



Hardlife



Herald



Newsletter of the  
385th Bombardment Group Memorial Association

1942 - 1945 • Great Ashfield - Suffolk, England • Station 155

*The Mighty Eighth*

Vol. 19 Number 2

May, 2002



**385th Schweinfurt Mission  
October 14, 1943**

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# Hardlife Herald

385th Bombardment Group (H)

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You don't s+op laughing because you grow old,  
you grow old because 'our s+op laughing.

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The US standard railroad gauge (width between the two rails) is 4 feet, 8.5 inches. That's an exceedingly odd number. Why was that gauge used? Because that's the way they built them in England, and the US railroads were built by English expatriates. Why did the English build them like that? Because the first rail lines were built by the same people who built the pro-railroad tramways, and that's the gauge they used. Why did "they" use that gauge then? Because the people who built the tramways used the same jigs and tools that they used for building wagons which used that wheel spacing. Okay! Why did the wagons have that particular odd wheel spacing? Well, if they tried to use any other spacing, the wagon wheels would break on some of the old, long distance roads in England, because that's the spacing of the wheel nits. So who built those old rutted roads? The first long distance roads in Europe (and England) were built by Imperial Rome for their legions. The roads have been used ever since. And the ruts in the roads? Roman war chariots first formed the initial nits, which everyone else had to match for fear of destroying their wagon wheels. Since the chariots were made for (or by) Imperial Rome, they were all alike in the matter of wheel spacing. The United States standard railroad gauge of 4 feet, 8.5 inches derives from the original specification for an Imperial Roman war chariot. Specifications and bureaucracies live forever So the next time you are handed a specification and wonder what horse's behind came up with it, you may be exactly right, because the Imperial Roman war chariots were made just wide enough to accommodate the back ends of two war horses, Thus, we have the answer to the original question. Now the extra-terrestrial twist to the story... When we see a Space Shuttle sitting on its launch pad, there are two big booster rockets attached to the sides of the main fuel tank. These are solid rocket boosters, or SRBs. The SRBs are made by Thiokol at their factory in Utah. The engineers who designed the SRBs might have preferred to make them a bit fatter, but the SRBs had to be shipped by train from the factory to the launch site. The railroad line from the factory had to run through a tunnel in the mountains. The SRBs had to fit through that tunnel. The tunnel is slightly wider than the railroad track, and the railroad track is about as wide as two horses' behinds. So, the major design feature of what is arguably the world's most advanced transportation system was determined over two thousand years ago by the width of a horse's behind.



# Will this be your last issue of the Hardlife Herald?

This will be your last issue of the Hardlife Herald if your dues are past due and are not paid by August 1, 2002.

Due to our declining membership, (we are getting older) and increasing number of delinquent members, the Executive Committee has determined that it is financially necessary to discontinue sending the Hardlife Herald to delinquent members. To determine if your dues are delinquent look at the dues code by your name on the address label. If it does not read R02, or A02, or LM999, or A999, or F999, your dues are due. If you are several years delinquent you may reinstate your membership by paying the 2002 dues of \$25.00.

The Hardlife Herald is our conduit to all 385th activities and members. The August issue of the Hardlife Herald will be our roster of membership with our latest update of new addresses. It will also include members e-mail addresses. I am sure you will want the roster of your old friends and comrades. We do not want to be one of those old soldiers who just fade away without "hanging in" together as long as possible.

Please send your dues check made payable to the "385th BGMN" to our Treasurer Vern Philips, P.O. Drawer 5970, Austin, TX 78763

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## PRESIDENTS REPORT

By Leo A. LaCasse, Col., USAF, Fiet.

When the news was released to the World that the Queen Mother has passed on, a letter in the name of the 385th Bomb Group was immediately dispatched to All Saints Church for the people of Great Ashfield expressing our sympathy in their time of grief. If any of you ever had a weekend in London during the War, chances are you had a chance to catch a glimpse of the Queen Mom, then Queen Elizabeth I, as she and King George appeared on the balcony of the Palace at the change of the guard. To us Queen Mom may be remembered as the person who insisted on staying at the Palace during the German Blitz of London. That courage transcended to the British people as well as to the American Forces. Let us mourn with our British friends the loss of a Grand Lady.

The European Tour 2002 has not attracted as many members as expected. Many weeks ago I made arrangements to block 70 seats on the airline in

the hope that at least 55 would want to participate in the ceremonies associated with the official opening of the new 385th BG Museum in Perle. Initially 30 people signed up. Then one by one for reasons known only to the individual, cancellations began pouring in to the point that we now have a total of 16 scheduled to depart the U.S. on May 22. I have made arrangements to hold on to those 70 blocked seats until May 10th. If you have the slightest desire to change your mind and decide to join me on the Tour, please make your move now by sending me a \$100 deposit per person and you will be assured of a seat to enjoy the tour. If you have any questions pertaining to the Tour call, e-mail or write to me. You can expect a quick response.

Many of you have been more interested in the 2003 Reunion than the European Tour 2002. At this writing I will give you just the basic facts that have been approved and contracted

which we are now committed. You all know the site because you unanimously approved it at ABQ last year. Our Mission is Hampton, Va. from October 22 thru October 27. Our rendezvous point is the Hampton Holiday Inn. The Theme for our 2003 Reunion has been adopted and approved by the Executive Committee. "COLONIAL HISTORY & THE EVOLUTION OF NAVAL AVIATION" Starting with the next publication of the HLH and each publication thereafter I will give complete details of the Tours available for our reunion plus information about cost for each tour and a proposed itinerary. It would be wise for each of you to retain the information I will give in the succeeding HLH for reference, because when the applications to attend the Reunion appear in the HLH, only a synopsis of the Tours will be mentioned. The count down has begun and our mission cannot be scrubbed or aborted. Max effort.



### Send Your E-Mail

It has been suggested that we start a page with member's e-mail address. If you are interested in sharing your e-mail address with other members please e-mail it to [tjnewton25@aol.com](mailto:tjnewton25@aol.com) In subject box identify as 385th e-mail.

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## CHAPLAIN SEZ

By Rev. James H. Vance

Happy Mothers Day (coming up)

I have found that I need a 'road' map to be used when I am going someplace that I have not been there before or it has been some time since I have gone that way. I went to a supply house in Bothel, Washington the other day. I had never been to that Supply House and it had been some time since I had even been in Bothel so I needed a map to find my way. I wrote down the directions but found I had to stop at the police station to get a map that would give me better directions. What I'm leading up to is a 'map' for life.

The 'map' I am talking about for life, of course, is The Bible. The Bible is the map for our life but it takes faith to really read it for directions. To read that

map I will give some meanings or truisms that will help.

The first is that we need to realize God is our Guardian. In Psalms 119:105 the psalmist gives us these words. "Your word is a lamp that gives light where ever I walk." The writer is, of course, saying that God's Word, which we have in our Bible, lights our lifes path as a guide. We need to seek Gods will and guidance and this is done by faith.

The second is found in James 1:25 as our guide. "But you must never stop looking at the perfect law that sets you free." If we read the Bible intelligently we will make several discoveries. It is not a book of science but a book of wisdom. We find the riches of the knowledge and love of God as revealed in

Christ Jesus. We follow His example by faith.

Isaiah 55: 10-11 the prophet writes; "Rain and snow fall from the sky, but they don't return without watering the earth that produces seeds to plant and grain to eat. That's how it is with my words, they don't return to me without doing everything I send them to do." Maps now cost money but even when they were free we had to accept them and that is so with God's Word. And it never changes in its truth. I Peter 1:23: "Humans wither like grass, and their glory fades like wild flowers. Grass dries up, and flowers fall to the ground, But what the Lord has said will stand forever." Use this map, the Bible, to find your way in life.

In Love - Chaplain Jim Vance

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## ANNOUNCEMENTS

### Books Authored by 385th Members

**Letters to Hardlife  
And No Purple Heart  
Fear Faith Courage  
Hunkered Down  
The Wrong Stuff**

**Thomas A. Helman  
Frank R. Mays  
Willard Richards  
Sterling Rogers  
Truman Smith**

Your Editor recommends that every 385th member should have a copy of these fine books. They may be purchased from the author, their address is in our 385th BGMA roster.

### Web Sites

Have you visited The Friends of The 385th web site. Great site maintained by our fine Perle, Luxembourg friends. Visit it at the following. <http://www.385bg.com/>

If you have any other good web sites that would be of interest to 385th members send them to Editor, Hardlife Herald. We will publish them in the Hardlife Herald.

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## THE SOFT LIFE SIDE

by Darla Newton

If life deals you lemons make lemonade; if it deals you tomatoes make Bloody Marys. Also remember that snowmen fall from heaven unassembled.

Tom and I have friends in the 390th Bombardment group and they meet every year. They have about 400 to 500 that attend and met last year in Omaha and this year they will be in Hershey, Pa. So what do you all think about having annual reunions? We have made some fine acquaintances in our 385th group. Every two years seems quite a long time between our get togethers.

At the state capitol, where I volunteer in the information and guide kiosk, some people

were in from The Netherlands recently. They were on a tour I gave and I mentioned that my husband was on some food drops during WW 11. Well, they said "We were starving and those drops of food saved our lives and we have never forgotten". About then Tom called and I said "hang on I want you to say Hello to some people from Holland" and handed the phone over to the man and they had a nice chat.

If you have e-mail and want to drop me a line just send it on Tom's. Remember that a pessimist's blood type is always b-negative. Is it true that some women love being married and finding that one special person

you want to annoy for the rest of your life. I hope none of you are authors because I quote from some college paper. "Writing at the same time as Shakespeare was Miguel Cervantes. He wrote Donkey Hote. The next great author was John Milton who wrote Paradise Lost. Then his wife died and he wrote Paradise Regained".

Hanging in with the HLH,  
Darla Newton

P.S. Tom had a heart by-pass on April 11 and is home and doing fine. He had one before and I know a lot of you fellows have had the same operation. It is a challenge getting up to the middle age of a 70 plus.

## BOOK REVIEW

### Final Flights by Ian McLachlan

Our friend Ian McLachlan has written an exceptional book called final flights. It is filled with dramatic wartime incidents revealed by aviation archaeology.

The forward by Len Deighton says "in rediscovering the recent past, in reconstructing events and wartime incidents from tangled and buried wreckage, eye-witness accounts and contemporary documentation, aviation archaeologists bring recognition to the individual flyers involved and shed new light on the air war between the British, American, and other Allied air forces on the one hand and their Axis opponents on the other."

In the book there are many pictures of the finds such as pho-

tographs from wallets, dog tags and parts from the downed planes. The narrative makes a most compelling and informative read. The research has been very detailed in finding information concerning those who went down over the British Isles. Even those who bailed out were found and their stories included.

Of special interest to members of the 385th in chapter 4, entitled "Collision" is the account of the mid-air collision of the John Hutchison and Warren Pease airplanes over Reedham England. The collision occurred as they were letting down through an overcast sky returning from a mission to Diepholz. In 2000 the 385th tour group participated in a

dedication of a 385th memorial to these two crews at Reedham.

This wonderful book is a great addition to all who have an interest in the history of WW11 and is a very gripping reading for all.

Personally I am impressed with the depth of authors research and the hard work of all who worked on the various digs throughout England.

The narrative and photography are excellent.

To purchase the book you may contact Ian McLachlan at 10 All Saints Green, Worlingham Beedes, Suffolk NR34 7RR England.

The publisher's E-mail: [sales@haynes-manuals.co.uk](mailto:sales@haynes-manuals.co.uk)

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## FEATURE STORY

### "Heavenly Body"

By Edwin Perry

My cadet pilot training was with Class 43K at Santa Ana, King City, Chico and Stockton, all in Calif. I completed B-17 transition at Roswell, NM in Mar. 1944. Crew training was at Rattle Snake Army Air Field (appropriately named), Pyote, Texas. On leaving Roswell, I picked up the six sergeants assigned to my crew at Salt Lake City, UT and proceeded to Pyote, TX. Nick Stabile, co-pilot; Fred Nestler, Navigator; and John Ostlund, Bombardier were assigned at Pyote. I was very fortunate to have this crew.

From Pyote we proceeded by troupe train to Kearney, Nebr. where we were processed for overseas duty and issued a new B-17G which we checked out and test hopped. We flew this airplane through a rough night of thunderstorms to Bangor, Maine. The next day we proceeded to Gander Lake, Newfoundland. While waiting for favorable winds to cross the Atlantic, the four of us were in the Officer's Club one night. The subject of naming our airplane was discussed. Several names were kicked around and the name of a new movie "Heavenly Body" starring Hedy Lamarr surfaced. This name was a unanimous choice so we composed a letter to Hedy Lamarr requesting permission to name our B-17 "Heavenly Body". We then flew the Atlantic landing in Prestwick, Scotland. We were taken to Stoke-on-Trent and then on to

Valley, Wales where we were assigned to the 385th Bomb Group. After flying old B-17's for a few missions, we were assigned a new 'G' model. A package arrived from Hedy containing two beautiful 8"x10" autographed pictures of Hedy and a letter saying she would be honored to have the plane named "Heavenly Body". We chose the picture with Hedy in the big hat and the group artist did a great job reproducing that picture on the nose of B-17G #44-6008.

While we were on a 48 hour pass living it up in London, the Charles Lament crew flew the "Heavenly Body" on a mission to Brennen, Germany September 26, 1944. Due to heavy damage the aircraft was forced to ditch in the English Channel. The pilot and co-pilot were killed but seven other crew members survived the ditching and were rescued.

Unfortunately, Hedy Lamarr died in Orlando, Fla. on 19 Jan. 2000 at age 86, probably without knowing her beautiful picture was painted on the nose of B-17G #44-6008. Hedy was also an electrical products inventor. In 1940 she invented a jamming device to block German radar which was one of some 45 of her patents. After her patent expired, a major corporation adapted the invention which now speeds satellite communications around the world. (San Francisco Chronicle, Sept. 1992).



Our first mission was to Stuttgart, Germany on 16 July '44. Our crew was split up for an orientation mission with me flying co-pilot with another crew. Our next 34 missions were flown with our crew intact. Our last mission on 30 Oct '44 was recalled. We completed every mission that we started, and thank God not a crew member was injured.

As I mentioned previously I could not have had a more outstanding crew assigned to me. Prior to every mission our navigator, Fred and bombardier, John would arrive at the aircraft in a weapons carrier and start lining the plane's nose with flak jackets. After several of these were aboard I would confront Fred, "Fred that's enough, we won't get this crate off the ground!!" Fred would say "Oh Ed just two more" "OK Fred, but no more". Prior to each take-off, Fred would come up to the

pilot's compartment and hand me a slip of paper and say, "If we get extensive damage over the target, here's the heading to take".

On a mission to a secondary target, Coblenz, Germany, we were on the squadron leader's left wing while turning on the IP the crew on his right wing inadvertently salvoed it's bombs. The following crews also dropped their bombs on the IP and peeled off around the target. The crew on the right wing stayed with us and the three planes continued on to the target with only two planes with bombs. Needless to say with only three planes over the target we took a terrific beating from flak. A shot came through the bottom of the fuselage and knocked out the entire instrument panel in front of Nick and me. I knew this had to come close to the navigator station if not through it. I got on interphone "Fred are you all right" What seemed like ten minutes but probably less than ten seconds Fred came on "Yeh, I'm all right". What a relief, hearing his voice!! The flak did splinter the left side of the navigator's desk. We were able to stay in formation back to base and on the wing of another B-17 we were able to make a successful let down, approach and landing with no flight instruments.

During another mission Jake Jacobson, our tail gunner called me, "Ed they're tracking up our rear end". I told Jake we'er on the bomb run in tight formation with very little room to maneuver. Jake came back, "Ed

they'er getting closer, right on our tail"!! I edged out a little and Jake hollered "I'm hit, I'm hit"!! I told Bob Brow our right waist gunner to get a first aid kit and portable oxygen bottle and go back and help Jake. We dropped our bombs and cleared the target when I called Bob to fine out how bad Jake was hurt. Bob came back laughing. Flak had come through the side of the fuselage and hit the 50 caliber ammunition belt and knocked it against Jake's leg. He thought he had been shot. Jake never lived this down.

Robert Glakeler was our ball turret gunner. At 33yrs of age he was by far the oldest member of the crew so his nickname was "Pappy". I told Pappy that he didn't need to stay in that fishbowl in the target area, no German fighters were going to hit us with all that flak bursting around. Pappy said "I want to stay in the turret. I point those twin 50's straight down and spin the turret as fast as it will go. If the flak gets close I get mad and and shoot back at the ground." Sadly, Pappy was later killed on a B-26 mission in Korea.

A landmark event for the 385th Bomb Group was the 200 Mission Party held during the first week of October 1944. The group stood down (no missions) for three days and a carnival was

set up in the middle of the runways. Gen Jimmy Doolittle honored us with a visit. Also, the Glen Miller Army Air Corp Band played for a hanger dance. To get some female dance partners, GI buses were parked on streets of neighboring towns with signs on the sides inviting girls aboard for the big dance. There was no shortage of beautiful girls available for dancing!! Unfortunately, Glen Miller was lost over the English Channel on his way to France the following December.

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FLIGHT CREW OF B-17G #44-6008 'HEAVENLY BODY'  
8<sup>TH</sup> AJR FORCE; 385<sup>TH</sup> BOMB GROUP; 548<sup>TH</sup> BOMB SQUADRON  
GREAT ASHFIELD; ELMSWELL, ENGLAND

FRONT ROW, LEFT TO RIGHT

EDWIN B. (ED) PSWNT, PILOT  
NICHOLAS J. (NICK) STABOF, CO-PILOT  
FRED H. NESTLER, NAVIGATOR  
JOHN W. OSTLUND, BOMBARDIER

BACK ROW, LEFT TO RIGHT

GEORGE M. SHELL, ENGINEER, TOP TURRET  
ROBERT (BOB) BROW, JR., RIGHT WAIST GUN  
ROBERT S. (BOB) HOWELL, RADIO OPERATOR  
ROOLRT T. (PAMPE) FLAKIER, BAD, TURRET  
JOHN W. RANGT S, LEFT WAIST GUN  
RLHISELL W. (JAKE) JACOBSON, TAIL GUN



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## Air Stories [385BG] "Off The Record (8)"

By Frank Fl. Mays, Author of "And No Purple Heart"

Another day for Airmen at Great Ashfield!

"Okay, - I'm awake," said the gunner, and the CQ moved on to the bunk of next man on the "Loading List" for today's combat mission.

In the dim light of a single low wattage light bulb - six men put feet on the floor and begin dressing. This crew is the only one from the Hut going out today. The men move about quietly as not to awaken the other sleeping Airmen in the Hut.

The last man out the Hut door snaps off the light. Walking toward the awaiting truck, cigarette smoke curls and mixes with the dark before-dawn damp air. Men from other Huts gather into the trucks which finally move out headed for the mess hall some half-mile away. Several loud yawns break the silence, but not a word is spoken.

After a breakfast of eggs, bacon, potatoes, toast and black coffee the truck is once again loaded with men now fully awake. A minimum amount of words are spoken - "Watch where you sit" - "Move over" - "Got a match?" - "Damn grease, makes me sick to the stomach" - "Who farted" - "Man, somebody is dead in here" - voices spoken in low tones as the truck rumbles toward the briefing room near the flight line.

A briefing officer talks - pointing to a map hung on the wall decorated with lines of red and green tape. The target is a German railroad marshalling

yard. Bomb load. Estimated time of trip to and from the target. German fighters. Number of flak guns around the target area. Every man listens intensely as the officer continues and finally comes to a stop. "Okay men - that's it, get it today and we won't have to go back tomorrow, Good Luck."

In the equipment building, several workers respond to given names by placing personal equipment bags on a counter. A loud thump, a chest-pack parachute is added to the load. Outside the six-man crew waits for a man to return from the Latrine as they load into a personal carrier - and then driven out across the field to a hardstand where their B-17 bomber waits. Four officers arrive in a separate vehicle.

A small truck stops and unloads barrels and guts for 13 - 50 cal. machine guns which are immediately installed. The pilot and engineer-gunner make a walk-around visual inspection, by feeling and the light from a mostly taped flashlight, of the bomber - kicking tires as if they were expecting to buy a car.

The pilot calls for the six airmen to come forward - and in the dark walk-through, by rotating the four engine propellers, to clear gas and oil possibly drained into the lower cylinders. All 10 men begin to work as a single unit - not saying a word - each doing tasks they know all too well - making the bomber ready for flight.

In the cool air the equipment bags are opened and flight-suit dressing begins. Throat mike strapped around neck - headset firmly in ear pockets on fur-lined leather helmet - heavy fur-lined pants, boots, jacket and gloves dangling from wrists complete dressing. Next - the Mae West life vest - and finally a parachute harness slipped on over all other clothing and equipment. They stand and wait. Cigarette smoke escapes from a hand held well hidden cigarette. Not a star shines - not a light is to be seen anywhere around the base. All is deathly quiet.

One by one the men enter the waist and forward doors of the bomber. The radioman fires-up his equipment and the odor of hot electrical tubes mixes with the normal BO of the bomber. A mixture of gun oil - hydraulic fluid - urine from an old overflow of a relief tube - slight odor of paint from a flak damage repair - burnt gun powder - all greet the noses as men settle down and plug in their intercom connections. Oxygen masks are clipped over the face and checked for fit and cleared by blowing - then hung to one side - ready for use.

The bombardier and armorer check the 10-50 pound bombs. Pull the cotter pins from bomb nose fuses. Check the arming wires for connections - making sure the arming propellers do not turn - and leave the bomb bay.

"All back there ready"

comes the voice of the engineer-gunner. The silence lets the man know all is okay. There comes the sound of a starter winding-up on the No. 1 engine until it reaches a very high pitch - Chug - Chug - Whump - Whump - Whump - varoom - and the engine comes alive shaking the entire bomber and crew. The engine is revved and slowed back. The crew waits and listens as the pilot and co-pilot get all four engines up and running smoothly. Each engine is checked and double checked along with all pre-light inspections of gauges and dials.

There comes a slight jerk as brakes are released - first one engine - then another engine roars - and the bomber rolls off the hardstand toward the taxi strip - bumping along over the uneven pavement.

Each man - all ten - quietly contemplating his own thoughts say nothing as the bomber stops - the engines are again checked by revving up and down. Roll and stop - roll and stop - as the pilot follows other bombers to the end of the take-off runway.

The brakes release and the No. 1 engine roars - the bomber now turns to position at the end of runway and stops. Final checks are made by the pilot and co-pilot.

Suddenly all four engines roar to life at one time sounding as if they will tear from the wings - the bomber vibrates throughout - a jerk as brakes are released - the bomber begins to roll gradually increasing in speed - faster and faster - bumping - the tail end of the bomber feels as if it lightens and raises - a slight lift and settle back - faster and faster the

bomber rolls - the sound of landing gear pistons hitting as the bomber raises and lowers - vibrations rattle all loose items in the bomber - a change in the noise as the bomber lifts clear of the runway - settles back - does it all over again - drops back with a heavy thud - raises once more - straining - the weight of the bomb load and full fuel tanks requires every bit of energy the engines can produce to stay airborne.

Vibrations smooth out - the four engines sound happy to have done this once more as they synchronize to an even sound. The bomber and crew fly into the dark morning sky - on their way to an unknown destiny.

It will be eight hours before the wheels touch the runway again - that is - the lucky ones that return today.

Frank

## THE MYSTERY DOG

*By Donald J. Kabitzke*

One day, a strange-dog came onto the base at Great Ashfield, A Lieutenant quickly adopted him. He played with it, took it along to the mess hall, also to briefings as well as setting space next to his bunk for it. When he had to go on a mission the dog accompanied him to the hardstand, sat there and watched him take off. He was to learn just what plane his master was flying in. This dog was uncanny.

One day, someone in the control tower who had watched the dog, noticed that shortly before the bombers returned off a mission, the dog came up and

sat along the hardstand where his master picked his Fort. He told others in the group what he had seen. They also joined in the watching for the dog. When they saw the dog, they knew that the returning bombers were nearing the base.

One afternoon they saw the dog come up to the hardstand, when all of a sudden the dog jumped up and the last the saw of him was his leaping over a fence. When the bombers came back one of those missing was the dog's owner. Several hours later they learned what happened. The Lieutenant had to make an emergency landing

in a farmer's field. He was not injured. When help arrived, there was the dog miles from the base. How did the dog know of the arrival times of the returning bombers? How did he know where and when his master would land his plane?

Shortly after, the Lieutenant did not return. Another officer adopted him.

### OTHER ANIMALS

One day a mysterious monkey appeared on the air base. There were several others also. This monkey was different. He was a filthy one who delighted showing off dirty health

habits for crowds. Nurses and WAACS joined in the crowd to watch. One day the Colonel was driving by, had the driver stop, and walked over to see what the attraction was. This made him angry and he ordered the owner to take it to the zoo in London.

On a mission to North Africa, others had also brought back all sorts of animal. One even made an oxygen mask for a donkey. English newspapers wrote stories about the animals. The British government was furious. No animal was to be allowed in the British Isles until it had been quarantined and certified that it did not have foot and mouth disease. Even Eisenhower and Pattons dogs had to go through this procedure.

An order went out to all bases to take these animals to the zoo in London. This almost caused an International Incident.

#### **Editors Note**

*I have been informed by Don Kabitzke's wife that he died. Don has contributed several articles for prior issues of the Hardlife Herald. We will certainly miss him. As editor I appreciated Don and his willingness to contribute his time & talent to the HLH. Don told me he like to write and had written & published three books. Don had supplied me with several articles so we can still read his stories in future issues of the HLH. Thanks Don*

## **GROUND STORIES [385BG]**

### **LIFE IN WWII AAF ORDNANCE**

*By George Menkoff, 550th Ordnance*

I was inducted into the USAAF in November of 1942, taking a train ride from Tulsa to Ft. Sill, OK, my induction and placement center. Marie and I had a 4-month old Daughter, Barbara, at that time, and after Basic, they followed me to East Lansing, MI, Spokane, WA, and to Cut Bank, MT. On these long train trips, the Porters helped them as they could with such chores as warming Barbara's milk.

I had Basic Training at Miami Beach, FL, and left that beautiful place on Christmas day on a Troop Train. I had already read about the delicious Christmas Dinner we were having at the McFadden-Deauville, but on the Troop Train we had Stew. However by the time we boarded the train and it got underway, and when finally it was my time to go to the chow car, stew tasted very good! This wasn't too hard a trip, waving out the windows to people at the small towns, and playing cards, etc., and the next day, we pulled into the train station at Lansing, Mi. Subsequently we were transported by bus to East Lansing, and the Michigan State Campus; I considered the MSU Dormitories to be excellent quarters.

My wife, Marie and our daughter, Barbara, left Tulsa, and followed me to Michigan. Since I wrestled in High School, I called upon Findley Collins, ex OK State Wrestler and Michigan

State's Wrestling Coach and asked where I might find a place for my family. He was great, and contacted friends, an older couple, who put them up in their home. They were great to Marie and our daughter.

The Gun School was at the Oldsmobile School of Armament in East Lansing, MI, where we studied the 50 Cal. Machine Gun, the 20mm Cannon, and the 37mm Cannon in detail. We learned the function of every part minutely, and could disassemble and reassemble these weapons blindfolded. We were given a test on every weapon. Those that made 100% on all tests had their names on a plaque, and I was one who did. Will Rogers said: "it ain't bragging if it's the truth."

After almost a month at school, we were transferred to Salt Lake City, UT, for a week of KP, so some other soldiers could attend school-fair enough! We were not allowed to have families with us at that duty station, so my family went back to Tulsa. I can still remember the words of that tough sergeant: "YOU ARE HERE FOR A WEEK OF WORK, AND BY GOD, YOU ARE GOING TO WORK!!"

WORK it was, and if you don't believe it try cleaning out baked meat-loaf pans for several hours! We were relieved when this grueling week was over, after which we were sent to Ft. George Wright, Spokane. Here

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we studied all the Side arms, Colt 45, Browning Sub machine Gun, Thompson machine gun, the M1 Garand, Carbine, etc. Did you know the M1 had a gas blow-back that ejected the spent cartridges?

After that stretch of time, we found ourselves going just across Spokane to Geiger Field Army Air Base, where we began to organize into Squadrons, and later the 550th Bomb Squadron went to Cut Bank, MT Army Air Base where all departments learned to do their thing. We were having Flights every day, which allowed our Bombardiers, to learn the fine points of using the bomb sight and hitting the target. All the while, the Ordnance crews were getting efficient at loading and fusing Bombs, the Armorers learning the 50 Cal. Machine gun and Bomb Racks, the flight crews learning formation flying, the Navigators, navigation, the Radio Operators their Short Wave, and the gunners, of course, practicing in-flight gunnery. We were beginning to be a close knit group, with every department doing their particular jobs.

To keep up with Marie and Barbara, they traveled to Spokane, then to Cutbank, Mt., staying entire 3 to 4 months our squadron was there. The 550th developed into a fine-tuned unit at Cut Bank, but remember this was without flak and fighters; the crews and our group later found out the reality of war in the ETO. After these months of day and night practice by our personnel we were ready to go to war, and in May of 1943, our

group traveled by train to Camp Kilmer, NJ, our port of embarkation. After being given a few days leave, we embarked on HMS 'Queen Elizabeth' for our voyage to England. (Note: I am sure that a lot of our Crews flew their B-17's from the USA to Great Ashfield-station 155.) There were so many soldiers and airmen on the ship that we ate and slept in shifts, giving us a lot of time to scan the ocean, and possibly slip into a game of Black-Jack. The latter left me a little short of cash until next pay-day.

Our trip across the Atlantic on this luxury Ship was uneventful as we zig-zagged, seeing no German Subs, thank the Lord! After a week or so on open seas, we landed in Wales, disembarked and began land transportation to Great Ashfield.

Upon arriving, we found the base was not completed, and we slept in four or six man tents. It was so humid and damp in England with the proximity of water so close, that our clothes felt damp when we put them on in the morning. Of course with our morning exercises and close order drill, together with unloading convoys of bombs in the revetments, our clothes soon dried. At the Air Base every department continued to practice their duties, because at Great Ashfield, mistakes often would be deadly—just think what would happen if a chute wasn't packed correctly!! Everything every one did on the ground and in the air, had to be performed as perfect as humanly possible.

Later, the barracks were completed, and we moved into

more comfortable quarters, with each of the four squadron's personnel being billeted at a different location on the field. The 385th Bomb Group consisted of four squadrons, the 548th—the Blue Squadron, 549th—the Yellow Squadron, the 550th — Red, the 551st— Green, and HQ,—White..

At Great Ashfield, our Pilots had to spend more time formation flying, and rendezvousing under different weather conditions. The latter was so very important as was signified by the tremendous number of in-flight collisions that occurred in the ETO; I know someone probably knows this figure, but even for our own base the number was staggering and sober. Almost everyone remembers the Story of Joe Jones, who, after a collision over Holland, rode the tail down, and lived. The rest of his crew perished, as well as those in the other 385th plane. Those men along with all the others that lost their lives in combat and mid-air collisions, and those that daily put their lives in harm's way are your Heroes.

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## REMINISCENCES

### A BUSTED LATCH

Like fictional Orientals, aircraft designers are inscrutable. They do things without obvious reason. One of them put a little round vent in the plexiglass nose of the B-17. It sat just to the right and below the bombsight. If I were young I would probably do the research to learn its purpose. One of the privileges of age is that you can be lazy without having to explain it. So I'm lazy. I know it was there. We used it to get additional air into the nose when we were on the ground. Beyond that, I don't know why it was there.

The first combat mission I flew was with somebody else's crew. That was standard practice and made good sense. The greenhorn got to see how the experienced hands reacted, and it had a calming influence. In my case, the calming influence almost went too far.

I didn't know the navigator with whom I was to share the nose compartment for several hours and many anxious moments. He seemed relaxed and confident. We busied ourselves getting our equipment in order and didn't notice that the latch on that little vent was broken. It was brought to our attention forcefully, however, not long after take-off when the vent flew open. A stream of frigid air swirled inside.

I slammed it shut and put my foot against it to hold it in place while I tried to figure out what to do next. I could ask the pilot to abort the mission. I felt like a fool doing that. Surely a little thing like a broken vent should not abort a mission. All of my training said you make do and get on with it. But how?

I looked at the navigator, hoping he had a solution. He looked perplexed for a moment, then dug under the chest chutes on the floor to come up with two flak vests. He tossed them down over the vent and yelled into my ear: "There. That

should do it." He went back to his maps as if nothing at all was out of the ordinary. His casual attitude gave me a great deal of confidence.

The flak vests were not heavy enough to keep the cold out. I had to put one foot on them so they didn't blow away from the plexiglass and freeze us to death as we climbed to altitude. That position made using the bombsight difficult, but I didn't have to worry. Nobody was going to let a brand new bombardier drop on his own. My chief worry was using the gunsight. It was an awkward position. I decided I could manage it.

My memory says the target that day was at Nancy, France. The official list of targets for the 385th, however, does not include Nancy on that or any reasonably close date. I can only suppose that I am mistaken. Whatever the target, it was not a short run. I sat for hours with my right foot against those vests. Then I shifted position so I could get my left foot over to hold them down. That made use of my gunsight even more awkward, but I couldn't stand that pressure on my right foot any longer.

We made it to the target, dropped our bombs, and came home. Although I shifted my feet several times, I held that vent closed. When we taxied to a stop the navigator grabbed his charts and dropped out of the nose hatch. I followed in short order. When I hit the tarmac my legs folded and I fell in a heap. The navigator looked down and asked, dead-pan: "Think we ought to write up that busted latch?"

*Sterling Rogers, 550th Sq, was a POW. His book, Hanked Down, is a memoir of that time. (A memoir is history written by a congenital liar.)*

### DUTCH FOOD DROP

In a prior issue of HH, there is a note on the Bulletin Board with regards to the plane hit by AA while dropping food in Holland.

"on May 2, 1945 I was the navigator on the Stork Club with a mission to drop food at Hilversum, one of the food drop zones designated by the Germans when they signed the temporary truce for this purpose. Many Dutch had already starved to death. As our plane approached the dropping area at approximately 200 feet altitude, one of the crew shouted over the interphone that he could see some German soldiers tracking us with the AA gun. The next thing I knew was a bump as if something lifted the plane upwards. Despite the truce we had been fired at and hit. One of the our gunners said we had taken hits in the port wing and our pilot, Lt. Swana alerted us that we might have to make a forced landing, since he had trouble holding altitude. The flak had damaged some parts of our plane. Parts of that flak had scattered around the plane but luckily no one was wounded. The main damage was a 30 inch hole in the wing."

When we arrived back at the base pictures were taken and the story told. Seems several planes had been fired on by rifle fire but we were told that the Stork Club was hit by 20mm and it was the last bomber hit by German flak. We were given credit for a mission because of this incident.

References are in books by Roger Freeman, Ian McClaclan and the Dutch author, Hans Onderwater.

All the best.  
Bob Valliere, 550th

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## REMINISCENCES

### NO, I DID NOT RECEIVE THE PURPLE HEART!

I would like to describe an incident that happened to me on a bombing mission to Merseberg, Germany. I was a radio-gunner flying with the 548th bomb squadron of the 385th Bomb Group. Our plane was called the "Flying Vixen" piloted by Lt. Larry Brown.

I decided to "take a leak" before our bomb run. My relief tube (funnel) was inconveniently located in the bomb bay along with twelve 250# bombs. While relieving myself, in the bomb bay, the doors opened up! We were on our bomb run! I had to get out of there FAST. In doing so, accidentally, I caught my "pecker" in the flying suit zipper. With excruciating pain, I managed to waddle like a penguin to my radio room, immobile. After our

bomb run, my pilot checked the entire crew by intercom. I explained to him the situation I was in. The crew listening in, had a good laugh. To me IT WASN'T FUNNY. My pilot checked with me several times and decided to give me some aid. He left the controls to our co-pilot, Lt. Andreas, and visited me in the radio room. He gave me some mobility by cutting off the cloth around the zipper. When we approached our air base at Great Kshfield, my pilot told me that our Waist Gunner, Sgt. "Sleepy" Laffoon would turn in my radio log. I soon found out why. Just as we were landing, I saw red-red flares being fired from our plane. As our plane taxied off the runway, we were greeted by our Flight

Surgeon, Capt. Donald Hunter and his medical crew, along with several Royal Air Force Visitors. Yes, I was the recipient of the "wounded" and the red-red flares. Sheepishly, I was transported in an olive gray Red Cross-marked vehicle called a "meat wagon" to the Post Dispensary where Capt. Hunter with his delicate phalanges disengaged the flight suit zipper from my family jewel. MISSION COMPLETED!

BILL ZARUKA  
a/k/a BILL ZAWYRUCHA

*P.S. I met our Flight Surgeon, Capt. Donald Hunter at our 50th 385th Bomb Group Reunion. Where else? While using the adjacent urinals in our hotel mens' room.*

### BI 7 VERSUS B24

After reading Wild Blue, Stephen Ambroses great book on B-24s stationed in North Africa (World War II), I decided to write a critique elaborating the sharp differences between the two aircraft, technical and functional, and sadly to our advantage. I simply had to get it off my chest and did not expect any return from the author. But what do you know!

I was an aircraft commander on a B-17 from October of '43 until May of '44. I flew twenty-six missions (one extra for Doolittle), no aborts, for the 385th Group, 3rd Division, 8th Air Force. The Consolidated Time Bomb was our best escort. At 25,000, that skinny wing couldn't handle thin air and the formations were sloppy. The German pilots were soon aware of this and you can guess who they took out after. When I heard about ditching failures I won-

dered who the bomb bay doors designer was. On bomb runs and elsewhere we were always peppered with flak shrapnel, a few little jagged holes here and there. The 24 was loaded with hydraulic plumbing. One nearby burst and things are out of service (was this airplane designed for combat?). When I wasn't "In Harm's Way" (hate that expression) and found out that a nearby 24 base was alerted, I'd ride my bike over and watch the returnees come in. It was tragic when some of the planes had lost hydraulic and couldn't get their gear down but spectacular. Everything looked good as they skidded along but as soon as the air speed died off and that high wing dipped down, the airplane cartwheeled most of the time rupturing the fuel tanks .... This is what I "heard" in February of '44, A brand new B-17 group, the 100th,

had just arrived and they wanted to become famous in a hurry. During their first mission, whilst over enemy territory, a warrior lagged back and two ME-109s decided to capture him. On his wing tips they started to herd him back to their base. You know the rest. It happened down south, too, according to Wild Blue. Lord Haw Haw, the-Nazi radio announcer, had a statement to make that night. He denounced the 100th, called them poor sports and said they better look out. on their next mission the whole gang went after them, one lucky crew made it back but they had aborted over the channel. Might check it out. Originally I tried to E-mail this info to Ambroses web site but my machine couldn't handle it. Do you have any mailing address? Would appreciate. Wild Blue terrific book.

Sincerely, Charles Davis

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## REMINISCENCES

### OCTOBER 1944 DISASTROUS MISSION

Something has made me recall that horrible day in October 1944 when we lost 11 aircraft and crews on one mission, and I thought that you might want to share this with the other members of the 385th BG through the pages of the Hardlife Herald.

I was awakened that morning for the mission but when I arrived for briefing I was told by Leo LaCasse (I think) that I wouldn't be flying on that mission, but that I was being sent to London to report to LtCol Ben Lyons, who was chief of Public Relations for 8th Air Force (or maybe even SHAEF) to be on a radio broadcast. When I reported in I learned that they had a broadcast scheduled on ABSIE (American Broadcast System In Europe), which was used for propaganda broadcast to all the countries in

Europe, and they wanted a bomber pilot and a fighter pilot to be on the program with Lady Mountbatten and tell all of the people in Europe how badly we were beating up the Luftwaffe, and that they may as well give up now and surrender, and end the war in Europe.

During my interview I told of my experiences flying missions where we would fly over German airfields and see many fighters setting there on the ground because they didn't have enough fuel to launch them to attack us.

The fighter pilot being interviewed was Lt. Fiebelcorn, who was an ace in the 20th Fighter Group. He told them his stories about how the German Luftwaffe was beaten so badly that they may as well give up now and save their aircraft and their lives before we

destroyed all of them.

We both felt really good about what we had said on the broadcast as we returned to our home bases. When I checked in with my crew on my return things changed when I found out that we had lost 11 aircraft and crews while I was saying that the German fighters didn't have enough fuel to attack us anymore. I felt like I had "Foot in Mouth" disease. Of course, I was mighty glad that my crew and I had been scratched from flying that mission.

Keep up the good work you are still doing for all of us survivors by letting us know whats going on with "Van's Valiants" who are still around.

Yours respectfully and  
nostalgically,  
Fain Pool

### ED STERN'S MEMORIES

My first significant memory is of listening to the whistles blow for the Armistice of WW I while I stood outside of our house in Valley City North Dakota. I was 4 years old.

I remember all of my grade school teachers, along with a number of escapades that I was involved in, one of which got me marched up to the front of the class and my hand slapped hard by a ruler for lying, the teacher said, not for "reading ahead in the book" which I had denied. That was by "Old lady Stowell" - she must have been all of 40 or so. "Old lady Sanderson" had the special nickname of "Old lady Sandbag", and to be called into her office for disciplining was a real terror.

I had a great time growing up, especially after I spotted Louise, my first wife when I was a

Senior in high school. I stayed smitten even though my folk's insisted that I go east to Penn for my college education. At the time they said it was because the Wharton School was the best, but I now know it was to get me to meet some nice Jewish girls to get over my "infatuation", which I didn't. We went together for 10 years-didn't get married until I enlisted 3 weeks after Pearl Harbor, went through the usual enlisted turmoil, made it to OCS, and finally snagged her for good when I had 3 weeks left in OCS. The CO told me at the end that it was a good thing I hadn't gotten married 3 weeks sooner. I forgot to study and would have flunked out, he said.

Thinking back, they certainly gave me the works as an enlisted man. KP, Guard duty, trouble from

our barracks Corporal, etc.

I was 27 years old, had run our business for a few years, wasn't used to being kicked around. I remember setting my suitcase on my bed to unpack the morning I got to Ft. Snelling. The Corporal yelled at me to get my suitcase off the bed, using four letter words and combinations of those words that I had never heard. I said "Sure, as soon as I finish unpacking".

At 4:30 the next morning, when I was still a civilian. I was ordered out of bed, into my good clothes, and sent to the mess hall for KP until around 6 that evening. And I was still a civilian.

So, after spending the winter in Cheyenne Wyoming and the summer in Miami Beach, I was sent to Boston for AF OCS where I had some wonderful instructors

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## REMINISCENCES

associated with Harvard, one of whom was McNamara, the architect of some of our later military fiascos.

After 6 months or so stationed at Ephrata, Washington in the middle of the desert, where Louise (now my wife) got a job teaching and was paid more than my 2nd Lt. Salary, I was stupid enough to go up to HQ and ask if I was going to fight the whole rest of the war in Ephrata. There I was with a nice desk job, a good place to live, a wife, everything you could want. So, boom, I'm transferred to the 385th Bomb Group, to Spokane, Great Falls, and overseas for 2 years 2 months and 4 days, luckily the whole time in England. And in my whole four years in the service, I never once slept in a tent. And I was in the Air Force, which was no doubt the best-and I "flew a desk" as I have to admit while explaining how I didn't do any flying.

My memories of "fighting the war" are still with me, but mostly I was "nursemaid" to about 500 fellows in my Squadron where I ended up as Executive Officer. Had a few German fighters come over our Base, an airplane explode in one of our hangers, a few exciting visits to London and their blackouts, the sorrow of losing combat men 10 at a time when a B17 went down, word of our first child who I didn't see until she was 22 months old, having one of our Enlisted men come in to tell me he wanted to go home because he had enough of loading bombs. I told him we all wanted to go home but we had to stay and fight the war. He said "But I'm only 15 years old". He had enlisted from Tennessee at age 14! We got him out of there the next day.

After VE day, we were scheduled to go to Okinawa after being retrained in B29s. We came home for a 30 day leave and, believe it or not, we ended up ready to reassemble on August 6, 1945, the day we dropped the Bomb. So, after another 30 days of waiting, we were discharged. Luckily, I didn't get called back for Korea, although I did have a call from my old Group CO asking if I'd be able to come back in and be his Exec for a Group he was taking to England with a new Bomber that was smaller and faster than B29s. With a second child on the way and a business to try to keep up with what my father had developed while I was gone, I had to decline - but I was flattered to be asked.

Remembering those boring, lonesome days in England, I recall one amusing encounter on one of my very infrequent trips to London. I was walking on Picadilly in the blackest blackout you can imagine when I felt someone rubbing a hand on my leg. A girl said "How would you like to come home with me?" I, who was a very straight guy if I do say so myself said "Thanks very much but I have a wonderful wife waiting for me at home". She said how lucky my wife was. I asked her "what were you rubbing my leg for?" She said I was feeling your trousers to see whether you were an officer or an enlistedman I can tell by the smooth feel of officer's pants".

Looking back some more, I must admit that I was proud that I made it "on my own" - went in as a "buck ass private" as we said, ended up a Major, and didn't know anyone who could help on the way. I guess I could have wangled a Commission because of my college education and my 5 or so

years of business experience, but I stupidly wanted to just "go in" and see what happened.

We administrative officers lived in barracks that had rooms, and we were mostly 2 to a room, although some were 4 or 6. I double-decked our beds to give a little sitting space, and I as the smaller of the two took the upper bunk. I had no trouble except once on D day, which was cause for a little celebrating. I remember walking back from the Officers Club feeling no pain. When I made it into bed, I had to hold onto the darn thing to keep it from tipping over-it kept lurching around. I never was much of a drinker.

You wonder how I felt about censored mail. I hated it-I was the guy responsible for censoring the mail. We hit on the idea of requiring each of our flying officers to censor mail-there was an awful lot of it, and it was really a big job. I would take a batch of letters, put them on a flying officer's bed, and he would have, to censor it. In most cases, they just signed the envelope, which meant it had been censored.

When I got home, I was astonished to find one of my letters had been censored. They had cut out "Elmswell" which I had mentioned as the towns we got the train from. Someone found that dangerous.

So, enough already! As you can see, I could go on forever-

Best wishes on your project.

Ed Stern



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## BULLETIN BOARD

# HELP HELP HELP

Any help in finding any of the following 385th members would be appreciated. Their Hardlife Herald was returned due to insufficient address, moved, left no forward address, etc. Please be sure to notify us of any address change.

Harold Albrecht	Halethorpe MD	Neil Rosener	Estes Park CO
Jefferey Anderson	Saint Paul MN	Joseph Sarmuksnis	Maspeth NY
Scott Bridges	Colorado Springs CO	Joseph R. Schneider	Tucson AZ
Kent S Brucher	Columbus OH	Kenneth W. Smithers	Quincy IL
James Clements	Danville CA	Herman W. Supplee III	Tavares FL
Harry Crew	Dana Point CA	William M. Tesla	Harlingen TX
A F Del Bianco	Tipp City OH	Carl F. Tuke	Cincinnati OH
Harvey R. Downs	Spokane WA	Richard A. Wheaton Sr.	Independence MO
Russell W. Fritzingler	Mesa AZ	Backman, Frank	Menlo Park CA
Harold R. Goodwin	Orville CA	Enroth, Edward L.	Houston TX
Raymond W. Gould	Pleasant Hill CA	Garverick, William	Harrisburg PA
Anthony Haugrud	Shreveport LA	Hanauer, Ron C	Peoria IL
Harold Heidbreder	Rantoul IL	Heiney, JG	Denver CO
Jim Keefe	Minneapolis MN	Immel John	Peoria IL
Albert Kent	Long Beach WA	Larson, Carl	Danevang TX
A. D. Kneale	Bella Vista AR	Leahy, John C.	Burke VA
Stanley B. Lamica	Roswell GA	Pappas, Michael	Calimesa CA
William A. Lasater	Tempe AZ	Pemberton James	Pharr TX
Calvin Linenmeyer	Riceville IA	Powell William	Bella Vista AR
Dr. W. E. Loftis	Nort Augusta SC	Santoro, Robert	Saylorsburg PA
Herbert McGregor	Saint Charles IL	Schumaker, Floyd	McAllen TX
Milford Mertens	Meadow Vista CA	Steil, Gerald	Aurora CO
Thomas Morgan	Bastrop LA	Toms, Richard	Escondido CA
Norman C. Powell	Branford CT	Williams, Carl	Sandusky OH
Abel S Rebello	New Bedford MA	Walz, Henry	Hammond LA

## EDITORS NOTE

Your editor wishes to express his appreciation to all the contributors of material for the Hardlife Herald. Without your support we would not have a Hardlife Herald. Due to limited space in the HLH sometimes we must edit some articles. Also for the same reason we are unable to publish every submitted article right away. Just because you did not see your article in the following HLH issue, do not quit sending in items. Again, thank you.

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## LITHOGRAPHS

Limited edition lithographs of the 385th Schweinfurt Mission (14 October 1943), painted by artist Ted Wilbur, are now available again at a reduced price from the initial offering, several years ago. The lithograph shows a formation of B-17F's with square "G" on the tails, led by Capt. Robert C. Smith in the "Liberty Belle", coming off their successfully bombed target in Schweinfurt. Overall dimensions of the lithograph (including margins) are 17" high x 21", wide. Apologies to those of you (like myself) who purchased lithographs at the higher initial price several years ago. Now is the time to buy additional copies for your kids and grandkids to lower your average costs.

Our 385th BGMA would also like to donate one of these lithographs to a quality air museum in each of the 50 states throughout the nation. We need your help in accomplishing this goal. If you have an outstanding air museum in your state that you think would be receptive to a lithograph donation, check with the museum's curator to get their approval. The 385th BGMA will provide the lithograph to you no charge, but we would ask that the donating 385th BGMA member provide appropriate framing and matting for the print, along with an engraved plaque stating that the lithograph was donated by the 385th Bomb Group Memorial Association. The print to be donated can be shipped with your personal order for your own print(s), or if you are requesting only a single print to be donated to an air museum, it will be shipped to you on a no charge basis freight free. Just fill out the order form on the next page. For personal prints, please make your check payable to Chuck Smith (all funds will be turned over to your 385th BGMA).

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### 385TH SCHWEINFURT MISSION LITHOGRAPH ORDER FORM

Please check the appropriate lines:

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1 Lithograph \$ 25.00 (UPS included)  
\_\_\_\_\_ 2 Lithographs 45.00 (UPS included)  
\_\_\_\_\_ 3 Lithographs 65.00 (UPS included)  
\_\_\_\_\_ 4 Lithographs 85.00 (UPS included)  
\_\_\_\_\_ 5 Lithographs 105.00 (UPS included)

\_\_\_\_\_ 1 Lithograph (No Charge) for donation to:

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(name of air museum, city, and state)

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*(no post office boxes please for UPS shipments)*  
City, State, Zip: \_\_\_\_\_  
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Please make checks payable to and send order form to:

Chuck Smith  
P. O. Box 329  
Alpharetta, Georgia 30009-0329

## LETTERS

To our friends at Great Ashfield:

The news of the Queen Mother passing away is not without sympathy from the members of the 385th Bomb Group Memorial Association. The courage the Queen exhibited in World War II to stay on at the Palace during the Blitz of London, later transcended to all U.S. Forces in Europe. The British people have lost a great person who has done much to stabilize fears and give the people hope and love throughout all these years. May her soul rest in peace. Please accept our deepest sympathy. With respect and admiration, The 385th Bomb Group Memorial Association members.

Leo A. Lacasse, Col. USAF Ret.  
President 385th BGMA

### A TRUE EXPERIENCE FROM WORLD WAR II

By Bob Silver

In September, 1944 I was a First Pilot on a B-17 "Flying Fortress". Our crew was in training in Ardmore, Oklahoma prior to going overseas to join the U.S. Eighth Air Force in England. One of our instructors had told us, "Be certain that every man on your crew knows one other job besides his own."

Following those instructions while on a cross-country training flight, I was in the radio compartment assisting the Radio Operator in teaching the Ball Turret Gunner about emergency radio procedures. Except for the Co-Pilot, everyone else on the ten-man crew was somewhere other than "his own" position- in an effort to "learn a second job".

It was a beautiful afternoon over Texas when our plane was suddenly rocked by a severe impact! Upon returning to my Pilot's position, I quickly saw that another aircraft had collided with ours, tearing a large section off of our right wing! I gave crew members the option to "bail out" via parachute but no one accepted this offer. The Co-Pilot, who had been in his position when the impact occurred said, "Why don't we climb to a higher altitude-to get a safety margin-and go through some landing stall procedures to see if the wing will fall off?"

We followed that procedure and I was subsequently able to make a perfect landing at the Army Air base at Big Springs, Texas. The other aircraft also made a successful landing.

After landing, I asked the Co-Pilot how he had come up with the idea to gain altitude in order to "test" the wing. His reply was, "I read about a similar incident in the Reader's Digest."

Four members of our crew are still living today. Could it be argued that we owe our lives to the Reader's Digest? I BELIEVE IT COULD!

*The Co-Pilot mentioned in the article is our very own Past President, Mike Gallagher...who later had his own crew in the 385th.*

A BIG THANKS!!!!  
To Roger and Luxembourg People,

Roger...Thanks for everything... Sharon and I both had a fabulous time honoring the 385th BG and Perle!!!

Everything went perfectly with you running the show...a true Master! It was great to see all that you have done to honor the 385th BG...I am sure they are all proud!!!!

It looked like ALL the townspeople enjoyed the concert!!!! I especially enjoyed the dinner at the La Diligence with the Mayor and everyone. The trip to Yces and Adree's home in Belgium was a real treat as well! They are lovely people and tell them thanks for us again.

I surely will be in touch for another trip to Luxembourg to go airplane searching. My son, Bryant, is very excited about looking for B-17s!!!

Take care and we hope to see you again soon.

David G. Curdy  
Colonel, USAF  
Director of Safety

March 19, 2002

Dear Mr. Newton,

I am Robert McGuire who is better known as "Mack". I served as tail gunner on the B-17, Picadilly Queen.

Special attention was given to page 14 of the February 2002 of *Hardlife Herald*. A picture of Notestein's crew was being briefed for a mission to Frankfort which was completed January 29, 1944. This picture was submitted by Earl R. Fohhenbee, Co-Pilot of the Notestein Crew.

This loss of Notestein's is reflected in 385th history on January 29, 1944. Mr. George B. Brown, bombardier for the original crew, has arrived back in New York and saved it. The other officers who learned about this at Great Ashfield were Harold Jordan, Pilot; A.D. Corriveau, Co-pilot; Norton Robbins, Navigator. I was informed of the plane being rammed by Sgt. Rogers. It was assumed by the enlisted men that the pilot of the enemy plane was dead. Everyone was upset by the loss of this crew in this manner. I thought each day since January 29th, 1944, that all crew members were deceased. My first knowledge of any one who survived was the photo submitted by Mr. Fohhenbee. I hope all members survived and are well today.

This information is very special to me. I was assigned to fly as a replacement gunner on this day, the officers of this crew made a mistake and joined a consolidated group made with the 94 Bomb Group. The officers of the crew I flew with should have been in the position of Notestein's Crew.

This was my 23rd mission. My 24th mission was January 24th, 1944 and 25th mission was February 5th, 1944. On this day Malcom Ness, from Mudge's crew, and I completed our last mission together. Our plane and crew was the final plane to return from that mission.

Yours very Truly,

## LETTERS

Dear Mr. Newton:

I would like to submit the following for "Taps"  
Edward F. O'Day Jr. age 84, of San Francisco, CA died March 30, 2002. First Lt. AC, Bombardier with the 385th Bomb Group. Received the Distinguished Flying Cross for heroism on a heavy bombardment mission over enemy-occupied French on August 2, 1994. He would not salvo the bombs while over Paris despite the imminent danger of explosion. He was rescued by the French resistance and escorted to safety by Anita Hartman (nee Ann Lemoine, Paris). The mission is reported in the December 2000 issue of the 385th BGMA Newsletter.

I recently sent you a check for my dad's subscription and would appreciate it if you would redirect the mailing to me. In the December 2000 letter from Ian McLachlan explaining the incident there is mention of my dad's note to him describing the account as "erroneous". I am familiar with the event and am in contact with Russell Cotts, co-pilot on the mission. I am also in contact with Anita Hartman, who is the woman from the French Resistance who escorted my father to safety. I have several pictures from that time, but do not have names to go with them. If I can be any help, in any way, please let me know.

Sincerely, Diane O'Day Cantor

34585 Quaker Valley Rd., Farmington Hill, MI 48331, Phone 248-477-1152, Email: 1doc@concentric.net

March 18, 2002

Dear Tom,

Hope this finds you and yours all well and happy.

Just want to report a few of my friends for the 548 Squadron that have passed away in the past couple of years.

1. Vincent Calvillo - Dec. 1999
2. Robert Victor - Jan. 2000
3. Martin (Mac) Bridges - June 2001
4. Paul Kostial - Feb. 3 2002

While I am writing, I will tell you about another memorable day that Bill Varnedoe's letter reminded me of, flying the French slave workers out of Lintz.

We flew with a skeleton crew (Pilot, Co-Pilot, Navigator, Engineer and Radio Operator) I was the Engineer. There were plywood floors put in the bomb bay and it was loaded with boxes of food that I believe was for our American Personnel that was on temporary duty to maintain the Litz Air Base. You have to keep in mind that the war was over only about a week and this was around the 16th of May. We, the crew had to dust ourselves down good with D.D.T. to keep from catching "Cooties" (Body Lice) from the 25 French workers that we were to fly back to Chartres, France.

As we landed in Lintz we were led to a parking place in line on the tarmac where there was a group of French waiting. Our engines had barely stopped turning when a truck with 2 or 3 American Infantry men pulled up to do business. The truck was loaded with German souvenirs that they had captured from a German warehouse. They had new Luger pistols still in crates, P-38 pistols, rifles, bayonets, daggers, helmets etc.

The only money that they would accept was English or American money, no French or German money. But you could trade. I traded a full unopened pack of Lucky Strike Cigarettes for a German Bayonette, the pilot got a Luger and the navigator got a German officers dress uniform dagger.

Anyway I had to see that the food was unloaded for the bomb bay and stacked on the tarmac. I had to dust each of the Frenchmen with D.D.T. to kill any "Cooties" before I let them get on the plane. I knew no French and they knew no English so I had to show them what I wanted done to unload the food from the bomb bay and stack it on the tarmac. Then I had to position them on the plane. The French did not know any English but they did know the word parachute. I did get them all loaded 3 in the nose with the navigator, 20 in the bomb bay and 2 in the radio room. After take off I came back to the radio room to make sure the Frenchmen did not go back into the waist.

After we landed in Chartres, France and let the Frenchmen out of the plane, they were so happy they had to thank us. It was gratifying to see how happy they were to be back in France.

Good luck as editor and thank you for all the work you put in.

Best Regards,

Marty Girson

## LETTERS

Dear "T. J."

Please add my name and email address (Francis Coleman – fcoleman@rochester.rr.com – to your page. I was a child of about 5 living in Haughley Green near Great Ashfield during most of the 385th actions. I visited the airbase a number of times during the war. My parents David and Annelise Coleman were friends of Col. Pete Vandeventer. He came to our home. I am trying to find out more information about him, and also about a "Henry Todd" who was, I think, in charge of ground crews at Great Ashfield.

Thanks, Francis D. R. Coleman  
7132 Gillis Road, Victor, New York 14564-9540 USA  
585-925-3525 Home Tel., 585-924-4833 fax, fcoleman@rochester.rr.com home Email

*Editors Note: The Pub at Haughley has fond memories from WWII and from a fun filled night a group of us (about 20) spent there in 1980. George Hruska was reunited with his wartime girlfriend. (This was a foursome with Gen Hruska and the English husband.) We did a lot to singing in the pub that night.*

## Notice Notice Notice

The next issue (August 2002) of the Hardlife Herald will be the roster issue of the 385th Bomb Group Memorial Association members. Please review your address label and notify your editor of any current or forth coming changes.



### WORLD WAR II PILOT, BOB SILVER, SHOWN HERE ON HIS WAY TO VISIT FRIENDS IN RAMBROUCH, LUXEMBOURG

March 13, 2002

(cc: Tom Newton)

Dear Roger –

This package gives me the opportunity to once again express our gratitude for all of the many courtesies that you and the people of Rambrouch have provided to the members of the 385th Bomb Group.

In my opinion, the thirteen copies of the Stars and Stripes that I have been saving for these past 57 years will be more appreciated in the Museum at Perle than they would have been in my closet! Of course, the BIG ONE is dated May 8th:  
"GERMANY QUITS"

You will need to handle them very carefully for some of them are no longer in the best condition (somewhat like the author of this letter!).

You will notice that in the issue of May 7th (1944) the aircraft dropping the food is incorrectly identified as being with the 385th BG. It was from, I believe, the 96th BG. An interesting fact is that the president of that bomb group's association lives in the same town as our former president and current Editor of the HHI, Tom Newton. That photograph, incidentally, has been said to be the single most famous photo from the war in Europe.

So, Roger, with every Best Wish to you and Jeanny and our friends in Rambrouch.  
Sincerely,

*The "artwork" used on this stationery is copied from mail that I sent to my parents when I was in Aviation Cadet Training in 1943 and 1944. They saved all of my wartime mail and I now have the sketches on my computer to use once again.*



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## BOOK REVIEW

By Mike Gallagher

### **What Went Wrong: Western Impact And Middle Eastern Response**

By Bernard Lewis

Oxford, 180 pages, 2002

How does one understand the Islamic world, the countries of the Middle East whose cultures and customs differ so markedly from the Western civilization?

Certainly not through the eyes of B-17 crew members and their generation who have not studied Islamic history and would not have the slightest idea that for almost a millennium the world of Islam was in the forefront of human civilization and achievement. Nor is it understandable through the eyes of those of us still focused on World War II enmities, Cold War strategies and the prism of national interests.

Bernard Lewis, emeritus professor of Near Eastern studies at Princeton and one of the West's foremost authorities on Islamic history and culture, reports in *What Went Wrong* (one of his many published books in the field), that the Muslim perception has been that Islam is coterminous with civilization and that beyond its borders were only barbarians and infidels from whom little or nothing could be learned. Thus, when at the time of the Renaissance the West drew from the knowledge of the Middle East, the Islamic world rejected, or ignored as irrelevant, the newly evolving science, technology and culture the West had to offer. This refusal to accept Western advances continued through the Industrial Revolution and, save in

limited instances, to the present time. It sprang largely from the belief that all issues were resolvable by reference to the Holy Law of Islam as interpreted by the so called Ulama, professional men of religion. There is only a single law, the Shari'a, accepted by Muslims as of divine origin and regulating all aspects of human life, including commerce and science. The concept of separation of church and state does not exist in the Muslim world, except at the present time among a small group of moderns educated in the West and to a degree in Turkey, where the principle was established by Kemal Ataturk.

The Middle East lament has been: Who has done this to us? Favorite villains have been the Mongols in the 13th century. Later the Turks blamed the Arabs, the Arabs blamed the Turks and the Persians (Iran) blamed the Turks and the Arabs. In the 18th, 19th and 20th centuries, a period of French and British paramountcy, European Imperialism became the scapegoat. Eventually, the United States succeeded as primary villain and was encompassed in the term Western Imperialism. When in 1948 five Arab states failed to prevent a half million Jews from establishing a state, the humiliation cast Israel as a co-villain with America in causing insurmountable obstacles to Muslim advancement.

It has been argued that Islam itself stands in the way of Muslim freedom, science and economic development, but how can this be if in the past it promoted all three and propelled the medieval Muslim world far in advance of the then Western World. The question may be, not what Islam has done to the Muslims but what the Muslims have done to Islam. Should the blame be laid at the feet of teachers, doctrines and groups, nowadays variously called fundamentalists, Islamists and fanatics, who it is claimed have fallen away from authentic Islam and as a consequence caused the loss of the Middle East's former greatness.

*What went Wrong* is a slim volume and easy reading, although it does require study and reflection. Does it conclude that fanatical religious authorities have stifled a once great civilization? Read it and see.

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# Taps

## DECEASED

Bromley, James R.	June 26, 1998
Hickey, John M.	Nov. 1999
Kelly, Ernest	June 19, 1999
Walsh, Kenneth L.	June 29, 2000
Kabitzke, Donald J.	Nov. 26, 2001
Morken, Harding	Feb. 02, 2002
Geisinger, Dr. Karl W	Feb. 26, 2002
Richards, Willard R.	
Wagner, Adelbert	
Calvillo, Vincent	Dec. 1999
Victor, Robert	June 2000
Bridges, (Mac) Martin	June 2001
Kostial Paul	Feb. 3, 2002

Joseph F. Kelly of Shelbyville Ill. died 9/99. He served with the 385th as an aerial tail gunner of a B- 17 and flew 16 missions.

Joseph Matuna died 12/2000. He was sent to England in 1943 and flew as a pilot with the 549th Sq. After completing his missions he served in operations until his tour ended in September 1944. After the war he flew as a commercial pilot with United Airlines.

Leonard (Mac) McIntire died 10/01. He entered the Army Air Corps in 1943 and served as tail gunner of a B-17 combat crew and flew 33 missions. He received the Distinguished Flying Cross, four Battle Stars and Air Medal with three Oak Leaf Clusters.

Ted C. Findeiss, Colonel, USAF retired, of Oklahoma died 12/01. As a pilot of a B-17 he flew 35 combat missions and was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross. After the war he served as an instructor at the Test Pilots School at Wright-Patterson AFB

William J. Dansro died 2/02 in Sudbury. During the war he served in England in the 385th BG.

Dr. Frank Crawford served from 1942 to 1945 as a pilot in the Army Air Corps in the 385th BG. and from 1951 to 1955 in the Army Medical Corps in the Korean War.

Edward F. O'Day died 3/02. He was a 1st Lt. Bombardier with the 385th and received the Distinguished Flying Cross for heroism on the mission of August 2, 1944 over enemy-occupied France. See letters to Editor.

Walter J. Rogers died 7/01. He served as a crew chief aboard a B-1 7 in the 385th in England.

Kimber D. Crowl of Elysburg, Penn. died 1/02. He was a B-17 copilot on Dunlap's crew serving in the Europe with the 385th. BG. He also served in the Pacific theater and retired with the rank of Captain.

Park H Campbell Jr. formerly of the 550 BS 385th BG, died March 23, 2002. Park was the tail gunner on B-17G "Thunderbird" piloted by Lt. Robert Bostick on it last mission to Frankfurt on Jan 29, 1944.