

NEWSLETTER OF THE
385th BOMBARDMENT GROUP MEMORIAL ASSOCIATION



COMBAT UNITS

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 548th BOMB SQ.
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JUNE 1996

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THOUGHTS OF THE PRESIDENT

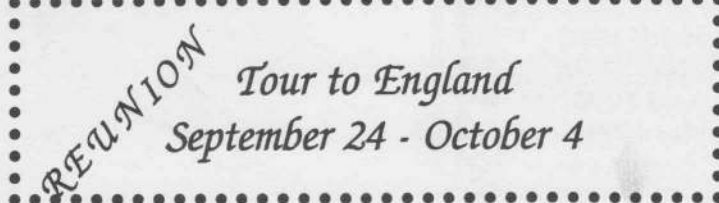
The 8th Air Force Heritage Museum was opened on May 13 & 14 in Savannah, GA (Pooler). The 385th was there in the persons of Milt Schalinsky, Jerry Donnelly, Hal Schrotter, Howard Richardson (who is also the President of the Mississippi State Chapter of the 8th Air Force Historical Society) and Bob Valliere. There may have been others but unknown to me. There should have been more of us among the 4500 who attended. A grand facility and should be seen.

I have arranged to have a display case for the 385th Bomb Group memorabilia in the Muesum. I urge members to send memorabilia to the Muesum and mark it for the 385th exhibit and include your name. We want to have an interesting and impressive exhibit. Send material to; Eighth Air force Heritage Museum, P.O. Box 1992, Savannah, GA. 31402. Bulky items to; intersection I-95 and U.S. Highway 80, Pooler, GA. Let's have a good show!

Plans are proceeding for the trip to England. Our English friends are anxious to see all of us again. You will be informed.

Tell then,

Bob Valliere, President



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CHAPLAIN JIM'S THOUGHTS

SUMMER GREETINGS FROM WET WASHINGTON!

I have been at a loss trying to come up with something to fill my space in the HLH. I want something that might help someone/anyone just a little. All I am able to think about is "change" so one more time I'm going to write about "change". Sorry. Three times and I promise I will change!!

Maybe it is because I am getting older (which no one can alter) and I am reading articles regarding aging but it seems the "wise ones" emphasize that we old duffers should be willing to change.

In a pamphlet I have in my files entitled "So We're growing Older" the author, John E. Beigert, writes about change. He quotes Bruce Barton's statement, "When you're through changing, you're through." This may be true but I think God's Holy writings can help us make good "changes". Not just jobs or our appearances but changes when we listen to the Ancient Preacher in Ecclesiastes 3:1-8 and knowing that God never changes. "For I the Lord do not change: therefore you, O sons of Jacob, are not consumed." Malachi 3:6.

Think about it and read these scripture references plus Ecclesiastes 8:1

Sincerely in love and peace,

Jim

A GUNNERS GRIEVANCE

I wished to be a pilot, you along with me,
But if we were all pilots, where would the Air Force be.
The pilot is just a chauffeur, his job to fly a plane,
It is we who do the fighting, although we don't get the fame.
It takes guts to be a gunner, to sit out in the tail,
When the messerschmitts are coming, and the bullets begin
to wail.
So if we all must be gunners, let us make this bet,
WE will be the best damn gunners, that Jerry ever met.

Author Unknown.

□ □ □ □ LIFE MEMBERS □ □ □ □

Geraldine Bush 317



- James W. Davis March 1996
- Lefty Lefferts L. Mabie Jr. March 1996
- Charles G. Flynn April 1996
- Russell C. Sharp May 1996

2406 Old Connecticut Path
Wayland, MA 01778

May 8 (VE Day), 1996

Ed Stern
Editor, Hardlife Herald
PO Box 2187
 Fargo, ND 58108

Dear Ed,

I can shed some light on the mission referred to in Jim Dacey's photo in the April 1996 Hardlife Herald, page 12.

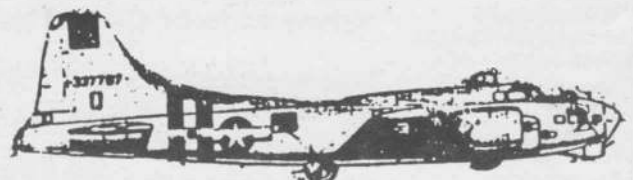
There were three missions to Royan, France on April 14, 15, and 16, 1945. Royan is at the mouth of the Gironde River flowing NW from Bordeaux. The missions were supposed to rid the area of a pocket of German troops threatening river access to Bordeaux. Our bomb load for at least one of those missions was fire bombs consisting of fighter drop tanks filled with jellied gasoline. (I don't recall whether or not the stuff was referred to as napalm at the time.) We were told to refrain from smoking just in case the things oozed a little bit. The tanks had no fins so, as can be seen in Dacey's photo, they tumbled like potatoes.

In my memory that was the first time that our group used that bomb load. The red checkered tails tell that the mission was in the spring of '45; the change from squared G took place during my stint with the group, i.e., from Jan. '45 on. The picture also shows the airplanes with the Cheyenne tail turrets which means they were late B-17Gs.

The photo is great, and if copies become available in the form of calendars or anything else, put my name on the list.

Regards,

Mat Leupold



EDITOR'S NOTE: This qualifies as an early history of the 8th I wrote a story for Stars & Stripes. You'll have to strain your Air Force - - evidently written in early 1943 before we got I eyes (as we did) if you want to read this. Thanks to Paul Lindover. As you know, Andy Rooney flew with the 385th and I say for sending it.

This is The Eighth Air Force

LAST week, over Germany, a young American kid had his arm shot off in the hall turret of a Flying Fortress. He bled profusely, there was no change that he would live through the long flight home. They wrapped that American kid up in a parachute and dropped him out over Germany. Maybe a German doctor would get to him before he died to death, there is no way to tell with figures the year's history of an air force in which things like that are happening to the boy whose '17 Ford sits up on wood blocks in his Dad's garage.

Johnston and Col. Ted T. Imberlake. Some have been relieved from their ground assignment* to do more important work in key positions. In those early months, before the heavy bomber raids grew to major aerial offensives, Eighth Air Force news releases were filled with the colorful but small scale operations of the transferred remnants of the Eagle Squadron, still flying British fighters. Maj. Gregory Augustus Daymond, of Burbank, Cal., met Mrs. Roosevelt on her tour of the Isles—during which she came to the conclusion that American soldiers' socks were too thin—immediately after King George VI had pinned the first bar in the British OFC to the majors brand-new American uniform. The major had shot down seven German fighters while serving with the RAF.

Fvt. Adam E. Gross, of Chicago, distinguished himself in a German airfield one day last (felcher and bombed it. It was the first taste American airmen had of the bottom end of a rail. Many of the bombs dropped that day were delayed action bombs and didn't go off right away. British... He and didn't go off right away. British... immediately. They... wanted someone to drive the truck to cart the bombs away though, and Pvt. Gross was first in the line of American volunteers. Pfc Carmen D'Amanti, another ground man, distinguished himself too. After an explosion on the field, a bomber was left burning with men unconscious inside. D'Amanti went in the bomber and dragged the men out while the fumes from the gas tanks burned as they accumulated over his head, threatening to explode any minute.

At night, the light in their hives... The crew of Old Bill, a Fortress piloted by Capt. Bill Whelan, is probably the most decorated crew in the ETO. They somehow they kept heart, even kept a sense of humor. At night, the light in their hives... Or, "The only reason I dropped out of formation to help you was the 30 quid you owe me." Whatever the conversation was to it, Derth makes fighting men think about religion. Some of them were very religious. In many cases Catholic priests were busy the early morning before a mission giving blessing to Catholic crewmen. Most of them are not particularly religious but believe vaguely in a comforting, God-given guidance which helps them to cope with home and date with home end.

There are still other heroes who have had a lot of publicity and deserved every line of it. The Mathis brothers, Mark and Jack, for instance, Mark swore to avenge the death of his brother Jack, who died a hero over his bombight at Vegesack. A few raids later, after doing a job of bombing Mark, too, was lost. There are sad stories like that. But there are brighter stories. The story of Snuffy Smith is a happier one. Snuffy is one of the Eighth Air Force's favorite characters. He saved?

Sceptical British experts have been convinced that day and night bombers are essential complements of an effective air force and some have even gone overboard to industrial targets is more important than the gigantic RAF raids. At the Okinawa to assist. It could have Many of the men who commanded live original bomber groups which operated from England left the theater early in the game to help fight in Africa. A handful of colonels—Armstrong, Atkinson, Overacker, Walker—came, star less tire business, and left. Col. Armstrong, now general, went home and returned Sinitly after to take command of a new group. Tire four units which have done more than their share of tire hard work in the daylight bombing experiment didn't start operating until he in October and early in November of last year. It was Nov. 9 before the Forts were joined by the B24s and struck with a force of lot) bombers at tire locomotive works at Lille. There were four Fortress Troops operating at that time. To there ur outfits, still operating, goes the credit for the success of tire experiment. Their original commanders have become well known. Col. Stanley H. Wray, Col. Frank Armstrong, Col. Curtis LeMay and Col. James Wallace were responsible for many ideas that came to them through their command or through their own ingenuity, many of which have been accepted as standard procedure today. The comparative handful of Liberators which trailed along on Fortress formations was commanded by Col. 1eon W.

It wasn't until after months J. later, Peterson and Anders-n began e'perating with their group of B47s as the Eighth urgrm Fighter Command shook loose its Eagle Squadron tag and began to he felt as a power in its own right. Under tire command of Brig. Gen. Frank O'D. Hunter they have done a workman-like job of sweeping France, Belgium and even parts of Germany. Capt. Charley London. Col. Chesley Peterson, Col. Arman Peterson, ILL. Ed Beattie, August Pa. Gosaro and Mai. Eugene Roberts were the early standouts. Heavy bomber heroes began to be heard of in tire Fall, as tire orts hit again and again at the U-boat bases in France. A few like Red Cliburn and Bob Rioridan brought their riddled Fortresses home time after time while tire majority of them brought them home with a few flak holes, and tire minority didn't come back. Ground crewmen, with few chance to do anything but the unspectacular, all-important job of keeping tire bombers in the air, stogged through the mud on the fields, learned to like their old-and-mild at the local pub, waited for their crew to bring their baby home and in a few rases distinguished themselves.

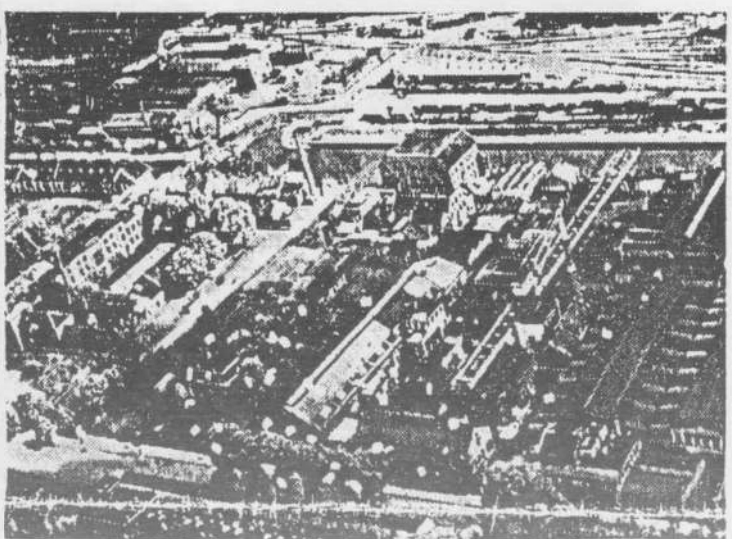
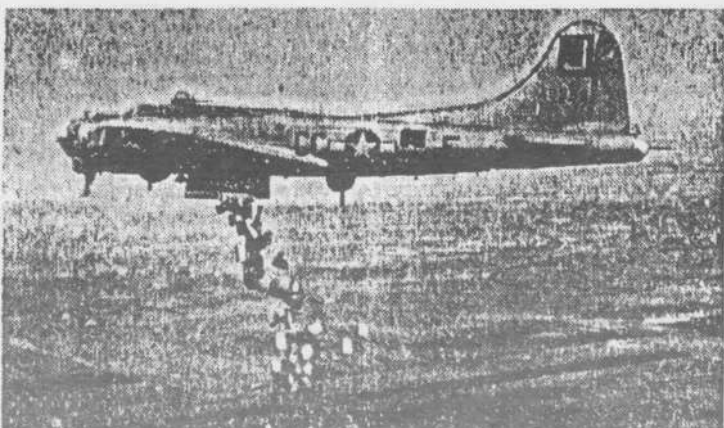
stiffest setbacks. In the same group another squadron was beginning a long lossless streak that was to continue way into this recent July. Bomkr Command, with Brig. Gen. Newton D. Longfellow and Brig. Gen. Hayward Ilansell as top men, charted, plotted and diagrammed everything that happens to the combat men. New ideas were listened to, tried, and accepted or rejected. The crew of the Fort "as increased from nine to ten men, as the waist attacks by the German fighters made the need for another waist gunner obvious. Gunners devised their own feed "carriages, and ground crews went to work on navigators' suggestions for wotting molkr gun into the nose to ward off head-on attacks. Stories of Forts and Libs returning on a wing, an engine and a prater became everyday shoptalk at the fields. They were often exaggerated by the time they got into print—it always look "wings, usually two motors, and the crews seldom prayed. No one knew better than the men at these few operational fields what tire losses were, and those men who were due

to go out the next day with the post-ill of not returning were tire men who were convinced that they were on the tight track. What they needed was prole with the award. The crew of Old Bill, a Fortress piloted by Capt. Bill Whelan, is probably the most decorated crew in the ETO. They somehow they kept heart, even kept a sense of humor. At night, the light in their hives... Or, "The only reason I dropped out of formation to help you was the 30 quid you owe me." Whatever the conversation was to it, Derth makes fighting men think about religion. Some of them were very religious. In many cases Catholic priests were busy the early morning before a mission giving blessing to Catholic crewmen. Most of them are not particularly religious but believe vaguely in a comforting, God-given guidance which helps them to cope with home and date with home end.

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By Andrew Arftfongy
Stars and Stripes Staff Writer

EDITOR'S NOTE: It wasn't all death and destruction, Andy. Here's a shot of a food drop later on.



U.S. Army Air Force photo

DIANNA FROM HEAVEN FOR THE DUTCH: Crews of (lie Sih Air l"orcc, nccstioned to high flititode bomfng, skimmed in low ovtr Dutch cities to drop hundreds of cnsos of ten-in-one rations to the belcRricred civilian population. 'lhose pictures show n 385th Bomb Group l'ort dropping its "merev cirgo." On each of the first three dnys of JVIny npproximctly 400 1117s sent KOO 4ons of food down townrd ureas cnrefully marked off by

By John T. Correll, Editor in Chief

The Army Air Forces at War

BEFORE ringing down the final curtain on the fiftieth anniversary of World War II, let us pause one more time to reflect on this mighty conflict, which is without parallel in history. The scope of it was unprecedented. The fighting spread to engulf Europe, Africa, Asia, and the Pacific islands. Eventually, it drew in the United States and every other nation of significant power anywhere in the world.

Nobody knows the exact carnage, but a credible estimate is that twenty-two million people—military and civilian—died and that another thirty-four million were maimed or wounded. We do know that US military forces sustained 1.07 million casualties and that 292,000 Americans were killed.

There were no extenuating circumstances to explain away the aggression of the Rome-Tokyo-Berlin Axis. The war was a cause that unified Americans like nothing before or since. More than sixteen million of them served in uniform. Citizens at home endured rationing, bought bonds, planted victory gardens, and saved scrap metal for defense production. The fighting forces were constantly reminded that their nation was behind them. In 1945, the United States allotted an incredible 89.5 percent of the federal budget for defense.

When the war was over, political and social change had swept the globe. Centers of power had shifted and the breakup of old colonial empires had begun. The United States, inclined toward isolationism before the war, was in a position of world leadership. A revolution had also taken place in the nature of war.

World War II effectively began and ended with airpower. In September 1939, Germany rained blitzkrieg, lightning war, on Poland. In 1940, German air attacks in the Battle of Britain came perilously close to opening the door for invasion forces to cross the English channel. On December 7, 1941, Japan struck the United States at Pearl Harbor. Four years later, long-range American B-29 bombers would bring the war to an end, strik-

ing the Japanese homeland from island bases in the Pacific, but in 1941 that end was not yet in sight.

When the war began, Germany had more than 4,000 combat aircraft. The British had about 2,000. The United States had only 800. In China, American airmen of the famous Flying Tigers used hit-and-run tactics because their P-40 Warhawks could not maneuver with the sleek Japanese fighters. And while the B-17 bomber was outstanding, we did not

The era of two-dimensional warfare was ended. The age of military airpower had begun.

have that many of them yet. Given the importance of airpower in the war, it is a good thing we were able to catch up. The Air Force Historian says that, on average, every day for the length of the war, American workers produced 191 airplanes, sixty-four tanks, 1,761 trucks, and 20,892 tons of shipping.

"During World War II," Secretary of the Air Force Sheila E. Widnall says, "the US Army Air Forces outpaced all other nations in the numbers of aircraft, engines, technology, and size. For instance, in 1941, our squadrons were still flying the P-26, an open-cockpit monoplane. Yet, by 1945, we were flying our first jet, the P-80 Shooting Star."

Walter J. Boyne, author of several excellent books on airpower in World War II, observes that the Axis nations had air superiority in the beginning but lost it through a series of critical mistakes. They were unable to match US and Allied production

of aircraft, so the numerical advantage shifted. The Axis nations could not hold on to their qualitative superiority. And perhaps most fateful of all, both Germany and Japan clung to the concept of airpower as an adjunct to ground and naval forces, whereas the US and the British wielded their airpower as a strategic weapon.

Albert Speer, Hitler's Minister of Armaments and War Production, said that Allied strategic airpower was the equivalent of a "new front" for Germany, tying up 10,000 guns, hundreds of thousands of forces, and about half the electronics industry. Had it not been for this "air front over Germany," Speer said, defensive strength against tanks could have been doubled.

The Allied landings at Normandy in 1944 were aided tremendously by an air campaign that pounded rail centers, bridges, roads, and airports and that isolated the invasion beaches from reinforcement. Ground troops fighting their way across Europe had no worries about air attack because the Luftwaffe had been put out of action.

In the Pacific, conventional bombing destroyed some sixty percent of Japan's industrial output. From the South Pacific to the coastal waters of Kyushu and Honshu, US airpower took its toll on Japanese shipping. American forces held air supremacy. The empire was reduced to using the airplanes it had left as *kamikaze* suicide craft. The B-29 gave the Army Air Forces a bomber that could deliver atomic weapons on Japan from bases in the Marianas and induce the Japanese surrender at last.

The era of two-dimensional warfare was ended. The age of military airpower had begun. The United States and its Allies had defeated Axis plans for world conquest. For the US Army Air Forces, however, there was yet one more legacy. On September 18, 1947, the -US Air Force would become a separate military service. It happened largely because of what the Army Air Forces achieved in World War II. ■

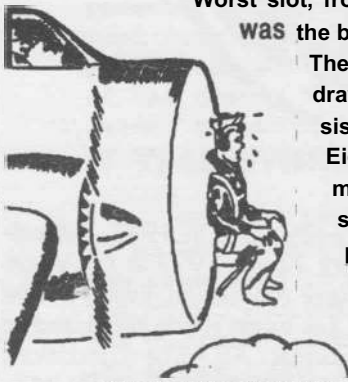
. From Bombardier Newsletter. Note the statistics DO NOT in- Maybe these stats reflect the old saying - "Figures lie and Liars dude planes shot down or those that didn't return to England. Figure."

BETTER TO FLY LOW AND SLOW?

Robert W. Blum, San Angelo 44-9 (1 Jul 44) sent the following information as printed in the 28 November 1962 issue of *Air Force Times*:

WAR II SURVEY SHOWS BALL TURRET SAFEST SLOT

WASHINGTON - Safest position in U.S. World War II heavy bombers was apparently the ball turret gunner's. Worst slot, from a casualty point of view, was the bombardier's.



Picture from Midland 43-4 classbook

These conclusions can be drawn from a detailed analysis of aircrew casualties in the Eighth Air Force over a three-month period in 1944. The statistics have just been reported in "Would Ballistics," a new Army Medical Department publication edited by Maj. James C. Beyer.

How the bombardier felt. * total of 1117 air battle casualties were tabulated. They covered heavy bombardment groups of the Eighth Air Force flying B-17s and B-24s. There were 110 men killed and 1,007 wounded during the period. These statistics *do not* (emphasis added) include crews

of planes which were shot down or did not return to their bases in Britain.

The overall casualty figures (killed and wounded) show bombardiers with 196 or a rate of 17.6 percent. There were more waist gunner casualties (233) but many of the big bombers had two waist gunners, so the 20.9 percent figure must be reduced substantially.

Position:	KIA & Wnnd	Percent	KIA	Percent
Waist Gnrs	233	20.9%	21	19 %*
Tail Gnrs	140	19.5%	19	17.3%
BOMBARDIERS	198	17.6%	18	16.3%
Navigators	136	12.2%	13	11.3%
Top Turret Gnr	94	8.4%	10	9.1%
Pilot	83	7.4%	8	7.3%
Radio Oprtr	95	8.5%	8	7.3%
Ball Turret Gnr	66	5.9%	7	6.4%
Co-pilot	74	6.6%	6	5.5%

* Numbers to be substantially reduced in consideration of there usually being two waist gunners per bomber.

A frequency distribution of the battle casualties by type of bomber showed that the "risk of becoming a battle casualty was approximately two-thirds greater to B-17 personnel than it was to men in the B-24s."



This picture should have been with Tom Helman's Enola Gay story in the February Hardlife Herald.

Thanks Carolyn!!!

BULLETIN BOARD

8TH AIRFORCE MUSEUM DISPLAY

We are on the secondary phase for display cases at the Savannah Museum. The size will depend on the amount of artifacts our members send them-largest size available is 11' x 17'. They are looking for A-2 jackets, photos, clothing, ear phones, goggles, etc. The recent 385th Group History has already been sent to the museum. If you have anything to donate, pack it up and send it off so that we can be represented.

The address is 8th Air Force Historical Society, 1020 E. Highway 80, Pooler, GA 31322. Daryl Westberry is the Curator.

NEWS FROM SALLY B IN ENGLAND

There will be an Air Show on Sunday, September 15 at The Biggin Hill Battle of Britain Air Display, where there'll be a special enclosure for supports of Sally B-which includes all of us.



50TH USAF ANNIVERSARY

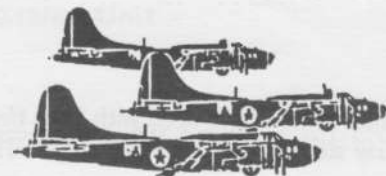
The US Air Force, as it was re-structured in 1947, will celebrate its 50th anniversary April 22-26, 1997 at Las Vegas under the auspices of the Air Force Association. Events will be held at the Convention Center, Las Vegas Hilton Hotel, and at Nellis AF Base. For more info, contact Air Force Association, 1501 Lee Highway, Arlington, VA 22209-1198 (703) 247-5853.

385TH BOMB GROUP MEMORIAL TRUST

Seventeen years ago, at the May 1979 Reunion in Kansas City, we voted to form a Life Membership fund, the proceeds of which would help in the maintenance of the Church in Great Ashfield. The money is deposited in Lloyds Bank in Bury St. Edmunds. In 1987, the membership voted to form a Memorial Trust fund to define the fund.

This memorial trust fund states that only the interest earned will be expended, with a small amount kept in the fund to allow for inflation. The principal has grown to \$50,000, with \$7,000 available for repairs. Our Life Memberships account for \$31,600 with the rest coming from interest, raffle donations, etc.

All of us should be proud of our support of this beautiful old church that offers so many memories of our time in England-hard to believe it's over 50 years ago!



EDITOR'S NOTE: Here's a book review from the Fargo Forum - haven't read it, but sounds like it will be of interest to all of us.

Book reviews

'Armageddon' explodes many World War II myths

Clive Ponting offers some revelations

▣ **ARMAGEDDON: THE REALITY BEHIND THE DISTORTIONS, MYTHS, LIES AND ILLUSIONS OF WORLD WAR II**, by Clive Ponting, is published by Random House (\$27.50).

Clive Ponting has written an excellent book that explodes many myths about World War II, in "Armageddon: The Reality Behind the Distortions, Myths, Lies and Illusions of World War II."

Here are just a few of the revelations offered by Ponting, who was assistant secretary in the British Defense Ministry during the Thatcher administration:

▶ The Anglo-American landings undertaken in North Africa in November 1942 were done against all military advice and delayed the Normandy invasion from 1943 until 1944, when the Germans were better equipped and had more men to resist the Second Front in France.

▶ Combat casualties were as high in World War II as in World War I, and in some cases, far higher.

▶ The average life of a bomber crew in the Royal Air Force was just two months and the branch suffered a casualty rate of 47 percent.

▶ Of the 85 million killed in World War II, about 55 million were Russians.

▶ Allied ability to read enemy codes was actually made strategically insignificant due to the fact that the Allied commanders either delayed use of the material or insisted anyway on blundering,



Author Ponting was an assistant secretary in the British Defense Ministry during the years of the Margaret Thatcher administration.

headlong assaults on enemy positions.

Ponting also puts into perspective the Soviet Union's role in winning the war. The United States and Britain accounted for fewer than 600,000 of the war's 20 million combat deaths; the Soviet Union incurred 13 million combat deaths.

The book is a compendium of interesting facts and figures, rubbed clear of any pro-Allied veneer to show how the Western

forces engaged in terror bombing of civilians that did nothing to win the war, and that the Allies helped smuggle out or later used for their own purposes some of the most notorious Nazis.

Old hands will know much of what Ponting writes about, but he has some surprises.

For those whose World War II education is just beginning, it's a shocking read. (Reviewed by A. V. Gallagher, Associated Press.)

The 8th Air Force Mission of December 24, 1944

(Christmas Eve)
"Pete Gray. 34th BG

One interesting feature of this mission was that, as it was planned, it would take 9 hours to complete the flight.

Yet, there were only 6 hours and 54 minutes of daylight on this particular winter day!

That's less than 7 hours in which, somehow a 9 hour flight had to be accommodated! (Take-off 9:30 Return 18:30)

Now you might say that's impossible to do, yet it was done!

The reason it was, is because of a well known astronomical circumstance scientists discovered several centuries earlier.

They had found that, at the Equator, when the sun sets, the twilight lasts for only a few minutes before darkness sets in. Yet, the farther north you go, the longer the twilight lasts. This is due to the angle in which the light from the sun extends over the earth.

During the winter, the angle is larger due to the lower position of the sun in the northern sky

At Mendlesham — latitude 55° N — on December 25th, the twilight lasted for 2 hours and 25 minutes. And, if you add that to the 6 hours and 54 minutes you get 9 hours and 19 minutes in which to complete the 9 hour mission.

Now that's cutting it rather close — any delay along the line would leave the planes in a most vulnerable position. Also, due to the length of the distances involved, they would be low on gas when they arrived back in England. And, add to that the fact that many of their bases had become closed in again due to the return of stormy weather that covered most of East Anglia. This meant that the planes usually based at those fields had to seek other locations.

All of these factors came into play at the same time which caused the mad scramble at those bases that were still open.

The "Mighty Eighth" had over 20,000 flight crew members in the skies over Europe that day and it was just by sheer luck that a catastrophe was averted!

Does anyone have additional facts on this occurrence?

Dear Ed,

The article I wrote for The "Hard Life Herald" has resulted in contact with Roy White-after 52 years!! I'm enclosing a photo of Roy and myself- how we looked like 52 years ago in at the 385/549.

Respectfully,
Ed Conrow

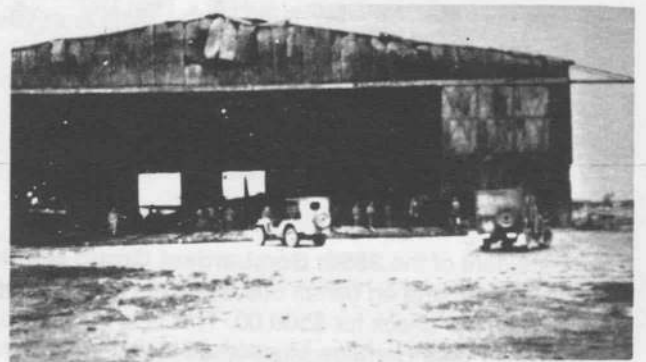
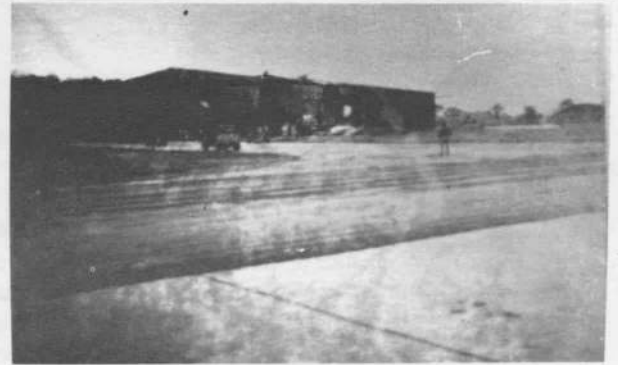
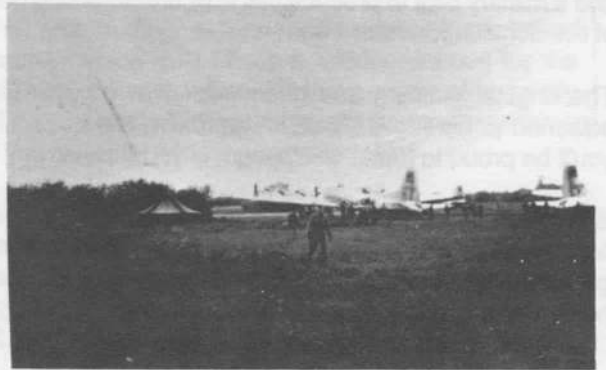
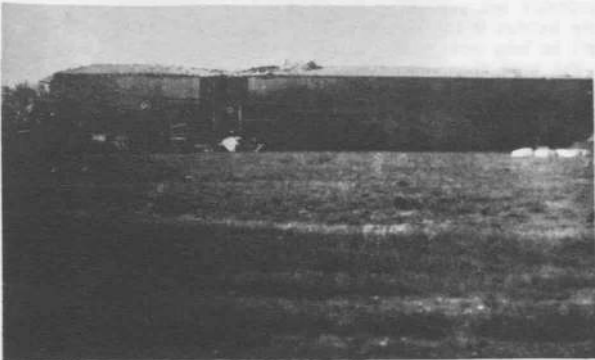
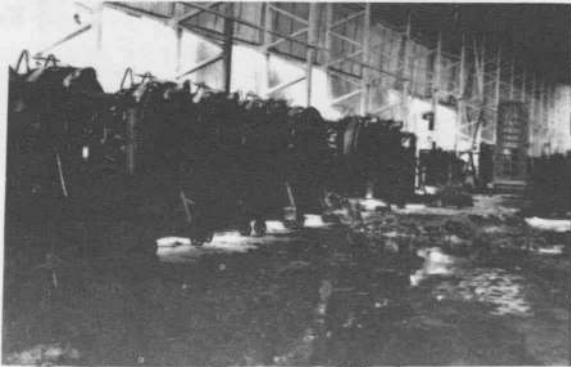


Jim McDonald sent these pictures taken after a visit from a German Plane one morning—remember? Here's what Jim had to say:

"Bomb damage after one Aircraft dropped about 8 bombs at 0430 hours during our briefing for a mission. We got 17 Aircraft off that morning. General LeMay called personally to see if we could mount the mission. Archie Benner jumped into a bunker and was waist deep in water.

I told Warren Cerrone to move a B-17 near the hangar. That B-17 was loaded with ammo and bombs and all hell was breaking loose. I can still see his blue eyes widening. He moved it—a brave deed."

Another editor's note: Another recollection recently received on that "incident"-if those bombs would have dropped a few hundred yards away, they'd have wiped out everyone in the briefing room.



SCHWEINFURT PRINTS AVAILABLE

Over 100 prints of this work by artist Ted Wilbur have been sold. Wilbur, a Senior Fellow of the American Society of Aviation Artists combined a lifetime of experience as both an artist and a military pilot to produce this truly breath-taking painting of the Schweinfurt raid.

The original painting has been valued at \$4,500. Limited editioned prints are \$125. It is approximately 21' x 17' and you'll be proud to frame and hang it in your home.

Bob Smith, N12019 Anne J. Drive, Spokane, WA 99218 is handling distribution. Write him for your copy of the print. We guarantee that it won't go unnoticed when you hang it in your home.



"The Mighty Eighth Reunion Group"

385th BOMBARDMENT GROUP MEMORIAL ASSOCIATION

GREAT ASHFIELD - SUFFOLK, ENGLAND

STATION 155

Lt. Gen. E. G. Shuler Jr., USAF, Ret.
%Eighth Air Force Heritage Museum
Savannah, GA 31402-1992

Dear General Shuler,

As President of the **385th Bombardment Group Memorial Association**, and on behalf of the officers and membership, I enclosed our check for \$500.00. This is to be used by the Eighth Air Force Heritage Museum (Savannah) to benefit the cause.

We are looking forward to the continuing progress of the Museum, which we, as veterans of the Eighth Air Force, are pleased to be honored with this magnificent facility which houses our history.

You and your staff are to be complimented for the hard work put forth and the fine result achieved.

In comradeship,

Robert A. Valliere
President

385th Bombardment Group Memorial Association
18 Whiting Farm Rd.
Branford, CT 06405

The Ten Boys Inside a Bomber Are Important Part of an Air Assault

**In No Other Form of Combat Are Men More Closely Knit
As a Fighting Unit Than Aboard a Flying
Fortress in Battle.**

BY EDWARD P. MORGAN.

(Copyright, 1944, Chicago Daily News.)

A FLYING FORTRESS Station in England, Jan. 18. — Did you ever really stop to think what lies behind a United States 8th air force communique saying 700—out 900—or 1,000—planes pounded Europe tonight?

You instinctively think in terms of American superlatives, of production lines and power and savvy. You probably tell yourself: Boy! We sure handed it to Adolf today. It won't be long now at this rate.

But the next time you read a communique, will you do me a favor? Don't try to memorize the statistics of bombloads or firepower or flying range. Just think of ten boys in a bomber. Ten very young boys with hopes and fears and nerves to signal pain, just like you and me, flying off to a rendezvous with flak and fire and dynamite.

Each for the Other Nine.

There is nothing quite so beautiful in all this world as the selfless teamwork of a Fortress crew. An infantryman will go through hell for his buddy. A sailor will do the same for his shipmate. But the ten boys aboard the bomber are ten brothers. Each one sweats and swears and shoots, hot for himself, but for the other nine.

An outsider can never quite belong to this brotherhood. The bombardier never knew the tail-gunner existed before the crew was organized six months ago. The radioman from Brooklyn used to make dirty cracks about "Joisey." Then he discovered his pilot came from Paterson. It is the same thing right down the line with the rest of the crew. It is a closed corporation, but its shares are held by every American and there is no stock on any market worth more.

Editor's note: Another clipping out of the Star's and Stripes from 1943. Bob Smith, our Past President is the pilot referred to. And Nathan Unger, the Navigator, later died when he had to jump without a parachute.

"Tib-rtly Belle** oh Fire.

RUells from n German fighter set the rear end of the Fortress "Liberty Belle" afire, on the Schweinfurt raid, but . Tall-Gunner, Bergt., LoAls G. ix>n<way of Oklahoma City, beat It Out! With lite bar? haHds and thert went back to the hot gun position, warding off swarms of Nazis on the return trip.

- The ship took a terrific knocking ArdUhd by 'antl-attbraft, machine gun and cannon fire and looked like a ■ slfeve when It reached base with ohe engine gone under the expert hands of the pilot, Lieut. Robert O Smith of Franklin, Neb.

Lonsway burned his hands, but not Severely.

He Kisses Fltpt,

The navigator of the "Liberty Belle," Lieut. Nathan Ungsr of Bronx, N. Y., changed the famillif practice of the navigator of kissing the grdound on the safe return from a mission—he kissed thfe pilot, x ^The crewmen, veterans of hiany missions, agreed that, the raid wa* tftie of - the toughest—if not th^ toughest—ever experienced.

10/15

LETTERS TO THE EDITORS

Dear Fred,

About five years ago I suffered a stroke and have incapacitating aphasia. After a year I was able to tell time. Two years later I started to read. After three years I could write my name but nothing else, but I could print some.

I'm O.K. from my waist up, as I have a great difficulty walking. I can drive my Mark VIII for about 12,000 miles a year and can fly about four hours a month in our Yak and our Aero-Commander jet prop.

One son flies for Delta and the other flies on business for his two companies. My grandson flies for them, too. My boys are my ears and my voice on the radio.

Because it takes me too long to read my 385th BGMA News- letter, I am only up to page 21, August 1995. What a pleasure it was for me to see your letter and it became so real, I could almost "smell the roses."

As I read you letter to the editor, you had a time and place. Now It's up to me to provide the actual time, plane and the incident. The name of the B-17F was "FlakShack." The Us Navy graciously took two shots of us running up and buzzing as we came up over the antenna on their tower.

You stated that I was piloting a B-17G over England on Octo- ber 9, 1944. Actually, I was holding my wife just after mid- day, October 9, 1944, in New York City. On 22 September

1944.1 was awaiting transporation to the Z of I.

I'll bet it was 9 September, 1944, because I had no missions between the 5th and 12th of September and therefore had some free time.

Along with my letter you'll find photos. Beside the Navy prints, I'm sending you a picture of my bride of fifty-six years, Jeanne, and me as we left Spokane after the August, 1993, reunion of BGMA. The "Yak" is one of my son's planes ready to be deliv- ered to Tennessee.

You probably never saw my book, so I'll give this one to you. You might find the page 130 of interest.

I'll think I'll send a copy of this letter to Ed Stern in case this may be of interest to him. It's been six years since I've written to him or any in BGMA.

When Jeanne edits this. I'm sure it will be OK.

Regards,
Fred

Fredrick H. Ihlenburg
16016 SW Wimbleton Ct
Tagard, OR 97224-3044



Dear Ed Stern,

As a result of my letter published in the Hard Life Herald, I received two phone calls. One from James Grinstead of Massanutten Village, Va. and the other from Truman Smith from Ponca City, Oklahoma.

In my conversation with James Grinstead, he told me of a fellow near me in Timberville, Va. by the name of Charlie McCauley. I contacted him, and since Timberville is only 12 miles from where I live, we were able to set up a time and I visited with him at his home.

I hope to meet with James Grinstead in the near future.

My wife and I are planning a trip to Tulsa Oklahoma in July and I hope to meet with Truman Smith then.

I want to thank you and George Hruska, who was my first contact with the 385th, for all that you did to help me in gathering the information that I have.

"MY SINCERE THANKS."

Sincerely,
Andrew L Ryan

John F Pettenger
Great Ashfield
PO Box 117
Laurel, Florida 34272-0117
USA

Dear John,

A huge big thank you to you and to the committee and members of the 385 BG Memorial Association for your wonderful donation of \$500.

This outstanding help is so very much appreciated. Believe me, it really is a great help towards the expensive exercise of keeping this big bird flying.

We were all extremely proud in 1995 to have *Sally B* celebrate not only her 50th Birthday but also the 29th anniversary of her arrival in the UK, which made the VE/ VJ have managed to keep her flying for 20 years now and it is of course because of friends like you, that we have managed to do so. What indeed would we do without your kind input and continued helps towards the upkeep of this unique aircraft.

On behalf of all of us here at B-17 Preservation, a million thanks to you all.

Yours sincerely,
Elly Sallingboe

Dear Mr. Stern,

I have been a member since 1988. My father was Maurice B. Simpson, Right-Waist Gunner. He was a crew member on Ohio Air Force. I think the fellas called him Maury. I know very little about this time in my father's life. He was a reticent man, although when he did speak of those times, it was with a bit-tersweet fondness.

Jack Gesser, also of "Big O.A.F.", writes me occassionally. And, when my father passed away in 1988, several crews members sent condolences.

I do not wish to take up your time Mr. Stern, and I do apologize for running on. But please know that your publication means so much to me. I thoroughly read every issue I receive. Attending your next reunion in Great Ashfield is my fondest wish. But circumstances may keep it just that - a wish.

I would like to offer to you the use of my father's extensive photograph collection. He saved hundreds of shots from the War. He even has the photos of crew members used for their fake identity cards, should they end up behind enemy lines, you are most welcome to use them. I would be happy to ship them to you. Other members would surely enjoy them, and it would help me to know more about my beloved father.

You know, until he fell ill, he called each time the newsletter arrived and read parts of it to me over the phone. In an odd sort of way, I believe that despite the terrible circumstances of the war, he was happier then, than any time after that.

Samantha L. Scott
26 Fairfield Street
Pittsfield, MA 01201

Dear Ed,

Thank you for printing my letter in the December issue of the *Hardlife Herald*. I am still looking for stories or information regarding my Father, Harlan K. Inglis, who was with the 548th Squadron. I hope to have the biography project finished by December of this year.

Your readers should be advised that I have been transferred to the Cleveland area by my company, and that they should send any correspondence to the address listed below. Once again, thank you so very much for your assistance. I hope to see you all in '97.

Sincerey,

Lamar Peoples
PO Box 1773
Coos Bay, OR 97420

Dear Mr. Stern

My associates and myself represent a group of British enthusiasts who are interested in the Vulture Eight, 8th Airforce. We are also members of "The Eighth Historical Society" and "Friends of the Eighth" with whom I am sure you are acquainted.

Over the last 9 years we have become particularly interested in what has become known as Wall Art (i.e. Paintings, Writings, Mission Lists, etc on the walls and ceilings etc. of World War 2 U.S.A.A.F. installations). This giving birth to the name of our group the "Eighth Wall Art Conservation society" or E.W.A.C.S. for short which is a voluntary and non-profit making group.

As a group we have removed and transported many sections of endangered brickwork with paintings on, to museums for display which if we had not stepped in would have been lost forever. To date one of the most adventurous projects being "The Big Picture" an 8 ft x 12 ft picture of a Flying Fortress of the 92nd Bomb Group, from Podington airfield in Bedfordshire (their wartime base) to the Imperial War Museum at Duxford. We have also successfully removed and arranged for the transportation to the 8th Airforce museum at Barksdale U.S.A. the following paintings:

A 'Bathing Beauty' from the 379th BG's wartime base at Kimbolton.

An '8th Airforce Badge' from the 361st FG's wartime base at Bottisham.

To date we have saved (for various museums) 44 of these unique pieces of both our Countries history and restored and preserved many others, the reason for writing to yourself is to see if we could possibly run a column in your group's Newsletter for an appeal for information, stories or copies of Photographs of World War 2 Wall art, with the prospect of perhaps publishing a book on this sometimes forgotten but most important part of 20th Century history (the proceeds of which will go to future projects). With photographs for example we can possibly publish a series of then and now photos as we have in our collection many examples captured on film taken in recent years.

Thanking you in anticipation for a favourable response.

Yours sincerely,

Richard J. Nimmo
10 Ditching Close, LUTON, Beds LU2 8JR
England

EDITOR'S NOTE: An interesting project-we decided to run the whole letter. If you have any memories, send them to him.

Dear Ed,

I just saw the page in the February Newsletter about the "Manna and Chowhound Brotherhood." This was the first I knew of the organization, and it reminded me of the article I wrote which I've enclosed.

I can't remember whether I ever sent it to you. If not, you might be interested in it.

Best regards,

Irving L. Garfinkle
4100 N. Charles St. Apt. 807
Baltimore, Maryland 21218

Other Voices

Blessed bombing

THE RECENT REPORTS of the air-lifting of food in Ethiopia have brought to mind a previous transporting of food by air to hungry people that took place nearly 40 years ago.

It was the last few weeks prior to the end of World War II in Europe when my outfit, the 385th Bomb Group of the Army's 8th Air Force, then stationed in England, was called on to fly grain and other bulk foods across the North Sea to Holland.

As the Allies had moved through France and prepared to cross the Rhine, the German armies moved out of Belgium and Holland, taking with them all the food they could carry.

This, added to the years of shortages of all kinds of consumer goods in Europe, created a serious problem in Holland.

The 8th Air Force, with its hundreds of B-17s, which had been dropping 1,000 pound bombs on places such as Berlin and the Skoda munitions works in Czechoslovakia, was asked to drop 50-pound bags of grain in the Netherlands.

When the orders reached down to my squadron, we members of flying crews the elite of the army — or so we thought — accepted our new assignment with shrugs and condescending smiles.

We hadn't yet been told we would be responsible for loading the bags of grain into the bomb bays of our planes and then be expected to shove out many of the bags manually that would not be hooked up to the bomb racks for automatic release.

So there we were; soldiers who had fought a war without getting their hands dirty assigned to do manual labor. We again shrugged off the inconvenient assignment with the knowledge that it would be a short mission and we wouldn't have to dodge any flak.

The Evening Sun

Thursday, January 10, 1985

When the trucks (tomes; amveo, we spend several hours helping to unload them and then to load our planes. Our bomb bays had been fitted with boards so that we could carry as many sacks of grain as possible.

The next morning we met in the briefing room about 5 a.m. as usual, were given our target assignments, a weather briefing, the navigators were given the necessary maps, and we bombardiers were told it was our responsibility, with the gunners' help, to get the sacks out of the plane one way or another when we reached the target.

When we approached the target, an air field at Haarlem, a town near Amsterdam, I opened the bomb bay doors. We came in a few hundred feet over the runway, I flicked the toggle switch and then walked back through the plane to the cat walk in the bomb bay. The crew was shoving bags out, and we watched them burst open as they hit the ground.

In a couple of hours we were back at our air base in England ready for the usual debriefing. It was the first time we discussed the outcome of a bombing mission without reporting casualties and near-misses.

We - who must have been the first soldiers to go into battle almost daily, rain destruction on the enemy, dodge hostile gunfire and, providing we were not shot down, return to our barracks to sleep each night on a bed with clean sheets - had the satisfying feeling of finally having used our skills to help friends rather than destroy enemies.

I. L. Garfinkle, an ex-bombardier, is a Baltimore free lance.

Dear Ed:

I have been wanting to send you a note of appreciation for your work on the "Hardlife Herald"...the stories that keep us all together, and for the insert taken from my book.

Making this story more meaningful to me was happenings at the Omaha reunion. At our squadron meeting, as I told the story of the accident which took the life of Sgt. Jim Ezell, Bill Henderson and Quentin Swartz spoke up saying they had flown with me that day! This was their first reunion, and after some fifty years they learned of the pilot who had flown the plane. They had risked their lives to get back in the tail to administer morphine to Sgt. Ezell, this had been a "make-up" crew so we didn't know each other. Meeting them, and hearing their part, meant a lot to me in showing how everyone forgets their own risk of life to help another.

The article on the origin on "Taps" was great too. I took the liberty of reading it at a recent V.F.W. meeting where it was enjoyed by all.

My thanks to George Hruska and his "work force" for a really great reunion. Ruth and I, after a week's visit to Colorado Springs, went back to Boys Town for an enjoyable "walking tour". The reunion "picture book" can't be topped either.

Best regards,

C.M. "Mac" McCauley
252 Maple Avenue
Timberville, VA 22853

Dear Editor Ed:

You have printed lots of pictures of crews...but in this mailing I am enclosing one of a slightly different type. This is our crew while we were still in Crew Training in Ardmore, Oklahoma and prior to our becoming members of the 385th. (Therefore, it may not "qualify" for the publication). Anyway, here are the names: Front Row, L to R, Mike Gallagher (now VP of the 385th BGMA), Sylvan Lieberthal, Bombardier, yours truly-Pilot and Roger Oates-Nav.* Back Row: Arnold Willingham-Ball Turret*, Mike Sawyer-Waist Gunner, ? Burkhart-Radio, Jim Dacey-Tail Gunner, Mike Kindya-Flight Engineer, Jack Hanna-Waist Gunner. We have lost track of Sawyer, Burkhart and Hanna and with the exception of the two *, now flying out of that big airdrome in the sky, the rest of us are still "in touch."

The broad, boyish smiles on those faces make me think the photo was taken before we had a very sobering briefing from one of our instructors at Ardmore when he said: "OK, man...you are now coming to that part of the Air Corps song that says, '...we go down in flames' so you better pay attention!"

All for now, Ed...as always with every Best Wish.

Bob Silver



Dear Ed:

Some input from your UK contact and a plea for help with an avenue of research for my next book.

Firstly, the 385th Creagmile crew and an appeal for anyone who can remember them. The reason I ask continues some work I've been doing to help Jeff Balding whose father came to England as a gunner on the Creagmile crew. Jeff asked me for help some time back but early investigations drew a blank and my microfilm reader was off-air, so I couldn't check the monthly movement orders. However, I've recently acquired another reader and spent some time going through the sections relevant to the period Jeff thought his dad was over here and, on 2nd May, 1944, I came across the following crew assignment to the 551st: 2/Lt John L. Creagmile (Pilot); 2/Lt Dyle B. Longhurst (co-pilot); 2/Lt Harvey J. Hincker (Nav); 2/Lt Richard G. Rosenbloom (bomb); S/Sgt Robert T. Santoro; S/Sgt Paul E. Moe; Sgts Leon Slosberg; Everett H. Balding; Leon Zontek; Robert A Poole. There is a promotion for Everett H. Balding to S/Sgt on 14th May but, when the crew went on R&R to the ARC Rest Home at Southport for 7 days from 1st August, 1944, Everett H. Balding had been replaced by T/Sgt William L. Griffith.

The only crew member I can find is Leon Slosberg and I've written to him to see if he can help with information about Everett Balding as well as asking Leon for his own recollections. If anyone else remembers the Creagmile crew, I'd like to hear from them.

Now, since writing the above, I've had another letter from Jeff Balding who, as you can see, has done his own investigations into the Creagmile crew and has linked it to the family so the story will undoubtedly continue....

To prod a few memories, I've enclosed some pictures and hope you can find spaces and ask the "boys" (and ladies) for help. One shows the "Fickle Finger of ?" and was captioned "2/3/44. Amarillo Tex 'Boys.'" I don't know who these guys are and would appreciate some help along with the background story to this picture. I know this B-17 served a long time and would welcome any air or ground crew recollections and more photographs. Another picture shows 1/Lt Cuttall and Sergeant Gould and I presume was taken after their last mission but

I'm only guessing. Then there's an atmospheric shot of coffee being dispensed, recognise anyone? Lastly, a "hack" B-17E pictured at Great Ashfield, anyone remember this bird?

That's it for now.

Best wishes,

Ian
10 All Saints Green
Worlingham Beccles Suffolk
NR34 7RR ENGLAND



Dear Ian and Sue,

What a surprise to return from Europe and find a letter waiting with my dad's crew names! I didn't really have much of a direction to go from there...until I got hooked up on the Internet a week or so ago.

One night I was "surfing" around, and I located a site called "Switchboard," which is in effect, a telephone book for the entire U.S. You can enter a name in the query box (and a city and state if you want to limit your search), and in about three seconds you either get a list or "no match."

It didn't hit me until last Thursday night to try a search on the crew names. John L. Creagmile was first. On "John" there was no match, but leaving the first name field blank, I got all the Creagmiles with listed phone numbers in the U.S., including a "J.L." in Orinda, CA. Could this be John L.?

On Saturday, I called and spoke with Mrs. Creagmile who confirmed her husband had been a pilot with the AAF in WWII. Unfortunately, Mr. Creagmile is afflicted with the dreaded alzheimer's disease and according to his wife, didn't talk too much about his war experiences. In any event, I told her I would write her a letter and relate some of the things I've learned and perhaps she could find some records or other notes of his service in England. She did say one of the planes he flew was called "Green Banana." What a thrill to hook up...even if I don't get anything back from her! We'll see if anything develops from this...

Now...cut to MARCH 11 th...had a call today from John Creagmile's son, Bob, from Danville, California. His mom showed him my letter and he was fascinated. We had an enjoyable conversation and I've more than peaked his interest. He said his mother is the type who keeps meticulous records, has saved all letters written during the war, and he's anxious to delve into things. I had sent along a picture of four members of my dad's crew, supposedly including the pilot. Bob confirms that his dad is, in fact, in the picture. I gotta tell you, this is pretty neat stuff!

I sent him a list of the other crew members that you had forwarded in case one might strike a familiar chord. We'll keep you posted. No luck yet on any other of the crew names...but my time has been limited to search.

Best to both of you...

Love,

Jeff and Sarah

Dear Mr. Valliere:

I had wondered for four years (ever since the passing of my father) if the children of 385th members were able to join the association. Imagine my delight when I read my mother's December '95 edition where you encouraged it! I don't know a great deal about my father's time in the war; as Daddy was reluctant to talk about the ugly side of that time and I was too young to hear most of the fun stories! I can remember lying upstairs, when it was thought we were asleep, and hearing a few raucous tales and I'd do anything to hear Daddy laugh like that again.

I would very much like to learn more about my father's service time, crew mates, Great Ashfield and England. (I think he was in the 548th Squadron.) I'm not sure, but I think his B-17 was named "Spruce Goose"? I would enjoy writing/talking with anyone who knew him then. From years of reading about all of you, I feel as if we're already friends. If financially possible, I would love to attend some of the reunions and meet in person! How I would love to go to England next year!

Enclosed please find my personal check for \$10.00 for a "Daughter Membership". I will also encourage my brother and sisters to join; as we all enjoy reading the Hardlife Herald when Mom is finished with her copy!

Thank you for keeping the memories intact, for educating our generation about WWII and, most importantly, thanks for going "over there."

Sincerely,

Tina J. Leonard
 (Daughter of Louis Lloyd Leonard)
 3150 North Auburn Road
 Indianapolis, IN 46224

Dear Ed,

Re-reading my copy of the December Hardlife Herald makes me regret even more that Mickie and I couldn't attend. However, you can't argue with a burst appendix!

I've particularly enjoyed some of the poetry contained in many issues of the HLH, Ed. And sorting through some of my papers I came across the enclosed poem, which I believe I wrote during the Vietnam years, when our son was flying as a crew-chief on a KC-135 tanker from Pease AFB.

Well, times change, many wars have come and gone since, but my sentiments haven't really changed much. Remembering those thirty missions as pilot of the crew of the MICKIE II, I'm sure we never questioned the rightness of our cause, or the importance of our Mission!

We're still holding two airline tickets, hopefully to be turned in for credit for two tickets to Tucson! Until then, keep up the

great work on the Hardlife Herald!

All the best,

James (Ed) Hughes
 124 Edward Wakefield
 Williamsburg, VA 23185

AERIE

How could we know in those cold days of war
 That we never could be quite the same as before
 That the clear gleam of purpose so brilliantly bright
 Could turn gray in the moonlight of our later life.

The sleep-deadened, stumbling, air crews at briefing
 The pain-thrilling shock of the target unveiling
 Those fog-shrouded aircraft, the young crew-chief beckoning
 The first engines roaring, mighty weapons, nerves trembling.

Green flare and away with throttles full forward
 Bomb-laden, fuel-heavy, wallowing onward
 Through dawn-tinted farmland, fog-tendriled, beckoning;
 Lift-off at last, great wings shuddering, steadying.

The long battle upward, every cylinder straining
 First squadrons, groups, wings, then divisions assembling
 Coast-out point at last, the soul-swelling armada
 Stretching off and away toward some flak-shrouded target.

Oh the hot flush of pride and the grim dedication
 Armed with faith in America's firm declaration!
 Festung Europe, man's nightmare, Hitler's spasm, must perish!
 God's endowment of freedom would survive and be cherished!

We survived or we died, the slim odds on returning
 To that dear land of home, family, memories, burning
 Cruelly fair when we thought of the stakes in the game,
 For we carried America's heart in our Bay....

How could we know in those cold days before
 This great heart could falter at history's door.
 That the pure righteous wrath against freedom's transgressors
 Could be cooled by self-pity, become weak and uncertain.

It's our sons now who climb through the red skies of war
 But the heart in their bomb bays is uncertain and sore.
 Let the faint-hearted, self-seeking doubters be damned!
 Set the Eagle of Freedom again loose in the land!

J.E.H.



Dear Editor Ed;

May I take this opportunity to add my belated congratulations to George Hruska, his crew and all of the 385th officers for an excellent Omaha '95 reunion. What a successful celebration for the first half century; and great send off toward the next fifty years.

The enclosed Toby McDaniel column might be a good "LEST WE FORGET", article to include in the HLH issue that appears during Memorial Day '96.

While Comrade Wally Jackson, was not of the 385th, he was a fellow tail gunner from the mighty 8th Air Corps, and extolled its virtues at every opportunity. It was my pleasure to work with Wally on several Americanism projects as fellow American Legionnaires.

It was my sad duty, however my privilege as well, to command the HONOR GUARD DETAIL for Wally's final graveside memorial. His was among the 322 provided by my volunteers in CY 95.

Trust if you agree in the merit of Wally's compassion that you will find space in the HLH.

In comradeship,

George J. Behl
TG and Radio Czerwinski Crew
51 Windsor Road
Springfield, IL 62702

Toby McDaniel



Camp Butler National Cemetery always was near and dear to WALLY JACKSON, the balding, bespectacled, always-smiling World War II veteran whose postwar career concentrated on selling cars and working as a security guard on the state fairgrounds.

Ever concerned about the slack crowds for Veterans Day observances at Camp Butler, he wrote the following essay, expressing what he imagined some of the thousands of veterans buried there might have to say about the day that is dedicated to them.

It was originally published in this column in 1981.

A CIVIL WAR VETERAN opens the conversation:

"Things have changed a bit since I was laid to rest here in '64," says Ned Rebel. "This was nothing but an old campground with a prisoner-of-war stockade. I was with a passel of my buddies back then.

"Look! They're still with me. This is Jack next to me and that's Bill over there. We were all captured at Vicksburg. I was wounded. Some Yank put a Minie ball into my shoulder. A Yankee doctor dug it out. Boy, did that hurt.

"They put us all on a train with lots of guards and brought us to Yankeeland. After a time, that old Yankee bug done us in. Never did get to see my wife or kids. None of my relatives have ever come to visit. Guess they won't even know where I am."

ANOTHER VET chimes in:

"Hi. I'm Billy. I went up San Juan Hill with Col. Teddy Roosevelt. Boy, did we give those Spaniards fits. And was the blowin' up of the Maine somethin' to see.

"Always told my wife I wanted to be buried in Camp Butler. SO here I am. And she's right here next to me."

THE CHATTER continues:

"I'm Tommy. I fought in the war that was supposed to end all wars. It didn't.

"A German sniper got me at Verdun. Put a bullet right between my eyes. Was on the 17th day of October in 1917.

"They put me in the American cemetery in France. It sure was a beautiful place. In 1921, they brought me home. I'm perfectly content here at Camp Butler."

A VET WHO DIED in a later war speaks:

"My name's Jerry. I was a tailgunner on a B-17 in World War II. We were flying a mission to Hamburg. Things were goin' real good. Over the target we took a lot of flak.

"Then we took a hit in our right wing tank. It was burrtrog fiercely, then the whole plane blew up.

"I was blown clear and started falling from 27,000 feet. I hadn't had time to get my bail-out oxygen bottle,^ I soon passed out. I came to somewhere aroun<y 0,000 feet.

"I wwthinking it was time to pull my ripcord. Then I looked down and saw both legs were gone. All kinds of thoughts raced through my mind.

"I finally managed to yank the cord. But that didn't do any good. My chute was in shreds. My body — what was left of it — crashed to earth moments later.

"It landed in a field, near a hedgerow. A German farmer and his wife ran up. He jabbed me with a pitchfork. Guess they wanted to make sure I was done for.

"They buried me next to the hedgerow. An American Graves Registration team found me on Aug. 5, 1945, put me in a military casket and shipped me to France. I was later put on board an American ship that brought me home."

ANOTHER VET TELLS his Story:

"My name's Ralph. I was in the Korean War. Stepped on a land mine near the Chosan Reservoir.

"I was picked up by medics and taken to a forward aid station. A doctor looked at me and shook his head.

"They loaded me onto a truck. Not long after, when the truck was full, I was taken to Seoul, sealed in a G.I. casket and flown to the Zone of the Interior. For you non-military types, that's what we called the U.S.A."

RALPH YIELDS to George:

"I guess Vietnam wasn't too popular with you folks here at home, but I fought for my flag and my country. I died for them, too.

"I got it in the middle of a stinkin' jungle. A Cong frag-grenade hit me. Didn't leave much.

"Please be a little more charitable, people. There's a lot of Vietnam vets left and they need your love, encouragement and understanding.

"I love it here at Camp Butler. But it does get a little lonely sometimes. So, I'm going to speak for Ned, Billy, Tommy, Jerry and Ralph.

"Please come out to visit us once in awhile. Come on Veterans Day especially. That's our day.

"Come to think of it, that's today.

"We'll have the Avenue of Flags up and we'll be at the main gate to greet you. You won't be able to see us, of course. But we'll be there.

"You'll be able to tell. Just look for a leaf to flutter, a tree limb to bend, a ripple in Old Glory.

"We'll be all around. Come see us."

Jackson knew of Jerry's WWII experience first hand. He, too, was a tailgunner on a B-17. Only he was lucky; he survived.

Jackson, barely 21 years old at the time, was on 26 bombing missions over Germany with the 34th Heavy Bombardment Group, which flew out of an American air base at Mendelsham, England.

He returned to the village of Mendelsham, 75 miles northeast of London, for a nostalgic visit in 1977. He found little trace of the old "aerodrome." It was dismantled soon after the war's end and returned to farmland.

But he was impressed to find that villagers had not forgotten who defended them. At the tip of where the main runway used to be was a small brick wall with a plaque dedicated to the American airmen of the 34th and three vases that are still filled with fresh-cut flowers daily.

For the past several years, Jackson resided at the Illinois Veterans' Home at Quincy. He died there May 31. He's buried at CamD Butler.

Dear Ed,

Another Photo.

At a general meeting of the Connecticut State Chapter of the Eighth Air Force Historical Society, the speaker was Nello Malavasi (385th BG). He told of his landing in Holland and with the help of the underground, made it to Belgium, where he eventually was captured.

Art Ruggiero, on left is the President of the state chapter, and Bob Valliere is treasurer.



Art Ruggiero, Nello Malavasi, Bob Valliere

To Editor:

Enclosed is a photo of a mission to Merseburg, Germany, November 30, 1944.

Leaders - Thrift-Mellinger-Randall, Weikert - 38 A.C.
None lost (I hope this is right).

The plane Lt. Bob Starkel and crew was flying had 94 holes from flak, including the radio knocked out.

Clayton Lind



Flak over Meresburg, Germany

Dear Ed,

Hope you can find room for this picture in the Hardlife. It may start a trend for license plates for our group.

The cost for the special plate was \$100.00, but it was worth it. I have had many comments about it.

Sincerely,

Willard Hagman
RR 4, Box 594
Aitkin, MN 56431



Willard Hagman, 385th BG 548 Bomb Sq.

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

Dear Ed,

I see by today's date that fifty-two years ago, on March 16, 1944, the 385th was headed on a mission to Augsburg, Germany. That was a long time ago, but it is still vivid in my memory. As I recall, our target was an aircraft factory in Augsburg, deep in Bavaria near the Swiss border. As our Group entered French airspace, we could see the contrails of German fighters forming-up for their pending attack. The ME-109's hit the Group head on. Lt. Krause's aircraft from the 549th was hit by 20 mm cannon fire. As our Group approached the target area, waves of ME-210 and 410 fighters hit our Group. I remember that Tommy Vance's crew was flying directly in front of us when they took 20mm hits in the nose and #4 engine! Lt. Bob Meyer pulled out of formation, with the aircraft trailing white smoke. We flew right through some of the debris from his damaged B-17. No parachutes were observed as the plane headed toward the Swiss border. Members of Vance's crew were all good friends of ours. We had been together since our days at Ephrata.

On this particular morning, Tommy Vance, the pilot, was grounded because of an ear infection, so Meyer was flying in his place. I understand all of the crew made it but Lt. Bob Williams, navigator, whose chute failed to open. The crew, including my friend, Boyd Henshaw, was interned in Switzerland for the duration. On March 16, the 385th lost three crews: McLaughlin, Krause, and Meyer. Our aircraft had sustained some battle damage, and the ground maintenance crew worked all night, and most of the next day, repairing the holes in our aircraft (#42-31102). It was terribly somber that evening, as we tried to console Lt. Vance over the loss of his crew. I remember your coming into our Quonset hut to pick up the personal belongings of the missing officers.

Two days later, following some crew rest, the Group put up some thirty aircraft for a mission to Munich. Then on March 20, the Group put up twenty-one aircraft for our mission to Frankfurt where we hit the railroad marshalling yards. That evening, Jack Salyards and I learned we were to be promoted to the rank of 1st Lt., but we didn't get to pin them on for more than a year!

On March 23, the Group was off again - this time to Brunswick. On the way back from the target, Capt. Witherspoon took us South of course and right over the city of Dortmund where we encountered some pretty nasty tracking flak. We nearly took a direct hit, but the 88mm shell exploded just beneath the aircraft, knocking out the #2 engine. The explosion set the whole underside of the wing on fire? All bailed out successfully, and we spent the next thirteen months as POW's. Salyards and the rest of the crew ended up at Stalag Luft I in Barth, and I was sent to Stalag Luft III at Sagan - after four months in the hospital.

Ed, I have really enjoyed receiving the "Hard Life Herald" over these

many years, and my wife and I had a great time at our first reunion in Spokane. It was good to see you again. I want you to know that you have done a superb job writing and editing the newsletter for the 385th! We all owe you a debt of gratitude!

In closing, I would like to ask if it is possible to collect and publish the "screen names" for members who have computers, and are on the Internet. E-mail would be a great way for everyone to keep in touch. Perhaps we could also locate some of the missing members of the 385th who would like to join our association.

With best regards,

Bob Wills

550th

P.S. My America Online (AOL) address: RWILLS1161



Jack Salyards & Bob Wills

385th BGMA APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP

Please Print

LAST NAME, First, MI.

Spouse's Name

Street or P.O. Box #

Telephone Number

City, State, & Zip Code

Squadron or Support Unit

The annual dues are Ten Dollars (\$10.00)
Life-time memberships are one payment of \$100.00 Date
Make Check out to "385th BGMA" and mail to:
John F. Pettenger, Treas.
Box 117
Laurel, FL 34272-0117

POW Capture Data
Place
Stalag Unit

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

Dear Ed,

Saw your item about Davis Monthan AFB. I would imagine that I am "top man" for time served at DM among 385th vets. I was assigned twice at DM.

In fact I was one of nineteen enlisted men assigned to DM in 1941.

I enlisted in the Regular Army Air Corps in September 1940 with the supposedly assurance of being trained to become an Aerial Photographer! The only photos I ever took from the air was with my own camera!!

My first station was Barksdale where I completed "recruit training" and was then assigned to a newly formed Air Base Group. In the Spring a S/Sgt and 18 pvts were ordered as a cadre to Davis Monthan.

There were no quarters available when we arrived. For the first three months we lived in tents. Finally the 42nd Air Base group was formed there.

On December 8, 1941 the 42nd Service Squadron left DM for Muroc, CA!!

I was ordered to DM the second time upon returning to the US after a tour with the 98th Bomb Gp in Japan. B-29s bombing Korea. After flying ten missions in miserable B-29' it was

discovered that I was an experienced Acft Maintenance officer. So I was no longer on combat status in B-29s.

Upon arriving at DM I was assigned to the 303d Bomb Wing as Field Maintenance officer. In all I spent nearly five years of my 20 years in the AF at DM.

I am enclosing some pictures that might be of interest to some members.

Upon completion of 30 missions with the 385th I went to the 4th Strategic Air Cepot where I was OIC of the Flight Test Section. Flew P-38, P-47, P-51 and several other types. The 4th SAD was only a few miles from Great Ashfield. I kept in touch with Bartley and Charles from the B-17 crew until I rotated to the US in September 1944.

The 303d Wing had B-47 Acft.

Sincerely,

Lamar Peeples

P.S. -1 hated B-17's but not as much after flying B-24s and B-29s!!!



**548TH BOMB SQUAD - 385TH BOMB GROUP
8TH AIR FORCE**

Front Row-Kneeling: Lst Lt. George V. Bartley A/C; 1st Lt. Second Row-Standing: S/Sgt Louis Leonard-Engineer; Sgt Lamar Peeples C/P; 1st Lt. William M. Bray B; 1st Lt. Rich- Stanley Stricklan-Gunner; Unknown; Sgt Bernard Z. ard w Charles N

Borzuchowski-Radio; No Positive ID

This is a B-17 from the 19th Bomb Group. Spring of 1941. When Pearl Harbour was under attack some B-17s from the 19th were in the air enroute to Hickam field. Some were already at Clark Field, P.I. Some of the crews participated in the 'Death March' from Hickam to Corregidor. A few of them survived.

When I made this picture there were three B-17s at (what would have become Davis-Monthan). (Before you go there better brief everybody on who Davis and Monthan were!) DM. They were doing navigation and bombing practice.

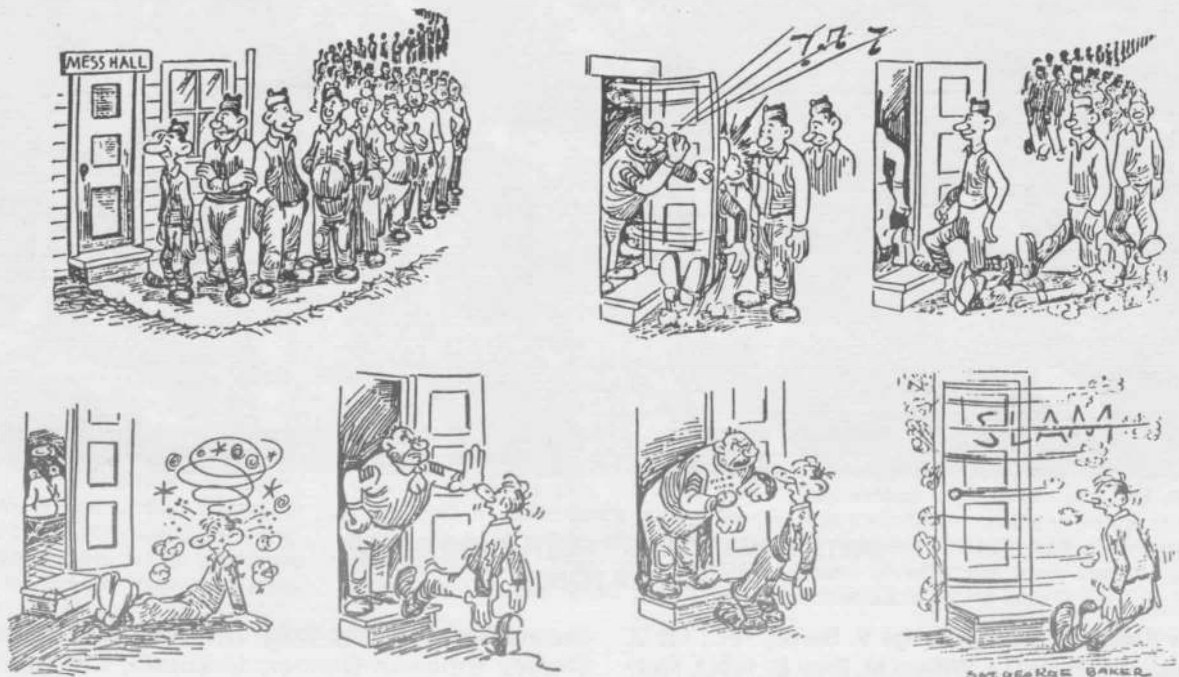
This picture and the LB -30 I made with a 35mm camera.



THE SAD SACK

by SERGEANT GEORGE BAKER

CHOW LINE



BIG BUSINESS

Every business day, promptly at noon, a timid little man would check in at the safe deposit department of a Chicago bank and obtain his safe deposit box which he would open, peer into, and carry away to one of the small coupon rooms where he would remain exactly 30 minutes. After several months, one young woman clerk plucked up courage enough to ask the visitor a few questions which he answered in a thin colorless voice. The deposit box was empty, and always had been. He had simply rented it so as to have a quiet spot in the little coupon room to eat his lunch, carried in his coat pocket.

— Contributed by Bill Kay

EDITOR'S NOTE: Paul Lindsay sent this June 1944 article that must bring back some unpleasant memories to all of our combat crew members. And receiving this story gives another illustration of what we've been saying all along -- you make the editor's job easy when you forward stories like this!

» The fantastic conditions under which our bombing crews fight

It's Grim Jbarlshig All the Way in the Big Bombers

Condensed from Air Facts ♦ Francis Vivian Drake

THE least-known front on which our young men are now fighting is the high-altitude battle line. Anyone who has felt bitter cold may have some idea of the Russian front. Movies have given a glimpse of the man who fights in a submarine or tank. But nothing short of an actual bomber mission can tell the whole story of conditions on the 25,000-foot front. The cold is worse than Russia's; the cramped quarters as bad as a tank's; the problem of oxygen as vital as in a submarine.

Leave out danger from the enemy for a moment and consider only the natural hazards at this great height. Remember the fearful hardships suffered by the men who tried to climb Mt. Everest, man's only other major effort five miles up. A bomber crew is whisked at dizzying speed from sea level to 25,000 feet. Making a deep penetration into Germany the men are in the air from eight to ten hours, every minute packed with intense danger and hardship. They must fight for their lives, possibly suffer wounds without proper medical help, and expertly control some of the most complicated and fast-moving machinery ever invented.

Quick, accurate jobs are done by everyone from tail-gunner to pilot, but they have to be done in clothes

that are aggravatingly bulky, for the cold may reach 60 degrees below zero. First a man dons the heaviest of long underwear. Over it go regular clothes. Then comes a bulging, binding winter flying-suit of leather lined with sheepskin. He is already moving awkwardly, but there is more to come: an armor vest of steel plates, a yellow Mae West life preserver, and, over all, the parachute harness. On his head he wears a warm cap and a steel helmet. On his hands go thick, heated gloves.

More items remain — not clothing, but gear. Without oxygen, a man would lose consciousness in about 30 seconds; so he slings on an oxygen mask around his neck. (Later its grip on his face will be almost maddening.) Then there are the intercom headset and the throat microphone—the one clamped over his ears, the other strapped snug around his Adam's apple.

Worry No. 1 is take-off. The pilot is strapped in his seat by his crew chief (another restriction on movement) — and he must take 30 tons of steel and aluminum, loaded with gasoline and high explosive, into the air. From the time the throttles are advanced at the head of the runway, the tension begins. The speed mounts to too, 120, before the heavy-laden

THE READER'S DIGEST

Jun/

wings lift the plane clear. The slightest swerve would blow a tire and cartwheel plane, crew and explosives into a pyre of flame and smoke.

The whole crew holds its breath. But the plane doesn't swerve. The mission is on.

Now it is time to strap the oxygen mask absolutely tight, so tight that the rubber face-piece digs into the skin and cuts off circulation in the cheeks. It is time for the pilot to turn up his radio receivers to a volume so loud that they overcome static and enemy jamming. The noise in his ears is deafening, but no word must be missed.

It is time for him to start the long strain of keeping eyes fixed on the Fortress 100 feet up and to the left, to move a stiff control wheel with one hand, tease four throttles and propeller pitch control levers into just the right speed, move the big rudder pedals against the resistance of heavy springs — all this to keep formation while the planes plunge ahead at 300 feet a second, surging up and down in the turbulent air. The gunners start their power turrets on methodical "searching" of the sky for enemy fighters that may blast into the formation at any second; the navigator begins his endless plotting and checking and sweating.

The second and third hours bring aches to the pilot's arms, legs and back, stiffness to the rest of the crew. The throat microphone grips and chafes those lithe scratches from shaving; the Mae West rubs the back of the neck. In the headphones, above 20,000 feet, the grains of carbon "pack" and produce a constant drilling squeal that has the same effect on

the nerves as dragging fingernails down a slate. The cold begins to creep through the heavy clothing. The oxygen mask grips the face like a malevolent hand. Subconsciously, a man wants to loosen it or rip it off; consciously, he leaves it on. In this Fortress and in all the others above, below and around, each mind feels the familiar strain of high altitude.

During the fifth hour, the Luftwaffe is likely to show up several thousand feet above the bombers, ready to slash down in screaming formations. But flying with the bombers are the Thunderbolts or Mustangs — to the bomber crews their black, heavy bodies transcend the beauty of any pin-up girl ever born. The attack cue is the urgent — excited but not scared — report from Top Turret: "Fighters at five o'clock! High. Ten of them. 190*3." After the first, instant twitch at the pit of the stomach, everyone waits tensely until the roar of Top Turret's guns say that battle is joined.

From then on things happen so fast there is little time for fear. Bullets spatter through the fuselage with the clamor of a boiler factory. The right waist-gunner catches a slug. The copilot is ordered to leave his seat and give first aid. In the next few minutes, some of the difficulties of this kind of warfare will be quickly apparent.

Lack of room is one, an absurdly vexing one. A heavy man in an overcoat, carrying two packages and trying to get at his change in a telephone booth is about the only civilian comparison. The copilot starts by disengaging safety belt, heater connection, radio cord and oxygen hose; and

1944 IT'S GRIM HARDSHIP ALL THE WAY IN THE BIG BOMBERS 49

finally, his parachute seat-pack. If the plane gets hit in the next ten minutes, the copilot is one man who won't jump. He fastens on a walk-around oxygen bottle, worms out of his seat and starts aft.

Every fold in his clothing seems bent on catching the knobs, levers and corners that crowd the interior. At the deep frame of the top turret, he has barely room to squeeze by when the turret is still; if the gunner is "searching," he may get caught in the powered crack and be seriously injured. The narrow bomb-bay passage is fringed with sharp brackets and fixtures; many a crew member has suffered bad cuts from them during violent action.

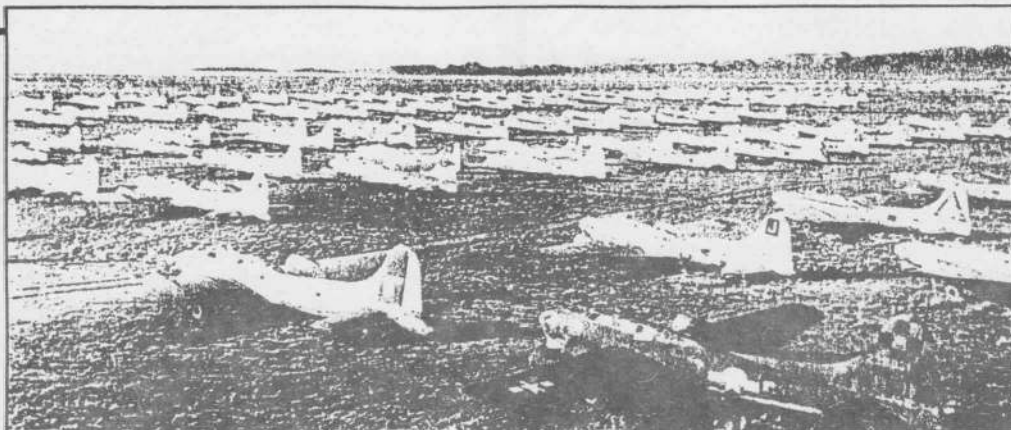
Right waist is unconscious at his station. The slipstream shrieks in through the gun aperture at 60 degrees below zero. He needs a tourniquet and a compress, sulfa dust and a hypodermic. It is no job for heavy gloves. The copilot slips his off. If he is fast, he may get the necessary things done in two or three minutes, then get his gloves back on. Even so, he is probably in for trouble. The blast of air is colder than the chamber which quick-freezes food, and it has the same effect on bare flesh. The few

minutes' exposure may mean six months in the hospital, hands muffled in aseptic boxing gloves, in the hope that the fingers will be saved. But it's a dead gunner or an injured hand, and there's no choice. The copilot's next worry is to struggle back through the plane to the cockpit. His walk-around oxygen is giving out, and he seems slower and more tired than a strong young man should be.

Now the Forts converge toward the bomb release line. German fighter *Stajeln* and anti-aircraft batteries reach their frenzied peak of resistance. The air is alive with flak. Horsing the bomber through violent evasive action takes all the strength of the pilot's arms and wrists. The crew counts each excruciating second. Finally comes the bombing run and the thrilling shout — "Bombs Away!"

The bomber swings around toward home — and goes through the whole harrowing experience again until that blessed moment when it slides down across the Channel in the protective custody of the Spits.

In spite of these fantastic hardships, no American heavy bomber formation has been turned back from its target by enemy action. The boys in the Forts and Libs can take it.



LOST HISTORY

South of the Kingman runways, looking west on 8 February 1947. Another of Bill Larkins' remarkable photographs. More than half of the 8th Air Force's 26 United Kingdom-based B-17 Bomb Groups are represented in this single photograph! Flying Fortresses from the 8th's 94th, 96th, 100th, 303rd, 351st, 381st, 385th, 388th, 398th, 401st, 447th, 487th, and 490th Bomb Groups can be found in this view. Crews from such quaint-sounding British bases as Bury St. Edmund, Snetterton Heath, Thorpe Abbots, Molesworth, Knellishall, and Eye had, for a second time, braved the Atlantic crossing to bring their charges home.

And what stories these boldly-marked Fortresses can tell!

The sun-faded checker-tailed Olive Drab B-17G 42-38031 in the lower right of the frame is typical of the Flying Fortresses pictured. The plane had survived more than a hundred combat missions as a member of "Van's Valiants," the famed 385th Bomb Group based at Great Ashfield. The Group had flown its first mission on 17 July 1943, and had the dubious distinction of being the last 8th Air Force unit to be fired upon in Europe — during a food relief drop over Holland in May 1945. By war's end, the Group had lost 160 Forts to combat and other operational reasons. They would claim 287 German fighters downed during the course of 269 combat missions.

Two years later, this 385th veteran awaits the Wunderlich ovens with its fellow survivors minus cowls, engines, propellers, guns, bomb sights, and, apparently, their highly-prized life rafts — once stored in the open side fuselage compartments just aft of the upper turrets.

Beyond the 385th Fort rests an earlier F model, perhaps a combat veteran which had ended its career stateside in a training unit, as its tail markings would suggest. To the right of the B-17F is a bare aluminum late model B-17G with the box J tail markings of the 351st Bomb Group — one of the groups that actor Clark Gable flew with as a gunner/aerial photographer. To its right rests a former member of the famed triangle C "Hell's Angels" of the 303rd Bomb Group. By war's end, the 303rd had flown 364 combat missions, more missions than any other 8th AF Group. Judging by the black mission score line running from its plexiglass nose to its radome compartment window, this particular Kingman resident took part on more than 130 of those missions.

At the very bottom left is a B-17 with the box H tail markings of the 388th Bomb Group. The group had been associated with the kind of special Aphrodite missions that would take the life of President Kennedy's older brother, Joseph. Kingman Fortresses with the triangle L tail markings had been members of the 381st BG — the Group sustaining the highest losses on the disastrous first Schweinfurt raid in August 1943. By war's end, the Group would have lost 131 B-17s on 296 wartime missions.

Fortresses with the box W tail markings of the 486th BG had not flown their first combat mission until 7 May 1944 — when the tide of the air war was clearly turning against the *Luftwaffe*. Remarkably, members of the 486th's 834th Bomb Squadron would lose no planes or personnel on its first 100 missions.

The red-tipped tails of another late-arriving Bomb Group, the 490th, would boast the lowest losses of any 8th AF Group in combat — losing 32 Flying Fortresses by VE Day. Evergreen's B-17G is painted in the markings of this relatively fortunate wartime group.

How many more stories are captured in this superb Bill Larkins study? More pages than we have here!

385thBGMA

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