

Hardlife



Herald



Newsletter of the  
385th Bombardment Group Memorial Association

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

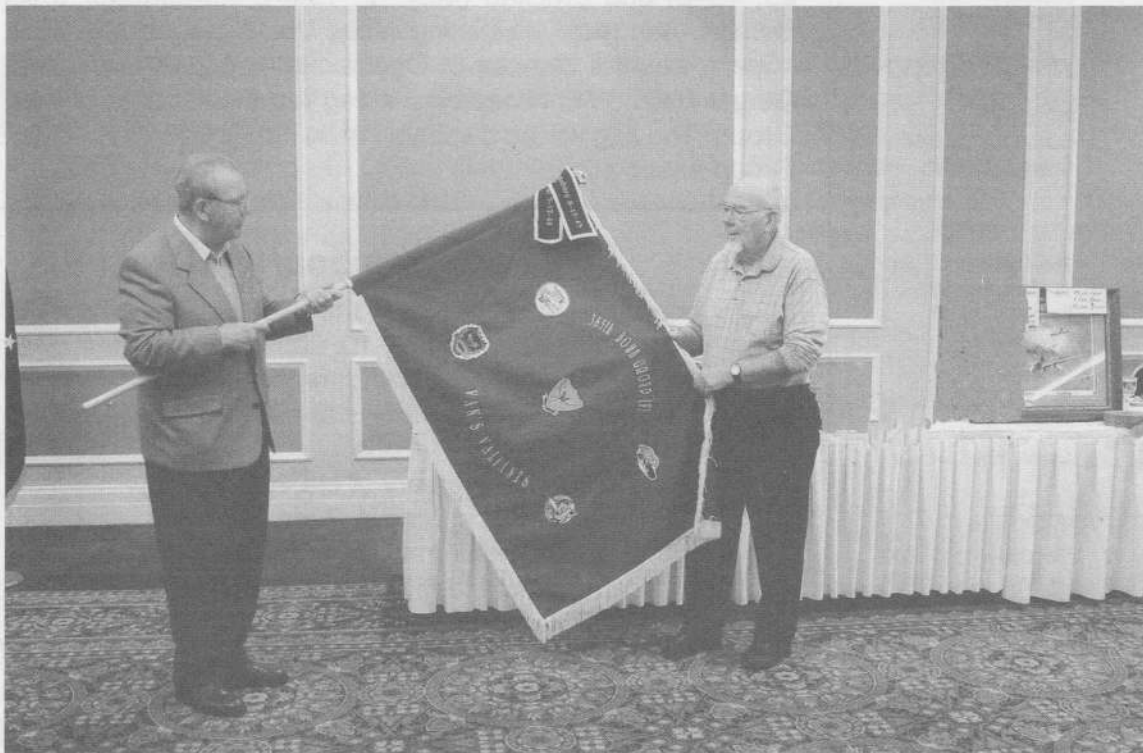
*The Mighty Eighth*

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Vol. 21 Number 2

May, 2004

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**385 BGMA REUNION • KANSAS CITY, MO • OCTOBER 5-10, 2004**

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# Hardlife Herald

385th Bombardment Group (H)

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*James H. Emmons	79-'81	Robert Valliere	'95-'97
*Paul Schulz	'81-'83	Michael Gallagher	'97-'99
*Forrest V. Poore	'83-'85	Tom Newton	'99-'01
William A. Nichols	'85-'87	Leo LaCasse	'01-'03

\*deceased

## Honorary Members

Roger Feller  
Mayor Ferdinand Unsen  
Eldon Nyssethler

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## COVER

The cover is a picture of Past President Leo LaCasse, Col. USAF (Ret.), presenting the 385<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group flag to James MacDonald, Col. USAF (Ret.), during the 385<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group Memorial Association's 19<sup>th</sup> Annual Reunion in Hampton, VA. The flag was made by Leo and depicts the emblems of the 385<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group (H) and the four Bomb Squadrons. The two banners flying from the staff represent the Warnemunde (July 25, 1943) and Zwickau (May 12, 1944), missions for which the 385<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group received Distinguished Unit Citations. Col. Mac, as he was known, was the Director of Operations when the Group was formed at Geiger Field, WA, accepted the flag for all members of the 385<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group. The flag will be displayed at all future functions of the 385<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group Association.

## Luxembourg '04

Roger Feller and Friends of the 385<sup>th</sup> are planning a 60<sup>th</sup> Liberation Anniversary Celebration on July 10, 2004 in Perle. Members of the 385<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group Memorial Association received an invitation from Roger to attend the celebration. Ceremonies as submitted by Roger are as follows:

Saturday, 10<sup>th</sup> of July - Perle

Memorial 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of crash at Perle

1500 Ceremony at church in Perle

1530 Overflight of aircraft

Ceremony at the two memorials, U.S. and Luxembourg  
WWII Vehicles

Dedications of a showcase for the 81<sup>st</sup> Squadron,

Spangdahlem Air Base at the 385<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group Museum

Reception at the Centre Culture

Dinner at Hotel Roder offered by Mayor Ferdinand Unsen of  
Rambrouch

Persons planning to attend the Ceremonies, please contact Roger Feller ([feller@pt.lu](mailto:feller@pt.lu)) to confirm attendance at dinner.

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## PREZ SEZ

*Bill Varnedoe*

One of the first things your new Executive Board did was to review our Constitution and By-Laws, since it was apparent we were not exactly operating by the current versions of these documents. The By-Laws had been amended several times, once in their entirety. Over the years our goals and procedures had and have evolved. The Constitution, our fundamental document, however, had only been amended once, and that was a minor name change, long ago. This left a sort of incompatibility between the two; the Constitution had not kept pace.

After an extended exchange of emails and comments about both documents, the Board unanimously adopted a new set of By-Laws on 27 February. They are in this issue. The Constitution was also revised in conjunction with the new By-Laws and a new version is proposed by the Board for adoption. It can only be adopted (actually, amended in its entirety) by the membership at a member's meeting according to the present Constitution. It will be discussed at the next member meeting in Kansas City. The proposed version will be published in the next issue *Hardlife Herald*.

Other actions by this Board were to eliminate any *new* Life Memberships, and to adopt a formal dues policy. Dues paid before July will credit to the current year. Dues paid after July will credit to the remainder of the current year *and* the next year. *Hardlife Herald*s will not be mailed to dues delinquent members after July 2004, and a postal card will be mailed to dues delinquent members to warn them of this action.

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## 2ND & 3RD GENERATION CORNER

We were happy to see nearly a dozen 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> generation kids and grandkids who accompanied their parents and grandparents to the October 2003 reunion in Hampton, Virginia. You might remember seeing some of us that looked a little young to have been around during WWII. Well that's us, the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> generation. Some of us have shown a considerable amount of interest in the 385<sup>th</sup> in recent years, and we have been asked to participate in your *Hardlife Herald* with occasional articles and contributions, which we are both honored and happy to do. We're thinking that it might be interesting to the 385<sup>th</sup> membership for us to occasionally reintroduce ourselves to you in future *Hardlife Herald* issues, telling you a little bit about our-

selves and what our connections and interests are in the 385<sup>th</sup>. We need a snappy name for future columns. Anybody with any snappy name suggestions? Please send any suggestions to me at the address below.

We're always looking for more 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> generation kids and grandkids to participate with us in future reunions. Remember guys, reunions are getting harder and harder to get to, and nobody's getting any younger, so please invite and bring your kids and grandkids to the next reunion this October in Kansas City. It's a chance to let them learn about your contributions during WWII to preserve America's freedom, and it allows them to meet your 385<sup>th</sup> comrades who lived through the experience with you. And most importantly, these reunions allow

us to remember and honor those that did not return home after the war to have families and lead prosperous lives. The 385<sup>th</sup> alone lost 413 men in combat. Freedom isn't free, and your children and grandchildren need to know it! Please guys, bring them with you. We guarantee that they will learn some things about you, your 385<sup>th</sup> buds, and WWII that they did not know before. They cannot learn about these things through mental telepathy — they need to be at the next reunion WITH YOU! We want to see lots of kids under the age of 60 in Kansas City, so we can all thank you for what you did for America and our generations! See you in October!

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

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# Mighty Eighth, Warpaint and Heraldry

by Roger A. Freeman

## AIRCRAFT MARKINGS-385™ BOMB GROUP

B-17F/G Fortresses, June 1943-July 1945. Original B17Fs were in Dark Olive Drab and Neutral Grey factory finish. Within a week of arrival at Great Ashfield a Group marking was notified for painting on the fin and right wing upper surface. An Identification Yellow letter "G", 40 in high, was painted on a 'dulled white' (actually light grey) square, varying in dimensions but generally 50in by 48in, positioned above the tail number. On some 549<sup>th</sup> Bomb Squadron aircraft the square was 60in on the horizontal sides and overlapped the rudder. On the wing this marking was 72in with the span and 57in with the cord, again light grey and a 45in yellow letter. The yellow individual aircraft call-letter painted below the tail number, was 24in high on some aircraft and 48in on others. The large letters only appeared on the Groups early B-17Fs; in general, replacements had 24in high tail call-letters. On some aircraft the call-letter was also painted on the rear fuselage in blueish-grey 36in high.

Early in July the instruction for the Group device was amended, the square G changed to white and the letter thereon altered to Insignia Blue. The size of the G and the square remained as already established. Exactly how many of the Group's aircraft had received the yellow G is not known, but many 385<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group B-17s were seen with this original device throughout the summer of 1943. The 'white' squares continued to be

well dulled while camouflaged B-17F/Gs were received. From early 1944 the dimensions of the Groups marking were generally consistent at 48in square. When aircraft without camouflage were received the Group marking was white letter on a black square, although forming the G by masking bare metal became common. Tail call-letters were black on bare metal but they too remained the same size. Although SD110 squadron code letters were available for the 385<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group they were not displayed on fuselages during combat operations period.

By late October 1943 propeller bases were being painted in squadron colors. The 548<sup>th</sup> Bomb Squadron used blue, the 549<sup>th</sup> yellow, the 550<sup>th</sup> red and the 551<sup>st</sup> bright green. In December 1944 the Group's aircraft received a yellow chevron marking on the upper surface of the right wing. Each arm was 48in wide with the apex approximately in the center of the outer wing section leading edge. At least one aircraft received the all-yellow empennage with which the 4<sup>th</sup> Bomb Wing experimented in January 1945. On transfer to the 93<sup>rd</sup> Combat Bomb Wing the Square G marking was deleted from both tail and wing; in its place 93<sup>rd</sup> CBW red wing and tail markings were applied. A single 48in wide red stripe was painted around each wing of Nos 1 and 4 engines, with the outer edge of the band running just inside to the outer wing section. The 36in wide red band round the horizon-

tal tail plane was situated midway between the two central elevator hinges. The vertical tail markings consisted of 28in squares forming a checkerboard. At the base there were three red squares and at the highest point in the center of the fin there were also three red squares, giving nine full and five part red squares on each fin surface. The squares separating the red were either olive drab or bare metal. On camouflage the call-letters was repositioned in white in the top full square and the tail number in white or yellow in its original position over the checkerboard. On natural metal the call-letter was black in the top full bare metal square and the tail number black in its original position. The first 385<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group's B17s with this marking were to be seen during the third week of February 1945, but it was April before the majority of the aircraft were so painted. In mid-May 1945 SD110 squadron markings were used as "anti buzz" identification marking under the left wing. Each letter was approximately 72in by 60in, black on bare metal and yellow on Neutral Grey. The 548<sup>th</sup> Bomb Squadron used GX, the 549<sup>th</sup> XA, the 550<sup>th</sup> SG and the 551<sup>st</sup> HR.

*Roger A. Freeman:  
"Mighty Eighth War Paint and Heraldry", Arts and Armour Press, London, (1997)  
ISBN 1 85409 3738, p. 83*

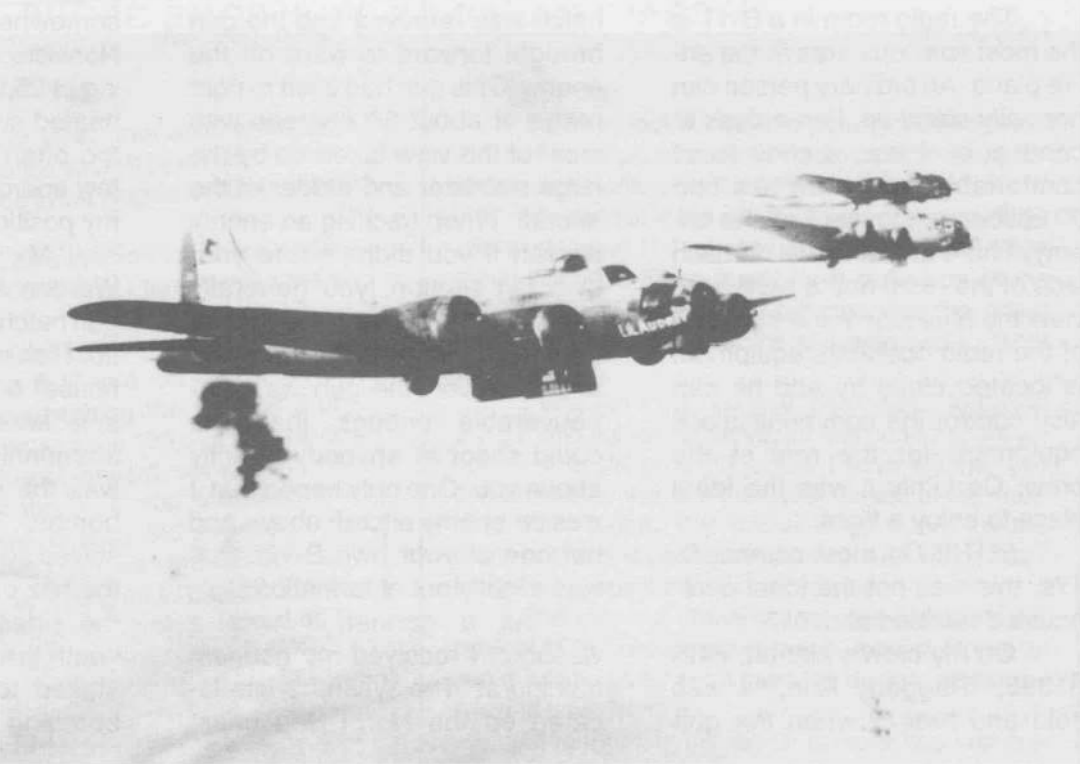
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## A Mission to Berlin August 6, 1944

by Elmer Snow, Engineer Top turret gunner of a B-17 Flying Fortress

You asked what is was like on a bombing mission to Berlin in 1944.

Imagine you are in an eight-foot diameter aluminum cylinder 5 miles high with the temperature at 30° below zero. The B-17 Flying Fortress you are in is carrying 2 tons of high explosives in the bomb bay, 1000 gallons of 100 octane gasoline and 5 to 8 thousand rounds of 50-caliber ammunition. You are amongst a group of 1000 planes flying in close formation on a bombing mission



deep into Germany. At an altitude of 5 miles the oxygen in the air is not adequate for breathing so you are breathing through a rubber mask that is attached to the oxygen supply by a flexible hose just long enough for movement about your gun position. I was in the upper turret. You are wearing a heated suit and boots, a yellow flotation vest (Called a Mae West) that will keep you afloat if your plane is damaged and goes into the North Sea or the English Channel, a parachute harness, a leather helmet with earphones, goggles, and a throat microphone. In case you are shot down and have to bail out over France you have a pair of black civilian shoes tied to the parachute harness (The Germans could recognize downed airmen by their shoes or boots) and an escape package contain-

ing French money and a photo of you in civilian clothes. These would aid the French Underground to prepare false identity papers for the attempt to escape capture. With the help of the valiant French Underground many downed airmen walked out of France over the Pyrenees Mountains to Spain where they could be repatriated.

The mission to Berlin today will be ten hours long, at least seven of which will be at high altitude on oxygen. As the bomber formation crosses the coast of Holland enemy anti-aircraft fire (Flak<sup>1</sup>) is encountered. Oddly enough the area we crossed in Holland was named **Overflak-kee Island.**<sup>2</sup> Today we are lucky! No one is shot down. Now we must be more on the alert for enemy fighter attacks, which can occur at any time. As we con-

tinue our route to Berlin we do not have any fighter attacks but other squadrons in the formation lost planes as a result of enemy fighter attacks.

Before long we are nearing the target. "Big B" it is nicknamed because of the heavy concentration of German Flak guns. We can see the bursts of flak in the distance as we approach the point where we start the bomb run. The fiery black bursts of flak are all around us. They say sometimes it looks so thick you could get out and walk on it.

As we start the bomb run we are in the most vulnerable position because the bombardier is now controlling the plane with the bombsight. The pilot and copilot must maintain the altitude, air speed and a steady course until the **Bombs Away**

*Cont. on page 18...*

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## THE B-17 RADIO ROOM

By Frank X. McCawley

The radio room in a B-17 is the most spacious area in the entire plane. An ordinary person can normally stand up, has a desk to conduct business, a chair to sit comfortably, and even has one 50 caliber gun to ward off the enemy. There are windows on each side of the room and a skylight to view the blue sky or the stars. All of the radio operators equipment is located close by and he can also control the communications equipment for the rest of the crew. Certainly it was the ideal place to enjoy a flight.

BUT!!! On most combat B-17s, this was not the ideal penthouse described above!

On my crew's aircraft, #42-31395, "Raggedy Ann," it was cold and breezy when the gun

hatch was removed and the gun brought forward to ward off the enemy. This gun had a left to right range of about 60 degrees with most of the view taken up by the huge stabilizer and rudder of the aircraft. When tracking an enemy aircraft if you didn't strafe your own tail section, you generally shot off the HF antenna which ran from the left wing to the top of the tail. However, the gun was maneuverable enough that you could shoot at anybody directly above you. One only hoped that it was an enemy aircraft above and not one of your own B-17s that was slightly out of formation.

As a gunner, I was a washout. I received my gunnery training at "The Wash," a site located on the North Sea coast

somewhere north of the City of Norwich, a place colder than flying at 25,000 feet with a burnt out heated suit. I did not fire my gun too often since there were very few enemy aircraft directly above my position.

My crew painted "Air Raid Warden #395" outside the radio gun hatch since my only view was up. I felt very secure in my "penthouse" on A/C 395. My "comfortable" seat was a box of 50 caliber ammunition and in front of me was the bomb bay loaded with bombs. The ground crew installed some armor plate beneath the box of ammunition and along the sides of the room. Underneath the room a camera was installed to take pictures of the bombing of targets. All these

*Cont. on page 7...*

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### 385<sup>th</sup> BGMA Reunion - Oct. 5-10, 2004

The 385<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group Memorial Association will hold its 20<sup>th</sup> Annual Reunion in conjunction with the 8<sup>th</sup> Air Force Historical Society in Kansas City, MO. We have been invited to participate in all functions of the 8<sup>th</sup> AFHS. However, we will be also free to conduct our own 385<sup>th</sup> BGMA functions and business. A 385<sup>th</sup> BGMA Hospitality Room has been obtained for our exclusive use.

The 8<sup>th</sup> AFHS has organized the reunion, and the complete reunion information is included in this copy of the Herald. Also included in this copy are forms for

- (1) Reunion Registration and Tours, and
- (2) Hotel Registration.

If you plan on attending the 385<sup>th</sup> BGMA/8<sup>th</sup> AFHS reunion, please complete and forward the completed forms as instructed in the reunion information sheets. Mail your Reunion Registration and Tours form with full payment to: Armed Forces Reunions, Inc. Send your Hotel Reservation form to: The Weston Crown Center.

Attendees of the reunion do NOT need to be members of the 8<sup>th</sup> AFHS or the 385<sup>th</sup> BGMA to attend the social functions. For any one wishing to join the 8<sup>th</sup> AFHS, the annual dues are \$25.00.

The schedule for members of the 385<sup>th</sup> BGMA is as follows:

Board of Director's Meeting	Wed., Oct. 6	3:00PM	Pres. Varnedoe's Room
General Member's Meeting	Fri., Oct. 8	8:30AM	To be announced
Squadron Meetings will follow the Member's Meeting.			
385 <sup>th</sup> BG Rendezvous Dinner	Fri., Oct. 8	7:00PM	To be announced

To maintain Group integrity and comradeship, Pres. Varnedoe suggests that all 385<sup>th</sup> BGMA Reunion Registrants who plan on taking any of the tours, register for each tour as follows:

New Theatre Restaurant	Wed.	Oct. 6	5:45PM
Steamboat Arabia Museum / Toy & Miniature Museum	Thur.	Oct. 7	9:45AM
Stephenson's Apple Farm / Truman Museum	Fri.	Oct. 8	11:00AM
City Tour	Sat.	Oct. 9	11:15AM

comforts were excellent protection against flying shrapnel (flak). The pane of glass from the right window had been removed and replaced with a chute to distribute chaff. There was always about ten to fifteen boxes of chaff to be distributed when approaching an area of flak. I always thought that the German population thanked us for providing them with well tinsel Christmas trees. But trying to distribute all of that tinsel took ones mind off the bursting noises and the rattle of flak hitting the sides of the aircraft.

Our pilot instructed me to monitor the assigned HF radio frequency for any important messages sent by higher headquarters. Unless under direct attack from fighters, I seldom was on the intercom, and did not hear most of the normal talk between the other crew members. Should the pilot or any other crew member wish to talk to me, they did not use the intercom call override, but would contact the waist positions to physically notify me to switch to the intercom.

Those boys had a very unique method to contact me. They would throw a steel helmet into the radio room which always banged against the front bulkhead or the doors of the room, scaring the hell out of me and usually lifting me about two feet off my comfortable 50 caliber box of ammunition. My first reaction to the helmet banging against the bulkhead was that we were hit by a flak burst or even worst, the bombs had exploded, and I better get the hell out of the plane. However, as I settled back into my comfortable seat, I would switch to intercom for any messages from other members of the crew. Looking back at my two waist gunner friends, I would see them laughing vigorously. They always enjoyed contacting me in that manner, and I was always caught unaware. They are still my good friends and we keep in contact with each other. And we still laugh about the helmet method of communication.

One of my other jobs as radio operator was to stand in the

bomb bay, without a parachute, to check and notify the bombardier and pilot that all the bombs had released and cleared the bomb bay. In event some did not clear they would have to be helped out with a swift kick. While performing this task during one of our missions, my throat microphone cord became disconnected. For several minutes after the bombs had been released, I could not find the end of the cord in the maze of heated suit, flak vest, parachute harness, mae west equipment, etc. thus I could not notify the pilot and bombardier that all the bombs had cleared the plane. They both thought that I had gone out with the bombs and sent the engineer back to check on me. I finally reconnected the mike, we had a good laugh, and we proceeded home without further incident.

After completing my tour of 30 mission I was sent to the 452<sup>nd</sup> Bomb Group as a radio instructor to new crews arriving in the ETO. Part of my instructions to them were these stories.

## REUNION 2005

It is not too early to think about Reunion 2005. Based on our experience with the 8<sup>th</sup> AFHS in Kansas City this coming October, we may wish to return to our past agenda of having our own 385<sup>th</sup> BGMA Reunions. Any member who would be willing to host a 385<sup>th</sup> BGMA Reunion in 2005 should prepare a presentation for the October 8<sup>th</sup> 385<sup>th</sup> General Membership Meeting in Kansas City.

## 2005 Great Ashfield Tour

The residents of Great Ashfield have invited the members of the 385<sup>th</sup> BGMA to visit and celebrate the 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the end of WWII. Bill Varnedoe has appointed Art Driscoll to plan, organize and lead a 385<sup>th</sup> BGMA tour in 2005. Specific details are not available at this time, but Art's preliminary proposal is to visit Great Ashfield as the focal point of a seven or eight day tour of the United Kingdom, and perhaps extend that to an additional seven to eight day tour of Europe. A time frame of May or June 2005 has been suggested. Participants may possibly take either of the two week-long tours, or combine them for back-to-back tours. Updates for the 2005 tours will be provided in future issues of the Hardlife Herald.

For further information, or to provide suggestions, contact Art Driscoll, 4500 Post Rd., Unit H-75, Nashville, TN 37205; Phone (615) 352-3530; Fax (615) 352-6995; e-mail: [artdriscoll@hotmail.com](mailto:artdriscoll@hotmail.com) Children and grandchildren are welcome to join our tour group.

# LETTERS

3 April 2004

Hi Frank,

Just received my Feb 2004 Issue of *HARDLIFE HERALD* and noted with sort of a chuckle your story on the 385<sup>th</sup> Group and Squadron LOGOS or as properly described EMBLEMS on page seven & eight. I can help clear this up very easily & tell you how all this confusion has come about now 59 Years after the end of the War.

First I am an 8<sup>th</sup> AF Historian and have been doing research on ALL of the Eighth Group and Squadron Insignia for at least 40 years now.

I have my own personal collection of close to 60 of these from WWII & a few of the Korean War Era also.

I have a COMPLETE SET of ALL FIVE of the WARTIME 385<sup>th</sup> B.G. original patches that were obtained by me in the 80's from 385<sup>th</sup> Men.

Now during WWII The National Geographic Society did a Special Section in one of their 1943 issues on a lot of these Squadron patches and these were shown in color and I can assure you that there were a number of errors in NOT ONLY designs being wrong but also in some cases where the colors are wrong.

Now as to the 385<sup>th</sup> Squadrons in particular there are only 3 of the 4 shown and 2 of the 3 are the wrong designs & this came about as there were contests held in the Squadrons up in Montana & somehow 2 of the 3 designs used by the magazine were part of the contest but not the eventual contest WINNERS. So shown for the 548<sup>th</sup> is the WHITE CLOUD with a B-17 in Flight facing to the right in Black in (the) Center & having a RED Lightening Bolt coming down from Bombay of the Aircraft... Also the second one shown for the 550<sup>th</sup> is a Rodent (Looks like a Large Beaver ) in BLACK walking facing Left & Carrying A Huge Light Brown Bomb all on a Light Green Circle with a Cloud very small in White at (the) base of a Circle...

The only (patch) close to correct is of the 551<sup>st</sup> Raunchy Wolf but the magazines design & that of the actual Wolf's Head used are slightly different, but at least closely resembles the correct design.

So this is how over the years that there has been confusion at times as people pick up these wartime mags and take for granted everything they see in them as official just because its shown in color in this mag.

There were two different Issues in 1943 that dealt with Military Insignia & Medals of the U.S. Armed Forces and these were so popular that they did TWO SPECIAL ISSUES. One a Dec 1944 with a GREY COVER and also a smaller one in number of pages, which is the June 43 issue, & has a Dark BLUE COVER... To get the Grey Cover they combined both the June & Oct 1943 issues into one.

By the way I have ALL FOUR of these issues & have had the BEST ONE, the Grey Cover since High School in the Late 50's.....

Now to the actual wartime 385<sup>th</sup> Patches. These were all made up in Montana before the Group left for overseas and they were either made one of two ways PAINTED on CANVAS, or PAINTED on OILCLOTH. The same material they used to make table cloths out of many years ago.

By the way I do have an EXTRA ORIGINAL RAUNCHY WOLF 551<sup>st</sup> Patch for trade or SWAP for another Wartime Original Patch from some other UNIT.

I also have FIVE of the REPRINTS of the Original 385<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group History left for sale at \$42.50 in case anyone is interested in a copy. I've had these for about 20 yrs.

Please, if you could put my two notes in the Newsletter on both the 551<sup>st</sup> Patch & the 385<sup>th</sup> B.G. History Reprints...

CHEERS

Jim (signed)

Ed.: This follow-up and informative letter about the Group and Squadron Patches printed in the February 2004 issue was received from James Young, 221 Ramsey Ave., Bridgeville, PA 15017. Persons interested in obtaining a copy of 385<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group History or the 551<sup>st</sup> Raunchy Wolf Patch, contact Jim at the above address.



# LETTERS

March 30, 2004

Dear Frank,

Here is yet another view, from another angle, of the ramming of the Burich aircraft by an ME-109 as reported by Bill Varnedoe in the August 2003 Hardlife Herald.

On April 7, 1945, on a mission to Gustro, I was flying the left waist gun position in Frank McNamara's B-17, in a high section.

I had an un-obscured bird's-eye view, at about a 45 degree angle, of a B-17 in a low section. I observed an ME-109 approaching the B-17 at 6:00 O' Clock level. Suddenly, as if the 109 pilot fire-walled the throttle, his aircraft shot forward, severed the left horizontal stabilizer of the B-17, and continued forward severing the entire left wing and engines.

The last thing that I saw was the ME-109, entangled with the wing, dropping off to the left. The B-17 with the starboard engines running, veered off to the left in a flat spin. I saw no parachutes.

(S)

Leonard A. Mika  
551<sup>st</sup> Squadron

April 24, 2004

Hi Frank,

I always look forward to getting "Hardlife Herald" but I was particularly interested in this issue because of the article on the 385<sup>th</sup> insignia.

My interest in the group was initially sparked 20 years ago when I bought an old A2 jacket with a 550<sup>th</sup> patch still on it. Since then I have picked up all the "standard" 385<sup>th</sup> squadron patches plus the group patch — some loose, some still attached to flight jackets!

I also have the "original" 548<sup>th</sup> patch featuring a B-17 with lightening strike, as mentioned in the article — it is still on a B3 jacket. I have another you don't mention, this is an unusual variant of the standard 548<sup>th</sup> patch. This shows Bugs Bunny on the bomb but he is superimposed on the AAF winged star insignia. I suspect this was a prototype.

The only one I have not managed to find is the original 550<sup>th</sup> porcupine and bomb. Indeed, till this issue of HH I'd never even seen the design, although I knew of its existence.

Unfortunately my digital camera has just collapsed on me but the moment I buy a replacement I will send you some photos! I'm sure other readers will be interested to see the two non-standard patches.

Kind regards,

Paul Roberts

(pewroberts@ontel.net.uk)

April 1, 2004

Dear Frank,

Sometime in the past someone got me confused with my being a minister. I am not a man of the cloth, so, when I received the Hardlife Herald on March 30, 2004, addressed to:

Rev. Edward J. McElroy

it was incorrect, as I am just plain Mister.

I will thank you in advance for making this correction. I have written previously to have this corrected, but evidently the good Lord wants me in his corner, for my religious title has appeared again. Prior to the latest issue, my mailing has been coming to just plain "Edward J. McElroy." I am not sure who is responsible for making a change to Rev. Edward J. McElroy or why.

Thanks again.

Edward J. McElroy

Ed.: Sorry Ed, I must take the blame since I sent the mailing address to the printer based on an old list.

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# By-Laws of the 385th Bomb Group Association (385 BGA)

## As Amended 27 February 2004

### ARTICLE I Membership

Section 1. Veteran Members in this Association shall be either former veterans, or their wives or widows, who served with the 385<sup>th</sup> Bombardment Group (H), 8<sup>th</sup> AAF, and to veterans of other units assigned or attached for support purposes, who were stationed at Great Ashfield RAF Station 155, Great Ashfield, Suffolk, England during World War II.

Section 2. Associate Members shall be other family members of veterans and/or those persons or organizations who have an interest in the activities and purposes of the BGA.

Section 3. Honorary Membership(s) may be awarded by the Executive Board to (an) individual(s) for exceptional contributions to the 385 BGA or its purposes. Honorary Membership may be awarded for either one year or for life.

Section 4. Members who have paid for Life Membership shall retain that status until their death. No new Life Memberships shall be offered.

Section 5. The word Member(s) in all documents shall include Veteran Member(s), Life Member(s), and Associate Member(s). Any Member may hold office and vote. No one is considered a member unless he has paid the current dues.

Section 6. The Veteran Membership shall meet the requirements of Section 501 (c)(19) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1954 as follows:

At least seventy five (75) percent of the Veterans and Life Members shall be war veterans, and substantially all (at least nearly ninety (90) percent), shall be veterans, or Cadets, or wives, husbands, widows or widowers of war veterans.

### ARTICLE II Meetings of the Membership

Section 1. Meetings should be held annually, but in no case at periods longer than two years. The geographic location of meetings should be dispersed around the USA, if possible, but the meetings will be held at locations and dates to be determined by the members at a previous meeting.

Section 2. Notice of meeting dates and locations will be published in the Newsletter at least two months prior to the meeting. Meetings are normally at a reunion.

Section 3. A quorum at any meeting shall con-

sist of the voting members in attendance at the meeting, in person or by proxy. A majority vote shall decide any question.

Section 4. Members may vote either in person or by Proxy. Proxies must be filed with the Secretary of the 385 BGA before or at the time of the meeting. No proxy shall be valid after the expiration of six (6) months from its date of execution.

### ARTICLE III Committees

The President may appoint any committee and name its chairman and scope. This chairman shall appoint its own committee members. Committees shall report to the Executive Board.

### ARTICLE IV Executive Board

Section 1. The Executive Board shall consist of: The President, All Vice Presidents, Secretary, Treasurer, The Editor of the Newsletter, and the immediate Past President. The President shall act as Chairman of the Executive Board. If an individual holds more than one office, he shall have only one vote. Advisors to the Board may be appointed by the President, but do not vote.

Section 2. Any vacancy, however occurring, in the Executive Board, may be filled by a majority vote of the remaining members of the Board.

Section 3. The Executive Board shall meet in person as called by the Chairman or by a majority of the Executive Board members; however, meetings may be conducted by teleconferencing or by e-mail. Meetings by e-mail are deemed to be in continuous session.

Section 4. The Executive Board may decide any question, item or business concerning the 385 BGA, by majority vote of those voting, except it may not act contrary to the intent of the Constitution.

Section 5. A quorum of the Board shall consist of a majority of elected officers of the Board. For e-mail, no reply within two weeks of posting the question shall be construed to mean "abstain" on the vote(s).

Section 6. Members of the Executive Board shall not be paid any regular wages, salaries or reimbursements for any expenses for attending any meeting of the Board.

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## **ARTICLE V Finances**

Section 1. The moneys of the 385 BGA shall be deposited in the name of the 385 BGA in such bank or banks as the Treasurer shall designate, and shall be drawn out by check signed by the Treasurer or an officer or officers as the President determines.

Section 2. The fiscal year shall be the calendar year, January 1 to December 31.

Section 3. Annual dues for members shall be \$25/year, domestic and \$30/year foreign.

Section 4. Funds of the 385 BGA shall be expended only for the purposes of the 385 BGA as stated in the Constitution, including, but not limited to the following:

(a) Funds for the conducting the business of the 385 BGA such as telephone, postage, office supplies, printing and reproduction, stationary and any other supplies or equipment normally associated with an office of this nature.

(b) Funds for compiling, printing, mailing and/or electronically sending the 385 BGA Newsletter, presently entitled *The Hardlife Herald*.

(c) Funds to search for, copy, buy and/or otherwise obtain historical 385th BG data, and/or artifacts to place in the Archives of the 385 BGA.

(d) Funds, if available and feasible, for memorials.

(e) The reunions and other meetings of the 385 BGA should pay for themselves; however, seed funds may be made to the Host, to be repaid to the BGA after the reunion by the Host. Reunions shall only charge those attending.

(f) Funds not enumerated above but whose expenditure will be necessary and proper for the purposes of the 385 BGA.

Section 5. No part of the earnings of the Association shall inure to the benefit of any Officer, Member, or private individual.

## **ARTICLE VI Dissolution**

Section 1. Although the duration of the 385 BGA is perpetual, if it is dissolved for any reason, the method of dissolution shall be either in the following manner:

(a) Notice of the proposed dissolution shall be given members of the Executive Board in writing, and shall be published in the Association's Newsletter, no less than sixty (60) days prior to the meeting at which the proposal is to be considered. A two thirds vote to dissolve is obtained at this meeting, or

(b) Dissolution is approved by a majority of the remaining Executive Board members if it is no longer possible to hold a membership meeting.

Section 2. Upon approval of the dissolution, the Executive Board shall, after paying or making provisions for payment of all liabilities, dispose of the total assets, giving them to an organization or organizations which qualifies as an IRS tax exempt organization as follows:

(a) Data, artifacts and other items in the 385 BGA Archives will be given to the Eighth Air Force Historical Society, (located: 175 Bourne Street, Pooler, GA 31233.)

(b) All other assets and moneys shall be distributed as deemed appropriate by the Board in compliance with current IRS code.

Section 3. As its final act, the Executive Board shall report to the membership and the IRS in writing or in a final issue of the Newsletter:

(a) a statement of the 385 BGA dissolution, and

(b) an account of the disposition of the Association assets, to whom, and the amount(s).

## **ARTICLE VII Severable**

Any provision, section or item of these By Laws, or any amendment or alteration thereof, which may be interpreted by lawful authority to be in violation of any law, shall not render the remaining provisions invalid.

## **ARTICLE VIII Amendments**

Section 1. By-Laws may be adopted, amended, or repealed in whole or part by the Executive Board by a majority of those voting. The members may also adopt, amend or repeal the By Laws at a meeting of the members by a majority vote of those voting, provided due notice and a copy of the proposed amendment is given in the Newsletter prior to the meeting.

Section 2. All amendments passed will be published in the Newsletter.

# LETTERS

## E-Mail from Stephen James to Truman Smith and reply (15 Mar 2004)

Good Evening

Are you the same Truman Smith whose book, *The Wrong Stuff*, I have just read? If so please accept my appreciation of a good book well written. I am now living close to Gt. Ashfield and every visit to the airfield still sends shivers down my spine. Thanks for all you did for us we are all still grateful.

Regards

Stephen James

YES, STEPHEN, IT LOOKS LIKE YOU GOT ME, ALTHOUGH I DON'T KNOW HOW, BUT I'M GLAD YOU DID. I CERTAINLY THANK YOU FOR YOUR EFFORT AND KIND WORDS OF APPRECIATION. I HOPE YOU'LL FILL ME IN ON YOURSELF: AGE; INTERESTS; HOW YOU FOUND THE BOOK; ETC.

I MUST RETURN MY GRATITUDE TO THE BRITS WHO SAVED THE ISLAND FROM WHICH WE WERE ABLE TO FIGHT. IT COULDN'T HAVE WORKED WITHOUT THEM.

I AM SENDING A CC: TO DAYSH. YOU MAY WISH TO CONTACT HIM, BECAUSE HE LIVES AT GT. ASHFIELD. I'M ALSO TAKING THE LIBERTY OF SENDING SOME BLIND COPIES TO OTHERS WHO WERE STATIONED AT GT. ASHFIELD. YOU MAY WISH TO CHECK OUT: [www.b17warhorse.fws1.com/about.html](http://www.b17warhorse.fws1.com/about.html).

THANK YOU STEPHEN, TRUMAN SMITH

*Cont. from page 5...*

signal from the bombardier. The 5–10 minute bomb run seems as if it will never end. Fiery red bursts of flak are now bursting very close and we fly through clouds of black smoke from the Flak. Inside the plane it feels as if we were being hit with a giant sledgehammer. A close burst of flak sends fragments into the plane and a piece of flak comes through the navigator's desk, between his hands breaking a navigation ruler he was holding. There are several other hits causing minor damage to the plane. The B-17 a hundred feet off our right wing takes a hit and black smoke billows out of the engine. Within a few seconds we see a door fly off the rear of the plane and a crewman bails out. Almost as soon as he jumps he pulls the ripcord, his parachute opens and he is floating down into Berlin. Our training was to free-fall to the cloud cover before pulling the ripcord to release the

parachute. If no cloud cover was present you were to delay opening the parachute as long as possible. Shortly afterwards the fire in the engine goes out and the bomber continues on with us to the target. Later we often speculated what the fate of that lone individual was when he landed. Perhaps he died from lack of oxygen before he reached an altitude of 10,000 feet. As soon as the bombs are away the pilot takes control of the plane and we can take evasive action to avoid the flak. A slight change of course or altitude will cause the flak to be inaccurate.

Before long we are over the North Sea and the crew can relax. As we continue on a westerly course the leader will give the signal for the formation to begin the gradual letdown from 25,000 feet to 5,000 feet where we can remove our oxygen masks. Strong headwinds today on the North Sea reduce our ground speed from 150 mph air speed to 90 mph. It seems to take forever

to reach the coast of England. As we approach the coast at 5,000 feet we get several rounds of flak from an English gun battery. No harm is done as we are quickly identified as Allied planes. There is partial cloud cover over our air base so we search for a hole in the clouds to let down through. We land and unload our guns to the truck waiting to take us to debriefing and then to the mess hall for the first meal since breakfast at 6 am. Our last act of the day is to go to the armament shack to clean and oil the guns. Each gunner is responsible for his guns.

So ends the mission to Berlin. Perhaps we will be alerted again tonight for another mission tomorrow. So it was. I flew 35 missions with 285 hours of combat flying time. Some missions were easy (We called them "Milk runs"), all were very hazardous and I saw many bombers shot down over Europe. It was exciting but not fun; if it were fun they would call it FUN — not WAR!

<sup>1</sup> The word Flak was derived from the German word for anti-aircraft gun, **FLUGABWEHRKANONE**

<sup>2</sup> Our navigator was a native of Georgia and he had a southern drawl and a great sense of humor. He would always have some quip as we flew over Overflakkee Island and the German Flak guns sent up their greetings. If we were on a mission to Munich or other target deep into the south of Germany we could see the Swiss Alps and he would always have a course plotted to get us to Switzerland if our plane should be damaged and we could not make it back to England.

# Taps

## CSS H. L. HUNLEY

On the evening of February 17, 1864, the CSS H. L. Hunley became the world's first successful combat submarine by sinking an enemy warship, the USS Housatonic in Charleston Harbour. After signaling to shore that the mission had been accomplished, the submarine and her crew of eight vanished.

This was the third time that the Hunley sunk. Twice before during sea trials, the Hunley had sunk, killing her crews, including H. L. Hunley himself. However, owing to the strangling blockade by the United States Navy and the desperate situation in Charleston, General P. G. T. Beauregard reluctantly authorized Lt. George Dixon to let "that submarine boat" have a go at the Union blockade. Lt. Dixon, at age 25, would command the new crew on what would become their historic final mission.

Lost for over a century, the Hunley was located in 1995 by Clive Cusler's National Underwater Agency (NUMA). The hand cranked vessel was raised in 2000 and delivered to the Warren Lasch Conservation Center, where an international team of scientists are at work conserving the vessel and piecing together clues to solve the mystery of her disappearance.

On April 17, 2004, the eight crewmen's remains were buried with full military honors at the Confederate Cemetery in Charleston, SC. Family descendants of several of the crew members attended the ceremony. The crew is identified as:

Lt. George E. Dixon, Captain.

Arnold Becker

Corporal C. F. Carlson

Frank Collins

C. Simkins

Joseph Ridgeway

Miller

James A. Wicks

### THE BIVOUAC OF THE DEAD

*By Theodore O'Hara*

The muffled drum's sad roll has beat  
The Soldier's last tattoo;  
No more on life's parade shall meet  
That brave and fallen few.  
On Fame's eternal camping-ground  
Their silent tents are spread;  
And Glory guards, with solemn round,  
The Bivouac of the Dead

### DECEASED

Jules A. Swickle, March 2004  
Cleve Solenberger ?