

HARDLIFE HERALD

Newsletter of the 385th Bombardment Group
Association.



548th



549th

550th



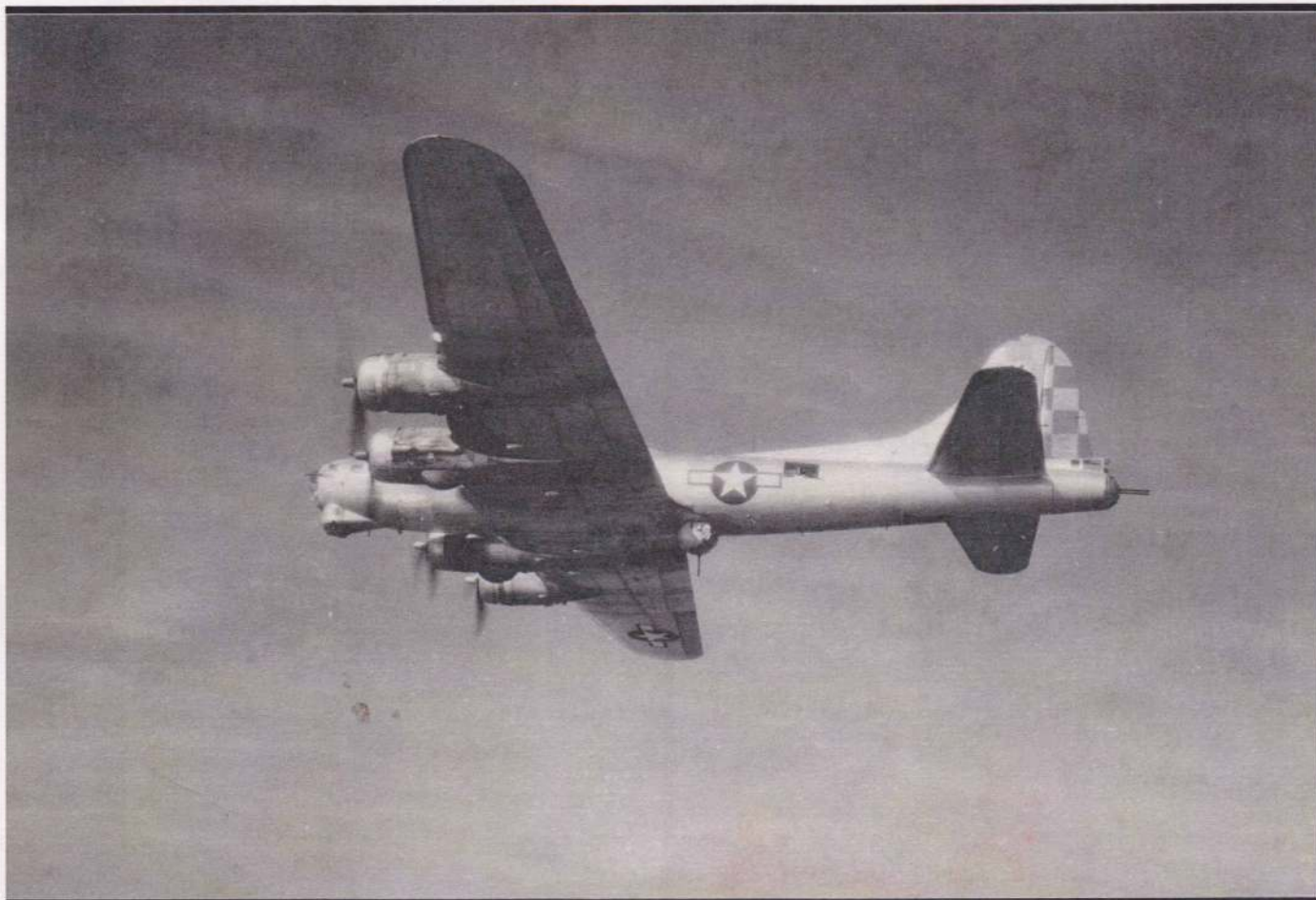
551st



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

Volume 33 - Number 1

March 2016



385th BGA REUNION - ST. LOUIS, MO - OCTOBER 2016

HARDLIFE HERALD

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Check us out online:

www.385thBGA.com
www.facebook.com/385thBGA

Front Cover: Unknown 385th B-17 circa 1945

Back Cover: 42-5892 "Pregnant Portia"

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385th BGA REUNION - OMAHA, NE - OCTOBER 2015

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

It seems as though our Omaha Reunion was just a short time ago, but here we are looking forward to our 2016 Reunion. This year, the Eighth Air Force Historical Society is planning a reunion in St. Louis, MO. When we were in Omaha, we had some discussion about doing our 385th BGA reunion elsewhere, either on our own or with another group since we had been to St. Louis just a couple of years ago. However, after due consideration, we have decided to stay the course and have our next reunion in conjunction with the 8thAFHS in St. Louis. Several factors went into this decision. First, our Group's attendance continues to dwindle making it difficult, if not impossible to qualify for attractive hotel packages. Second, selecting a site, organizing a program of appropriate activities including transportation for offsite involves a great deal of time and effort. Holding our "reunion within a reunion" eliminates the need for us to do all that planning and negotiating. Perhaps most important, however, is our realization that holding our reunion with the 8thAFHS gives us the opportunity to meet and interact with attendees from other groups, and especially their veterans. After all, that is what our reunion is truly about - providing an opportunity for veterans to meet with their comrades and for the rest of us to meet, honor and learn from the remaining members of The Mighty Eighth. Let's face it — the passage of time means we will only have limited opportunities left to do so. So I encourage you all, especially those of you "next generation" folks who have been meaning to attend a reunion but just haven't made it yet, to make a special effort to do so this year. Hoping to see you in St. Louis!!

Tom Gagnon

Letter from the Editor

Many thanks to those of you who have contributed and continue to contribute photos and articles for the Hardlife Herald. In this issue I'd like to mention Al Audette for donating "The Bombers Go Out" article from Stars and Stripes that he had saved since his service with the 385th.

For those of you interested in reading the Raunchy Wolf newspaper article that was obscured on page 25 of the last issue, I have placed it on page 07 of this issue. Thanks again to Joseph Pyatek for the contribution.

The Front and Back photos on this issue were graciously shared by Shannon Muchow from her grandfather's collection. I will post more with her permission in the future. It is always a joy to see photographs that have not been widely circulated and because of these contributions, we (especially those of us who were not around) have a broader sense of what life was like on the ground and in the air with the 385th Bomb Group.



44-8236 PFF Call Letter E

A great example of a 385th B-17 we previously had no picture of. Thanks to the Muchow family for sharing.

TRIP HOME - MAT LEUPOLD

When the war ended in Europe with VE Day those that had flown 25 missions or more were credited with a complete combat tour. I became a Happy Warrior and received a Lucky Bastard certificate. My score was 25 against Nazi Germany plus one for the food drop mission to Holland in which our group received some ground fire and one of our planes sustained battle damage.

We happy warriors were separated from the air echelon which left Great Ashfield in June. We were left at Great Ashfield for several more weeks.

On the day that the atomic bomb on Hiroshima was announced I met Charlie Liacoano, our original waist gunner. Charlie had been a private pilot in civilian life, but being in his thirties was probably too old for the aviation cadet program. While we were training as a crew in Drew Field, Lunny our co-pilot would sometimes let Charlie sit in on the flight deck. Charlie and Lunny, as we called Evert Lundstrom, were the adults in our crew. Also, Charlie was from New York. Anyway, on the day I met Charlie he had a memorable comment on the bombing, "I don't like to see 'em fuckin wid dem atoms!" Charlie might have been prescient - not a word he would use.

Eventually a bunch of us happy warrior navigators were assigned to a Ninth Air Force group that needed navigators for their flight home in their A-26s.

The A-26 Invader by Douglas was a twin engine attack bomber. It was the successor to the A-20 Havoc also by Douglas. The Invader replaced the B-26 Martin Marauder in the Ninth Air Force. It was formidably equipped with 50 cal. guns in the nose. Larry Darst, my pilot, said that with them he could push a tiger tank off the road.

Our airplane was named Calvados, after a high-octane French distillate made from apples.

We were in Valley, Wales when they arrived from the continent. We watched them as they landed. One came to grief, pulling his flaps up instead of the gear when told to go around.

On our arrival in Valley we saw a wrecked B-17 with red checkers on the tail. It was Hay-bag Annie which had suffered a landing mishap. No one was hurt.

Our itinerary was Valley, Iceland, Greenland, Goose Bay in Labrador, Bradley Field in Connecticut. We took off from Valley. Larry and I side by side in the Invader - no altitude, no oxygen, no heated suit, etc. We flew singly, not in formation.

We landed at Meeks Field in Keflavik where we spent a long week. The weather had to be good both in Iceland and Greenland before we could go. To us Iceland was dreary, partly because of the weather and partly because we wanted to get home.

Finally, they let us go. We were briefed to fly to a beacon at the end of a fjord in case there was an undercast. There was. From the beacon we were to fly up the fjord to the fourth left turn where we would find our runway. Going up the fjord in a boat would have been fun. Flying up it at a speed the Invader was comfortable with and hoping we were counting correctly made for white knuckles. Our landing was downwind and uphill!

Greenland was spectacularly beautiful, and American cigarettes by the carton, Lucky Strikes for me, with no one to collect any tax, cost next to nothing.

I bought an eskimo doll made by a native woman for my sister.

No intimidating terrain for our landing at Goose Bay. However, our departure was to be delayed because of the base's total concentration on the weekend barbecue roast, etc. We were invited but not really consoled. We wanted to get home.

Bradley Field in its wartime camouflage was hard to find, but we did.

Home at last, late August. Thirty day leave got extended by fifteen more.

Mat Leupold
Nov. 2015



Left and Below:
42-97280 "Haybag Annie" after
her landing accident



Bottom Left:
A-26 Douglas Invader



Rosemary Dery is offering prints of her original artwork depicting the history of the 385th Bomb Group.

Prices include shipping and handling and are as follows:

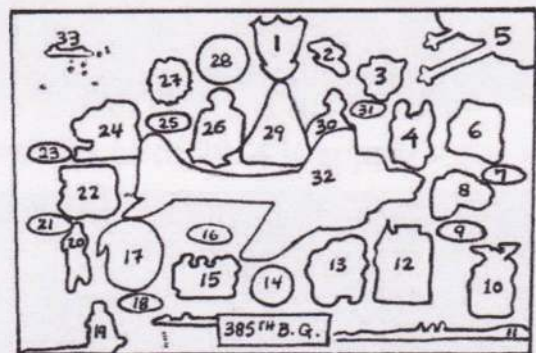
2' x 3' poster size- \$110
18" x 24" - \$75.

Both are printed on a beautiful quality, heavyweight watercolor paper. (Originally painted in acrylic on canvas).

To order, send your name, shipping address and print size preference, along with a check or money order to:

Rosemary Dery
306 Howard Street
Cape May, NJ 08204
928-600-5813

385th Bomb Group



- | | |
|--|------------------------------|
| 1. 385th Bomb Group | 18. Nose Art |
| 2. 549th Bomb Squadron | 19. "Sweatin' Em In" |
| 3. 551st Bomb Squadron | 20. Doc Savage |
| 4. English Orphans | 21. Nose Art |
| 5. B-17's 35,000' Over England's Coast | 22. "Donut Dollies" |
| 6. Wounded | 23. Nose Art |
| 7. Nose Art | 24. Bomb Bay |
| 8. Officer's Dance | 25. Nose Art |
| 9. Nose Art | 26. Col. Vandervanter |
| 10. Navigator (Cptn. William Dery) | 27. 550th Bomb Squadron |
| 11. 3 Trees at Great Ashfield | 28. 548th Bomb Squadron |
| 12. Great Ashfield Alter | 29. Great Ashfield Base |
| 13. After Mission Briefing | 30. Col. George Jumper |
| 14. 8th Air Force Insignia | 31. Nose Art |
| 15. Before Mission Briefing | 32. "Square G" Tail Markings |
| 16. Nose Art | 33. Taking Flak Over Germany |
| 17. Oct. '43 Waist Gunner | 34. "Checkered Tail" |

By Lt. Earl Mazo
U.S. Army Air Force

ONE day last week the Eighth Air Force lucked away in its files another amazing record in an already illustrious history when a cocky, transplanted Yankee from Georgia and seven of his Flying Fortress crew came back from the frigid, 1,300-mile trip to Nazi war centers in Norway.

The record: 25 consecutive major missions to the most vital enemy targets in Europe since July 17 without once turning back, or "aborting," after being airborne."

With their Fortress Raunchy Wolf. 1/Lt. Irving H. Frank, of Savannah, Ga., and his crew, in some 200 hours of combat flying, hit such Nazi strongholds as Schweinfurt, Regensburg, Marienberg, Bremen, Paris, Gelsenkirchen, Munster, Wilhelmshaven and others, shooting down

gunner from Danforth, Me., and S/Sgt. Arthur M. Boyer, right waist gunner from Ashland, Pa., fell behind the other crewmen on missions. Boyer, who had June 24 at this writing, missed one because of illness, and Barhihoopic, a native of Canada, missed three miss ons during a week in which he had to get hiW?Mb^citizenship papers. He was sworn in as a rufledged Yank shortly after returning from the England-Africa shuttle" bombing of Regensburg. It was Bartholomew who hung by his toes over that Nazi target when, during the bomb run, an attacking German fighter shot off his bali turfet door. Fortunately he had one foot firmly implanted behind the range pedal of his gun sight. The turret door was facing immediately downward at the time ;^when it was snotted off, Bartholomew fell out like a rock. His toe was stuck in that range pedal, however, and with the aid of the slip stream and "some super-human strength" he pulled himself back into the turret, and then into the ship.

we left, he said, 'You can have your boys back. Major.*"

Of all Raunchy Wolfs "rough rides" over Germany, the crew agrees with the pilot that the mission to Munster some weeks ago, was the damndest and toughest.* Lt. Frank tells the story this way: "We were flying purple heart corner, low squadron, low group . . . before we even neared the target about 200 Nazi fighters jumped our formation . . . what with Dornier 217s out there lobbing rockets at us and Messerschmitts, Focke Wulfs and Junkers 88s attacking like a pack of mad wolves, our formation came pretty close to breaking up. I never saw those Nazis more determined, not even at Schweinfurt and Regensburg* One Mel09 came head in at us, his 20rtM. guns blinking away like the devil spitting fire. Westerman, from his nose guns, poured about 200 rounds into him and Deb Whitney, in the top turret, added his share. I m sure that German was dead before he could dive out because he came right straight on and I had to pull up my wing to let him go under. As he whizzed by he blew up, just like *heavy piece of flak, iarrin&hell out of our ship. . . . Then another one skidded in, dead. He shot out a good part of our right wing before we got him."

Raunchy Wolf went on to bomb the target and fought its way back to base, shooting down four German fighters en route. When the ship landed, Sgt. Fleet and his groundmen counted several hundred flak, bullet and cannon holes—from nose to tail.

Fighters Help

Summing up the progress of the aerial war in this operational theater as he saw it develop and grow since July, Lt. Frank pointed out that increased American fighter support is making the heavy bomber job easier. "At first I was skeptical of P47s, then I grew to love them and everybody and everything connected with them," he said. Guessing that the war on this side of the world will be won late in 1944, this battle-worn officer, who has seen time and again what Germany has in the way of fighter aircraft, discounts rumors of "quick victory." . . . "We're winning," he said, "we're pushing the German Air Force farther and farther into Germany . . . but don't forget there is still plenty of Luftwaffe left. We found that out at Schweinfurt and Munster."

After 25 starts against the Nazi without once turning back, friends of the Raunchy Wolf crew figure newcomers pouring into the rapidly expanding Eighth Air Force ought to sit back and take notice when the "vets" tell them: don't ever sit still for an enemy fighter, weave around and shoot like hell; stay in tight formation over enemy land; keep the crew working like one team; make the ground crew

part of the family. "Those fourTiems make up the Raunchy Wolf's secret of success.

'Rau n ch y Wo I f's Crew:-----7----

'We Never Turned Back On a Job'

nine German fighters and aiding in the destruction of numerous others in the process. In all, this crew in four months bombed Germany 17 times, France five times, Norway twice and Holland once; and, despite numerous operations in which Raunchy Wolf itself was battered severely by flak and bullets, none of the 25-mission crewmen have been so much as scratched by ^eemy fire.

The Raunchy Wolf's crews, both ground and combat, as well as the plane itself, are the pride of the Fortress station commanded by Lt. Col. Elliott Vandevanter, of Washington.

The crew is unanimous in attributing the record to: Fine handling of the plane in flight and pin-point teamwork, plus expert and conscientious maintenance on the ground by M/Sgt. George Fleet, Youngstown, Ohio, crew chief; S/Sgt. Joe Zorzoli, Memphis, Tenn., his assistant, and the others working under them.

But behind that record is the story of an average group of Americans, hailing from Main@, to California, and Michigan to Mississippi, who, despite widely separated temperaments and interests on

into a unit that clicked like fine clockwork in the air. The 25-year-old pilot, a slim redhead, who grew a mustache because he forgot to shave it before his first mission, ran soft-drink, peanut and ice cream concessions in Boston theaters in "them days" before 1941. When war came he joined the air forces, married a Savannah girl while he was stationed there, and decided that Savannah "from here on out" would be home.

The Combat Crew

Raunchy Wolf's bombardier, 1/Lt. Frank B. Westerman, is a lanky, drawling Texan from Midland, who was a wildcat oil operator before Pearl Harbor. The copilot, 2 Lt. James L. Watson, of Brattle- ■ HCTTb/deft pre-med school to become ST flier, and the navigator, 1/Lt. Martin T. "Fearless" Farrell Jr., of Pass Christian, Miss., once ran a drug store. These four round out the 25-mission crew of Raunchy Wolf with T. Sgt. Lowell Moomaw, Greenfield, Ohio, radio gunner, who was a filling station worker; T/Sgt. Delmar R. Whitney, Prativille, Mich., formerly a restaurant manager, now top turreteer; S/Sgt. Alfred A. "Pappy" Oldfather, Mercedes, Tex., shipyard welder, turned tail gunner; and S/Sgt. Harvey Snider, Mulkeytown, Ill., mechanic, who was the Wolf's left waist gunner.

S/Sgt. Aubrey Bartholomew, bail turret

That week-end in Africa Sgt. Bartholomew shepherded his Fortress crew to inc nearest church, and from then on me boys of the Raunchy Wolf wens known as the "prayingest" bunch of fliers in their group. Lt. Frank, immediately on his return from that shuttle mission.

Jim KHncannon in organizir^Ffid^ay night-services lo i u* JapaLanm at his station. When Lt. Farrek disafeared between briefing and station time before every mission, the others knew he was al Catholic confessions * and Lt. Watson led the crew's Protestants to church every Sunday morning when he wasn't flying.

Quotes The Bible

Lt. Frank insists that he and his crew will continue their religious fervor after victory, and often he relates incidents of missions with stories in the Bible. On one ride over Bremen, he said, "the flak was so thick you couldn't see through it . . . then as we approached the city it opened right in the middle, like the Red Sea, and after we passed through we looked back, and it was closed up again. Major Archie Benner was leading us that day, and I can't help but believe hai ^bc firod lqnLsill just HeIbre weIutIremen; I TI take your group awhile. Maj. Benner," and right after





1.—The alert is called the evening before the mission. When the target comes in the operations and intelligence officers get together with the lead pilot and begin working out details.



2.—The Group CO, who often leads, his unit or bigger forces, call in the weather man for a conference on the all-important "met" problems.



3.—Intelligence officers hours before briefing choose their maps and pictures. The whole picture—routes in and out of Germany, and the target itself—must be clear in every airman's mind.



4.—Meanwhile ground crewmen have gone into the ship to check out the structure. The big ships are gassed and bombed to check routes, points of bombing and after-bombing rally points, and every part of their structure checked, and every flak position en route.



5.—The lead navigator and bombardier for the day are especially careful.



6.—At briefing, several hours before the take-off, intelligence and operations officers, the weather man and flying control personnel present every detail of the day's operation.



7.—Before take-off the navigator rebriefs the pilot, co-pilot and bombardier while the gunners install their weapons and the ground crewmen make final check of the ship. No detail is overlooked.

WITH a vast number of heavy bombers — Fortresses and Liberators—now operating from England, and increasingly large forces planned for the future, every American attack against Germany is a major offensive, and each mission requires the strategic planning plus the plain hard work of a battle operation.

While the targets are selected and the planning executed in higher headquarters, details of the mission are worked out in individual combat groups, mostly by the men who are to fly and fight that day.

Surprisingly rapid and smooth-running channels function for every operation. Higher headquarters funnel out duties to the Bomber and Fighter commands, and the whole day of combat is cut up and divided among the lower combat group is told that place, at a certain time, at a certain target.

This is the story of a combat operation by one of the participating bomb groups.

The Bombers Go Out



8.—Then comes take-off. The heavily laden bombers assume their place in the carefully stacked formation, and head for the enemy coast.



9.—Perhaps the most tense moments of the normal mission come during the bomb run. This photo is of the first stick of bombs falling away from the lead Fortress—precision bombing at its best.



10.—Throughout the mission, the ship's gunners are on their toes, ready to blast Nazi fighters.



11.—Meanwhile, as time for the return approaches, groundmen gather to "sweet in" their comrades. The chaplain and a special group of medics are always on hand until the last plane is reported.



12.—On landing, the pilot signs his Form 1, and after looking over the ship with the crew chief reports on battle damage.



13.—A cup of hot coffee, a bite to eat, is followed by the intelligence interrogation to the "Hot News" desk anything they might have gleaned.



14.—Immediately on coming from the line, combat crewmen report to the "Hot News" desk anything they might have gleaned. Here the crew's summary of the mission is recorded and later evaluated from the operational and intelligence viewpoint.

Photos by Sgt. Duke Apodaca

"There I Was..." The Cartoons of Bob Stevens

^£Li£VEIT<9RhJOT,TI-IG^AR£XC7ZZaz. EXCEGPTg, TALfEKJ FPOM A PO\A/s
 'A WAETIME LCKs''(^TALA5 ULI PT i) 24 FES44-SMAyA5.

* LETTERS FROM HOME

"I'm so glad to know that you can get sufficient college credits so you won't have to go back to school to get your degree"
 LT. CAZ FROM WIFE



"I am really worried about Adolph the cat. I took him to the vet yesterday and he said the cat's diet was insufficient"
 LT. B.G. FROM SISTER



"Do you get to town often?"
 LT. M.C.L. FROM WIFE



"It must be nice to be able to play golf again"
 CAPT. S.W.C. FROM WIFE



* ORIGINALLY, A 150 pp. BLANK, BOUND BOOK (TO BE FILLED IN BY THE RECIPIENT) AS A "PERMANENT SOUVENIR OF THE PRESENT UNPLEASANTNESS", COURTESY YMCA, GENEVA.



Featured Pin-Up Artist

Art Frahm 1907-1981

Art Frahm is best known for his "ladies in distress" pictures involving beautiful young women whose panties mysteriously fall to their ankles in very public places. Whether in the process of bowling, walking the dog, changing a tire or most commonly, carrying groceries, wardrobe malfunctions conspire to cause maximum embarrassment to Frahm's pin-up girls.

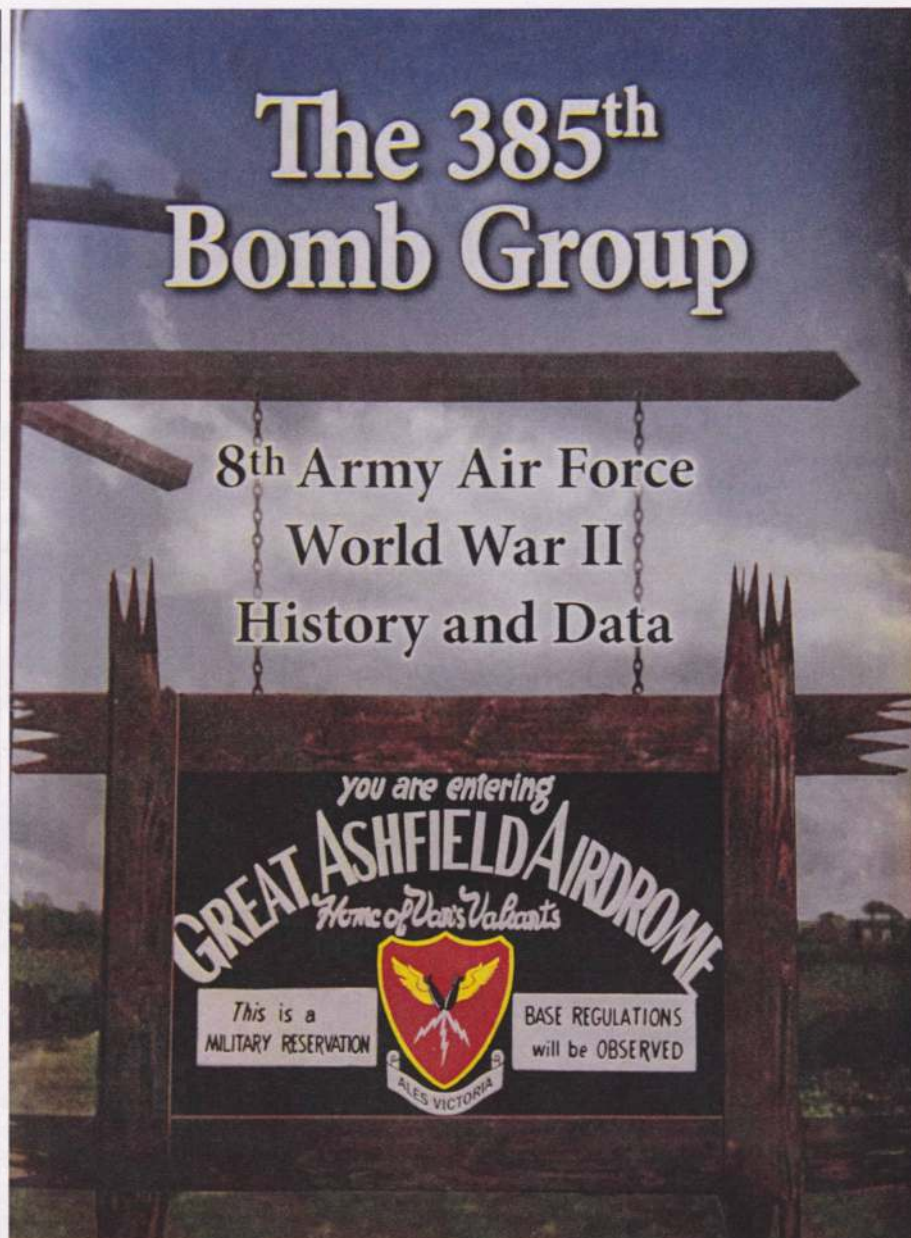
Art Frahm, another Chicago area artist and a likely Sundblom-shop graduate, compares favourably with such master technicians in oil as Gil Elvgren.

Many of his works were outstanding examples of the glamour genre. His perfectly coifed, daring décolletage dressed beauties glowed in the midst of romantic soft settings.

In addition to his pin-up work, his commercial art ranged from magazine cover illustration to zany "hobo" calendar paintings.

(Left)

"Swinging Into Summer" -1945

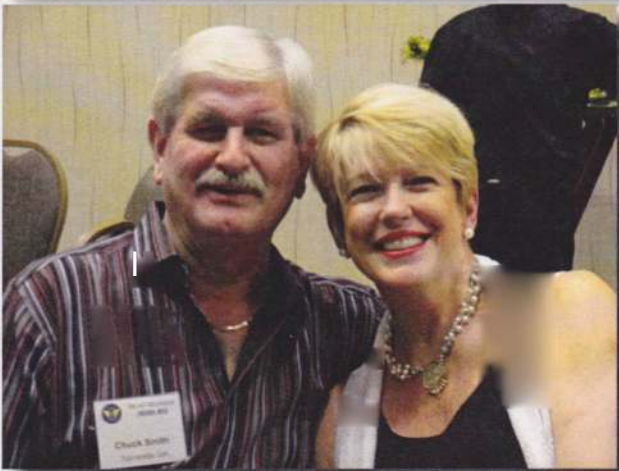
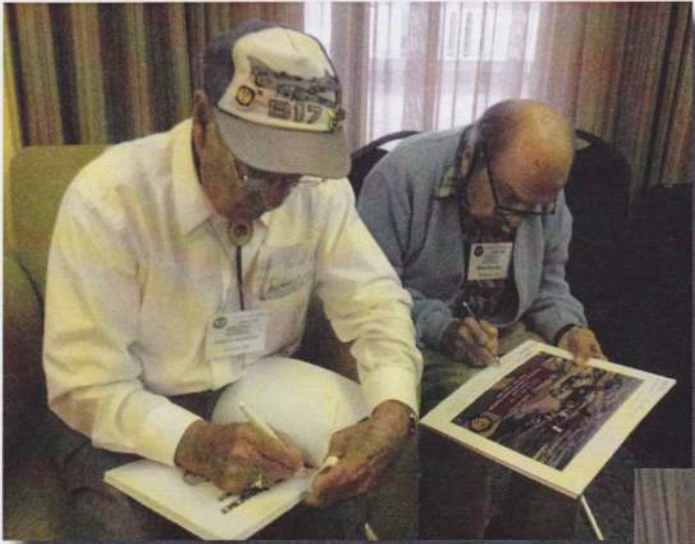


The 385th BGA announces publication of a new book: "The 385th Bomb Group, World War II History and Data, by W.W. Varnedoe, Jr. and Charles W. Lundsberg, III."

The 265 page, 9" x 12" hardcover book focuses on the 385th's combat missions, targets and losses incurred. Several stories and first-person accounts of combat experiences are included along with crew and aircraft photo appendices and a table with detailed information (serial #, name (if any), squadron, last pilot and ultimate fate) for each of the B-17s flown by the 385th BG.

Anyone interested in purchasing a copy of this book should contact 385th BGA President, Tom Gagnon, via email atThe385thbga@aol.com. Price is \$50 shipped.

2015 Omaha, NE Reunion Highlights





385th Bell Ringing 2015

The following were honoured at the 385th TAPS Bell Ringing Ceremony Omaha, Nebraska - 2015:

Joe Caruso
John W. Crookston
Herbert Russell Greider, Sr.
William Moebius
Gardiner Rogers
John Desmond
Ronald Webster

*"Oh, I have stepped the surly bonds of earth,
And danced the skies on laughter-silvered wings;
Sunward I've climbed and joined the tumbling mirth
of sun-split clouds -
and done a hundred things You have not dreamed of -
 wheeled and soared and swung high in the sunlit silence.
Hovering there I've chased the shouting wind along
and flung my eager craft through footless halls of air.
Up, up the long delirious burning blue
I've topped the wind-swept heights with easy grace,
where never lark or even eagle flew,
and, while with silent, lifting mind I've trod
the high untrespassed sanctity of space,
put out my hand and touched the face of God."
John Gillespie Magee, Jr.*

Useful Online Memorial Links

Chuck Johnston, Jr. (son of Pilot 1st Lt. Charles R. Johnston - 385th/548th) was kind enough to write in and mention some very valuable online resources where you can honor your Fathers and Grandfathers and relatives on the internet so their stories do not get lost.

The American Air Museum in Britain

<http://www.americanairmuseum.com/>

The National Gold Star Family Registry

<http://goldstarfamilyregistry.com/>

Fields of Honor - Database

<http://www.fieldsofhonor-database.com/index.php/>

National WWII Memorial Washington, D.C.

<http://www.wwiimemorial.com/Registry/Search.aspx>

Google Earth Ardennes Cemetery. Here, Chuck Johnston, Jr. added photos to the location of his Dad's Grave. He wrote: "When I did it not many other of the graves were marked with names. But now a lot are. And Dad's pictures have over 1500 views. The following is a clip from the link see the photo on right side of cemetery the red marker is Dad's Grave location on Google earth and his name is there. I posted it in 2009." <http://www.panoramio.com/photo/29054933?source=wapi&referrer=kh.google.com>



BEFORE YOU RECYCLE THIS NEWSLETTER...

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



HARDLIFE HERALD
Newsletter of the 385th Bombardment Group
Accrington



1942 1945 Great Ashfield Suffolk, England Station 155 T11 Mighty Eighth
Volume 32 - May/June - 3 2015 September



385th BGA REUNION - OMAHA, NE - OCTOBER 2015

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Previous issue pictured at left

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42-5892 Pregnant Portia ”