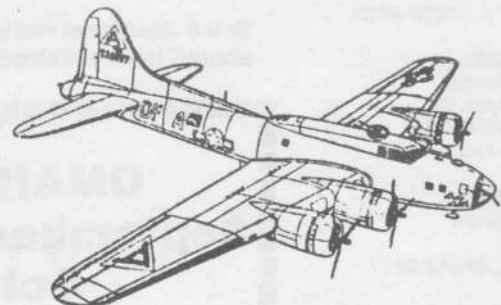
## NOMINATIONS NOW OPEN FOR 1997 REUNION

We'll be voting on our 1997 Reunion in Omaha - if you would like to make a suggestion, send it to us and we'll print it. The number ONE requirement is a Host for the City involved. A hotel that can promise around 1 50 rooms, seat around 500 for dinner are about what is needed.

Tucson, Arizona is the first candidate. Speaking from experience gained from visits over the last 10 years, your Editor can vouch for Tucson as a great convention city. Wonderful facilities, exciting scenery, great Air Force attractions, including the Pima Air Museum with its collection of almost 200 vintage and modern airplanes, Davis Monthan, where some of you no doubt trained, an unbelievable "Bone Yard" of literally thousands of obsolete planes.

There's a bunch of "must see" things to do, and you'll want to spend extra time in the area.

Let's hear from other candidates. Send us some information for the next issue.



# BULLETIN BOARD

## NOTICE

MSGT USAF Retired requests original squadron, group, etc. patches from WWII to the present. Greatly appreciated. Send to Jim Perry, 138 Manchester Road, Summemville, SC 29483

**HELP HELP HELP**  
Does anyone have the original or a copy of the Distinguished Unit Citation issued for the Regensburg and Zwickau missions. Send copy to George S. Hruska.

**HISTORIC AVIATION TOUR OF BRITAIN**  
From Aug. 28 to Sept. 11, an Anglo American History Productions group will travel in the UK. Itinerary includes visits to aviation museums and USAW WW2 airfields, operational RAF and USAW museums, cathedrals, HMS Victory, National Motor Museum, pubs, plus London. Climax of the tour will be the Imperial War Museums Air Show at Duxford. Tour leader will be Air Marshall Ron Dick RAF (Retd). For details, call 703-492-8934.

**1997 REUNION ABILITIES**  
fo\*6  
Ken Lafoon, who works one or two days a week in the 390th Hangar at the Pima Air Museum in Tucson writes to tell us that he can arrange a very special tour of Davis Monthan if we decide on Tucson for our 1997 Reunion. This would not be a tour offered to everyone--it'd be special for us who they recognize for what happened 50 years ago.

### "OL DOODLE BUG"

One of our British friends wonders if anyone knows how "01 Doodle Bug" was chosen as a name for one of our bases. The name is that name of anyone who can help, please write Ron Durand, East View, 14 Preston Paddock, Rustington, West Sussex BN162AA, England. If anyone has the name of 01 Doodle Bug, he'd give his eye-teeth for that.

a bit too.

**NOTICE NOTICE NOTICE**  
M/Sgt Allan P. Holtman (Retired) offers to place a floral tribute on the Headstone of 385th members who are buried in Jefferson Barracks National Cemetery. If you can do this on May 7 and again on May 14, please contact me at 703-492-6093. I can identify any graves, please contact me at 703-492-6093.

**EIGHTH AIR FORCE MEMORIAL WRIGHT-PATTERSON MUSEUM, OHIO**  
Will anyone who has personal knowledge and/or who attended the dedication ceremony on April 22, 1935, has pictures, and can give an up-to-date report on the above, contact George S. Hruska.

**ELDERLY MOBILITY**  
Our membership is VERY mobile--had 38 changes of address since the last Hardlife. We made all the right changes in mind the last time you don't get an issue every two months after you've moved let us know.





**EDITOR'S NOTE:** Truman Smith of Ponca City, OK has a book in the works—"The Wrong Stuff". When it's printed we'll let you know. In the meantime, here's one of the chapters.

### CHAPTER 10

The "Blitzkrieg", Lightning War, on London was from September 1940 through May 1941 and the ruins from 190,000 tons of bombs were still quite prevalent in 1944.

The "Baby Blitz" was between January and the middle of March 1944, and some Londoners continued sleeping on the platforms of the subway stations down in the "Tubes" where they still maintained their dignity and, somehow through necessity and strong character, were able to preserve their privacy in the midst of public activity.

Then came the third "Blitz" at 3:00 A.M. on the 13th of June 1944 when the first V-1 "VENGEANCE WEAPON", die vergeltungswaffen hit London and started the "Buzz-Bomb Blitz"; as Lord Haw Haw had forecast.

British Prime Minister Winston Churchill, in a radio broadcast a few days after "D" Day, warned of the serious times ahead with the hardest battles yet to be fought, because he was well informed about the German's development of a pilotless robot flying bomb and the many launching sites that had been established in Northern France, all aimed at London.

These were the "NO BALL" targets that both the Royal Air Force and the Eighth Air Force had been hammering on intermittently for many months. The fact that the Allied invasion, delayed in breaking out from the beaches and not capturing the launching sites of the V-1 's as hoped for, was a guarantee that London would once again catch Hell.

In fact, the Germans would have destroyed the Allied invasion force with the V-1 "Flying Bombs", if the 6 June invasion had not gone when it did. That, of course, would have made a major change in history. Thus, due to the arbitrary nature of warfare, victory for the allies was far from certain - and all that that implies.

Even before Hitler had come to power in the 1930's, Germany had started the development of rocket weaponry in an effort to get around the limitations placed on it by the Versailles Treaty of World War One.

So after more than ten years in the making and motivated by desperation created by the stalemate on the Eastern Front by the Russians and the invasion of France in the West, the Flying bombs were still committed to the defense of the Third Reich.

The V-1 Flying Bomb was in effect a pilotless airplane guided by aiming its launching rails in the direction of the target and controlling its flight with gyros. It was 25 feet long with a wingspan of 17 feet and carried one ton of high explosives. Driven by a ram-jet engine using 80 octane gasoline it cruised about 300 mph. The bombs were manufactured at the Volkswagen plant in Fallersleben near Hamburg: 1,000 in April; 1,500 in May and 2,500 in June of 1944.

It was the last day of a three-day pass in London that I stopped in to pick up my customized "Smitty Jacket" from the tailor, who mentioned that he was also making one for a general who liked the idea of it.

Hmmm? This was probably just a sales pitch to keep me from refusing delivery of the odd-ball garment, because he knew I was concerned about being out of uniform, since a one-of-a-kind could hardly be considered "uniform."

While we discussed my acceptance of, and payment for, the short-waist tunic, the air-raid sirens began to wail, which stopped everything. I followed the tailor out of the shop and into the street and did what he did in looking up to the sky between the buildings that lined the street. If he knew what he was looking for, I didn't.

Maybe I'd learn something. I'd heard air raid warnings before, but nothing bad had ever happened to me by doing nothing.

If in a movie theater, a notice would appear on the screen that an Air Raid Alert had been given, in case you wished to go to a shelter. I never went to a shelter. Rather, I just did nothing, except to watch the movie. This had worked for me.

So I did nothing except to observe nothing happening in the sky, except scattered low clouds, when I followed the tailor into the street. We were joined by many people coming out of the buildings to do the same as the tailor and I.

"It'll be a "doodlebug." the tailor said. "It'll be coming from that way." He pointed to the top of the building above his shop.

"Buzz Bomb?", I asked, just to make sure I knew what I was looking for, since the new secret weapon already was being referred to by various names.

The tailor acknowledged that it was the V-1 he was talking about. So I fixed my attention on the location from where he said it would make its appearance, because I was very curious to see one of the damn things fly by.

The sirens continued to wail and then an electric alarm bell started ringing, which was joined by—I presumed—local air-raid wardens tooting whistles, which must have meant that they could see one of the flying bombs from their positions atop the roofs. And sure enough, I began to hear the god-awful noise increasing above all other sounds as the "monster" approached.

It was a deep throbbing growl like nothing I'd ever heard before: BRGAAAAAAAAWWWWWWW!

It was fast approaching and it sounded very mean and dangerous! It's rumbling, like an approaching tornado, reached an almost unbearable crescendo. And then it was quiet?

Quiet!!!

By contrast to the racket it had made, there was an absolute absence of any kind of sound. I turned to the tailor.

He was gone!

What had been a street full of people was, to my greatest surprise, EMPTY, except for ME!!!

I ran my hardest for the tailor shop and, bursting through the door, I heard, "OVER HERE!!!!!"

It was the tailor under a table and I hit the wooden floor like in a running hook-slide, as if stealing second base, and joined him.

We waited, staring at each other and listening.

KRAKKHHAABBOOOOOOMMMMM!!

Even though the damn thing hit and exploded a block away and the buildings absorbed most of the shock, it was, never the less, one Hell of a blast!

I promptly paid the tailor, took my jacket and returned to base in order to get out of harm's way.

**EDITOR'S NOTE:** One of our best correspondents - Tom Helman - doesn't approve when we goof up one of his stories. So-what do we do? WE goof up two of them. A few years ago, our typist skipped a whole page of a 3 page letter. We corrected that by running the missing page in our next issue.

This time-in the February issue-we goofed up twice. First, we left off the title, which was the key element in the whole letter. Then, to compound the problem, we cut out a 1 7s page segment (can't blame this on anyone but the stupid editor). It just seemed to long.

You read part of it once. Here's the whole thing, heading and all. It's worth-while to read the whole story - complete.

We won't do it again, Tom-honest we won't!

## BOMB-BAY BATHROOM

I don't know if you're ready for this, but I have one more tall-tail-tale left to tell; on John Richey's OHIO AIR FORCE B-1 7 crew.

Far be it for me to bore you with any more of my shootem-uppers, I am tired of telling all those myself. But I think that anybody and everybody of high-fly fame, can relate to the simple fact that there can come much more from out of the belly than a mere laugh or two.

Don't smile when I say the alternate to a belly laugh is not one bit a laughing matter, maybe even a peril to the funny bone.

The old saying, when you gotta go-you gotta go, takes on another meaning when gotta-time gets to show-time at the double-cold heights of thirty thousand feet. And who ever did hear of a Flying fortress with indoor plumbing all its own, even on the ground? Or any of its crewmen with weatherized equipment to use it, especially upstairs?

As you know Ed, I was the copilot of this neat bunch, and while I was never told I was an unnecessary item, it was my front office job only and always and all ways to make that man Richey look good; that was it. And never ever did I ever ever do latrine duty.

I remember way back in the late thirties in Seattle, while I was a high-schooler, and the early forts would loll around overhead with the look of a huge barn door pulling a skinny waspy tail (in the day before the dorsal fin), and I read articles several on this modernized goliath, that could go all the way there and half way back - nonstop - and proudly featuring a galley for lunch, a cot for the extra pilot, and a funnel and pot for all the boys, no girls allowed, No not once did I dream, day or night, that I had future in one of these.

It was maybe six years later when I climbed aboard one of Geiger Field's weary warriors, alas not to find either a galley, nor a cot, or a pot, just one lonely lone funnel ahid on the wall somewhere the bomber belly, nary not a dream come true.

The proper name for this dandy device was and is the relief-tube but the uninitiate and all girls were told it was the interphone, so if the wish is to call the pilot, stand close and speak to the tube.

My first-time experience with one of these gadgets was back when I was in Basic Flying School where we flew the Vultee BT-13. It had a couple of the things, one for the front seat and one for the rear and put in a place only a Texas Longhorn could use.

On this particular day, I was on a regular check ride doing all the maneuvers I was told by my worthy instructor. This guy was a sourpuddle second loo, an acid personality who is mad at mad and all because he's been stuck at herding cadets in a flying school. I know the feeling, it could only be worse than a tag as a forever pilot.

I had completed what I thought was a pretty smooth job of under-the-hood instruments, when he burnt my ears with a blip blast in the interphone, spouting, "If you're so dam good, lets see your slowroll."

Aha I mused, this I AM good at. But just when I had that little honey on her back, I wasn't too sure; for then whammo and all of a sudden and shouting "I got it", he split-essed to a dive straight down and we were pronto on the ground and rolling hells-bells flight line bound where before the stop he hit the ground running shouting as he passed, "you got it" and "I'll be back, you wait here!"

It was maybe an hour when I guess he remembered me, and returned all spic and span for proper dismissal (for I dasn't leave the plane before popping him a salute) and to explain that at the precise time we were on our back he was doused full measure by used suds from the plugged up relief tube. So from that time I would trust them not. My gosh, is there such a thing as a Rotor-Rooter Air Service?

There was more than one reason why the B-17 RT was the folderol nonsense of stupidity for use at any altitude below freezing, and/or whenever grouped with other planes, either friend or foe. Obviously no one dares leave his post sans

parachute or oxygen. And if one did, with chute in one hand and walk-around bottle the other, how to make the move, to "bleed the willow" or "moon the bare" through layers of shorts and longjohns (with or without backflap) and pants and flight suit, ah me, what else? You can dress rehearsal these maneuvers all year but its no go unless tried for true at 20 to 70 below. So pity the poor guy peeling the electric suit, and not to forget the fleece liner coat and the Mae West apron. What the heck, let er fly, oh so?

We, the guys what flew the big ones, didn't know, and hadn't been told, much of what we understood about living in the brittle sky of much lesser air, and little heat. More is needed than a warm heart.

I know somebody said that body gasses expanded seven times at 25 thousand feet. What this did to the bladder and other things wasn't a happy thing even for those with a hefty prostate and a nosey hose. My gosh, a mug upstairs of that mess hall MUD was worse than a drink of Airplane beer (just one and P-38).

Little did we know the "hows and whys" of the oxygen system, but lucky for us the oxy-mask masked all the stinko stench which was too much the likes of an old-time backyard one-holer. Wonder of wonders how could we survive without it the hours on hours insucking our own exhaust with no hint even of our own bad breath? Hail you gas mask!

So I would ask, howcum our big brass could expect us young bucks to fly high all the day with brimfull tanks of warmed and wet juices and in a climate only an ice cube would like, and not go aplumdum in our own scum? It was each men his own, for ary a pot and a window.

And everybody's choice was either wet the pants or a try scaring tne rabbit from the briars routine, through frozen zippers with ice-tong thumbs clung in boxing gloves. No fun in sop-diaper frost bite.

Somewhere from someone I'd heard it told of "pissing up a rope", but tail-gunner Jack Gesser did the same dummy thing in only his own neat way, he drained it down a string. And would't you know it that that wetted string (spanning pis from willow to the floor) became an instant icycle? Whee. And he did all this while down on his knees.

But the rope-de-rope whix on the knees grind wasn't for gunners Tom Hair and Milt Simpson nor Radiogun Milt Lane, noway. Their way was the easy way, a quick-freeze puddle right on to the floor, then a stomp into chunks and quick toss to overboard.

There were options to string dings or frozen floor though, like a big-enough can perhaps, or anybody's pocket, or as last resort, an unused trojan. However, it is a one mean try caging one bashful dragon into one rubber glove, one-slip and it's one royal flush.

Rumor had it that ball-turret gunner Chuck Schaefer rode first class in his downstair penthouse happily equipped with his very own fur-lined funnel deluxe. This feature he shared with no one.

And it was no rumor that Ace bombardier Bob Winnerman possessed his own private urinal up in the nose. His funnel

was not a funnel but a trough formed by the metal ring that fastened the plexi-glass to the airplane body. It had a perpetual flush activated by one wee weep-hole at the bottom of the trough. Sadly for him, result was a peed-green stain on our Fort's olive belly, from her front to her ball-turret, and source of one odd-offal smell on the ground.

If all this wasn't enough to make for Bob's growing "I'm a nice guy" rep, there came the time when he stretched relations with nose partner Navigator Frank McKibbin way past deadline. This episode is cannily called "the saga of the G-map and the wet tin hat."

As the story goes, Bob one day, had the emergency of an unscheduled b.m. of all things, somewhere high in the sky on a mission day and maybe even in the heat of battle, who knows. The thing is, Bob claimed he could find no place to put the load except on Mac's dear radar map, which he had kyped while Mac obviously was napping.

It all gets unprintable when same was discovered (or was it "uncovered") by map-owner Mac, as casually and without a close look he unfolded it all. And that is when the man hit the fan!

Sound like fun? Just you wait until the closing scene, the next mission. Meantime Mac and Bob ain't talking.

It was Bob's custom (as head bombardier) during takeoff and the climb and until landfall, to languish comfortable up in his nest in the nose, sunning or snoozing or reading a funny book, his only big duty to warm up his toggle and trigger fingers.

When time came to don his flak helmet and he piped on the interphone, "Hey Mac, toss me my tin hat," the whole crew heard the first line of a two line scene, just like radio.

The second line was also Bob's. It came but an instant after the first. And it was loud. So loud it smelled loud. End of broadcast.

Bob was speaking again, that was obvious. And in his way, so was Mac, he even had the last word. Seems that on the way up, Mac and in need of relief, made use of Bob's tin hat. And by the time that Bob called for it, there was a good sized ice ball asloshing about.

Radio robbed us all of spying our dear Bob over the non-chalant cool-man-duke, kerplod that brawny brine all over his curly head.

Sad to say, the merry import of this festivity had to wait until the mission was done about a half a day later. Then, oh happy day!

Not one of the nine other members of the crew was kind enough to sympathize with Sir Robert. None could figure if he'd been baptized by firewater, or was crowned prince of the nightcrawlers, or enjoyed but a brisk wallow in a cool golden shower.

But be what may be, he didn't come close to grab honors the hero of this crew, not really. He may have been full of it, but fell some short of THE big time defecating master of this scrap-crap outfit.

The high award went hands down to the skipper of this grand ark of the space cellar, head (pile-it) pilot, John Richey.

Honors don't come easy to a cockpit dweller. He has no gun, nor even a paddle for up the creek. It's he those bogeys throw rocks at, and to defend himself, he can only pucker-up-on his own dear bung.

John's big day hatched in the usual manner of an ordinary combat mission, in no way different than any of our twenty-five missions we flew. Only thing was, he should never have been allowed off the turf that morning, he was one sick turk, but sick call? Not for John, no.

He was yet aboil from the big chief's chewing him, over the time we aborted our number three mission; the inference being his spinal-bones were color lemon the gutless, no nutter the charge untrue.

But John was no chicken, he neither cackled nor crowed, but he'd not plead belly-ache with a mission to fly. So off we go, we did.

It was when we had climbed to ten-thousand feet, where decreased atmosphere pressure begins to comingle a man's insides, and the time came for oxygen masks, that John took on the pale-face of an s.o.s.

From the looks of him, it was hard to tell which would be first, upchuk? or downchuk? It was plain to see, this was gotta go time.

So I asked him, "You wanna abort? Let's go back", and he roared, "Hell no, and that's NO", as he shot from his seat and went looking I guess, for Mac's G-map or maybe Bob's tin hat. Instead though, he had gone to the bomb bay where he loosed a glut-load of loose geese all over a full bomb load of ready-to-go five-hundred-pounders.

Suddenly (without knowing where he had gone and by the time we'd dumb through 12 thousand) I'm thinking, this here's one big stinky-winket, where in hell's John? On ajohn I hope, but his chute is yet under the pilot seat and his oxy-mask? oh no, he didn't use that for upchuk?...downchuk?...omigosh ohmy...methinks it time to punt.

Good thing I didn't, I'd probably drop the snap. But in our case today, good news came in pairs. In my preoccupation with herding the bird, at the same time wondering if John got any on him, I failed to note the formation had ceased the climb and was now descending.

At the precise same time, I was startled to find dear John, only partly garbed but looking like an all-night Schlitz party... but now pale Budweiser, aclimbing stiffly back in the head saddle left seat.

It was a mixed feel when was heard the mission was scrubbed, and with great feeling, John said too loud, "Oh great! and WHO's the guy ashlushing off those stinking bombs?"

And so it was, this officer and gentleman, and number one combat bomber pilot, with flair and great skill, hosed and

hosed whilst his most loyal crew, and well out of range har-moanized the old ditty of the guy who crawled from the pit all covered with sweet violets. But John? He only said if your pants are down and you can't find a pot, any old tub will do, end of quote.

Tom Helman

## Letters to the Editor

Dear Ed,

The officers pictured on page 8 of the newsletter, shaking hands with Frank Walls, is my husband Capt. Charles Baker. I have this picture, and as I remember, it was supposed to have been taken in England after Charles's last mission. He was killed September 25, 1953 in a B-29 accident near Eilsen AFB, Alaska, where we were stationed.

We had three sons, Steve, Rick and Bob. Steve became an Army Major, serving in Vietnam and Korea.

Charles was navigator on Frank's crew, along with Jesse Kirby, co-pilot, and Jim Cooper, bombardier.

Best wishes to you and all old friends in the 385th.

Sincerely,

Mary (Baker) Behm





Dear Ed,

My wife, Mavis, and I want to add our thanks to the many others that you have received for the outstanding job you do in producing the Hardlife Herald! All who come to our home enjoy reading our copies as they learn about our life and times with the 385th.

Enclosed is a picture of our crew that turned up in the attic. It seems that Howie Schwartz, ball turret, and I are the only ones who have kept in touch with each other! He did learn a few years ago that radio operator Dick Swanda had died. All efforts to contact the others have been unsuccessful. If anyone can provide us with leads to the missing, we will be most grateful.

I also enclose a very good picture of the famous ship "Rum Dum". It should make a good addition to your file. Our crew had a special affection for "Rum Dum" because we flew our first mission together as a full crew in that ship. It took place on September 26, 1944; target oil refinery at Bremen, Germany; flak moderate but very accurate. Took several hits; bombed PFF. John Kerner our waist gunner and unofficial photographer took this picture of Rum Dum in action - date unknown. He had copies made for each of us to remind us of our first full crew mission. We thought it was a nice gesture! Who can claim that combat crews are not sentimental people? The third picture enclosed shows the "Cherokee Kid" guiding us safely home after we were shot up pretty good on January 5, 1945 mission to Kaiserlawton, Germany marshalling yard. If I knew where to send a copy, I'd be glad to mail it to the proper fighter group organization! This picture should make a good addition to your file, so I'd sure like to thank the pilot.

The article by Commander Daniel F. Riva "Radar comes to the 333 B.S." in the December 1994 issue of the HLH was very interesting! It was also very personal because number one, I came to the 385th as a radar bombardier-Navigator who was trained at Boca Raton, Florida and second, it was good to see the name of Tom A. Abernathy listed among the commander's original mickey operators. Tommy was on our original crew and did a good job of guiding us across the Atlantic. Although we were sorry to lose him to the 94th, we knew that the radar training he would receive was very important! Although we were closeby, we never got to visit each other!

Now that things are quieting down after my two operations this year, I plan to get some material off to the southern Heritage Press that they may find worthwhile for their revised history of the 385th.

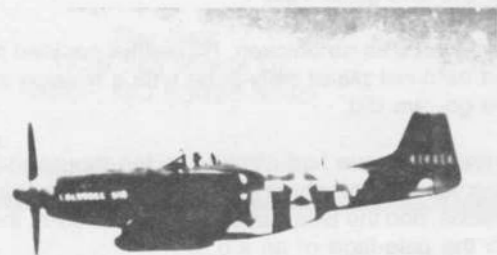
Again, congratulations on the super job you do on the Hardlife Herald publications!

Sincerely,

Captain Leslie F. Thompson  
2 Carriage Court  
Stony Brook, NY 11790



We flew our first mission together as a crew in this ship on September 26, 1944 - Tom Funk's crew (Target-Oil Refinery at Bremen, Germany "RumDum on a mission")



Picture taken by Waist Gunner John Kerney "Little Friend getting us home safely"  
Picture sent by Captain Leslie F. Thompson  
2 Carriage Court  
Stony Brook, NY 11790



Tom Funk's 551st Squadron Crew  
Rear L-R 2nd Lt Leslie Thompson-Bombardier, 2nd Lt Thomas Funk-First Pilot, 2nd Lt Calvin Wiche-Co-Pilot, 2nd Lt. Sam Rosenblum-Navigator  
Front L-R Sgt Howard Tennant-Tail Gunner, Sgt John Kerner-Waist Gunner, Sgt Richard Swanda-Radio Operator, S/Sgt Howard Swartz-Ball Turret, T/Sgt Preston Paul, Engineer-Top Turret.



Dear Ed,

In mid February I mailed over 1250 brochures to acquaint veterans and friends of the 385th with my book 'Fear-Faith-Courage'. The results have been great. I have mailed out 136 books as of the end of March.

The really gratifying things are the notes received as a book was ordered, and those written by readers. Many tell of their connection with the 385th, either as flight or ground crew members, or relatives of men who are deceased.

James Roud, tailgunner on Sherry's crew with the 551st tells me that he also watched as 'Mr. Lucky' was involved in a mid-air collision. We also shared the Dresden mission the next day.

Ken Laffoon remembers the 12/24/44 mission as his 'greatest' - his final one.

Jim Nicholls, past president of our association says he hopes to see us all in Omaha, as do many others. (Vivian and I sent our reservations early March).

Bob Silver called to tell me he was thrilled to see a picture of 'Willy' (Arnold Willingham). 'Willy' was transferred to our crew when Bob left for Lead-pilot training.

I originally wrote the book for our grandchildren, including many personal references. These seem to have struck a chord with many of those who have read them. All of the descriptions, stories, records, pictures, news articles and illustrations portray the times and my involvement in them.

If it encourages others to tell children and grandchildren some of their life-stories I would certainly encourage them to do so. (while there is still time).

Future generations need to know the facts of the time, not a watered-down version as prepared by 'new-age' (historians).

Regards

Willard Richards

Dear Mr. Stern,

In your last Hardlife Herald on page 8 is a picture of Frank Walls with ???? - the ? is Major Williston Bunting - Group Flight Surgeon for the 385th. Bill recognized himself - and wanted me to write you.

Bill had a horrendous stroke 21 years ago - but his cheerful courage is remarkable. He enjoys the home we've been in almost 50 years and especially the grandchildren.

Sincerely,

Alice Bunting  
1231 West 62nd Street  
Kansas City, MO 64113

Dear Mr. Stern,

My husband Charles Pease, belonged to the 548th stationed at Great Ashfield, and flew missions on the "Fighting Cock", Capt. Rummons, pilot; George Webb, Navigator. He was on the shuttle raid to Regensburg in August of 1943 and observed the anniversary date every year.

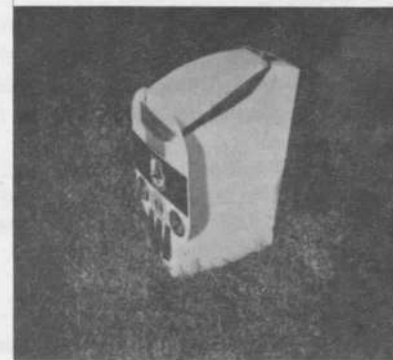
Charles and I met in Watford three days after he arrived in Bovingdon. We married the following April 4/4/44. We had a very happy marriage and last year celebrated our 50th wedding anniversary.

Charles was healthy all of his life, interested in "Ham" radio operating, also enjoyed 23 years of retirement. The 7th of February he was diagnosed with cancer, and died of heart failure due to cancer on the 25th. We were together to the end, he didn't suffer and I am going to be very lonesome without him.

I hope you will continue to send the Hardlife Herald. I enjoy reading it.

Sincerely,

Pamela J. Pease  
582 Middle road  
Caledonia, NY 14423



Dear Ed,

I called Southern Heritage Press of St. Petersburg, FL to order a copy of the 385th Bomb Group History. This is the book Bill Varnedoe has been instrumental in getting to the publishers.

Mr. Kennedy of Southern Heritage Press told me that as of now, they are holding about 100 reservations. They need at least 200 before they can go to press. I strongly urge our members to send in their order now, so we will be able to add this book, on our 385th B.G., to the material covering our wartime experiences.

Let's get this published.

Sincerely,

Bob Valliere

Hi Ed,

Seems like I read in a recent Hardlife about the bombing raid on the 385th..since my diary entry about it was dated May 23, 1944 I also called Joe Pritchard, our crews Navigator to get his input. He said: "The last time I saw you after the bombs starting falling; you were trying to bust through a solid stone wall in the locker room." He said, "I had spotted an air raid shelter (didn't know there was one) and I headed for it."

Here is my diary entry: May 23, 1944. I finally got my 2nd mission in today. We bombed the Rail Road yards in Chaumont, France using #1000 G.P. (6).. The mission was a milk run. The real excitement was provided earlier when a lone Jerry dropped a string of bombs parallel to the briefing area. We had just finished briefing and were in our locker room changing when we heard this ever increasing crescendo or shriek of falling bombs. It was my first and only experience of being on the receiving end. When the shriek ended and explosions started we were too stunned to do anything for a few seconds. Evidently the Jerry was after the personell. He must have known our briefing time. He made a hit on a hanger with two B-17's and all the time I was running from the scene I could hear ammunition going off. He had a beautiful aiming point because the hanger was all lit up..the doors could not be closed for some reason. This was so ironic because we made sure all curtains were drawn in the barracks.

We had heard a plane buzzing around previously but thought it was one of ours. He made just one pass but it was enough.

Later one of the Brass made the remark that the bomber had been very un-lucky because although he wiped out a hanger and two ships; just a few more yards he would have wiped out most of the base flying personell.

Dorn Jordan 548th

Dear Ed,

Appreciating the difficulties experienced in trying to obtain a good photograph of the stained glass window at All Saints, Great Ashfield, I made a pen and watercolor drawing of the window in order to capture the detail lost by flash photography and poor lighting conditions.

I have enclosed a copy for you and I will gladly send a free copy to any member who would like to have one if they care to write to me at the address on this letter.

Very sincerely yours,

Vance Pennington  
17 Ashdown Court  
Cedar Road  
Sutton  
Surrey  
SM2 5DG  
ENGLAND

PS Ed -1 thought you might like to know that I have at last been accorded the status of citizen of the United States of America as a right of birth. It has taken over 30 years to achieve this status which was granted by the State Department, Washington DC, on Thursday 27 April 1995. Needless to say, I am absolutely delighted.



Dear Ed & Jane,

Much to our disappointment we find that our health is controlling our trip to Omaha and must say many thanks for the invitation to your house and more so as I expect your house at your request would have been the first to visit.

I thought I was in for a slice of that turkey you had in your hands in the H.L.H.

I can only repeat that it would have been a great pleasure to have been able to meet up with the various folks to whom we write and of course all the others too, on their home ground.

Both Peggy and I trust you are both enjoying good health and with a bit of luck we may meet up with you and Jane next year.

Just once again our Very Sincere thanks to you both and our Best Wishes,

Leo and Peggy Gordon.



Dear Ed,

In the latest "Hardlife Herald" there was a comment about me by one of your correspondents, Bob Bensing. I am surprised that anyone would recall me..... after 50 years.

I had a top flight lead crew, and we had 25 lead missions to our credit. Now that some one has remembered me I would like rest of crew to take a bow:

CP Bill Parker  
 Nav: Guy Guillot  
 Bomb: Bill Bell  
 Engr: Joe Sarmoksnis  
 Radio: Ed Kostick  
 Waist: Howard Duff

Where, oh where have they all gone? I have tried to locate but to no avail.

See you in Omaha

Sincerely,

Bill Wray  
 4917 Ravenwood Dr. #1745  
 San Antonio, TX 78227

Dear Ed:

Many thanks for all the hard work you and others do on publishing the "Hardlife Herald." I continue to be amazed at all the things I missed seeing or whatever even when right there. Sort of busy most of the time just keeping in formation and stuff like that.

It's getting close to the 50th anniversary of Dec. 24th, 1944 mission. Had been grounded due to bad weather for many days. Crews were eager to get up and help the ground troops according to my memory. On this mission I think the 548th was leading the group and according to information in Willard Richard's book, the 385th was #3 group behind General Castle. Capt. Bill Wray was pilot on the lead crew and when his deputy lead had to return due to some malfunction, Bill called us up to fly the mission on his right wing. Shortly thereafter the lead group and General Castle's aircraft were hit by fighters. I clearly remember seeing this.

One thing that occurred in reading the Dec. 1994 newsletter was that it might be fairly easy to do and not too expensive to get a good professional photo of the stained glass window in Great Ashfield's All Saints Church. Am sure many missed even seeing the church while there, plus may not have the opportunity for a return visit. Is hard to believe the church dates clear back to the 13th century. (Getting close to the time of my ancestor King Richard I). Wish I had known more about history and such things when in school.

Sincerely

Bob Bensing

Dear Ed,

The copy of the "Hardlife Herald" for Feb. 1995 is of special interest to me. the P-51 silhouette on page 9 brought back fond memories for me. As a member of the 385th on detached service I flew the P-51 with the 3rd Scout Force on my second combat tour during the later part of 1944 early 1945. Just as our B-1 7 was our best bomber, our P-51 was our best fighter - it was a sweet flying machine!

In mid 1944 when the 8th conceived the scouting forces to fly ahead of the bomber streams and scout out weather, enemy activities and the target, the scout forces became something of a bastard outfit, flying a fighter groups P-51 s but assigned to their home bomber group, thus the 385th consisted of not only B-1 7 pilots but also P-51 pilots for a few months until the scout forces received their own TOs after having proven themselves. The scouts were all ex-bomber pilots so they were aware of the problems in flight that faced the bomber pilots.

The 385th contributed at least four bomber pilots, that I am aware of, to the Third Scout Force, V.W. Masters, Commander of the 3rd Scout Force, E.R. Grabowski, A.M. Klasinski and O.V. Lancaster. Each Air Division had it's own scout force.

The second item of interest is the article on page 20 "Ian's Wartime Tribute". I flew that mission and remember the shooting started as we were preparing for landing. Though this was the 311th mission for the USAAF, do you have information as to the mission number for the 385th or the date.

Enclosed is a copy of my picture in a P-51 cockpit.

Sincerely,

Anthony Klasinski  
 7933 S. Natchez Ave.  
 Burbank IL 60459-1737



A few P-4 7s cavorting around a B-1 7-  
 from Ian's collection.



Dear Ed,

While spending the winter in Florida, Nancy and I met with regulars Weikerts and Pettengers. George and Jim Hruska joined us for the Super Bowl party at John & Ruth Pettenger's.

On the way north, Nancy and I stopped at the temporary office of the 8th Air Force Heritage Museum, Savannah. We spent some time with Wayne Corbett, Director of Public Affairs, who explained the progress made so far. He showed the artifacts being received weekly from all veterans of the 8th.

The architects model shows what a fantastic facility this will be. Surely every 8th Air Force veteran will want to be associated with this fine and lasting tribute to the 8th Air Force.

The dedication is for April/May, 1996. We should consider having our Group Reunion in Savannah.

Would you print the enclosed membership application?

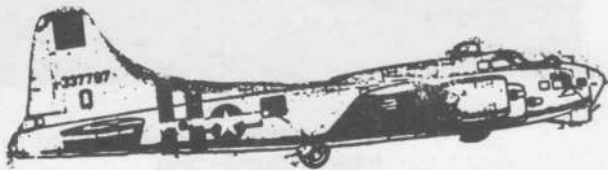
We had some flurries of snow today April 5, unusual for Connecticut, but I guess common in Fargo.

Regards to Jane and till then, all the best.

Bob Valliere  
18 Whiting Farm Rd  
Branford, CT 06405



Back Row L-R: Ruel Weikert, Bob Valliere, George Hruska  
Front Row: John Pettenger



Bob Valliere & Wayne Corbett

Dear Ed,

Here are pictures from Ensham Hall Rest Home near Oxford. There are not too many exciting memories only good food, relaxation and a break from fighting the war.

Memories of the 200 mission party are also vague. There was a carnival as shown in the pictures. I think Glen Miller was there playing for the group in one of the hangars. Jimmy Doolittle may have been there, but my memory of fifty years ago has faded away.

**EDITOR'S NOTE:** He was!

There are some nose art pictures and two pictures of crews, the first picture is of Bob Kearin's crew with which I flew 33 missions. The other is Wilte Lehman's crew with which I finished my last two missions to finish with a total of 35.

Regards,

Bart Dickey



This is our crew. We trained at Pyote, TX and came to the 385th together. I flew 33 missions with them.

L-R: Richard Mulzhan (Radio), Matthew Gallagher (WG), Kenneth Ray (WG), Russell Sharp (E), Bob Kearin (P), Howard Werdehoff (BG), Oscar Winniford (TG), Bart Dickey (CP), John Walsh (B), Paul McDonald (N).



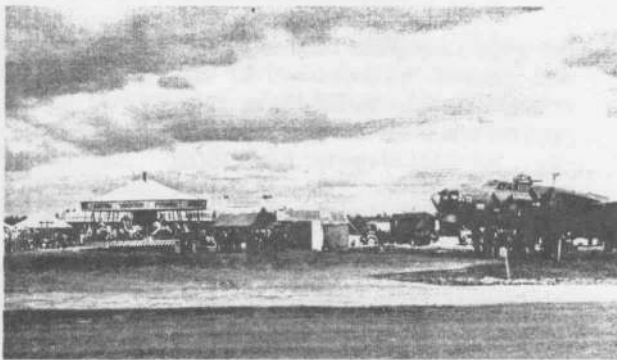
This is the crew I flew 2 missions with to complete 35 Back  
L-R: Lehman (P), B. Dickey (CP), Branch, McKee, Jerry Thacker.

Front L-R: Peterson, Klosterman, Geyer, Nepsa

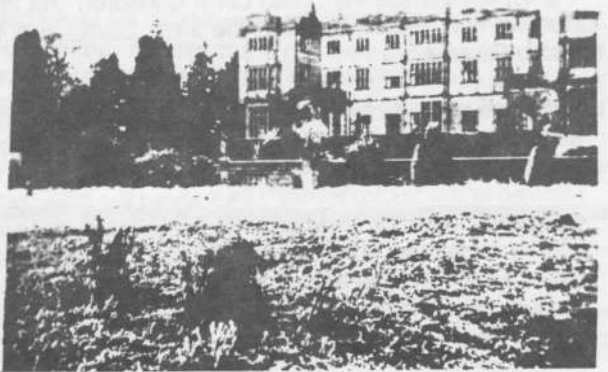


200 Mission Party, October 1944 - Rollin Pennies for prizes.

2nd from right - Jerry Thacker  
3rd from right - Bart Dickey



200 Mission Party, October 1944  
the plane is "Honky Tonk Sal"



Ensham Hall - Rest Home near Oxford, England. Private home used for R&R for war weary air crews.



Charles W. MacCauley at Ensham Hall



Paul McDonald (L) & John Walsh (Rearin's Crew) at Ensham Hall, December 27, 1944 to Jan 4, 1945.

Dear Ed,

I would like to make a few comments to add to those made by Daniel F. Riva in his excellent article about the 333rd Bomb Squadron at the 94th Bomb Group. This write-up, in the December 1994 issue of the "Hardlife Herald" (pgs.

4 & 5), concerned the "Lead Crew Squadron" for the 4th Combat Wing which included the 94th, 385th and 447th Bomb Groups.

I was one of the radar (Mickey) navigators that was assigned to the 549th Bomb Squadron, 385th Bomb Group, but was placed on detached service with the 333rd at the 94th. I arrived at the 333rd in July 1944 about the time Dan Riva was preparing to be reassigned and was there until approximately November 1944 at which time the detached service people returned to their respective Bomb Groups. All combat missions were lead missions for the 385th, either Squadron, Group or Wing Lead. Two other names that I remember that could be added to Riva's list are Natal D'Andrea and William Counts.

It is true that the radar equipment was not first rate and we didn't always drop them in the barrel, but with saturation bombing, all we needed was to be close to be effective. Since most of our combat missions were not visual over the targets during the 1944/1945 (Fall and Winter) and most of our bombing was achieved using radar, as I recall, and since it is generally believed that the 385th had an outstanding achievement record, it appears evident that we did a pretty good job with the radar.

Yet, as I remember, radar operators in our group were generally given no recognition for doing a good job. This is perhaps reflected by the fact that no mickey operator in our group ever made Captain as in other groups. Morale among the mickey crew members was not great. Many of our senior officers compared the radar with pinpoint bombing using the Norden Bombsight and considered radar to be an inferior method. I was personally told by a senior officer in our group (who I will not name) that the radar bombing was used only because it was directed by higher headquarters. This attitude persisted to the end, notwithstanding two facts; We couldn't have bombed the target except with radar for most of the combat missions we flew, and our 385th combat record of achievement turned out to be outstanding overall.

With the development of more and more sophisticated radars, the Air Force, after WWII, made radar bombing its mainstay. It has become the primary method of bombing in our present strategic bombing fleet.

Sincerely,

Howard Director  
22C Pilgrim Drive  
Westford, MA 01886

Dear Ed,

As I was visiting my wife in the nursing home, a man asked if anyone knew who owned the truck with the license plate "385th". I acknowledged that I was the owner. He said, "Does that mean the 385th Bomb Squadron in England?" and I said "yes, it does." This was the first person I met that had any knowledge of the 385th. He stated that he knew you from a past job that he had with the government. It was a nice surprise meeting and talking with Allen Holtman as he knew a lot about the 385th and also about the bases

we had in Russia. I was assigned to a base in Poltava after volunteering when Charles Smith talked to me about it. He was my transportation officer of the 549th.

This meeting was a surprise because I had just received the December issue of the *Hardlife Herald* and I enjoyed the article about the bases in Russia. Brought back a lot of memories. Did you know that Russia was one country where the American soldiers were fingerprinted and a history of their families were recorded? After the war was over, we started to receive the communist paper "The Daily Worker." Often wondered how many subscribed to it.

Hope Allen Holtman joins the group. I gave him a couple of editions of the paper.

Sincerely,

Ray Baer  
1739 San Miguel Ln  
Fenton, MO 63026-3245

**Editor's Note:**

Ray died in April 1995

Dear Ed:

Am enclosing a story which was written about WWII food drop to Holland, which was written by my 11 year old grandson Casey Koon.

He won first prize in his school and we are very proud of his accomplishment.

Am sending a few pictures and hope you can use the material. Looking forward to seeing you and your wife in Omaha.

With best regards,

Bill Koon  
104 Wedgewood Drive  
Lafayette, LA 70503

**EDITOR'S NOTE:** A really professional piece of writing, Casey. Keep up the good work. We're all proud of you.

Casey Koon  
Grandson of Lau & Bill Koon  
and  
Stan & Lita Gall







## 50TH ANNIVERSARY WORLD WAR II FOOD DROP MY TIES TO HISTORY

By Casey Koon

### ABSTRACT

The purpose of this project is to show how I am tied into history. My Oma (grandmother on my mother's side) and my Papa (grandfather on my father's side) share a tie in history.

My Papa heard that the Nazi's were invading all parts of Europe. He joined the U.S. air Force. My Oma was starving in the Netherlands. My Papa dropped food to them, saving their lives.

Twenty five years later, these two people were talking about World War II and discovered that Papa had saved the lives of Oma and her family. My Oma's daughter (my Mom) married Papa's son (my Dad) and together they had me. I am tied into their history.

### REPORT

World War II was terrible. Hitler planned to take over the whole world. This war has a special meaning to me. First let me tell you about the history.

On May 10th, 1940, German forces invaded Belgium, Netherlands and Luxembourg. Luxembourg was occupied without any fighting. The Netherlands and Belgium declared war. Winston Churchill now replaced the aging Neville Chamberlain as prime minister of Great Britain. The Allies sent troops into the Low Countries. The Dutch succeeded in remaining neutral, which means they did not take sides. The Germans attacked anyway without warning and bombed many cities. Queen Wilhelmina fled to London. There she formed a government in exile.

The Nazis all but starved people and deported many to labor camps in Germany. The Dutch underground resisted stubbornly with sabotage and surprise attacks. Some vessels

of the Dutch navy escaped and helped patrol the Allied supply lines. In 1942, Japan seized the Netherlands East Indies.

The liberation of the Netherlands began in September of 1944 when the Allies drove the Nazis from the Southern border. Nazi forces held the lower Rhine River until May 4, 1945, cutting dikes to slow the Allied advance.

Despite the utter hopelessness of the German cause, Hitler remained defiant. The Russians attacked Berlin on April 21, 1945. To escape capture by the Russians, Hitler committed suicide on the night of April 30, (my birthday).

On May 4th, General Montgomery received the surrender of the Germans in Denmark, the Netherlands, and Northwestern Germany. General Alfred Jodi signed a surrender at Reims May 7th. The War was over for the Netherlands.

History comes alive for my grandmother and me in the Netherlands where she lived during the war. She tells this story.

In 1944, war had been raging in Europe for four and a half years. My grandmother was a young woman of 21. The Germans took away everything that everyone had. They were eating soup that looked like dishwater after the dishes had been washed, that was cooked in a Central Kitchen. They also were fed a piece of bread every day. The Nazis would check everyday on them to see that they were not doing anything wrong. Rich people would come and invite their family to feed them once a week.

The Central Kitchen that had been making the soup closed down, then they had only a piece of bread every day. My grandmother's family prayed that they would die that night instead of slowly starving to death. That very night they were listening to the English radio when they heard that American planes were coming to drop food. They couldn't believe it!

The next morning they heard planes flying over. But that wasn't unusual. Their mother kept shouting out "The American planes are here! I see it by their emblems." She got a large towel and came shooting down the stairs and went outside in her slippers while the snow was there on the ground. She waved the towel at the airplanes so that they would drop food there.

She told the children to stay inside as she came home with a pillowcase full of crackers. (Oma's uncle somehow got hold of a can of Spam and nearly died after devouring such rich food.) Crackers were the only food they could digest. That night they had a feast of crackers. It felt so good to have their stomach's full. The crackers were a miracle! It was a miracle that they had lived through all of this terrible nightmare.

Twenty five years later, as their oldest daughter was preparing to marry, the new in-laws met and visited. During the conversation, World War II came up. amazingly the father-in-law had served in the U.S. Air Force and was involved in the American Food Drop of May 1945.

This is his story.

Papa always wanted to fly. That is why he joined the U.S. Air Force. But he found out that since he needed glasses, he could not be a pilot.

My Papa was stationed at Great Ashfield, England. From there his group flew bombing missions over Germany. He loaded bombs into their squadron's B-17 named "Latest Rumor" and "Ruby's Raiders". This was heavy work. Toward the end of April, 1945, they knew the war was over. Some of Papa's friends had already gone home. Papa was told that he could fly on one of the food drop missions into the Netherlands. They had to build a wooden scaffold in the hold of the airplane to dump the food. After they loaded the food which was flour, bacon, spam and crackers, they took off to dump the food.

When they came to the airport they were flying about 400 feet with the flaps and wheels down. He saw people all around the airport waiting for the food, waving flags and even long underwear. Sitting up in the Plexiglas nose of the airplane with the navigator, he could see everything. Papa wondered if the people could salvage anything. It was dropped from 400 feet up. Papa says that he saw one man chasing the airplane. A bag of flour was dropped and hit him on the head. They watched the man until they saw him get up, pick up the flour and walk away. Most of the people waited until the food was clear of the plane before they picked it up.

"We didn't know that the people were starving. We saw that the dikes were broken and many places were flooded. We saw lots of flowers. This was very pretty. There was no place to land the planes, the airport was all bombed up", he remembers.

"It was a strange feeling to be dropping food instead of bombs. Everyone on the plane was restrained. I didn't feel like a hero. I felt like I was on vacation. We had been working so hard before that," he said. Papa remembers many of the people that flew in the squadron. Major Frank Walls flew a food drop mission with the chaplain, Scherer. He was out of the flight pattern where he got fired upon. (He even got credit for the last combat mission of the war because his plane got hit.)

The 385th Bombardment Group dropped more than 100 tons of food to the starving people of Holland during the first seven days in May 1945. The 385th was officially recognized as the last 8th Air Force unit to be fired upon in the European Theatre of Operation.

Thank GOD I am alive. My Papa saved my Oma's life.

#### SPECIAL MISSIONS MAY 1945

- May 1 - Food Drop to Rotterdam - 40 planes
- May 2 - Food Drop to Rotterdam - 41 planes
- May 2 - Food to Hilversum\*/Utrecht - 41 planes
- May 3 - Food drop to Amsterdam, Schiphol and Vogelenzang - 40 planes
- May 5 - Food to Schiphol/Haarem - 40 planes
- May 6 - Food to Schiphol/Haarem - 38 planes
- May 7 - Food to Schiphol A/F - 38 planes
- May 15 - 449 POW to France & England - 15 planes
- May 16 ■ 600 POW (French) to Chartres - 20 planes
- May 18 - 721 Allied POW to England - 24 planes
- May 20 - 720 Allied POW to England - 24 planes
- May 25-730 French Civilians to B-55 - 31 planes

#### COMMENT

The 296 combat missions listed through 20±<sup>0</sup> April 1945, accounted for the dropping of 18,494 tons of bombs on Europe. In addition, several tons of weapons were dropped to members of the Underground Forces in Europe.

During the first seven days in May 1945, 385th aircraft dropped more than 100 tons of food to the starving people of Holland. Flights (\*) 385A, B & C the food drop at Hilversum. 385A led by Major Frank B. Walls flying in B-17G, S/N 44-6136, was fired on by German forces using 20 mm guns. Four aircraft were hit, two with major damage and two with minor. Thus the 385th was officially recognized as the last 8th Air Force unit to be fired upon in the European Theatre of Operations.

During the last 15 days of May 1945, 385th aircraft, flying from Linz Air field, Austria, returned 2490 Allied prisoners of war to bases in France and England, including 730 Displaced French civilians.

Mackinlay Kantor, well-known novelist and poet who won a Pulitzer Prize in 1956 for "Andersonville" was sent to England by the Editor of the Saturday Evening Post and the Country Gentlemen to report on the war.

Here's what the Editor, Ben Hibbs, said about Kantor's efforts.

I couldn't be sure how Mack would perform as a war correspondent, but I had bought and published much of his fiction in the Post, and before that in the old Country Gentleman, and I suspected that the fire within him, his towering love of country, was something the American people could use in those anxious days. We sent him to England, and he attached himself at once to the bombers, lived with the men, flew with them through terrifying enemy skies. Pretty soon his "pieces" began to come in bits of writing that stirred the soul and brought tears and pride to millions of people.

There was, for example, one article in the form of a letter to his small son, Timmy. With simple eloquence, Mack told how it feels to fly on and on toward target with flak bursts rocking the ship and the enemy fighters diving at you. His "letter" had within it the drum-beat of old.

And then there was the day when Mack's epic poem showed up in our offices. When it reached my desk and I saw that it was verse, I thought, "Oh, God! What has this unpredictable guy done now?" Poetry we usually buried in the filler spots way back in the magazine. But after I read it, I lifted the manuscript tenderly, took it in to Bob Fuossk, my second-in-command, and placed it on his desk without saying a word. Fifteen minutes later Bob came into my room, and there was the glint of excitement in his eyes. "Let's give it the works," he said.

It was the poignant true story of a gay, cocky, tow-haired American kid who bailed out of his shattered B-17 and pulled his ripcord too soon. His parachute touched the flaming mass of the ship, caught fire, and he plunged to his death in the fields of France. We blew Mack's poem up into large type, gave it two pages up front among the articles and

stories, and illustrated it with a starkly powerful painting by Robert Riggs. And when it reached our readers-it was titled One Chute Burned and published in the December 4, 1943, issue of the Post-the response was the sort of thing an editor dreams about. The letters poured in-letters of gratitude and pride in the valor of American Youth.

**EDITOR'S NOTE:** Our appreciation for poetry runs more to the "Roses are Red, Violets are blue" sonnets, but this moving piece makes a deep impression. Read it once, then read it again. It was sent to us by Ian Hawkins.

## ONE CHUTE BURNED

By MacKinlay Kantor - Somewhere in England

Up there on oxygen,  
Up above everywhere  
Ten of you trained and projected for bombing,  
Wrapped in your mission and in dural metal;  
Eighth Air Force Bombers - the Heavy command.  
Secret the numbers of wing and squadron:  
Busy with guns ...Let us open the breeches  
Of the big Fifties, the hardy machine guns -  
Let us go back to the Gunnery School.

First Postition Stoppage:

Failure to feed,  
Failure to fire.  
(Did you burn up , Bailey?)  
Broken the striker,  
Broken the firing pin  
Or broken the firing-pin extension,  
Or broken the belt-holding pawl arm.

Faulty ammunition,  
Faulty this or that;  
A broken scar;  
Something jammed or broken:  
The good clean steel  
That never before had broken, and now broke  
And let that single Messerschmidt come in.

No one at fault. Not you.  
Not another one of the gunners,  
Nobody back at the base.  
None of the ground crew.  
No one who helped you vicarious -  
No one who wished you victorious -  
Nor the man nor the woman back in the States  
Who constructed that piece for the gun.  
(Did you burn, was it you,  
The chute on fire?)

So this was the way: I shall tell how it happened,  
As others hard-eyed of the squadron observed.  
Now, wisely I tell you, young Bailey, I tell you  
You could never observe, you were busy as hell!  
Still flying behind in such perfect formation,  
Not far from the wing tips of others that flew -  
The bombing run done, and the bomb bay wide open,  
The block-busters puffing in patterns beneath -  
Down into that mix-up, that mingles illusion  
Where dozens of bursts had already appeared.  
Then the swoop, and the fighter deflecting on in -

O swift like a fish, he is trout coming in,  
Drawn taut by the line of his own tracer bullets -  
An ME-ONE-TEN, with his two motors mooing -  
And so he got in, and he put all his Twenties,  
He put his death into the B-Seventeen.

So you turned, lazy-daisy, all ten of you people,  
The living and dead, with four motors asleep,  
And one of them stringing its wet wash of flame.  
(Did you burn, and if not you, who was it that burned?)  
Flame hanging-across, torn behind you in laundry:  
Slips of fire, skirts, scarves and a kerchief of flame.  
While everyone else went away, went away,  
Still keeping invincible in their formation,  
Conducting their war by immutable rule.  
And you gentlemen turned, jumbled round; the ball turret  
Transformed to mid-upper. And endless you hung there  
Before the B-Seventeen started on down.

Did you burn, did you burn up, O Bailey the Kid?  
One of you went with all haste to the ground.  
Seven white parachutes, now morning glories  
(Lilies of France on the Fourth of July  
Over Nantes the poor city. O lilies of France,  
Sorrowing prisoner, swallowing tears.)

But one was on fire - a little flame chewing,  
Eating the glossiest silk of the chute.  
Who was it had waited not near long enough?  
Who let his hand tremble too eager and wild?  
Who managed his handle too soon, so the cord  
Tossed open the fabric to kiss the high fire?  
Somebody's chute was a little red rose -  
Somebody's chute and his life were a crumple,  
Battle black crumple, all the way down  
Twenty-two thousand feet deep into Nantes.  
Six of you wistful and six of you sailing,  
Sailing and swinging,  
All the way down, four miles to the ground.  
Bailey. Who burned?

This is the way that I think of you always:  
Cocky and walking untrammelled and quick.  
Tough face and monkey mouth wrinkled and pert.  
Leather arms swaying, you walk at the base;  
Dingy gold bars on the loops of your jacket;  
Childish forever you swagger and sing.  
Always your cot with its rumpled gray blanket,  
Always your pin-ups with lingerie leer,  
Always your silken-limbed blondes on the wall,  
Always your tongue running loose, and some fellow  
Hauling you off of the bed on your fanny,  
All the way down to the floor with a bump.

All the way down  
To the checker-board Nantes!  
(Tell me, O Bailey, who burned?)  
All the way down to the barbed-wire fences -  
You, who said "Heil!" for a comical greeting -  
Down to the Achtung!" and 'Blitzspiel" you gabblea.  
Six of you drifting, three dead in the ship,  
Or battered so badly they couldn't bail out, .  
And another, lone flower, a'burning.

Somewhere forever among the cloud strata,



Somewhere aloft of the patterns and railroads  
 Off there we bomb and go bombing persistent.  
 Off there, a Mysti, you look up and hear us -  
 Secret and shapeless, names Missing in Action....  
 Ask for the news and I'll willingly tell you:  
 Driscoll has salted down twenty-two missions;  
 Webb has done his, he is through, he is home -  
 Drawing tall Webb, with his souvenir pistol,  
 He is alive and is gone back to Texas.  
 Springstun's still with us, and Bower, and Greene.  
 "Whisky" and "Whiskers" are living with Greene,  
 Barking and wagging back under his bed;  
 He gives them food from an old peanut can.  
 Otis is with you, and with you is Scott,  
 With you in blankness, with you in your limbo.  
 Bailey - who burned?

So, I will think, sitting silent in briefing,  
 So I will remember in looking at maps:  
 How did it happen, the thing that has happened?  
 Now I shall utter in whispers the failures:  
 How did that Messerschmidt do it to you?  
 Second Position; the broken ejector....  
 Incorrect oil-buffer setting, or bolt track  
 Burred and distorted to stop the smooth cartridge,  
 Or - Third Position - the burred cantilever...  
 Still, he came up and burst your hot motors,  
 All of his shells in the nose and the gas tanks,  
 All of his death in your B-Seventeen.

Hitler was shouting, ten years were forgotten:  
 Chancellor new of the Reichstag and Reich.  
 You, in the limitless void of Kentucky,  
 Played with your bombs on the Fourth of July.  
 Hitler remote, just a name in the papers -  
 Papers you would never read at your age.  
 You were nine, you were ten,  
 And you liked to read funnies....

Fourth of July; and you yell in Kentucky,  
 Shoot off your crackers and frighten the cats;  
 Wait for the rockets in dusk, and the candles,  
 Sparklers an flowerpots. Then you would sleep.  
 I didn't know you from Adam, child Bailey, ten years ago.  
 Then you would sleep with your yellow hair mussy -  
 Dream of the finger you fried with torpedoes -  
 Dream of the cap pistol popping so proudly,  
 And of the cherry bombs burst in the garden....  
 Old Mrs. Allan...you frightened her cat. Ten years ago.  
 Go to sleep in the past,  
 Bailey the Kid, on the Fourth of July.  
 But where sleep you now with the imps in your spirit?  
 And who was it dented the deck with his nostrils,  
 When his parachute blossomed with flame over Nante  
 Over Nantes, over France on the fourth of July,  
 Bailey.... who burned?



### THE MIGHTY EIGHTH AIR FORCE HERITAGE CENTER

P. O. BOX 1992, SAVANNAH, GA 31402

1-800-421-9428 (912)748-8888

#### MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

DATE:

NAME:  
 ADDRESS:  
 City:  
 State:Zip:  
 PHONE:

SPOUSE:

#### ANNUAL MEMBERSHIPS: (Check one)

- INDIVIDUAL \$20  
 FAMILY \$30  
 ALLIES/Out of USA \$35

#### LIFE MEMBERSHIPS:

- COMMANDER'S CLUB \$200- \$999  
 SUSTAINING MEMB ER \$1000- \$4999  
 ANNIVERSARY PATRON \$5000- \$9999  
 MIGHTY 8TH PATRON \$10,000 & UP

8AF UNITS & DATES:

SPECIAL INTERESTS (POW, GUNNER, SHOT  
 DOWN, MECHANIC):

POST-SERVICE ACTIVITY: \_\_\_\_\_

Please make checks payable to: The Eighth Air  
 Force Heritage Center. You may also use your  
 MasterCard, Visa, or American Express to  
 contribute and join.

Card Type:Exp:

Card #:

Signature:

IRS APPROVED 501 (C)(3) CORPORATION

Dear Ed,

During the "D" Day remembrance week, I had the rare privilege of flying a restored B-17G "Left Seat." around the San Francisco Bay area. With approval from three control towers, we made a low pass down each runway before landing. I am enclosing a photo from the local paper of the B-17 in flight. This was a rare experience. One other time I was allowed to fly the B-17G "Sentimental Journey" that belongs to the Confederate Air Force, only after becoming one of their colonels.

I completed the twenty seven mission tour with the 551 st Squadron with approximately 210 combat hours and no aborts. I started as co-pilot on Charles M. Davis' crew, then checked out as first pilot. I flew missions in "Shack Bunny" (see enclosed article), "Raunchy Wolf," "Winnie the Pooh" (Bum name, bum plane) and several other "F" and "G" models.

According to the mission numbers, many were in consecutive numerical order. I wonder if finishing twenty seven missions in four months, with no aborts, could be some sort of record, considering the period of time, number of losses and being winter time, all being factors that would slow the completion process.

I thought a report of this sort would be of interest to some of the members, especially CM. Davis, Bryce Moore, Frank Walls, Vincent Masters and others whose faces I still remember, but as the years have flown by, they say the memory is the second thing that fails.

Sincerely,

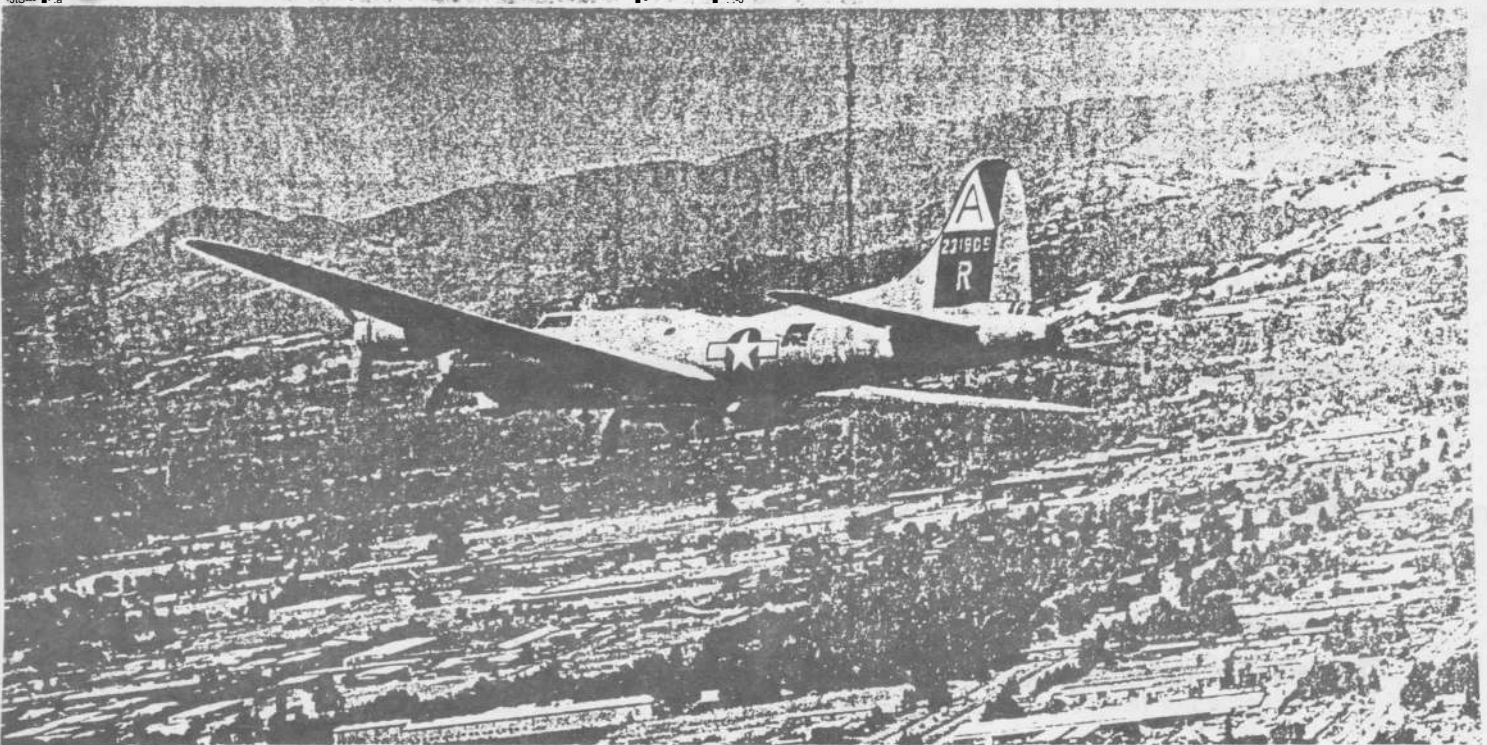
L.R. Fostmeier  
1626 4th Street  
Santa Rosa, CA 95404

**EDITOR'S NOTE:** Sorry to learn that your memory is the second thing that has failed, Larry.

Santa Rosa, California, Friday June 10, 1994 | 137th Year. No. 230c

25<t

**WARHORSE WINGS INTO SANTA ROSA**



JFF KAS LEE'S DEMOCH

**Big piece of history goes on display**

*A Boeing B-17G flown by Sonoma County contractor and World War II veteran, Larry Fostmeier, flies from Napa to Santa Rosa on Thursday. The newly restored plane is on a West Coast tour and will be at the Santa Rosa Airport. Tours are available for a donation of \$4 from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. today and Saturday. The plane was used in all areas of combat during World War II, said Bill Carpentier of the Redwood Empire Aviation Historical Society.*

# 385th BOMB GROUP UNIT HISTORY

This book will be approximately 200 pages and will consist of the history, personal remembrances and photos of the members of the 385th

This will be a limited edition, hard cover volume that will increase in value the minute the last copy is bound. Reserve your copy now. Anticipated publishing date, 8/95.

## 385th Bomb Group History *please print*

Book	Qty	Price	Total
385th Bomb Group Unit History		39.95	
Gold Foil Name stamped on cover		5.00	
(Florida Residents add 7% sales tax)			
Postage and handling (\$3.95 for 1st book \$2.50 for each additional)		Shipping	
		<b>Total</b>	



send to:

**385th Bomb Group History**  
**Southern Heritage Press**  
 PO Box 10937 St. Petersburg, FL 33733  
 (<<M>) 282-2823

Name(s) to be embossed on cover (up to 24 spaces)

**Payment: Check VISA Mastercard**

Name on Credit Card

Credit Card Number

Expiration date

Name

Street

City, State, Zip

Phone

This unit history, put together over several years by Bill Varnedoe, will include 146 crew pictures, most with individuals identified, 98 plane pictures including nose art, plus a history of the 385th (pre-combat and combat), many

air stories, really a complete volume that everyone will treasure. Orders should be sent in promptly - there'll be just one printing.

# 385 BGMA

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

**FORWARD & ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED**

Non-Profit Org.  
 U.S. POSTAGE  
 PAID  
 Fargo, North Dakota  
 Permit No. 1761

R 95  
 Joseph B. Koscinski  
 Rt 2 Box 21A  
 Stone Lake WI 54876-9533



# BULLETIN

# BOARD

## NOTICE

MSGT USAF Retired requests original squadron, group, etc. patches from WWII to the present. Greatly appreciated. Send to Jim Perry, 138 Manchester Road, Summerville, SC 29483.

## NOTICE

M/Sgt Allan P. Holtman (Retired) offers to place a floral tribute on the Headstone of 385th members who are buried in Jefferson Barracks National Cemetery. In 1995, he plans to do this on May 7 and again on Memorial Day. If anyone can identify any graves, please write Allan at 705 Menocina Ct-#12, Florissant, MO 63031-6093.

## NOTICE

## NOTICE

### EIGHTH AIR FORCE MEMORIAL U.S. AIR FORCE MUSEUM WRIGHT-PATTERSON AFB, OHIO

Will anyone who has personal knowledge and/or who attended the dedication ceremony on April 22, 1935, has pictures, and can give an up-to-date report on the above, contact George S. Hruska.

### ELDERLY MOBILITY

Our membership is VERY mobile--had 38 changes of address since the last Hardlife. Hope we made all the right changes--keep in mind that we print an issue every two months. If you don't get one after you've moved, let us know.



## HELP HELP HELP

Does anyone have the original or a copy of the Distinguished Unit Citation issued for the Regensburg and Zwickau missions. Send copy to George S. Hruska.

### HISTORIC AVIATION TOUR OF BRITAIN

From Aug. 28 to Sept. 11, an Anglo American History Productions group will travel in the UK. Itinerary includes visits to aviation museums and WW2 airfields, operational RAF and USAW Squadrons, HMS Victory, National Motor Museum, cathedrals, country pubs, plus London. Climax of the tour will be the Imperial War Museums Air Show at Duxford. Tour leader will be Air Marshall Ron Dick RAF (Retd). For details, call 703-492-8934.

### 1997 REUNION POSSIBILITIES

Ken Lafoon, who works one or two days a week in the 390th Hangar at the Pima Air Museum in Tucson writes to tell us that he can arrange a very special tour of Davis Monthan if we decide on Tucson for our 1997 Reunion. This would not be a tour offered to everyone--it'd be special for us who they recognize for what happened 50 years ago.

### "OL DOODLE BUG"

One of our British friends wonders if anyone knows how "Ol Doodle Bug" was chosen as a name for one of our planes. He bought a 1/144 scale kit of a B-17 and it had 385th markings and that name on it. Anyone who can help, please write Ron Durand, East View, 14 Preston Paddock, Rustington, West Sussex BN162AA, England. If anyone has a picture of Ol Doodle Bug, he'd give his eye-teeth for that, too.