



**NEWSLETTER OF THE  
385th BOMBARDMENT GROUP MEMORIAL ASSOCIATION**



**COMBAT UNITS**  
 HQ. SQUADRON  
 548th BOMB SQ.  
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 550th BOMB SQ.  
 551st BOMB SQ.

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**THOUGHTS OF THE PRESIDENT**

re un ion, (re un 'yan) n. 1. a coming together again: the reunion of parted friends. 2. a being reunited. 3. a social gathering of persons who have been separated or who have interests in common: a veteran's reunion.

Yes, the dictionary is describing us, the 385th Bombardment Group Memorial Association. We are having a reunion and I hope that the turnout will be the greatest. Quite a few of our devoted members are working hard to make the Tucson reunion a memorable experience. We must keep our friendship together. Send in your reservation NOW. We welcome all widows and we look for your presence and input.

As I leave office in Tucson, my reward would be to see the largest number of members there.

Remember—the reunion is not a reunion if "u" are not in it!

Bob Valliere



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**PAST PRESIDENTS \*DECEASED**  
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 \*Paul Schulz  
 Forrest V. Poore  
 William A. Nicholls  
 \*Earl L. Cole  
 Sam Lyke  
 Sid Colthorpe  
 Robert C. Smith

## CHAPLAIN JIM'S THOUGHTS

Greetings from Wet-Windy-but warm Seattle area,

In the April Hardlife Herald I wrote that I liked to apply the truth in scriptures to my daily life. I found this in my files and thought it might help apply some scriptures to your life. It is a Paraphrase on I Corinthians 13 written by Robert N. Zearfoss, First Baptist Church, Evanston, Illinois in the 1960's.

If I speak with precision of a scholar and acquire the subdued elegance of a television announcer, and have not love for all men, I am but the staccato noise of a riveting machine or the irritation of a dripping faucet. And if I have the training of a news analyst to predict what will happen tomorrow and understand the Einstein theory and can identify question, and if I have faith, so as to change the opinions of my neighbors (which in many ways is more difficult than removing mountains), and have not a warm love for people in my heart, I am as interesting as last week's headlines. If I give all my money to the United Fund drive and if I push my body to the edge of a nervous breakdown, but have not awareness of God's creative love, I gain nothing.

Love is willing to wait a long time and always searches for evidence of goodness in people; it does not push its way through crowds or break into line at supermarkets. Love does not care about recognition on committees, it is not distressed by careless words, nor is it depressed when a fellow worker is successful; love does not rejoice when misfortune comes to a competitor but rejoices in right, no matter who gets the credit.

Love is eternally present as the atom. As for predications of presidential elections, they will melt away. As for the intricacy of language, the United Nations will surmount that. As for the latest classroom theories, they will vanish like the early morning mists. Love shows in how little we really know. When I was growing up, I was eager to learn and soon felt that I knew all the answers, but when I became full grown, I blushed with realization of how little I truly knew. For now we see as through a distorted television screen, but then person to person. What a small fragment I know about the world! But there will come a time when the love of God will show me the world reflected in the souls of people. So nuclear mysteries, 1999 models of everything, and love are woven into the fabric of life, but the greatest of these is the creative love of God.

Sincerely

Jim



Jack (J.D.) Noble  
John Hadzega  
Elton Lewis  
Stephen J. Suspenski

April 1996  
December 1996  
January 1997  
December 1996

Gentlemen,

I'm writing to inform you of my husband s, Stehpen J, Suspense's death on 12-12-96.

Mary Suspenski

It was a sudden, a heart attack.

Dear Ed,

It is with sorrow that I wish to report the death of Jack (J.D.) Noble on April 21, 1996.

He was the waist gunner on "Angels Sister" for 33 missions - a member of Wayne Montgomery's crew.

He was a fun loving person who will be greatly missed.

Ed Stermer

(tail gunner)

John Hadzega died suddenly on December 1, 1996.

His last mission was on "Mrs. Smith"-B-17 which had engine failure. He witnessed as a P.O.W. what he thought was a dump burning but was told it was the plane itself after crashing.



Dear Ed,

I noted in on Carl Williams' letter in December '96 issue that he'd saved every issue of the Hardlife Herald. I, too, have saved back issues. Unfortunately, I'm missing some of the early issues. If someone has these issues and is willing to Xerox them, I'd be happy to pay for them. I'm missing, as best as I can tell, Volumes I through V; Vol. XI-No. 1; Vol. VIII-No. 4 and vol. VIII-No. 7. If I can make a complete collection. I'll donate it to the 9th AF museum at Savannah.

Readers might be interested in this mini-history of our 385th BGMA 'magazine.'

The first issue was called News Bulletin #1, dated May 27, 1957, and was a single sheet! By Vol. VI-No 1, dated 8 August 1975, it was called, Members Newsletter, editor not specified, but John Ford was Secretary and presumably published it and the next issue, Vol. VI-No. 2, was titled, 385th Bombardment Group (H) Reunion Newsletter, and the editor was clearly specified as John Ford in the masthead. Vol. VI-No. 5 shortened this to just Newsletter. Vol. VII-No. 1 was Reunion Newsletter, but Vol. VII-No. 2 was back to just Newsletter. John Ford was editor until Paul R. Schulz became the Newsletter editor with the Vol. VIII-No. 6. Paul continued until Verne Philips took over with Vol. IX-No. 4. Vol. XII-No. 3 had no title at all, but it resumed as Newsletter when Ed Stern became editor with Vol. XII-No. 4, October 1985. Ed has been editor ever since. (And a fine one too!!) Ed changed the name to Hard Life for Vol. XV-No. 4, which was the first issue to have the names of our B-17s on the cover. But Ed settled on the title, Hardlife Herald, for the next issue, Vol. XV-No. 5, June 1988. It has been the Hardlife Herald ever since.

Yours for a happy and fine New Year,

Bill Varnedoe  
5000 Ketova Way  
Huntsville, AL 35803

Editors Note: From the April 1988 Hardlife Herald, we find this additional history:

Another New Heading For Our Newsletter  
A few of you have noticed the new heading on the January Newsletter. If you didn't, you WILL notice this one!

Bob Cribb of Spartanburg, SC, sent it, and it looks like a great idea-we needed a name for the Newsletter, and Hard Life seems just right. He also suggested that we should add the 31st Station Complement Squadron to our list of support units.

Thanks Bob! Anymore suggestion from any of you out there will be welcome.

Bob died shortly after he designed our heading. What a lasting contribution he made.

May 4, 1997

Dear Ed,

This is a copy of a poem by V. Layton, was given to me by a friend Pete Jackson who served in the Royal navy. It appeared in a publication called White Ensign.

Having been stationed at Great Ashfield from 1943-1945 and returned to visit there in 1962 and again in 1995 it puts into words some of the feelings I have about the base and the men I knew there.

I was not a flyer but ground crew (a medic) but I saw many who flew away and did not return.

Sincerely

Joe Dern

## TRIBUTE TO FALLEN HEROES

fl Suffolk flirfield

In mists, black flaking hangar stands.  
Where silent aircraft stood,  
find weeds now cover concrete tracks.  
Where nervous airmen fooled.  
Sometimes a bitter wind moans cold.  
Where sirens sighed and howled,  
•find hard the ram that beats the ground.  
Where heavy bombers rolled.  
Short breaks of sunlight strike old tower.  
From which green flldis flashed.  
Now clattering combine harvester.  
Where mighty engines thrashed.  
The plough's keen blade cleaves earth aside,  
Where props whipped air and whined,  
find over cars where lovers kiss.  
Nite bombers slowly climbed,  
find like, to hovering hawk above,  
5>ome fell to fighters, prey.  
Whilst others struggled back, and burned.  
In Suffolk's soil to lay.  
find what of grieving relatives.  
Grown old, and mostly gone.  
Who whispered prayers on reading,  
"Just one last trip, then home!"  
Instead, came black-edged telegram.  
Then later, anguished tears.  
Now fades his photo by the clock.  
That chimed through long sad years,  
fl crumbling shrine, this field, to those  
Who flew, too young to die.  
In Rhine, and Ruhr, and places far  
Beyond where earth meets sky.  
fls evening sun fires fields with gold,  
fgamst dark hanger's line.  
Somewhere, beyond faint moon and stars,  
Brave souls of these men shine.

VP LAYTON

Submitted by S/M Jack Quainlanee tlon. Sec. RHF tlarwih  
Branch, and Sec. tl.M.S fltax and River plate flUnociaion. I

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Editor's Note: This is on the list of what you'll see at Tucson. Really incredible sight.

AI 8 Sunday, May 11, 1997

NATION

THE FORUM

# Discard lot alone makes for air superpower

Tucson, Ariz. (AP)

With row upon row of mothballed warplanes on the desert floor near here, the Air Force's most sweeping strategic review since "Boneyard" has become the world's largest concentration of military aircraft in the world.

If Arizona were to seize the 4-square-mile storage center, the desert republic would become an instant air superpower, endowed with 139 patrol planes, 426 cargo planes, 562 helicopters, 570 trainers, 1,142 ground attack jets and 2,087 fighter jets - 750 more planes than the Air Force

has in service.

As the Pentagon prepares to subvert a reservoir of spare parts and planes, the and that it cannot substitute for the Air Force's most sweeping strategic review since two high-profile Air Force programs, \$45 billion for a new generation of bombers, the B-2, and \$80 billion for a new generation of jet fighters, the F-22.

on this patch of the Sonora Desert, "We could have air superiority with what we have in the Boneyard," said Caleb Rossiter, director of Demilitarization for Democracy, a group in Washington. Air Force officials respond that

the Boneyard is largely useful as a "It would have been absurd to fight World War II with biplanes. It would have been absurd to fight MiG-15s in Korea with P-47s. By the time we buy the first F-22, in 2004 the average age of our F-15s will be 25 years."

"Most of those planes have essentially outlived their service lives," Brig. Gen. Bruce Carlson, who works on acquisition for the Air Force, said from Washington. "If you look in the Junkyards of America, there are probably 50 million junked cars that could get running, too.

Fighters and bombers that flew Jr. Nixon and Carter administration: will not guarantee U.S. air superiority in the 21st century, said Kathryn Hayden, a spokeswoman for Lockheed Martin, manufacturer of the F-22. "Russia is still developing tactical aircraft. China is starting to develop aircraft."



## B-17 Visit Emotional for Tailgunner's Daughter

By Shaun Schafer  
World Staff Writer

A visit by a piece of flying World War II history is giving one local woman a chance for a sort of re-union with her late father.

Susan Jones' father, Joe, was a tail-gunner in a B-17G, the same model as the bomber "Aluminum Overcast" that is visiting Tulsa this weekend on the first stop of a 20- to 30-city tour.

On March 1, 1945, Jones' father was a 19-year-old sergeant manning the twin 50-caliber machineguns at the back of a B-17G known as "Mr. Lucky." On a bombing run to Ulm, Germany, another bomber collided with "Mr. Lucky," splitting the plane across the middle.

After the collision, Joe Jones called the pilot over his headset and got no answer, his daughter said. He couldn't kick his compartment door open, so he lit a cigarette and waited as the tail section fell 13,000 feet to the ground.

Eight days later, Jones woke up in a See Plane on E-2

He has a nose and a bad bruise, but no broken bones.

He said it was just luck. She said she was glad to see him and that she just couldn't resist.

Jones, 32, said her father wrestled over the miracle that allowed him to survive while everyone else in the crew perished: Although she remembers a trip to see one of the bombers more than 20 years ago, B-17s have taken on added significance since her father's death from lung cancer in 1994.

"When I was a kid, I didn't realize who my dad was, and what he went through," she said. He didn't brag, he didn't talk about it.

After retirement, however, her father did devote his time to the 8th Air Force Historical Society, a group that keeps alive memories of the 8th's exploits over Europe as part of the 353rd Bomb Group, a unit of the 8th, Joe Jones had



B-17G "Aluminum Overcast" at Jones Airport.



Ken Laffoon & 1943 Willys Jeep to be displayed at Tucson Reunion.

Two Tulkani. Dr. Wiliam Harrison Jr. who once co-piloted the B-17G during its stay, the plane will take off three times each morning from its base in Oshkosh, Wis., to Tulsa, Ariz. Flights have all been scheduled to celebrate the plane's arrival in Tulsa.

It's a wonderful educational opportunity, said Joseph L. Parker Jr., who chairs the Museums and Historical Society of Tulsa. "It's a wonderful educational opportunity for the public," he said. "It's a wonderful educational opportunity for the public."

Charles Harris, who organized this stop on the bombers tour, said the 52-year-old plane carries opportunities to reminisce and to educate, and a number of onlookers

Editor's Note: Sam Lyke sent this interesting story, see his letter that follows.

YOUR COMMUNITY WORLD — WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 27, 1996

SOUTH 7

## Former German Pilot Speaks to U.S. Veterans

By Bill Underwood  
World Staff Writer

Fifty years ago, they were deadly enemies clashing over the skies of Europe. Today, they can sit down together and share memories of those dark, but thrilling days when each fought bravely for their countries during World War II.

On Nov. 15, Horst Petzschler, a former fighter pilot with the German Luftwaffe, an old foe of the U.S. Eighth Air Force, spoke to his former enemies who were the hosts of a meeting in East Tulsa.

Instead of peering across the skies over Europe, the veterans met face-to-face in a packed meeting room at Furr's Cafeteria, 11111 E. 41st St. Petzschler was there at the invitation of the veteran's organization, which boasts more than 100 members throughout northeastern Oklahoma.

After a warm introduction by Lt. C. Kinzer, a member of the group, Petzschler recounted for the crowd his memories of serving in the Luftwaffe.

Petzschler joined the German Air Force in 1941. He was 20 years old and eager to get behind the stick of a fighter. Petzschler's only prior flying experience was piloting gliders, but that was enough to get him in the Luftwaffe.

After completing basic training, Kinzer was promoted to corporal and sent to school to learn how to become a bomber pilot. Kinzer did everything he could to convince his



Contributed photo

This photo of Petzschler was taken during the war

instructors that he was not cut out for bombers, and eventually succeeded in getting transferred to a fighter school located near Nazi-occupied Paris.

While there, Petzschler got his first taste of air combat when he, his instructor and six other students tangled with a group of 200 American B-17 heavy bombers headed for a German radar center in Guayancourt, northwest of Paris.

The students let loose with their guns long before the B-17s were in range, Petzschler recalls.

"We didn't have more than four hours flying time on our Focke Wulf 190s," he said. "We started shooting when we were 1,000 feet away."

Petzschler's instructor did, however, succeed in knocking out one B-17. Petzschler counted 10 parachuting men in the air — the plane's full crew — before it crashed.

One of the bombers in that group was the famed Memphis Belle, pilot of the first to complete 25 missions. Petzschler met Morgan at an air show.

"We have become good friends," Petzschler said. "He gave me a picture saying Thank you Horst, that you didn't gun me."

After completing his training, Petzschler reported for duty on the Russian front



Community World staff photo by Bill Underwood

Sam Lyke, left, president of the Eighth Air Force Veterans' Group of Northeastern Oklahoma, is shown with Horst Petzschler and Petzschler's son, Patrick. Petzschler spoke to the veterans' group earlier this month.

"We were in a special squadron that was put together to fight the Russian tanks, to stop the tank onslaught," he said.

Shortly after arriving, Petzschler celebrated his birthday on Sept. 7. The next day he flew his first sortie and was forced to bail out when Russian anti-aircraft fire disabled his plane. He was rescued by a German tank crew and after returning to base in Smolensk had a heated confrontation with his commander.

"He said, 'You go to the infantry now.' And I said, 'No sir, I fly again.' He said, 'How do you know this?' And I said, 'Well, if you'd just give me a better plane. That was the oldest horse in the barn that you gave me.' And it was. Nobody wanted to fly it... The lame duck gets it always."

Soon, Petzschler was flying a state-of-the-art Messerschmidt 109. During his months on the Russian front, Petzschler flew a staggering 126 sorties, often providing close air support for the German infantry.

In April 1944, Petzschler was transferred to Magdeburg, Germany, to train bomber pilots to fly fighters. These were painful days for Petzschler as he witnessed the war's tide turning against Germany. There was no more obvious sign of his than the massive, B-17 bomb-

ers which, at times, literally filled the sky.

"It was so overwhelming to see the Eighth Air Force parading over Germany," Petzschler said. "I had tears in my eyes when I saw this. This is hopeless, I thought to myself."

As bad as it was, Petzschler and his comrades were still determined to defend their homeland against the allied invasion. Petzschler flew 14 missions over German soil, including a few skirmishes with the formidable American-made P-51 Mustangs.

Speaking to the group, Petzschler recounted the details

"I was shot down twice by Mustangs," Petzschler said. "But I got even with them. I got me two Mustangs. I also got a B-17 over Frankfurt, and I was happy to see the crew bail out. I don't say that because I am facing you here, but that is the feeling you have. You think, 'The battle is over. They go home now.'"

Petzschler was transferred back to the Russian front for a short time, then returned to Germany where he fought his last battles of the war.

After the final battle, when it was obvious to everyone that the war was lost, Petzschler and his comrades resolved to fly to Copenhagen, where they would surrender to the British, who treated war prisoners much more humanely than the Russians did.

Sweden. You will be treated according to the Geneva Convention."

Petzschler surrendered his plane and was interned. Then his luck changed for the worse when Soviet Premier Josef Stalin insisted that all German prisoners in Sweden who had served on the Russian front be returned to Russia for internment. Petzschler became one of more than 1 million German troops transferred to Russian prisoner-of-war camps. There he remained until 1949, when President Harry Truman and German Chancellor Konrad Adenauer insisted that Stalin release all German war prisoners.

Petzschler and his comrades endured terrible hardships at the hands of their Russian keepers, including starvation. At the time of his release, the 6-foot-tall Petzschler weighed only 118 pounds. Most of his comrades did not fare as well. More than 800,000 are still classified as "missing in action."

Eventually, Petzschler ended up in America, where he worked in the aerospace industry until his retirement. He even lived in Tulsa for one year while working on the Boeing 757 and the space shuttle cargo bay doors at Rockwell International.

Petzschler remembers the first time he saw Rockwell's "mile-long" hanger, one of the places P-51 Mustangs were manufactured during the war.

During Petzschler's address to the Eighth Air Force veterans, the group sat in rapt attention. Many asked questions afterwards and were eager to shake Petzschler's hand. Among them was Gen. Joe Turner, a former squadron commander with the 96th bomb group.

"I think he's a typical fighter pilot," Turner said. "We were doing our job, and he was doing his job. I have no animosity toward him at all."

Similarly, Petzschler, who now resides in Wichita, Kan., was moved by the warm reception he received.

"It was great," Petzschler said. "I must say I met some very understanding people. We have respect for each other. And that's the way it should be."

Dear Ed,

I thought you might be interested in this article. This ex fighter pilot is real thankful to be alive and an American citizen considering only a few thousand German pilots survived the war.

He shot down twenty eight planes, mostly Russians. He wrote our Group a nice letter expressing thanks for our invitation to speak to us. He was thankful that we are now friends and enjoy talking about our experiences. His young, ten year old son was born here in America and is a typical American boy. He is proud of his dad which is great.

Hope the plans for the Reunion are coming along and hope we have a good attendance.

Sincerely,  
Sam

# BULLETIN BOARD

## Air Fares to Tucson

Our best opportunity for special rates for the Tucson Reunion will be to watch for Airline special promotions and take advantage of them. We've arranged with Travel Planners agency to track fare wars as they occur and inform our members. Call them at 1 -800-624-6280. Give them your name, home address, and travel dates. They will contact you with the best fare as it develops on any airline that serves Tucson.

## Flood Update

On April 10, we wrote a short note for the April Hardlife Herald saying that things seemed to have settled down with the Red River flood situation. Wrong! A few days after April 10 things went from bad to worse, predications of the crest were raised and raised again. Fargo's dikes held, but Grand Forks was swamped, as you no doubt saw and read- -really a disastrous flood that forced evacuation of the entire city. To relate things a little to the Air Force, some 6,000 people were temporarily housed in B-52 hangers at the Air Force Base about 20 miles west of the river.

Personally, we had a basement (unfinished fortunately) full of water when our area was flooded and the electricity was turned off- -sump pump water instead of dirty, slimy river water. Took lots of cleaning, tearing out of wallboard, new furnace, water heater, etc. Been an exciting 4 weeks. We've been living with relatives, hotels, the lake cottage- -wherever. And we were one of the lucky ones.

Thanks to all of you who expressed concern!

## Reunion reservations at the Doubletree as of June 1:

Albert Audette, George Behl, Rie Bennett, Denver & Noriki Canaday, Sidney Colthorpe, Thomas Conway, Burnell Cook, Charles Coughlin, John Deberg, Joseph Degiacomo, Wayne Detwiler, Mr. & Mrs. Henry Dworshak, Dale Dykins, Dale Dykins, William Fife, Susan Fineman, Norman Franks, Michael Gallagher, Plato Gallon, Norman Gual, Drue Gillis, Mr. & Mrs. Herman Heckel, William Hoagland, Homer Howe, George Hruska, Doris Inglis, John Johnson, Michael Kindya, Wallace Kuester, Dean Leyerly, Ben Love, Ed Lowe, Sam & Mary Lyke, Mike Marby, Paul & Irene Marince, Robert T. Marshall, Mrs. H. Martin, Harry Martin, John Matthews, Evelyn McInnis, George Menkoff, Mr. & Mrs. Karl Moravek, Fred Nestler, William A. & Doris Nicholls, Maurice Nysether, Emily Onstott, Mr. & Mrs. Lyndon Palin. Howard Richardson, George Salvador, Ralph Smith, Robert Smith, Harvey Snider, Harvey Snider,

Edward Stern, Wilbur Sunday, J.A. Thompson, Willis Tulare, Rev. James Vance, Rolland Vencil, Wayne & Eunice Zeigler

## REUNION REGISTRATION CLARIFICATION

In the April issue, we explained a misunderstanding that a few had with regard to registration fee for the Tucson Reunion. We need \$ 110 from both husband and wife of members - -\$220 total. If you bring guests (children, grandchildren, friends, etc), they pay only for meals as listed. Please save Sam and Mary Lyke the trouble- -and embarrassment- -of writing you, if you misunderstood.

## "WAR STORIES"

is a collection of 66 highly personal accounts by the men of the 8th AF (including one of ours, Loren E. Jackson telling of his P.O.W. experiences). For a copy call 1-800-443-5903. it's \$29.95 plus \$3.00 shipping.

## CONTRIBUTIONS

Clark Robbins sent a nice contribution for our treasury. Thanks. We seem to be solvent now- -especially if we can anticipate a slight increase in dues after Tucson.

## TO THE WIDOWS OF THE 385TH

As President of our Bomb Group Memorial Association, I would like to extend my sincere invitation to attend our forthcoming reunion in Tucson.

I am asking the membership to offer a warm reception to all widows, and to make you comfortable during activities of the reunion. Your name tags will identify you and I do hope that you will be included in ail functions, as one of us, which you certainly are.

Don't drop out, but continue to be a part of the 385th Bomb Group Memorial Association. Records show that there are over 150 widows listed, and the list grows. Let's hear from you. At Tucson, if you would like to share a room with another widow, please let Sam Lyke know -tel: (918) 333-4939.

I look forward to seeing you in Tucson.

Robert A. Valliere

Harry E. Woltman, L/M 999 #171  
5111 Fontaine St. #212  
San Diego, California 92120

March 9, 1997

Ed Stern  
Editor HARDLIFE HERALD

Dear Ed:

I've been a member of the 385th Bombardment Group Memorial Association since 1975 and a LIFE MEMBER since about the time this type of membership was established. My wife, Norma, and I have been to several 385th reunions, the first of which was in 1976 at Las Vegas, Nevada; then in 1977 at Colorado Springs and Great Ashfield in 1984.

For some time I have been meaning to write to you but I guess I never really had the impetus until now. After the HARDLIFE HERALD informed me about the new 385th history I sent to the Southern Heritage Press for a copy and received it. Well, after seeing pictures of the many crews, I was just delighted, but was greatly disappointed that my crew was not included. I suppose I was in error to believe our memorial association had pictures of all the crews. So to correct this, and in fairness to my crew, I am enclosing a picture of my crew (Encl.#1) and (Encl. 2 & 3) their names on Heavy Bombardment orders. Because of the policy to decrease crews from 10 to 9 Robertson was later removed from my crew (front row, third from left). Over the years I have had no contact with any except Broughton and Klaas. Since Paul Klaas, who lives in Washington State, found me he has visited Norma and me the past two years. The History did mention me on page 90 concerning an incident that happened when I was giving McGregor an instrument check flight. I was commended for averting a similar situation that caused the loss of a bomber and crew. - I attended the inquest. In the article they incorrectly have my middle initial as K when actually it is E. I was one of the few Instrument Check Pilots in the group. (Encl. #4).

Let me give you a little history of my crew. I checked out in the B-17 Flying Fortress in May 1944 at Hendricks Field, Sebring, Florida. I was then sent to Lincoln AFB, Nebraska in June 1944, where I received my combat crew assignments. My crew and I were then sent to Ardmore, Oklahoma for combat crew training (July & August 1944); then back to Lincoln to receive our new B-17G #43-38720 (I signed for it) (Encl.#5) The assignment was to check out all features of the plane (swing compass, test engines and controls etc.). In September we were ordered to fly to Dow Field, Bangor, Maine to get our combat orders. When I took off from Dow we had a heading to take, and SECRET ORDERS to open (after a length of time) to give us our destination - ENGLAND. We did this via Goose Bay, Labrador, Meeks AFB, Iceland and on 3 October 1944 I made my last landing in our beautiful new B-17G at Valley, Wales, where they took it to go into the A/C replacement depot. Then by train we were sent to the Crew Replacement Base at Stone, England, where we received our final COMBAT ASSIGNMENT:

Great Ashfield Sta. 155  
385th Bombardment Group, 5<sup>9</sup>th Sqd.

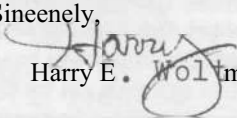
I believe we arrived there on 9 Oct. 19<sup>4</sup>. Here I must tell you, I had absolutely no qualms about going into combat with these guys - they were great, they were the BEST. I believe my first mission was Hanover, Germany. All of my crew finished their missions and returned to the U. S. - THANK GOD!

I had been kicked upstairs (as they say) to be a Command Pilot (Leader) and Assistant Operations Officer of the 5<sup>9</sup>th under Charley REID. I stayed on to the end of the European Conflict. My mission to Berlin was on 3 Feb. 19<sup>5</sup>. (Encl.#6) is a copy of our planning sheet for the Kiel mission on 3 Apr. 19<sup>5</sup>. I'm sure you have seen a lot of these and recognize many of the names.

In the early part of May 19<sup>5</sup> I flew on the Survival Mission (Chow Hound Food Drop) to Rotterdam, Holland. Then later in that month I was directed to fly a contingent of our personnel to Linz AFB, Linz Austria to help organize and conduct the POW Revival Missions - to return allied POWs back to bases in Belgium, France and England. We had as many as <sup>^</sup>0 passengers on each flight (bombay doors boarded up of course). (Encl. #7) After returning from the Linz project I was privileged to fly some dignitaries, but more importantly, ground crew personnel on what was later called a Cook's Tour of Germany, Belgium and France at low altitude for them to see what their work helped to accomplish. I can say I actually enjoyed these last few missions, but the best was when I flew twenty of us back to the good old U S A in a B-17 #<sup>^</sup>3-38361 (Encl. #8).

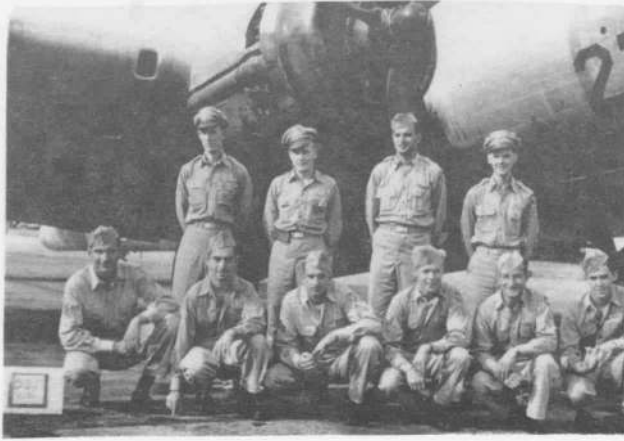
We'll in brief - that's it. However the other reason I am writing at this time is for the life of HARDLIFE HERALD. Norma and I can never thank you and your crew enough for the nostalgic pleasures you've given us through the years. Don't ever think of discontinuing HARDLIFE! In the October 1996 issue you offered four options for survival. I agree with all of them. We LIFE MEMBERS should be willing to aid in any reasonable way. If some annual donation is necessary - tell us. I'm sure we will all respond. Thank you again for HARDLIFE HERALD.

Thank you, thank you, thank you  
Sincerely,

  
Harry E. Wolftman

P.S. Norma and I intend to be at the Tucson Reunion in November, health permitting. Hope to see you there.





WOLTMAN CREW NAMES AND AGES

REAR	Age	FRONT	Age
Pilot Woltman	24	Eng. Siemienkovic	5
o-Pilot Broughton	24	Radio Siegel	1
Nav. Goldstein	22	W Gun Robertson	1
Bomb. Klaas	19	W Gun Duquette	1
		BT Gun Goldsmith	1
		T Gun Johnson	1

Encl. # H

For PAUL

\*B,STJHET2D

HSRDQUARTERS... 2731C AAF BaSS U/IT (S3) Lincoln Army Air Field Lincoln, Nebraska

370.5-838 (235-35)

25 September 1944

SUBJECT: Movement Orders, Heavy Bombardment Crew, Number FK-350-AJ 109, To Oversea Destination.

TO : P 1ST LT HARRY E. FOLTMAN 0-662520  
 CP 2D LT GEORGE E. BRUGHTECF 0-828936  
 N F/O FRED GOLDSTEIN T-129262  
 B F/O PAUL K. KLAAS- T-4649  
 APMG Sgt John C. Siemienkovic Jr 33083967  
 RCMX Cpl Julph E. Siegel 16081762  
 Ljasi Cpl Lucien C. Duquette 39576849  
 Pvt. C. Charles W. Robertson 37527641  
 CG Sgt. Louis Goldsmith 1203552  
 CG Cpl Donald G. Johnson 36782777

You are assigned to Shipment No. FK-350-AJ, as crew number FK-350-AJ 109, and to B-17 airplane number 43-38720, on aircraft project number 92840R. You are equipped in accordance with the provisions of the movement order.

RISS \* RJOTED

(SO, 7136 Hq AkF Sta 155, APO 559 dated 16 S2; 457 continued)

(jg) VOCC 15 Hay '45 is hereby notified and made a matter of record: PIC VOCC 3d AD, for named 0 and HI, organs indicated, are placed on TDI for M indefinite period to Allied Occupied Territory on the Continent to carry out VOCC 3d AD.

n.v. av r WILDM	C667520...	AC	549th Bomb Sq
CIPT FREDERICK C HEYSR	0659659	AC	551st Bomb Sq
1ST LT KENNETH R VINTERS	0764853	AC	551st Bomb Sq
H Sgt Harvey C Helmer	17049408		551st Bomb Sq
U Sgt Harry J Bellett	35378407		551st Bomb Sq

DATE: April 13, 1945 > K (6) L

POSITION OF GROUPS IN DIVISION (NO) >

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3

HEADQUARTERS  
70TH REPLACEMENT DEPOT (AAF)  
APO 635

AAF STA 594.  
7 Oct 1944.

SPECIAL ORDERS )

NO. 281 )

EXTRACTSECTION I

9. Following AC EM, Casual Pool, this Hq, are reld fr asgmt this Hq, and asgd as indicated. 0 concerned are reld fr at chart 156th Replacement Co, 130th Replacement Bn (AAF), this sta, and EM concerned are reld fr atchrat 158th Replacement Co, 130th Replacement Bn (AAF), this sta. WPR a/o (SIT o/a 8 Oct 1944, rpt on arrival to CO thereat. Cooked rat in kind will be provided while traveling. A perm c of sta. TCNT. TDN. FSA 60-136 P 431-02 A 212/50425.  
AUTH: IWX Restricted D65773, Hq Eighth Air Force.

385TH BOMB GP. AAF STA 155FK 350 AJCr 100 (APO 16500 AJ 100)

1ST LT JOHN B. MILLARD 0463417  
2D LT MARVIN W. PROCHNOW 0766947  
2D LT WILLIAM E. DICKISON 02064542  
F/O RICHARD S. DOWELL JR T4547  
Cpl Roy G. Bagley 14106761 (611)  
Cpl William E. Baker 39047333 (612)  
Cpl Dariel Clark 37708303 (611)  
Cpl Frederick N. Greene 34834458 (611)  
Cpl Walter Kmiec'16067202 (757)  
Cpl Donald J. Sims 18139680 (611)

Cr 103 (APO 16500 AJ 103)

2b LT OSCAR B. HEINTZ 0771397  
2D LT ELLIOTT B. YOUNG 0770888  
2D LT FRED W. DUNTON 02064707  
F/O WILLARD M. HAGMAN T4562  
Cpl Anthony G. Erbaooi 16107149 (611)  
Cpl Harold K. Frederickson 39468957 (611)  
Cpl Delbert J. Huth 35892111 (611)  
Cpl Bernard H. Smyth 35554925 (757)  
Cpl Karl E. Stubenazy 12076548 (612)  
Cpl Horace L. Twyman 37508990 (748)

Cr 108 (APO 16500 AJ 108)

2D LT BYRON D. ALLEN JR3672012  
2D LT WARREN A. HOYT 0768554  
F/O GILBERT GOLDBERG T129261  
2D LT WILMER A. JOHN 0780382  
Sgt Robert A. Garner 39272656 (748)  
Cpl Virgil O. Fallon 39619559 (612)  
Cpl Samuel J. Graham Jr 13062986 (611)  
Cpl Robert D. Hedington 35600133 (757)  
Cpl Harry C. Keyer Jr 15364204.(611)  
Cpl Edward C. Saville 39137386 (611)

Cr 109 (APO 16500 AJ 109)

1ST LT HARRY E. WDLTMAN<sup>1</sup>0662520  
2D LT GEORGE E. BROUGHTON 0828936  
F/O FRED GOLDSTEIN T12.9262  
F/O- PAUL K. KLAAS T4649  
Sgt John C. Siemienkovioz Jr 33083967 (748)  
Sgt Louis Goldsmith 12035442 (611)  
Cpl Lucien C. Duquette 39576849 (612)  
Cpl Donald G. Johnson 36782777 (611)  
Cpl Ralph E. Siegel 16081762 (757)  
Pvt Charles W. Robertson 37527641 (748)

Cr 113 (APO 1-6500 AJ 113)

2D LT WILBUR N. WHIT&HEAD 0770869  
2D LT JOHN W. SULLIVAN 0776435  
F/O GENE Pi HACKNEY 1129264

Cr 117 (APO 16500. A J 117)

2D LT GERALD O. STEIL 0\*772556  
2D LT MORTON H» FEINGOLD 0828396  
■ 2D LT JOHN A. JOSEPH. 020.6459.4.....

- 1 - (Over)

R E S T R I C T E D

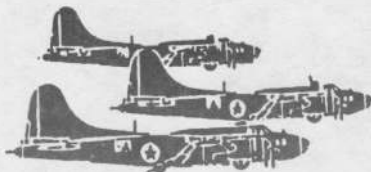
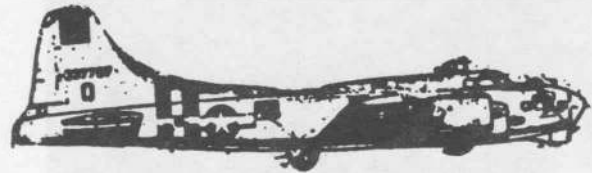
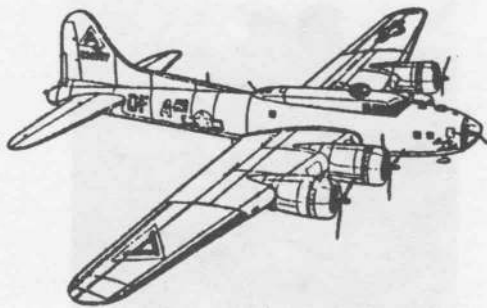
ENC # 3

RESTRICTED

Extract Par 9, SO 281, Sec I, Hq. 70th Replacement Depot (AAF), 7-10-44, Cont'd.

2D LT WILLIAM H. BUTLER 0780216  
 Sgt Olen E., Gilmore 38431441 (748)  
 Cpl David M. Cates 14,135402 (612)  
 Cpl George D. CrobauA 15399064 (611)  
 Cpl Leonard T. Edwards Jr 37528860 (611)  
 Cpl John H. Povey 13115040 (757)  
 Cpl Rial O. Purnell 34178994 (611)

2D LT DONALD E. COLLINS 0780221  
 Cpl Donald J. Abens 36751630 (757)  
 Cpl Alan G. Boltz 35895321 (611)  
 Cpl Ronald J. McInnis 39136796 (611)  
 Cpl Rbland B, Tanguay 31321365 (611)  
 Dpi RaVph J. Vollmer 35732831 (612)



Frederick C. Meier  
1651 Ho'okani Street  
Pearl City, Hawaii 96782

April 21, 1997

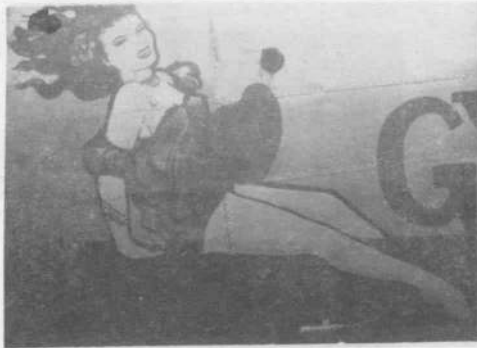
Dear Mr. Stem:

Our crew was assigned to the 550th B.S. of the 385th B.G. We departed Lincoln Army Airfield, Lincoln, Nebraska for England on or about 15 February 1945. Our B-17 touched down at Dow Field, Bangor, Maine where we stayed for 4 or 5 days as a crew member required hospitalization. After leaving Dow Field we flew to England via Newfoundland and Greenland. During the flight the fuselage and wing antenna iced up to the size of a broom handle. Thank God our wing deicer boots worked. I will never forget the parts of that flight!

The crew members include:

AP COM	2nd LT	Thomas Wallner
P	2nd LT	Ray E. Batey
N	F/O	James J. Manion
B	2nd LT	Edward Denning
APMG	S/SGT	John E. Portz
ROMG	S/SGT	Frederick C. Meier
AG	CPL	Richard L. Smith
CG	CPL	Harry J. Davidson
CG	CPL	Joseph F. Kelley, Jr.

Enclosed are photographs of the air crew and ground crew enroute to, on bombing runs and returning to Elmswell and a list of our target areas.



Our B-17 Gypsy Princess



Harry J. Davidson-Ball Turrent Gunner meets his brother at Elmswell.



Richard L. Smith Left Waist Gunner



Joseph F. Kelley Tail Gunner



Frederick C. Meier Radio Operator-Gunner



Harry J. Davidson Ball Turret Gunner



John E Portz Engineer-Gunner



500 Pounders on this run.  
Again I don't recall which target



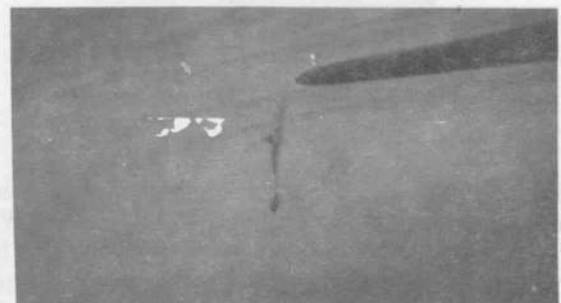
On way to target.  
Don't ask me which one-1 wouldn't know



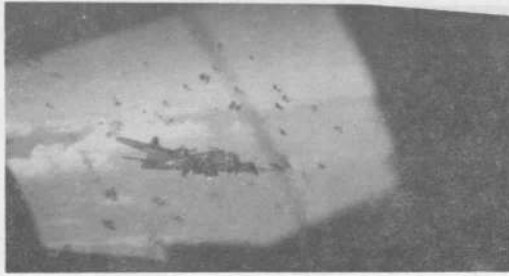
On bomb run over Germany target.  
Most missions had this much flak



On bomb run



One that didn't get back to Elmswell.



On bomb run over Germany  
on most missions we received this much flak



Yes they landed!!!



Grim Reminder before going to town

I do not recall the date we landed in Elmswell, but, I do know little time was wasted in assigning us to fly missions. We completed sixteen (16) combat missions. Immediately after the war, we flew on "food missions." We dropped food and supplies to people in Holland after their dams were damaged by German bombs.

When I stop and think of what happened in such a short period of time, I thank God, all members of our flight crew, our ground crew members who kept our B-17 in great shape, Boeing Aircraft for manufacturing such a great plane, and all the other personnel who helped us perform our missions.

I hope these photographs will allow you to put together an article for the HardLife Herald.

Thank you so much for your interest in our experiences and for giving me the opportunity to display my crew and mission photographs.

Best to you,  
Fred Meier

LISTOFTARGETS/MISSIONS  
1945

1. GEISKEI, GERMANY	23 MARCH
2. ZWISCHENSU, GERMANY	24 MARCH
3. PLAUE, GERMANY	26 MARCH
4. KEIL, GERMANY	3 APRIL
5. KEIL, GERMANY	4 APRIL
6. NURENBERG, GERMANY	5 APRIL
7. GUSTROW, GERMANY	7 APRIL
8. HOF, GERMANY	8 APRIL
9. MUNICH, GERMANY	9 APRIL
10. ROYAN, FRANCE	14 APRIL
11. ROYAN, FRANCE	15 APRIL
12. ROYAN FRANCE	16 APRIL
13. ROUDNICE, CZECHOSLOVAKIA	17 APRIL
14. AUSSIG, CZECHOSLOVAKIA	19 APRIL
15. WUSTERMARK, GERMANY	20 APRIL
16. RENTINGEN, GERMANY	<i>m</i>

JOHN PORTZ, THE ENGINEER, SAVED A BOMB TAG FROM EACH MISSION. THE DATE OF THE SIXTEENTH MISSION IS MISSING AS HE DID NOT FLY THAT MISSION.

**Editor's Note:** Our records show May 2 - Utrecht as the only mission after April 20.



Feller Roger  
22 Rue de l'Armitage  
L-8833 Wolwelongc

Memorial 385<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group  
20.21<sup>st</sup> of June 1998  
Perl 



Wolwelange the 25<sup>th</sup> of April 1997

Dear Mister Stem.

Thank you for writing and the information about the accident of the two planes. There were two survivors: Sgt Robert L. Me Pherson 37496515 TG crew member of Capt. Richard B. White's plane N°42-31917 551 Sqr and S/Sgt Larry Atiyeh 32860116 crew member of 1<sup>st</sup> Lt. Robert L. Me Donald's plane N°42-102606 550 Sqr captured in Wolwelange in front of the house Belche. I try until this time to get contact with this two men. I try also to have contact with relatives from the other crew members, I found only the Ryan family and I stay in contact with the whole family. They will come to Perle next year.

In a document REPORT FOR THE ADJUTANT GENERAL'S OFFICE made by the MILITARY INTELLIGENCE SERVICE on 7<sup>th</sup> of September 1944. Robert Me Pherson declares: "I bailed out with the left waist gunner (Samuel L. Canter) on my back; when the chute opened, it snapped him off; I never saw any more chutes". He landed near Holtz about 4 km away from Me Donald's plane then he crossed the frontier to Belgium. (800m)

I included in the letter a scheme of the plaque. It will be 70X40 cm. Mister Pettenger is coming to Luxembourg on 09<sup>th</sup> 10<sup>th</sup>, and 11 of May I made reservation for him in a hotel. I will show him all the crash places and the original parts from the two planes we found. One week ago I found a lot of ammunition belonging to Me Donald's plane we will show it on the exhibition. I told you about the historical cars for the memorial day, we will go on Saturday 20<sup>th</sup> of June 1998 by these cars and the members of the 385<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group around the crash places and will put flowers on the crash places.

Right now I got the Hardlife Herald thank you very much. I wrote a letter to the dinner Association to Albert E. Conder POB 844 it came back to sender undeliverable as addressed perhaps the address is not correct or it had been changed.

Thank you for your help and I will be in Tucson for breakfast on Saturday Nov. 15 at 7.30 at the hotel Doubletree. If you want to have more information I will give it to Mister Pettenger.

All the best for you, your family and all the heroes of the 385<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group.  
Your friend Roger.

Col. James G. McDonald  
950 Mandalay Beach Road  
Oxnard, California 93035

Dear Ed,

March 27, 1997

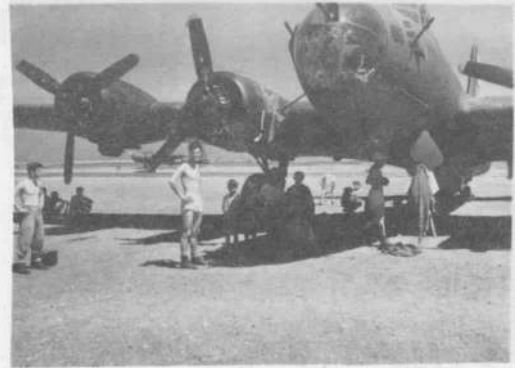
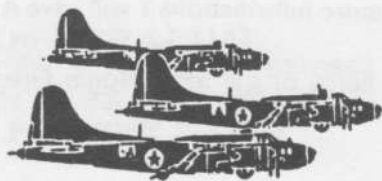
Came across these recently! Can't read my writing on one. Vince Masters may like the one with Schulz and Dentoni!

Greg in underwear-(under #3 engine) looks like Leo Lacasse. The picture is in North Africa

All the Best,  
Jim



Masters, Schulz and Dentoni



March 9 Berlin Job



Col. Van returned from Berlin & congratulating gunner who completed his mission with him.  
Sgt. Dennis to the left  
March 9, 1944



Dear Ed,

I just returned from a trip to Germany, Holland and Luxembourg. I spent 3 days in the Perle area. Roger Feller showed around Luxembourg. A very small country has many museums and memorials throughout the country, Perle with 300 people is building a memorial for the 385th men killed there during 1944. The Memorial will be 10 feet tall with water cascades water fountain included. They are also going to have a museum in Perle. They will be happy to receive any material for the museum. Money is not object, but they do need material.

Words can not show the caring and dedication of the people of Perle. The dedication next year will be a large affair. They will have military vehicles from all over Europe for a parade on Friday and the dedication on Sunday. The dates are June 19 to 21, 1998. I plan to attend.

Sincerely,  
John Pettenger

Dear John,

Enclosed find my 97 dues. I was a radio operator on Blue Champagne, shot down April 8, 1944 near Stettin Germany was captured and taken to Stalag 17B Krems Austria for 13 months. All the enlisted men were together, the officers were taken somewhere else., The following are the names of all the crew....

- Lt. Robert Bailey, Pilot who died a few years ago
- Lt. Wayne Corbin, Co-Pilot lives in Texas....
- Lt. George Kontos ?. Navigator....
- Lt. Pryer Bomb Dropper...Dead...
- Sergeant Cliff Libeck, Engineer Montana
- " Curtis Ailes, Connersville,IN 47331 Radio Op
- " Drew Gillis, Maryland, OK...Ball
- " Noble Brucker, Ohio. Dead. Waist Gunner
- " Barney Coble, North Carolina " " Dead
- " Corbet Fugate, Quincy, KY. Dead.

Tail gunner

I would be pleased if you would pass to Ed Stern  
Curtis

**BULLETIN BOARD INFO**

Lots of entries are still being sent to Savannah for the Wall of Valor. If you haven't sent yours and want to, it's not too late. Address 8AF Historical Society, Box 1992, Savannah 31402. Send them \$ 100. We'll have an updated list in the next issue.

Frank Mays, 136 Tanglewood Dr, Madison Heights, VA 24572, is trying to get 549th patch or color photo of the two patches. He's contacted everyone without success - - someone help him out!

Dear Ed,

"As one of the directors of the International Brotherhood of Manna/Chowhound, I attended the reunion and meeting in Woodhall Spa, England in April.

A planning meeting was held with the Dutch Food and Freedom Committee and the R.A.F. Manna board to discuss the Holland celebration in 2000 of the Food Missions.

Shown here are the Chowhound directors; L-R...Clyde Cole 96BG, Bob Cooperman, 388BG, Chairman, Bob Valliere, 385BG"



Enclosed also is a photo of the Memorial at Woodhall Spa, England, dedicated to the R.A.F. Dam Busters. Led by Guy Gibson, VC, they attacked the German dams with skip bombs. Photo by Jeff Brown, R.A.F.



15089 Tierra Alta  
Del Mar, Ca 92014  
May 18, 1997

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

Dear Ed,

This letter is in reply to the article in the April 1997 issue of the Hard Life Herald in which Mr. Don Kabitzke wrote about experiences of crews landing in Switzerland. The article asked for comments about treatment of the Swiss by other crew members who landed there.

I was pilot in command on my 26<sup>th</sup> mission to Karlsruhe, Germany and was hit by flak over the target. Our number two engine caught fire and the prop became uncontrollable and ran away. The resultant drag from the prop made it impossible to maintain our position in the formation. Switzerland was 90 miles away at the time and we elected to go there instead of attempting to fly back alone to England with a badly damaged aircraft. Luckily, we got to Switzerland without being picked up by German fighters but we had no maps and could not tell where we were, or for that matter, whether we were actually in Switzerland. Fortunately, it was a very clear day and we could see for hundreds of miles and were able to see Lake Constance which we recognized from a previous bombing mission to Friedrichshafen. We figured that if we bisected the lake with our left wing we should be somewhere in the middle of Switzerland. As it turned out that is exactly what happened. I decided to ditch in a large lake because there were no level areas in sight suitable for landing. At the last moment on final I noticed a very small clear area which I thought would be preferable to ditching. We successfully belly landed with no injuries to anyone. We were quite fortunate that we were not intercepted by Swiss fighters and were able to make our own landing site choice. After landing we were arrested by the Swiss police and the Swiss military and taken to a hotel in Lucerne and each of us were locked in individual rooms for the next three days. We were interrogated by Swiss military intelligence officers who wanted to know about the classified equipment on board. We were flying a pathfinder aircraft and were able to destroy the equipment before being arrested which is why they kept questioning us for so long. I guess we frustrated them because all we gave them was our name, rank and serial number.

The referenced article by Mr. Kabitzke is indeed accurate. Swiss anti-aircraft gunners fired on a number of our crippled aircraft desperately trying to find a place to land and in some cases causing them to crash with resultant loss of life and injuries. I know this to be a fact because I heard a Swiss Captain, who was in command of one of these AA units, address our Swiss Internee Association. He said he was ordered to fire on our aircraft and apologized to us for having done so. I also saw the movie shots of our aircraft forced to land at Dubendorf by Swiss fighters. Many of these aircraft crashed because of damage, injuries and/or lack of pilot proficiency.

After about two weeks of internment I made an attempt to escape and after four hours of walking and sliding down a steep mountain I was caught and returned to the compound. The Swiss Military's policy was to punish anyone trying to escape or for other infractions. Lucky me for some reason I was only given two weeks confinement to my room. Other internees were sent to a prison commanded by a Swiss Major who formerly was with the French Foreign Legion. I can only describe this person as a sadist. Our personnel, confined in this jail, had to live in unheated barracks with inadequate bedding and terrible food. Some were placed on bread and water rations and in some instances in solitary confinement. It was later that I learned this officer was tried by the Swiss for his atrocities and other illegal activities. Two months later I was successful in another try at escaping and got into France with the unofficial help of American Embassy personnel and the French underground. After traveling through occupied France for about 200 miles I met the American Forces in Grenoble. From there I made my way back to the 385<sup>th</sup> via Sardinia, Italy and North Africa; the whole journey taking about two months.

The Swiss, although technically neutral, were very helpful to the Germans as is currently being revealed by the news media. Not only did they bank and launder money for the Germans they provided

manufactured goods such as ball bearings and received ME 109 aircraft in trade. They also made available their railroads to carry war materiel from Germany to Italy.

During my brief stay in Switzerland I believed that the ordinary Swiss people were friendly and sympathetic to our side and that it was the Swiss authorities running the country that supported Nazi Germany.

Mr. Kabitzke can get a lot more information on this subject if he contacts Mr. Robert A. Long, President of the Swiss Internees Association, at 69D Dorchester Dr. Lakewood, NJ 08701. His telephone number is 908-901-0899.

Sincerely,



Norman I. Radin

Colonel, USAF Retired

Editor's note: Sounds like another great book—by Frank Robert Westie-Ash Wednesday '45. We didn't lose any planes on November 30, 1944 mission to Meresburg.

Dear Jim,

The other day I had my two grandchildren at the airport pilot shop. The proprietor recommended a book by Frank Robert Westie, a social psychologist and retired professor at the University of Indiana. He flew a full tour of missions in B-17s over Germany. He spends his winters in Naples and Tempe, AR. I hope to meet him one day. The book is entitled "Ash Wednesday '45". I'm only at page 189, so I don't know the significance of the title. I recommend it to you because it is a page-turner and because of the accuracy and its details. The second and third chapters deal with a mission to Meresburg's Leuna Oil Refineries. The date of the mission in the book was Oct. 13, 1944. The description was so compelling I felt that I was back there, almost 53 years ago. I went to my Journal to see if, indeed, I was on that mission. I found in my Journal that my first mission to Merseburg was on November 30, 1944. It was my first mission with "our" crew/ Fifty-seven bombers were lost to flak. The target was briefed for 385 anti-aircraft guns with the potential for 600 to 800 enemy fighters. We carried twenty 250 pounders. The trip in was uneventful but the bomb run was complicated by our group commander's error in overshooting the initial point, thus taking us through the flak of Leipzig as well as that of Merseburg. According to my Journal we had approximately 100 flak holes in the airplane (every crew member probably had a different number) and Buzz Sawyer sustained a slight shoulder wound for which he refused to apply for a Purple Heart medal although he was entitled to it. We landed with a flat tire and had to pull off on the grass so as not to impede other landing traffic.

Another couple chapters are devoted to a mission on which a courageous tail gunner aided in landing a badly damaged B-17 whose pilot was dead and whose co-pilot had passed out from injuries. Of course, the book has some silly stuff too, like romance, which has always turned Syl off, but you'll be impressed with its technical accuracy and, particularly, with his description

of the true-to-life heroics of a standard, routine, run-of-the-mill, average tail gunner. It costs \$ 15.75. I would have bought it for you but I knew if Silver or Lieberthal found out there would be hell to pay. By the way Westie has not mentioned one courageous bombardier yet, but I'll be patient, being only half way through the book. I'm afraid I'll be disappointed.

I'm glad you and Bob are going to the Tucson meeting. Wish Lieberthal would go. Mike Kinda' also going to Tucson. I've already offended him by not mentioning that the tailgunner was in the co-pilot's seat and the engineer was in the pilot's seat and the trip back from Berlin was a joint venture, the engineer handling the control wheel while the tailgunner handled the other controls.

I've gone on too long. Look forward to seeing you in Tucson.

Best Wishes

Mike Gallagher

Dear John,

Have just received the February edition of *Hardlife*, and as the President has commented on dues, I stirred myself to go into town to buy a dollar note.

I am so grateful to Ed Stern for sending me the newsletter as they are read most carefully, with me marvelling at the deeds of young men. The *Hardlife's* are kept in a folder for reference and they are read over when a particular incident is mentioned. Also books are still coming out over here and they are purchases (or bought for me when it's birthday or Christmas time).

Will drop a note to Ed after Easter holiday as he is due for a "thank you". Likewise I write to one or two members who started up a correspondence over an item in *Hardlife*. It keeps memories alive as to what was done all those years ago.

My warm greeting to you and trust your health is reasonable, I seem to be knocking on the dr.'s door rather frequently!

Sincerely,

Ron Durand

April 20, 1997

Dear Ed:

I was glad to see pictures of the 385th Reunion at Great Ashfield. My tail gunner, Maurice Sumney, and I as a pilot, were the only ones in the group that flew on the same crew during WWII. Maurice is front and center in shots with five veterans and the guard of honour. Also seated front and center on the memorial plaque at All Saints Church, with me kneeling to his left and the group standing behind. "Suds" was always a show horse, even though he only flew ten missions before getting "shot up" with FLAK and was shipped back to the USA for surgery and therapy.

More to the point, I want to salute a great English family tradition with special "Bonding" to the 385th BGMA. The letter from Stephen Miles, on page 11 of the February issue of HLH, brought back very pleasant memories of the reunion at Great Ashfield. My wife, Mary, and I met Stephen and his wife, Petrina, when a few representatives from Great Ashfield joined our group for dinner at the Bull Hotel on Friday night. Stephen was host to the 385th Reunion at the site of our old airbase on Saturday. We were welcomed by a large number of locals at the intersection of the concrete remains of the NE and NW runways located on his sugar beet farm. After touring the area, we gathered in his large barn for a barbeque lunch, outstanding display of early 1940 photographs and maps of the airbase as we knew it, and personal conversations with many local family members.

Stephen was one of the lay leaders during Sunday morning worship at All Saints Church. The special Harvest and Reunion Service was a very emotional experience for all of us. Especially, when military guard of honor moved the flags from the main altar to the 385th memorial altar and prayers were said by clergy and congregation. This was a solemn remembrance of more than 400 members of the 385th who were KIA. Their names are recorded in the "Book of Honor" which is kept at the memorial altar. My tail gunner and I found the name of our navigator, Edward Gildea, who was KIA while flying with Tripp's crew as a substitute navigator on March 2, 1945. The 385th lost four planes and crews on that fateful mission to Dresden.

After church services, our reunion group was hosted for Sunday dinner in the homes of 13 local families. Mary and I were guests in the home of Stephen and Petrina Miles. Their precious children, Rachel, Emily, and Anthony, made us feel right at home with local guests Don and June Taylor. Anthony at 5 years old, is not shown in the enclosed picture, as he was helping Don take the photograph. The traditional Harvest Sunday dinner was delicious and the conversation was stimulating. Later that afternoon, the family gave us a personal tour of their farm which was the site of part of the 385th Airbase. Two specific areas brought back memories of WWII. We stopped at a large building painted yellow which Stephen said was the old Operations Building of the 385th. I remember some early morning briefings for lead pilots, navigators, and bombardiers prior to the general briefings for all crew members and take-offs at/before dawn. Of course, de-briefings also took place in this building upon completion of a 6 to 9 hour combat mission. The other area of special interest to me was Site #5 on the map of the Airbase which Stephen gave to me when we returned to his barn at the runway intersection. The map had been on display

Page 2.

during the Saturday barbeque lunch and meeting with local families. Site #5 was the living quarters of the 549th Squadron. It was located Southeast of the Operations Building beyond the area of the CO's home and the base hospital. I have a partial list of the officers who lived with me in barracks # 261 from December of 1944 to June of 1945. It was exciting to see a couple of them at Omaha as I was a "First Timer" at the 1995 Reunion. Roy Courtney (co-pilot) and Richard Knight (navigator) flew with the crew of Roland Myers.

Having been host to our group on Friday night, Saturday, and Sunday, we were surprised when Stephen and Petrina showed up for lunch on Wednesday in the Flying Fortress Pub at Rougham, after our tour of Bury St. Edmunds. Mary and I missed the Farewell Dinner on Friday in Cambridge, because of our early departure for the USA, but we assume that Stephen and Petrina Miles were among the invited guests from Great Ashfield and the Friends of the Eighth.

What a great host and personal friend of the 385th. Stephen and Petrina represent a great family tradition that sustains a special and unique "Bonding" with the 385th BGMA. I hope the younger generations of our membership take up the torch. Stephen's grandfather owned part of the land occupied by the 385th Airbase from 1943-45. His father and mother, Rowley and Angela Miles, still own some of the land and were very gracious hosts to some of our group during the reunion activities. Stephen employs more than 60 people to handle the operation of his sugar beet farm on the former site of Great Ashfield Airbase. He is an able advocate for the 385th.

I salute Stephen and Petrina Miles and their beautiful family. I hope they will be able to attend our Reunion in Tucson during November of this year. They are welcome to visit us in Nashville anytime.

Sincerely,  
*Art Driscoll*  
Art Driscoll  
4500 Post Road, H-75  
Nashville, TN. 37205



At the home of Stephen Miles  
Great Ashfield, Suffolk England

Dear Ed,

Sorry for long silence but my job makes many unreasonable demands (It's an American company!) and I've had to meet the deadline for my latest book.

I'm now getting back to my 385th work and enclose a copy letter received from Jan Loftis. I hope some of the 385th veterans can help Jan's grandmother, perhaps by telling her about their own visits to Great Ashfield.


I will be getting round to the rest of my 385th mail but gave this one some priority for the reasons outlined by Jan. Today I accepted the invitation from the US Embassy to once more represent the 385th during the annual Memorial Service at Madingly. It's on a bank holiday Monday and Sue and I are in Scotland that weekend but will be travelling back on the Sunday. Not sure whether we'll get the wreath up there or arrange for it nearer home but, one way or another, the 385th will be in the line up.

All the best for now,

**IAN McLACHLAN - AVIATION HISTORIAN**

10 All Saints Green Worlingham Beccles Suffolk NR34 7RR England

Telephone 01 502 713253



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Dear Mr. MacLaughlin:

I have learned that my father's brother, S/SGT Anthony Burroughs, was stationed at Great Ashfield air base during World War II. He was killed in action over Germany on 9 August, 1944. His mother, my grandmother, is 97 years old and is unable to make the trip to England to see the American Air Museum. Although she is totally alert and still lives in her own home, I believe she is too fragile to make such a long trip.

I understand that there is a memorial to the airmen killed in action; I believe this in a church, perhaps in Bury St. Edmunds? I would like for my grandmother to know about this, and I was wondering if you could provide any information concerning the memorial, or even a brochure about the airfield. She had no idea where Anthony was stationed because of the censorship at the time. Anthony's brother, my father, died unexpectedly in 1954, so she has rather let the issue surrounding Anthony's death rest. However, I think she would be comforted to know that these young men were not forgotten. I am a founding member of the American Air Museum, and she seems happy about that, as well as keenly interested in its progress.

Personnel at the Eighth Air Museum in Savannah, Georgia, provided me with your name; I hope you don't mind the intrusion. I will gladly reimburse you for any expenses for materials that you could send me, especially if Anthony's name is recorded in a memorial book at the church.

I hope to visit your area, but I cannot within the next year or two; since my grandmother is 97, time is of the essence! Her name is Clyde Anthony Burroughs. Thank you so much for your kind attention.

Sincerely,



Dear Jan,

**Many** thanks for your letter of April 10th which was delivered to a very old address of mine **but** luckily caught up with me today.

I recognize the urgency behind your request and will do what I can to help because your grandmother deserves all the comfort that can be given. Firstly, in case you don't have it, **let me** give you the address of Hardlife Herald, the 385th newsletter. The editor is Ed Stern, **PO Box** 2187, Fargo, ND 58107-2187 and my advice would be to write, enrol as an associate member and request any back-issues of Hardlife Herald. In the newsletter, you'll **find** all sorts of stories about the 385th and there may well be members who can tell you **more about** events on 9th August, 1944. From my copy of the MACR (Missing Aircrew **Combat Report**) I see that aircraft 43-38156 was lost on a mission to Furth. The number **two** engine burst into flames then, "the aircraft flew level for a minute or so and then went into a steep climb through the formation, then stalled out, going into a dive, breaking up as it went down. Two chutes were seen to come out of the aircraft when it was first hit, four more were seen coming out just before it started to climb through the formation and one more came out just as the aircraft broke up. The crew were: Pilot, 2/Lt Sterling W Bristol, Jr (Killed in Action); co-pilot, 2/Lt Billy H Allison; Nav. 2/Lt John F Faulkner (KIA); 2/Lt John H Campbell (KIA); Top Turret Gunner, S/Sgt Anthony Burroughs (KIA); Radio Op. **S/Sgt Earl I Hansen**; Ball turret, Sgt Anthony J Mosca; Tail Gunner, Martin S Buell; Waist gunner, S/Sgt Julius L King, Jr. For my archive on the 385th, I'd appreciate any information you can give from letters your uncle may have written home and would especially welcome copies of any pictures you may have of him relating to his service with **the 385th BG**.

I note that you are a founding member of the American Air Museum and you'll be pleased to learn that Bob Smith donated a limited-edition print of his aircraft, "Liberty Belle" to the museum and this was presented last year when the 385th were in England. Sue and I were at Duxford only a few days ago and Martin Boswell of the Imperial War Museum gave us a tour round the AAM which is due to be officially opened in August.

Of one thing you can be sure, the sacrifices made by so many young Americans won't be forgotten over here. The AAM is huge but there are many smaller museums staffed by volunteers dedicated to ensuring their contribution continues to be recognized. For over twenty years I've represented the 385th and laid a wreath in the American Cemetery on Memorial Day. In addition, I have a slide show about the 385th in my program and it has proved very popular.

As far as memorials are concerned, there are three in Great Ashfield church. The first was originally on the airbase itself and was re-positioned in the church-yard when the group went home. This is a bronze placque mounted on stone and was unveiled on Memorial Day in 1944. The second memorial is inside the church and I enclose a copy of a leaflet describing it in more detail and, finally, there is a beautiful stained-glass window which was dedicated in May, 1992 and I've enclosed a copy of the Service of Thanksgiving. You will note that there's also a book in the church with the names of 385th personnel who died in action and I hope knowledge of these things will comfort your grandmother.

My own interest in the group originated after discovering the wreckage of a 385th B-17 buried on marshland near where I lived, a full account of this appears in my first book, "Final Flights" and I enclose a flyer giving information on this and the others I've written.

I hope I've been of some help and, to prove I keep all my 385th mail, I enclose copies of some correspondence I had with Buell Martin back in 1987/88. This gives a bit more information about the crew and, should you want to follow it up, your National Archives will have a more detailed MACR and I'd really appreciate a copy should you get one.

Kindest regards,

**Editors Note:** Jan answered this letter giving all the details he had as follows

My uncle: S/SGT Anthony Burroughs  
 Aircraft #43-38156  
 385th Bomb Group, 551 STBS (bomb squadron)  
 Crashed at Baumholder (FLAK) 9 August 1944

**Mailing Address**  
 821 River Bluff Rd.  
 North Augusta  
 South Carolina 29841  
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 Telephone (803) 278-3758  
 E-mail [jloftis@southconn.com](mailto:jloftis@southconn.com)

# 385th BGM A

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