

Hardlife



Herald



Newsletter of the
385th Bombardment Group Association

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

The Mighty Eighth

Vol. 24 Number 1

April, 2007



385TH BGA REUNION • KALAMAZOO, MI • JULY 17-22, 2007

Hardlife Herald

385th Bombardment Group (H)

Federal IRS Tax Exempt Code #501 (C) (19)
52-1068468

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Past Presidents

| | | | |
|---------------------|---------|---------------------|---------|
| *Ruel G. Weikert | '56-'72 | *Earl Cole | '87-'89 |
| *Frank Walls | '72-'75 | Sam Lyke | '89-'91 |
| Vincent Masters | '75-'77 | *Sid Colthorpe | '91-'93 |
| *John C. Ford | '77-'79 | *Robert C. Smith | '93-'95 |
| *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 |
| | | W. W. Varnedoe, Jr. | '03-'05 |

*deceased

Honorary Members

Roger Feller
Eldon Nysether
Mayor Ferdinand Unsen

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FRONT COVER

A view of the heavy anti-aircraft shells (flak) bursting around the formation of bombers. Picture taken from the left waist position.

BACK COVER

A view of the condensation (con) trail left by each engine of the aircraft. A pain in the butt for the aircrews, but an excellent target for the German anti-aircraft firing crews.

EDITORIAL

This will be the last issue of the Hardlife Herald prior to the 385th BGA Reunion in Kalamazoo. Reunion information for both the 8th Air Force Reunion and the 385th Bomb Group Association is described in this issue. We were directed by the 8th Air Force Historical Society not to change any of the reunion information provided by them, thus it is printed as received. Notice that there has been another change to our By-Laws increasing the number of Board members. Our eighth president of the Association, William A. Nichols, (see Taps) has taken his last flight. He was honored in the past reunion in Boisser City

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

A new election process is set forth in this Hardlife Herald (HH) issue. Look for the ballot to cast your vote by e-mail or postal mail prior to June 15th. We hope this makes it possible for a larger number of our membership to participate in the election of officers and board members. Those who do not vote by e-mail or postal mail will have an opportunity to vote during the 385th BGA annual business meeting at the Reunion in Kalamazoo, MI, July 21–27, 2007.

The board has voted to honor two different groups during the reunion. Second and third generation members and their parents will be recognized and honored by certain events. Senior officers and ranking enlisted personnel of both flight and ground crews will be recognized and honored during other events. We are making a special effort to recruit 2nd and 3rd generation prospects to become associate members who will carry-on and maintain the legacy of the 385th BGA when we veterans are gone. We have long neglected to honor our ground crew personnel, so we will pay tribute to their roles in winning WWII and preserving our

Freedom and Liberty. I need help to identify their names and secure e-mail and postal mail addresses so we can get in touch with them and their family members. Please take time to advise me about who we should honor. My e-mail and postal mail address is listed on page 2 of the HH. You may call me at 615-352-3530 or send a FAX to 615-352-6995.

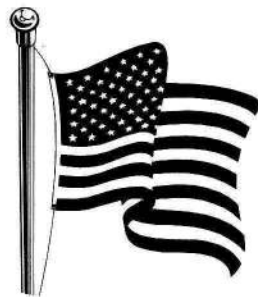
Information about the Kalamazoo Reunion is covered in this issue of the HH. Since we conduct "A Reunion Within A Reunion," compare the following events for the 385th BGA with the schedule for the 8th Reunion. Our private hospitality room will be opened daily, Wednesday through Saturday 4:00–6:30 pm and 9:00–11:00 pm. Our annual business meeting is scheduled Friday, 8:00–9:30 am. Our private dinner meeting is scheduled for Friday, 7:00–9:00 pm, as part of the 8th AFHS Reunion under the heading, "Rendezvous Dinners and Hanger Flying." This perk is provided for a few bomb groups who have the largest delegations while all others are mixed in a common dining facility. The dinner price is included in the

meal shown in the reunion registration form (Choices #1 and #2). We will schedule a group picture of the 385th BGA at the conclusion of the Friday night dinner. The 385th BGA will reserve a cluster of tables for the Gala Banquet on Saturday. Sign-up sheets for reserved seating will be available in our hospitality room. Otherwise, we mix and mingle with members of other bomb groups during meals, tours, seminars, programs and other events such as the two religious services (Protestant and Catholic) Sunday morning. The current Board will meet in our hospitality room at 3:00 pm Wednesday. The newly elected Board will meet after the election with day and time TBA by the new President.

Make hotel reservations as soon as possible as space may be limited. An amount of \$5 from the reunion registration fees will be given to the 385th BGA by the 8th AFHS Reunion, based on each person of our group who stays in the reunion hotel, and registers for the reunion before the deadline of June 15th.

AMENDMENT CHANGE

The wording in ARTICLE IV, Section 1. has been changed from — "Three Board Members" — to — "at least Three, but not more than Six Board Members".



RADISSON PLAZA HOTEL & SUITES, KALAMAZOO, MI
JULY 17 – 22, 2007

Summer is on its way, so make plans now to attend the 33rd annual reunion. Secure your reservations early, as rooms may be limited, as well as some of the tours. The weather is almost perfect this time of year with daytime temperatures in the low eighties.

REGISTRATION INSTRUCTIONS

See choices below and complete the Registration Form noting your event choices and personal information. By "WWII GROUP," we're asking for the group or unit in which you served (specific Bomb Group, Fighter Group, PRG, HQ, etc.). We use this information for tallying totals for each group, nametags, and seating arrangements. If you prefer to sit with a different group, please give us that information too. Remit by check or money order payable to Armed Forces Reunions by June 15, 2007 (no credit cards or phone reservations accepted). Forms received after this date will be accepted on a space available basis only. Hotel reservation forms should be filled out completely and mailed to the hotel by June 15, 2007.

ARMED FORCES REUNIONS, INC. CANCELLATION POLICY

For attendees canceling reunion activities prior to the cut-off date, Armed Forces Reunions, Inc. (AFR) shall process a full refund less a \$5 processing fee. Attendees canceling reunion activities after the cut-off date will be refunded to the fullest extent that AFR's vendor commitments and guarantees will allow, less a \$5 processing fee. Cancellations will only be taken Monday through Friday from 9:00am until 5:00pm Eastern Time, excluding holidays. Please call (757) 625-6401 or email cancel@afri.com to cancel reunion activities and obtain a cancellation code. Refunds processed 4-6 weeks after reunion. Canceling your hotel reservation doesn't cancel your reunion activities.

MEALS / EVENTS CHOICES

CHOICE #1 TOTAL PACKAGE \$169

Package includes 7 hotel food functions starting with breakfast on Thursday. Tours are separate.

CHOICE # 2 PARTIAL PACKAGE \$119

Package includes 5 hotel food functions starting with breakfast on Friday. Tours are separate.

Breakfast menus: The continental breakfasts on Thursday, Friday, and Sunday include juice, breakfast breads, cereal or yogurt (changes each day), fruit, coffee, and tea. The breakfast buffet on Saturday includes juice, assorted breakfast breads, eggs, bacon, sausage, hash brown potato casserole, fruit, coffee, and tea.

CHOICE #3 INDIVIDUAL EVENTS

Friday Rendezvous Dinner \$39 and Saturday Banquet \$49 can be purchased separately, but are included in both packages above.

TOUR OPTIONS

Tours and trips are described on the Reunion Highlights Pages. Prices are listed on the registration form. Driver and Guide gratuities are not included in the tour prices.

8th AFHS ACTIVITY REGISTRATION FORM

Listed below are all registration, tour, and meal costs for the reunion. Please enter how many people will be participating in each event and total the amount. Send that amount payable to ARMED FORCES REUNIONS, INC. in the form of check or money order (no credit cards or phone reservations accepted). Your cancelled check will serve as your confirmation. Returned checks will be charged a \$20 fee. All registration forms and payments must be received by mail on or before June 15, 2007. After that date, reservations will be accepted on a space available basis. We suggest you make a copy of this form before mailing. Please do not staple or tape your payment to this form.

Armed Forces Reunions, Inc.

**PO Box 11327
Norfolk, VA 23517
ATTN: 8th AFHS**

OFFICE USE ONLY

Check # _____ Date Received _____
Inputted _____ Nametag Completed _____

CUT-OFF DATE IS 6/15/07

| | Price Per | # of People | Total |
|--|--------------|----------------|-------|
| REGISTRATION FEE | | | |
| Includes Unit rebates, Saturday's Symposium expenses, and other reunion expenses. | \$45 | | |
| Reg. Fee for children ages 10-17 attending more than 1 function & staying at hotel | \$30 | | |
| MEAL PACKAGES | | | |
| <i>Choice #1 includes 7 hotel meals beginning with breakfast on Thursday. Choice #2 includes 5 hotel meals beginning with breakfast on Friday.</i> | | | |
| Choice #1 | \$169 | | \$ |
| Choice #2 | \$119 | | \$ |
| Please select your entrée choice(s) for the Banquet: | | | |
| Roasted Beef Tenderloin | | # | |
| Cedar Plank Salmon w/ lemon-pepper | | # | |
| SEPARATELY PRICED MEALS (if not purchasing a package) | | | |
| Friday: Rendezvous Dinner (chicken) | \$39 | | \$ |
| Saturday: Banquet (please select your entrée) | | | |
| Roasted Beef Tenderloin | \$49 | | \$ |
| Cedar Plank Salmon w/ lemon-pepper | \$49 | | \$ |
| TOURS | | | |
| <i>Please choose one of the following two tours:</i> | | | |
| Wednesday: City Tour | \$31 | | \$ |
| Wednesday: Winery Tour | \$48 | | \$ |
| Wednesday: Dinner Theater | \$64 | | \$ |
| <i>Please choose one of the following two tours:</i> | | | |
| Thursday: Air Zoo | \$55 | | \$ |
| Thursday: Gilmore Car Museum | \$54 | | \$ |
| <i>Please choose one of the following two tours:</i> | | | |
| Friday: Air Zoo | \$55 | | \$ |
| Friday: Gilmore Car Museum | \$54 | | \$ |
| Saturday: Kellogg Manor | \$46 | | \$ |
| Total Amount Payable to Armed Forces Reunions, Inc. | | | \$ |

MEMBER NAME _____ WWII GROUP _____

8AFHS MEMBER # _____ LIFE MEMBER? _____ PH. # (____) _____ - _____

SPOUSE NAME _____ LIFE MEMBER? _____ MEMBER # _____

GUEST NAMES _____

MEMBER'S ADDRESS _____

DISABILITY/DIETARY RESTRICTIONS _____

MUST YOU BE LIFTED HYDRAULICALLY ONTO THE BUS WHILE SEATED IN YOUR WHEELCHAIR IN ORDER TO PARTICIPATE IN BUS TRIPS? ☐ YES ☐ NO (PLEASE NOTE THAT WE CANNOT GUARANTEE AVAILABILITY).

EMERGENCY CONTACT _____ PH. NUMBER (____) _____ - _____

8th AIR FORCE HISTORICAL SOCIETY ANNUAL REUNION

JULY 17 – 22, 2007

RADISSON HOTEL – KALAMAZOO, MICHIGAN

Tuesday, July 17

2:00pm - 6:00pm **Early Bird Registration open**

Wednesday, July 18

8:00am - 10:00am **Reunion Registration open**

Hospitality/Gathering Room, Memorabilia Room, & PX opens (hours tbd)

9:30am - 12:30pm **CITY TOUR**

11:00am - 2:30pm **WINERY TOUR**

1:00pm - 8AFHS Board Meeting

3:00pm - 6:00pm **Reunion Registration open**

5:00pm - 11:00pm **CORNWELL'S DINNER THEATER**

Thursday, July 19

Mighty Eighth Theater open Thursday & Friday (hours tbd)

7:00am - 8:30am **Continental Breakfast**

8:00am - 9:30am **Unit Advisory and Chapter & Unit Development Meeting**

8:00am - 10:00am **Reunion Registration open**

9:30am - 2:30pm **AIR ZOO**

10:00am - 2:30pm **GILMORE CAR MUSEUM**

3:00pm - 6:00pm **Reunion Registration open**

3:00pm - 3:45pm **Speaker – Martin Bowman, English Author**

4:00pm - 5:00pm **Medical Advisory Seminar: *Pearls*, by Dr. Brown**

6:00pm - 7:00pm **Cash Bar Reception**

7:00pm - 9:00pm **Group Dinner & Entertainment**

Friday, July 20

7:00am - 8:30am **Continental Breakfast**

8:00am - 9:30am **Reunion Registration open**

8:00am - 9:30am **Individual Group Meetings**

9:45am - 1:45pm **AIR ZOO**

10:00am - 2:30pm **GILMORE CAR MUSEUM**

3:00pm - 5:30pm **Next Generation Meeting**

3:00pm - 6:00pm **Reunion Registration open**

4:00pm - 5:30pm **Research Seminar (break-out group from Next Generation Meeting)**

6:00pm - 7:00pm **8AFHS Cash Bar Reception**

7:00pm - **Rendezvous Dinners and 'Hangar Flying'**

Saturday, July 21

7:00am - 8:30am **Full Breakfast Buffet**

9:00am - 11:00am **General Membership Meeting**

11:30am - 4:00pm **W.K. KELLOGG MANOR HOUSE**

1:00pm - 3:30pm **Norman C. Grant Symposium: *THE BIG B***

4:00pm - 5:30pm **Heritage League Meeting**

5:30pm - 6:00pm **Reunion Registration open**

6:00pm - 7:00pm **8AFHS Cash Bar Reception**

7:00pm - **8AFHS Gala Banquet**

Sunday, July 22

7:00am - 8:30am **Continental Breakfast**

8:30am - 9:15am **Separate Protestant and Catholic Services at the hotel**

9:30am - **8AFHS Annual Board Meeting**

Please plan to be at the bus boarding area at least five minutes prior to the scheduled time.

All tours must have a minimum of thirty people, unless otherwise stated.

RADISSON PLAZA HOTEL & SUITES
KALAMAZOO, MI
269-343-3333 or 800-333-3333

The Radisson Hotel is located at 100 West Michigan Ave, Kalamazoo, MI 49007. The hotel is located in downtown Kalamazoo, close to shopping, theaters and museums. If you are driving, please call the hotel at (269)343-3333 for accurate driving instructions. The Radisson Hotel features beautifully decorated rooms, and are all equipped with a coffee maker, hair dryers, iron/board, cable TV and complimentary high speed internet access. The hotel also features the Kalamazoo Athletic Club, with pool, sauna, whirlpool and fitness equipment. Located inside the hotel are a few different shops as well.

Handicapped and non-smoking rooms are subject to availability. Please request these special accommodations when making your hotel reservation. Self-parking is being offered to all attendees at a rate of \$5 for Monday-Friday, and parking is complimentary on Saturday and Sunday of the reunion. Check-in time is after 4pm and check-out is 12 noon. **Zazios** offers a modern Italian experience for dinner only and brunch on Sundays. **Old Burdick's Bar & Grill** has a sports theme and serves lunch, dinner or drinks. **SOL World Cafe** offers buffet or a la carte breakfast and an excellent Sunday brunch. **Webster's**, a fine dining restaurant, serves dinner Monday-Saturday. Room service is also available.

The hotel offers several different types of **suites** for various purposes. The best 'hospitality' suites for units wanting to entertain their members are called the **Manhattan Suites** with separate bedrooms. This parlor offers a sitting area, dining table, along with a small kitchen with large refrigerator, sink, microwave, and stove. The sleeping room is separate. These ten suites will rent for \$149 per night (plus tax), but 8AF units must contact Donna Lee, Armed Forces Reunions, Inc. to make these reservations. DonnaLee@afri.com or 706-356-1905. For other suite requirements, please call the hotel for information, rates, and reservations.

The Radisson Plaza Hotel provides free shuttle to and from Kalamazoo/Battlecreek International Airport. Please proceed to the hotel courtesy telephone board located in the baggage claim area of the airport. You may want to consider other transportation services, as space is always limited on complimentary services.

The Radisson Plaza Hotel & Suites has parking for RVs at a parking lot close to the hotel. Should hookups be required, call American Campgrounds at 1-800-340-2267 for information, reservations, and directions. The address is 8368 West C Ave, Kalamazoo, MI 49009, and the park is approximately 13 miles from the hotel.

Should you need to rent a wheelchair for the reunion, ScootAround rents both manual and power wheel chairs by the day and week. Please call their toll free number at (888) 441-7575 for details.

Vendors, Schedules, and Prices are subject to change.

----- CUT HERE AND MAIL TO THE HOTEL -----

8th AIR FORCE HISTORICAL SOCIETY - HOTEL RESERVATION FORM

REUNION DATES: JULY 17-22, 2007

NAME _____ SHARING ROOM W/ _____
ADDRESS _____ ZIP _____
TEL. # (____) _____ FAX # (____) _____
EMAIL ADDRESS _____

ARRIVAL DAY & DATE _____ DEPARTURE DATE _____ # NIGHTS _____
OF ROOMS _____ # OF PEOPLE IN RM. _____ HANDICAP ACCESS _____ SMOKING _____ NONSMOKING _____
KING BED _____ 2 DOUBLE BEDS _____

If room type requested is not available, nearest room type will be assigned.

RATE: \$89 + state and local tax (currently 11%). Rate will be honored 3 days before and after reunion dates, based on availability. Reservations must be guaranteed by credit card (information below) or first night's deposit enclosed. For Suites, please see information above.

CUTOFF DATE: 6/15/07. Reservations received after this date will be processed on space & rate availability.

CANCELLATION POLICY: Deposit is refundable if reservation is canceled by 6pm on day of arrival. Attendee will be charged for one night's stay if cancellation is made after 6pm on expected day of arrival. Adjustments to departure date after check-in, resulting in a shortened length of stay, will result in an assessment.

RESERVATION BY PHONE: 269-343-3333. Please inform the hotel that your reservation should be under the 8th Air Force Historical Society Reunion group rates.

___ AMEX ___ DINERS ___ VISA ___ MASTER CARD ___ CARTE BLANCHE ___ DISCOVER

CREDIT CARD NUMBER _____ EXP. DATE _____

SIGNATURE (regardless of payment method) _____

Mail to: Radisson Plaza Hotel & Suites, 100 West Michigan Ave, Kalamazoo, MI 49007 Attn: Reservations

REUNION HIGHLIGHTS

CITY TOUR

Wednesday, July 18

Begin a professionally guided tour of downtown Kalamazoo's well-known landmarks and areas. You'll learn lots about the cities as you ride by Stuart Neighborhood, Pedestrian Mall, Bronson Park, and the Kalamazoo Institute of Arts. Stop at Bells Brewery for a brief tour. We'll meet in the conference room for an overview and then proceed on a short walking tour. You'll learn the sequence of events of brewing beer from grain to glass! On the way back to the hotel, buses will make a brief stop at the Taste of Kalamazoo Festival in downtown. You may eat lunch here if you want, and then walk back to the hotel. Buses will also drop off at the hotel for those wishing to return for lunch.

**9:30am board bus, 12:30pm back at hotel
\$31/Person includes bus and guide.**

**** OR ****

WINERY TOUR

Wednesday, July 18

If tasting wine is your 'cup of tea,' then join us today for a trip to Paw Paw, Michigan. Warner Winery is the second oldest winery in the state, celebrating their sixty-ninth year. They make twenty-four different types of wine, so there's sure to be one for you. You may sample several during our tasting time. At St. Julian Winery, we'll take a tour of the winery beginning with a film explaining the winery's history, where the grapes are grown, prime picking time, and how they're processed into the juices and wines. From there, we'll go through the white wine cellars, red wine cellars, the bottling line, brandy still, awards room, and end up back at the tasting room. In between, we'll have lunch at Kevin's Tavern on the River, a wonderful restaurant at Warner Winery. Lunch includes your choice of sandwich (chicken salad, roast beef, or fish) along with fries and a drink. Note: This tour is limited to the first 100 people registered.

**11:00am board bus, 2:30pm back at hotel.
\$48/Person includes bus, escort, winery tour, and lunch.**

CORNWELL'S TURKEYVILLE DINNER THEATER

Wednesday, July 18

Step right into Cornwell's Dinner Theatre, Professional Dinner Theatre at its finest. Join the group for a traditional style turkey dinner before sitting back for the show. See stars of tomorrow on their hometown stage. Tonight's show is "Nunsense, A-Men." The whacky Little Sisters of Hoboken need to raise money for burials after Sister Julia accidentally poisons 52 nuns...the solution? A musical revue, of course! With one twist - all the performers are men! An evening at Cornwell's Turkeyville Dinner Theater means laughter, food and fun all rolled into one! Note: This evening requires a minimum of 75 people, and a maximum of 150.

**5:00pm board bus, 11:00pm back at hotel
\$64/Person includes bus, escort, and dinner show.**

AIR ZOO

Thursday, July 19 and Friday, July 20

The Air Zoo has grown into the 10th largest non-government aviation museum in the nation. Celebrate the Wright brothers' first flight. Tour the International Space Station like never before. Take the controls of a military jet plane. It's all part of a multi-sensory experience aimed at submerging guests into the wonders of man-made flight. With indoor amusement rides, full-motion flight simulators, the Midwest's only 4D theatre, live character actors and a collection of over 80 rare aircraft, there's something to make everyone's time fly. The Air Zoo is home to a variety of permanent exhibits that celebrate everything from the history of flight to its inner workings. While there, enjoy a box lunch in the café area, consisting of a sandwich, fruit, chips, brownie, and beverage.

**Thursday: 9:30am board bus, 2:30pm back at hotel. Friday: 9:45am board bus, 1:45pm back at hotel.
\$55/Person includes bus, escort, box lunch, and admission.**

*** OR ***

GILMORE CAR MUSEUM

Thursday, July 19 and Friday, July 20

Rated as one of the ten best automobile museums in the United States, the Gilmore Car Museum sits on ninety landscaped acres. In restored historic barns you will find more than 175 extraordinary vehicles spanning more than 100 years of automotive heritage. Visitors will find exhibits ranging from an 1899 Locomobile to the classic Duesenberg, the elusive Tucker, the Model T and the muscle cars of the '70s. The popular gift shop offers fun memorabilia and is located in an architectural reproduction of a small town bus depot. Transportation will be available to help shuttle between areas. Enjoy a box lunch in the picnic area, consisting of a turkey and swiss sandwich, cole slaw, chips, cookie, and a beverage.

10:00am board bus, 2:30pm back at hotel

\$54/Person includes bus, escort, box lunch, and admission.

GROUP DINNER

Thursday, July 19

Spend the evening with your comrades and friends at the hotel. The buffet will feature two entrees (roast sirloin and chicken) along with side dishes & dessert. After dinner, enjoy the tunes of the Barbershop Quartet, *Four-Got to Shave*. They'll wow you with their harmony, wonderful voices, and great songs.

6:00pm Cash Bar Reception, 7:00pm Dinner and Entertainment.

Cost is included in Meal Package #1.

RENDEZVOUS DINNERS

Friday, July 20

Gather in your respective banquet rooms with your individual groups for dinner featuring a Chicken Breast w/ Madeira Sauce. Units (BGs, FGs, etc.) with approximately fifty or more people in attendance will have a private room. Smaller groups will be combined with others. Think of this as your "reunion within the reunion."

6:00pm Cash Bar Reception, 7:00pm Dinner.

Cost is included in both meal packages or \$39 separately.

W.K. KELLOGG MANOR HOUSE

Saturday, July 21

Otherwise known as Eagle Heights, the W.K. Kellogg Manor House served as the Cereal King's summer cottage beginning in 1926. The family spent many summers here enjoying the privacy and natural beauty of Gull Lake. During World War II, the estate was used as induction and training areas for the Coast Guard. Later, it was used by a hospital for rehabilitation services. Despite all of the varied uses of the Manor House, restoration began in 1998. Now, it is once again an elegant lakeside estate. On the tour of this beautiful Tudor-style home, you'll see many of the original seven bedrooms, huge living room, kitchen, dining room, breakfast room, exercise room, Billiard Room, and more. Furnishings are not original, but true to the era. The woodwork and tilework are amazing. While at the estate, enjoy a cafeteria-style lunch at the adjacent conference center. Time will also be allowed to wander around to view the lake and see the beautiful garden.

11:30am board bus, 4:00pm back at hotel

\$46/Person includes bus, escort, lunch, and admission.

SYMPOSIUM - "THE BIG B" - A Historical Study of the First Berlin Raids - March, 1944

Saturday, July 21

This fascinating Symposium will feature actual veterans who flew these historical missions; with a special emphasis on the March 6, 1944 mission when the Eighth Air Force mounted the first full-scale daylight raid on Berlin, resulting in the loss of 69 heavy bombers and 11 escort fighters. On no other single mission, before or after, would the Eighth Air Force lose more aircraft.

1:00-3:30pm at the hotel

Cost is included in your Registration Fee.

8th AIR FORCE HISTORICAL SOCIETY ANNUAL BANQUET

Saturday, July 21

Assemble in the ballroom for the Posting of the Colors and Memorial Service. Dinner will be a choice of Roasted Tenderloin of Beef or Cedar Plank Salmon and the usual accompaniments. After dinner, we'll proceed with the awards ceremony and guest speaker.

6:00pm Cash Bar Reception, 7:00pm Banquet.

Cost is included in both meal packages or \$49 separately.

Driver and guide gratuities are not included in the tour prices.

BALLOT FOR ELECTION OF OFFICERS AND BOARD MEMBERS

We are initiating a new procedure to involve more of our membership, in the election process, than those who are able to attend annual reunions. Members who have paid 2007 dues and those who are life members can vote by email or postal mail prior to the next Reunion at Kalamazoo, MI, July 17-22, 2007. The deadline for voting by email or postal mail is July 15, so we can have these ballots in hand before the Reunion. The election process will be completed during our annual business meeting at the Reunion. Members who failed to vote by email or postal mail will have an opportunity to vote during the business meeting.

The nominating committee was named by the President in the direct mail to our total membership, dated January 15, 2007. Chairman, Lewis Smith, and his committee members, James Bond and Thomas Gagnon (2nd generation member), have completed a job well done and recommend the slate of nominees in the ballot below.

----- Cut-out the ballot printed here or make a copy to email or postal mail -----
BALLOT TO SUBMIT TO ART DRISCOLL PRIOR TO JULY 15, 2007.

- ___ President -- Albert Audette from Woburn, MA.
- ___ Vice President -- Thomas E. Gagnon (2nd gen) from Sun City Center, FL.
- ___ Secretary -- John W. Hyatt from Flagstaff, AZ.
- ___ Treasurer -- Chuck Smith (2nd gen) from Alpharetta, GA.
- ___ Editor HH -- Frank X. McCawley from Cheverly, MD.
- ___ Past President -- Arthur Driscoll, Jr. from Nashville, TN.
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VOTE HERE ___ FOR THE ENTIRE SLATE, OR USE THE OPTION TO VOTE FOR ONLY THOSE YOU APPROVE, BY MAKING A CHECK MARK IN THE SPACE PROVIDED TO THE LEFT OF NOMINEES POSITION.

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Email or postal mail your ballot prior to July 15 to Arthur Driscoll, Jr., 4500 Post Rd, H-75, Nashville, TN 37205. Email address: artdriscoll@hotmail.com These ballots will be brought to the Reunion in Kalamazoo, MI, July 17-22, 2007. Be sure to pay 2007 dues prior to the Reunion so your vote will count. DONATIONS FROM LIFE MEMBERS AND OTHERS ARE ALSO WELCOMED TO HELP MEET OUR 2007 BUDGET.

MY 8TH USAAF EXPERIENCE

By Thomas Gentile

This my story about my wartime experience while stationed in England with the 8th Army Air Force.

After graduating from Aircraft Mechanic school in Amarillo, Texas with Corporal stripes, somewhat later I sailed with about 2800 other GIs to Scotland. From Scotland I went by train to England where I was assigned and transported to the airbase at Great Ashfield where the 385th Bombardment Group flying B-17s was being organized. During this time B-17 aircraft were arriving from the States on a daily basis.

The 385th Bombardment Group consisted of four flying Squadrons, the 548th, the 549th, the 550th, and the 551st, a Group Headquarters, and several support units. Initially, I was assigned to a ground crew of six men to maintain a B-17 aircraft, but as the Group obtained additional B-17s, a ground crew was reduced to three men per aircraft. I was assigned as the crew chief of my three-man group.

During my stay with the 385th Bomb Group, we ate a lot of brussel sprouts at our mess hall. While living in the tin barracks

and the war going on all around us via buzz bombs, V1s and v2s, and enemy planes strafing the field, we completed well over 200 missions. On some missions, the 8th Army Air Force scheduled and flew up to 2,000 aircraft. While celebrating the group's two hundredth mission, we were honored with a visit from General Doolittle.

The Great Ashfield airbase was about 90 miles from London. When we received a 48-hour pass (now and then), we went to London. On our visits to London, we saw the bombed out areas, the fires and the total destruction of the city. The people lived in subways (underground), and their food was severely rationed. We brought our own bedding and slept in triple deck beds. We ate a lot of "fish and chips" which were wrapped in yesterday's newspapers. Delicious!!! I visited the palace and met Queen Mary and her daughters. They wished us well.

I rode the underground which had escalators (no steps) and tile floors and ceilings. I rode the London taxis which drove on the wrong side of the road. There were many service personnel in

Piccadilly Circus. I saw "Gone With the Wind" movie many times as it was the only movie being played during the war. During blackouts, there was no smoking outside. Overall the English folks treated us well.

When the war ended in Europe, the Group had completed about 275 bombing missions. I had enough points to rotate back to the States, but rather than wait for a ship to take me home, I flew back in one of our returning B-17s. We took four days to fly back due to cloudy weather, but we eventually landed in Connecticut.

I received a 30-day leave and went back to "My Love" got married, and Honeymooned on Broadway with all the celebrating for VE Day. Returning from my leave, I was sent to New Mexico to prepare for a Pacific tour against Japan. However Japan surrendered after the atomic bomb attacks by B-29s.

The 8th Air Force Museum in Savannah, GA has a wall of Valor with our names, rank and history, and is open to the public.

Lots of Luck and Chin Up

Great Truths About Life:

No matter how hard you try, you can't baptize cats.

Never ask a 3-year old brother to hold a tomato.

You can't trust dogs to guard your food.

If your sister hits you, don't hit her back. They always catch the second person.

When your Mom is mad at your dad, don't let her brush your hair.

62 YEARS LATER

by Bill Varnedoe

Navigator, Crow's crew, 385th BG

It all started out on April 7, 1945 as a routine mission, (if any can be called routine.) Crow's crew in B-17, No. 42-107054, and Burich's crew in B-17, No. 44-8744, along with 36 other 385th BG crews were briefed to hit a RR marshaling yard at Gustrow, Germany. Crow took off at 9:25 AM and Burich followed 8 minutes later.

On assembling Crow was in the No. 5 position in the Low Squadron of the three Squadrons making up the Group, and Burich was below and behind No. 7 position, variously known as "Coffin Corner," "Purple Heart Corner," or "Tail End Charlie." They set out in the bomber stream with the 385th Group and crossed into Europe via Belgium. There were reports of light flak in the target area, and of some enemy fighter activity, which caused the Group to pack in close together for mutual protection.

Near the target area a single ME-109 made an attack on the Low Squadron from 6 o'clock. The tail gunner, Sgt. Charles J. Stewart, in Burich's crew, opened fire. Sgt. Leroy Lancaster, my tail gunner, also joined in firing at the German fighter, but the ME-109 would not break off his attack. Gunners had been trained to fire in short bursts to protect their guns. But in defiance of orders, both gunners held their triggers down and kept up a steady stream of bullets at the attacking ME-109. However, the fighter did not waver and continued straight as an arrow, hitting Burich's plane behind the No. 2 engine. This knocked the left wing off 44-8744, which immediately went straight down, disintegrating as it fell.

On the ground, an American POW, William P. Marsicano, saw the collision from a POW compound near Hanover, where about 400 American POWs had front row seats for the Allied air raids. As the Fortresses flew over the compound, the POWs saw the lone German aircraft headed for the tight B-17 formation with guns blazing. [We now know that they only saw the tracers from the tail gunners. -Ed.] They saw the fighter fly into the cluster of bombers, collide with one, and watched pieces of two aircraft fill the sky. Mr. Marsicano saw what he thought was a piece break off the B-17 and fall clear. Those on the ground watched a parachute jerk a man out of the falling part, and watched as he disappeared over the horizon.

That evening, a German guard picked six POWs to bury an American in a wooded area near the compound. When they arrived at the site, one of the POWs asked if he could pray over the body and the guard gave him permission. Preparing the body for burial, the POWs found the body was missing boots, a watch, and a ring, but were able to recover the dead airman's belt. The underside of the belt was marked with "S-3906," which confirmed the airman as Charles Stewart, ASN 33613906, the tail gunner on Burich's crew. The POWs concluded that he had survived the collision, but was killed on the ground by German civilians, who looted the body.

Both German and American records show that all ten members of Burich's crew were killed in that incident. Sgts. Stewart and

Lancaster shared ½ credit each for the ME-109 kill. In analyzing the incident, everyone thought that their gunfire had killed the German pilot causing him to ram Burich's B-17, since he did not fire his guns during the attack. The Germans were not thought to be suicidal.

The bombing of the marshaling yard at Gustrow was successful and the Group returned to Great Ashfield.

The next week, *Stars and Stripes*, the American GI Newspaper, published a picture of a B-17 with its left wing knocked off, going down on that day, April 7th. The picture looked familiar to the members of Crow's crew and I, his Navigator, wrote to the Editor asking for a copy of the picture. *Stars and Stripes* complied and I received a nice copy glossy print which I still have. This picture has appeared in several books with various identifications, but we believe it was B-17 44-8744 with the Burich crew aboard. It was certainly taken on April 7, 1945, and the left wing is clearly knocked off.

To put an odd twist to this story, in the 2002 Jane's *Battle With The Luftwaffe* by Theo Boiten and Martin Bowman published an account by a German pilot of WW II.

Fw Walter Otto was trained to fly a captured B-17 during the latter half of 1944. Several surprise commando type raids, involving KG200, as the Germans called their B-17s, were planned during the final phase of the war. The intention of one of these raid was to land several KG200s with commandos on Algerian Airfields, wrecking havoc with flame-throw-

ers among the American bombers based there and then try to take off again in the KG200 aircraft. None of these missions went ahead and Fw Otto "volunteered" for ramming duties. He was one of the few pilots to survive a successful ramming attempt during the *Rammkommando Elbe* Operation on 7 April 1945.

He is quoted, "I was given the choice of either being sent to the infantry on the Eastern Front, or to become a *rammingfighter*. I chose the latter and received further instruction on the ME-109. On April 7, 1945, I finally became operational for the ramming mission, operating from Prague Gbel airfield. Our ME-109s were fitted with an additional belly fuel tank and with an armoured front windshield, but without any guns or camouflage. With the belly tanks, we had about three and one half hours flying endurance. If I re-

member correctly, we were informed that 200 aircraft were to take part in the ramming mission, but I don't know if all the machines did in fact start on the mission. At 0900 hours, we were scrambled in the direction of Brocken, and climbed to a height of some 10,000 meters. [about 30,000 ft.] During the flight, I heard the Deutschland Song and the Horst-Wessel Song in my headphones, and we were also told to "save your Fatherland, think of your women and children." At last, at 11 o'clock, we were ordered to go ahead with the ramming mission. The four engined Fortresses came in from Belgium and were on a heading probable for a bombing attack on Stendal. [Actually, the target was nearby Gustrow.] I successfully rammed one bomber and was fortunate to bail out, coming down back to earth by parachute at

Stadthagen, near the Steinhuder Lake."

It is now believed that the parachute seen by the POWs and Sgt. Marsicano was most probably the German pilot. They could not have been able to distinguish who was parachuting or from what aircraft at a height of four miles. Looting is not proof that Sgt. Stewart was murdered on the ground by civilians. Only one parachute was seen and we now know that the German pilot parachuted and survived.

So 62 years after the incident, we discover a truth that we would never have guessed or believed!! All eye witnesses had a different story and conclusion that they thought was true, but we now find that the ramming was deliberate, and all B-17 crew members were killed in the collision and the German pilot survived.

THE MAKING OF AN ICON

Abstracted from "the Making of an Icon"

By Fredrick A. Johnson, *Air Force Magazine*,
October 2006, pp 78-81

Among World War II bombers, the B-17 Flying Fortress occupies a revered status with the B-24 Liberator a close second position. The two bombers were designed and built almost five years apart, with the B-17 making its debut in 1935 and the B-24 making its appearance in late December 1939.

Comparison wise, the B-17 was powered by four Wright Cyclone engines protruding from its large wing surface, and had split-flaps to lower the landing speed, while the B-24 was powered by four Pratt Whitney engines mounted flush to the top surface of its Davis wing. Although this

arrangement on the B-24 increased its speed over the Fortress, it also increased its landing speed, but the Liberator's increased area flaps were superior to the B-17's spit-flaps. Furthermore, the Consolidated Aircraft's B-24 Liberator had a tricycle landing gear while Boeing's B-17 Fortresses embraced the more conservative tail wheel.

The B-17 was stout and strong due to its circular fuselage and its bridge-truss wing, an exceedingly advantage for belly landings or ditching, while the Liberator seemed less durable and appeared to be constructed more for capacity than combat operations.

The debate over the merits of the two heavyweight bombers continues today. While the Liberator flew many knots faster than the Fortress, the Fortress had greater utility and survivability than the Liberator, and enjoyed a logistical advantage of less aircraft for servicing and spares. Thus the B-17 Flying Fortress was the preferred aircraft of "The Mighty Eighth."

Although the Fortress was the preferred bomber for the the Eighth AF, the first mission over Europe was made by B-24 Liberators on the Romania's Ploesti oil field on June 11, 1942, a full two months prior to a European raid

from England by B-17 Fortresses in October 1942

During the four plus years of WW II the United States produced 2,731 B-17s at three plants while five plants produced over 18,000 B-24s. Liberators operated in nine Air Forces, as well as for the Navy. The B-17s mainly operated within the 8th and 15th Air Forces. In mid 1944, 4,574 B-17s and 6,043 B-24s were operational, a difference of 1,469 aircraft.

After the war ended, a number of B-17s continued to perform for the Navy and Coast Guard as over-water patrol planes, and also as VIP transports. Today there are about twelve flyable B-17s, however, only one flyable B-24 exists.

During the war years, the press and public made the B-17 as the icon of heavy bombers through published battle damaged B-17 photographs. Holly-

wood glamorized the B-17 in a late 1938 film, "Test Pilot," starring Clark Gable and Spencer Tracy. The "Memphis Belle," the first B-17 to complete twenty five missions, was highly honored, featured in a documentary, and was on a tour with its crew in thirty two cities. Time and history will tell if the B-17 Flying Fortress will remain as the icon of heavy bombers.

THEN AND NOW

By Russell E. Barin

Reprinted from a 2003 edition of
The Flying Fortress Newsletter

In 1945 when we left the service our average age was 26 yrs. old, now it is well over 70. The heart that we left at the Stage Door Canteen doesn't beat as strongly as it did then, and "Them There Eyes", do not see polka dots and moonbeams as sharply and as clearly as they once did.

The bellbottom trousers and zoot suits wouldn't fit us anymore. The "Jersey Bounce" doesn't bounce like it use to, and being "In The Mood" sometimes just approaches the nostalgic. The fellow who "Wore A Pair of Silver Wings" and an oxygen mask is a little too wrinkled to wear either anymore. The "Chatanooga Choo Choo" is probably now Amtrak, and the Pompton Turnpike is an adjunct of I-95. It's no longer a case of being "either too young or too old", and the apple tree you wouldn't sit under is getting a little more sparse and barren every year.

"Let's Put Out The Lights and Go To Sleep" is now a mere statement of fact rather than the title of a song. "Gertie from Bizerte" has not had a marketable product to sell for many, many years now, and "Sweet Sue", "Linda", "Marie", and "Rosie the Riveter" are probably grandmothers or great-grandmothers by now. The fellow who had "spurs that jingled and jangled" probably has traded them in for a golf cart.

"Do Not Worry" (the song) now probably refers to living on our retirement income and hoping the old car will hold out for a few more years.

We sometime realize that in our heart we really didn't leave our hearts at the Stage Door Canteen...in our hearts we took the Stage Door Canteen with us. We all have our private, bittersweet, and sentimental memories of our own Stage Door Canteen across the five continents and seven

seas, and once in a while, like a hitch-hiking thistle, a song, a sound, a picture or an expression will prod our innermost memories, and evoke a smile or a sigh, and maybe an occasional tear. That was all a long, long time ago, but it intrudes on our thoughts clearly through the mists of years. Sometimes, when we think back upon the friendships, the spirit and the concerns for one another, our heartbeats pick up—that "Jersey Bounce", for a fleeting second or so, comes vibrantly back, and we remember.

We remember simply because we cannot forget, and simply because we do not want to forget—ever. Till the last sunset we see, till the last breath we draw, we shall remember.

Editor's Note: I can remember those days, and I am sure that every Marine, every Soldier, every Seaman, every Airman, and, Yes, every 385th BG veteran can remember those wonderful days.

LETTERS/E-MAILS

From: James Rea <jrea@nemontel.net>
To: Tom Newton <Tjnewton25@aol.com>, Bill Varnedoe <billvar@comcast.net>

It has taken eight years...but the Lewistown AAF MD sign is up. It's sited along Highway 87 at the Kiwanis Park on the north edge of the field. The field and AAF buildings are clearly visible from the sign. The LAFF has been added to the National Register of Historic Places...and there are NPS site/district signs on the buildings as well. Thanks for your gracious assistance.

Jar

From: Bill Varnedoe <billvar@comcast.net>
To: McCawley, Frank <fxmccawley@aol.com>
Subj: Lewistown AAF MDT
Nov. 11, 2006

LEWISTOWN ARMY AIR FIELD 1942-1943

At this airfield, US Army Air Corps airmen trained to fly and fight with the Boeing B-17 Flying Fortress during the darkest days of WWII. Heavy bomber crews completed final proficiency phase training here before being assigned to aerial combat in Europe and North Africa. The combat squadrons polished the vital important skills of formation flying, precision bombing with the top secret Norden bombsight, aerial gunnery and navigation.

RE: Luxemburg
From: rofeller@pt.lu (Roger Feller)
To: artdriscoll@hotmail.com
26 Jan 2007

Sir:
Sorry for writing earlier. I lost all my email addresses when my computer went down. I hope all is going well and you had a good start in the new year.
We edited a new home page for the 385th BG. The address is www.385bg.com <<http://www.385bg.com>>
Please inform all your friends and members of the 385th.
Thank you for your help.
Roger

From: artdriscoll@hotmail.com
To: rofeller@pt.lu
CC: fxmccawley@aol.com
28 Jan 2007

Roger,
Glad to hear from you. I also had trouble with email because my monitor went out and had to be replaced. Hope the New Year is going well for you.

Note that I sent cc this email to editor of Hardlife Herald, Frank McCawley, to inform the 385th membership that you have edited a new home page for the 385th BG with addresses shown in your message.

We continue to appreciate your services on our behalf and are always grateful for your personal support and all you do for the 385th BGA at the Museum and when we bring our groups to Perle. Our next Reunion in the USA will be held in Kalamazoo, Michigan, July 17-22, 2007. Information will be sent to you under separate cover. Hope you and others will be able to meet with us so plan a trip to the USA during that period of time.

Best regards to you and Jenny. Also greetings to Mayor Unsen and Maizie.

Art

LETTERS/E-MAILS

From: Guy de la Bedoyere <guy@romanbritain.freemove.co.uk>
To: Bill Varnedoe <billvar@comcast.net>
Subject: Correct serial (identification)
January 2007

Dear Bill,
Hi from England again. I wonder if you can help me identify a B-17 part. This was given to me about nine years ago but I only got around to cleaning it at the weekend. It comes from the 385th Pease ship B-17G 42-97363, crashed 21 Feb. 1944, and is clearly some sort of roller device. I was told it was something to do with the machine gun feed, but I have been completely unable to find any picture or diagram to confirm this. Do you know what it is? I'd be very relieved to know. The picture is attached.

Best wishes,
Guy

Guy wrote:
Sorry Bill. That serial should have read: 42-37963.
Cheers!
Guy

From: Bill Varnedoe
To: Guy de la Bedoyere
Cc: Frank McCawley fxmccawley@aol.com>
Jan. 2, 2007

Guy,
I can tell you that B-17 was named "Sleepytime Gal." It crashed after a mid air collision. The crew was the Pease crew.
I do not recognize that part, but I was a navigator, not a gunner. I never went through gunnery school. I suggest we put those pictures in the Hardlife Herald, and ask if anyone can recognize what it is.
I'll send a copy of this e-mail with pictures of the "thing" to the editor. Since it seems to have been motorized, could it have been the reel for the trailing wire antenna?
Bill

LETTERS/E-MAILS

From: Guy
To: Bill
Jan. 2, 2007

Hi Bill,

Thanks for the pictures. Wow! I attended the dig which excavated remains of the ship and it was amazing to see the wreck. That explains why not much found at the site. I have the Norden bomb sight mount and some other bits and pieces.

Yes, do publish the picture. I would like to know what it is. The outer skin with the holes is definitely part of the same appliance (rather than being part of the barrel), since the roller unit with bearings was rusted inside and fits exactly. The outer skin is exactly the same height as the shell casing of a 0.50 bullet at 3 7/8".

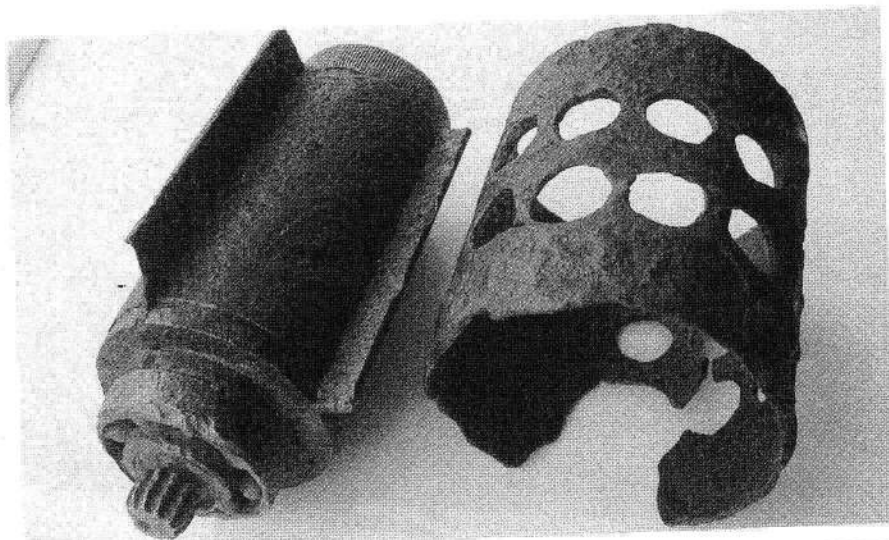
Best wishes,
Guy

From: fxmccawley@aol.com <Frank McCawley>
To: guy@romanbritain.freemove.co.uk
CC: billvar@comcast.net

Guy,

I am unable to identify the objects, however, I will place the picture of them in the next issue of the Hardlife Herald. As a radio operator gunner, my only gunnery training was a short two week course attempting to learn how to fire a .50 caliber gun at the "Wash" on the shore of the North Sea. I did not receive any training on the mechanics of the gun. I do remember that the Wash was the coldest place that I visited. I slept in my clothes with about eight blankets covering me, and I was still cold. I remember the following incident during my gunnery training. One day while learning to shoot at a moving target, a rabbit hopped across the field between the target and approximately ten of us trainees. All of us trained our guns at the rabbit, and fired at "that moving target." As the bullets hit the ground, the field clouded over with dust. When the dust cleared, the rabbit hopped off the field unharmed.

Frank



LETTERS/E-MAILS

From: guy@romanbritain.freemove.co.uk
To: fxmccawley@aol.com
CC: billvar@comcast.net

Hi Frank,
Thanks for the info. Well, perhaps one day we will find out what it is. The outer casing with perforations is exactly the same height as a .50 shell casing so I think it must have something to do with the Browning guns. The crossed plates were mobile originally, and were clearly designed to be able to move back and forth past each other. I think they have corroded into the position they are now from the force of the impact. I have complete B-17 technical notes and I cannot find it anywhere. But there is no doubt that it came from a B-17.

I have attached a picture of The Wash for you which I took on New Years' Day. The view is SE from the Lincolnshire coast, about 30 miles from my home. The Norfolk coastline is just discernible on the far left (east) horizon. The Wash is a large marshy bay on the English coast. It is as cold now as it ever was!! Plenty of 8th and RAF ships put down there as they ran out of gas on the way back from long missions.

Best wishes,
Guy

Editor's note: Anyone who can identify the "thing", contact Guy de la Bedoyere at guy@romanbritain.freemove.co.uk.



Taps

William A. Nicholls – Atco, NJ. – Eighth President of the 385th Bomb Group Memorial Association, 1985 – 1987, passed away December 23, 2006 at age 87. In 1997, he hosted the association reunion in Philadelphia. Bill was a Bombardier with the 385th BG, and on his 20th bombing mission, December 11, 1943, his aircraft was shot down over occupied Holland. As a POW, he spent 17 1/2 months in Stalag Luft 1, near Barth, Germany, and attempted escape twice before being freed in 1945. Later he continued to serve in the Air Force Reserve for an additional 20 years, and retired as a Major. Following the war, Bill co-managed his family's food distribution business in Westfield, NJ until his retirement in 1983. Bill is survived by his wife, Doris, five children, nine grandchildren and five great-grandchildren.

by Doris E. Nicholls, Wife

Robert E. "Andy" Andrews – Gainesville, GA – died April 18, 2005. S/Sgt. Andrews was stationed at Great Ashfield in the 548th Bomb Squadron, and completed 34 missions, including two on D-Day. Andy was a tailgunner earning the Distinguished Flying Cross and the Air Medal with 4 Oakleaf Clusters. Upon completion of his service with the AAC, he became an attorney and was a practicing Trial Lawyer for over fifty years. He served with distinction in both the Georgia House of Representatives and the Georgia State Senate. He was a devoted, loving and proud husband and father. He was also my best friend.

By Robert E. Andrews, Jr., Son

Merland "Chick" Belden – Eden Prairie, MN – 385th Bomb Group, Flight engineer on Perry's Pirates.

Eighth AF News, Vol. 7 No.1 March 2007

Paul Rudloff – Ft. Walton Beach, FL – 385th copilot and pilot; his third mission was the Regensburg shuttle to North Africa.

Eighth AF News, Vol. 7 No.1 March 2007

Francis Coughenour – died May 1990 – 385th Bomb Group Photographer. Flew many missions with group and took many Ariel photos of European cities.

By Brent Coughenour, Son



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April 2007

385th BGA

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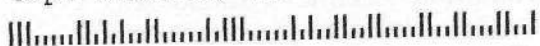
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April 2007