

Hardlife



Herald



Newsletter of the  
385th Bombardment Group Association

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

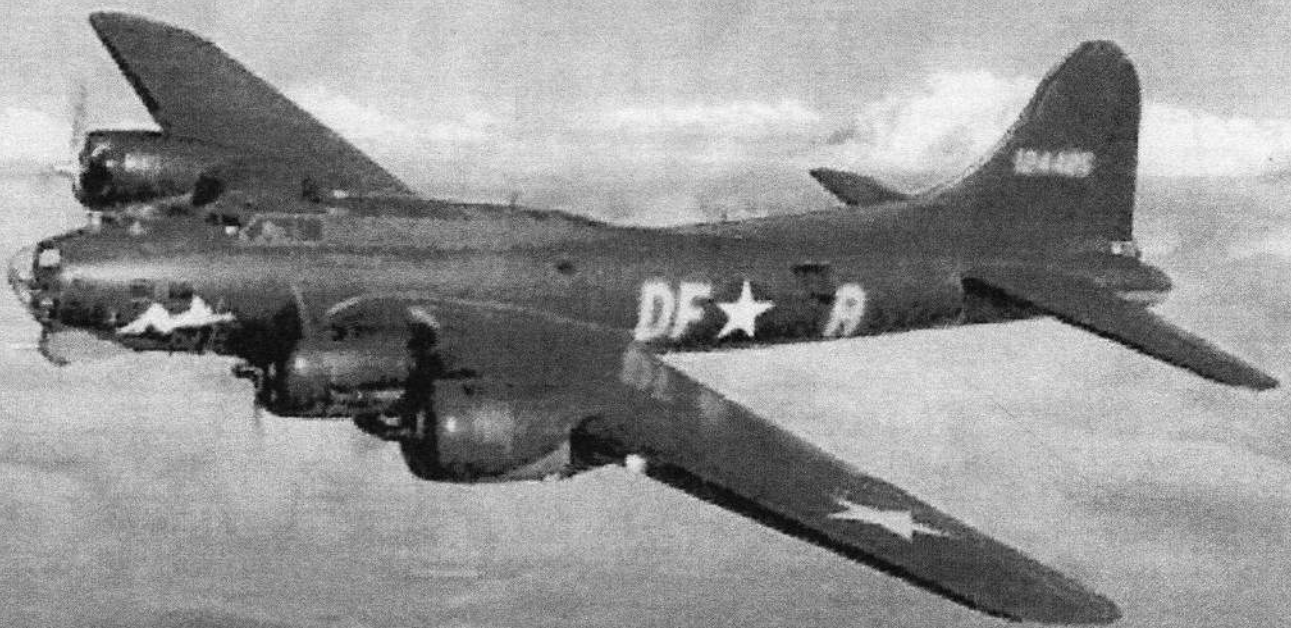
*The Mighty Eighth*

VOL 27. NUMBER 1

APRIL 2010

Dedicated to:

Those who supported her; Those who fixed her;  
Those who flew in her; Those who loved her!



**385TH BGA REUNION • CHARLESTON, SC • OCTOBER 11-15, 2010**

# Hardlife Herald

385th Bombardment Group (H)

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*Earl Cole	'87-'89	*Art Driscoll, Jr.	'05-'07

Albert A. Audette '07-'09

\*deceased

## Honorary Members

Roger Feller Eldon Nysether Mayor Ferdinand Unsen

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## FRONT COVER

The Plane We All Love.

## EDITORIAL

After this past Winter, I look forward to a pleasant Spring. At my home, outside Washington, it was a record-breaking snowy winter. I am sure that many of you in the other areas of the country also had record-breaking cold and wintery weather.

Our drive for donations to the 8th Air Force Museum in Savannah, GA for the restoration of the B-17 was a great success. We, the 385th Bombardment Group Association members, contributed \$3,465 to the B-17 restoration project. The Association matched that figure and the overall monies donated to the Museum was \$6,930. I believe that we should all be proud to help in the restoration of the number one aircraft of WWII. But, let us not stop in assisting in the restoration of the "City of Savannah." We only need \$1,535 from the members, and with matching monies from the Association we would reach \$10,000 for the restoration project. Send those checks made out to the 385th BGA and marked 'Museum' to Chuck Smith; P.O. Box 329; Alpharetta, GA 30009-0329.

In the last issue of the *Hardlife Herald*, it was reported that the 385th BGA would hold its 2010 Reunion July 19-23, 2010 in Tucson, AZ in conjunction with the 8th Air Force Historical Society. After receiving numerous concerns about the place and date of the 8th Air Force Historical Society Reunion, your Board chose to plan a separate 385th BGA Reunion October 11-15, 2010 in Charleston, SC. Details of tours and hotel are listed in this issue. Final details will be listed in a future issue.

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# PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

By the time you read this, Spring should be pretty well established in most areas of the country, a welcome occurrence, I am sure. Spring is a time of rebirth and renewal... a time when we often look forward to coming events. Well, we have events to look forward to. A small, but intrepid group of souls is planning to venture to Jolly Old England again to visit London, Great Ashfield and other sites in East Anglia, followed by a trip across the Channel to Luxembourg to visit the 385th Bomb Group Memorial and Museum in Perle. En route to Perle, we will visit the Normandy Beaches and Museum. If you are interested in joining us and have not already signed up, please let me know as soon as possible. We are departing the last week of June, 2010 so time is short. Also on the docket is our reunion in Charleston, S.C. October 11-15. There is an abundance of information on this event elsewhere in this issue, but let me give you a little background. A number of our members expressed concern over the summertime 8th AFHS reunion in Tucson, expecting the heat to be oppressive. Reacting to these concerns, your Board asked me to develop alternatives. Accordingly, we are joining with the 96th Bomb group for a joint reunion in Charleston in the Fall. I hope to see you there!

Tom Gagnon, President 385th BG, 8th Air Force

## THE 385TH BOMBARDMENT GROUP (H)

Sixty-seven years ago, February 1, 1943, the 385th Bombardment Group (H) was activated at Geiger Field, Washington. By the end of March, the Group had received its full complement of B-17s and personnel, and on June 11 the Group received Special Orders 120, Kearney Field, Nebraska, to begin movement to Great Ashfield, England via Bangor, Maine. On June 19, the Group consisting of the 548th (Blue), the 549th (Yellow), the 550th (Red) and the 551st (Green) Bombardment Squadrons plus the Headquarters (White) Squadron arrived at Great Ashfield. Supporting the 385th BG was the 424th Base Services Squadron composed of sections as the Transportation, Medical, Quartermaster, Military Police, Fire Fighting, Finance, etc.

On July 17th, the Group under the leadership of the Group CO, Lt. Col. Elliot Vandevanter, flew its first combat mission to Amsterdam. From July 17, 1943 to April 20, 1945, the 385th BG flew 296 combat missions consisting of 8,265 sorties and dropped 18,494 tons of bombs. During that period, the Group lost 609 Officers and 843 enlisted personnel for a total of 1412 crewmen due to enemy action. Of these, 231 were killed in action, 458 became POWs, and 13 were interned. More than 1450 men completed their tour of combat.

The 385th BG lost 129 aircraft in combat and

another 40 were lost in other activities such as ground accidents and training or administrative flights. Records indicate that the 385th BG airmen accounted for 287 enemy aircraft destroyed, some 80 probables, and 90 aircraft damaged.

During May 1945, the 385th BG participated in Operation Mana with the dropping of food to the people of Holland. They also completed several missions from Lintz, Austria to France bring home French POWs and DPs. It was during Operation Mana that the 385th BG became the last Group in the 8th Army Air Force (The Mighty Eighth) to be fired upon in WWII. Despite a truce, during the food missions, a German ground battery fired at one of our B-17's and it sustained minor damage. Thus it is considered to be Group mission No. 297.

Beginning on June 18, 1945, the 385th BG began flying 72 B-17's with crews and the ground personnel as passengers back to Bradley Field, Connecticut USA. In August 1945, the 385th Bombardment Group (H) was deactivated after existing for a period of 2 years, 6 months. In 1963 the 385th Group with the same four Squadrons was reactivated for a short time as an Atlas Missile Wing.

Note: Abstracted from articles by John C. Ford, Paul Schultz, Forrest V. Poore and William Varnedoe.

## AND THE CHECKLIST WAS BORN

On October 30, 1935, at Wright Air Field in Dayton, Ohio, the U.S. Army Air Corps held flight competition for aircraft manufacturers vying to build its next-generation long-range bomber. It wasn't supposed to be much of a competition. In early evaluations, the Boeing Corporation's gleaming aluminum-alloy Model 299 had trounced the designs of Martin and Douglas. Boeing's plane could carry five times as many bombs as the Army had requested, could fly faster than previous bombers, and almost twice as far.

A Seattle newspaperman who had glimpsed the plane called it the "Flying Fortress," and the name stuck.

The flight "competition," according to the military historian, Phillip Meilinger, was regarded as a mere formality. The Army planned to order at least sixty-five of the aircraft.

A small crowd of Army brass and manufacturing executives watched as the Model 299 test plane taxied onto the runway. It was sleek and impressive, with a hundred and three-foot wingspan, and four engines jutting out from the wings, rather than the usual two, the report said. The plane roared down the tarmac, lifted off smoothly and climbed sharply to 300 feet. Then it stalled, turned on one wing and crashed in a fiery explosion. Two of the five crew mem-

bers died, including the pilot, Major Ployer P. Hill (thus Hill AFB, Ogden, UT).

An investigation revealed that nothing mechanical had gone wrong. The crash had been due to "pilot error," the report said. Substantially more complex than previous aircraft, the new plane required the pilot to attend to the four engines, a retractable landing gear, new wing flaps, electric trim tabs that needed adjustment to maintain control at different airspeeds, and constant-speed propellers whose pitch had to be regulated with hydraulic controls, along with several other features.

While doing all of these actions, Major Hill had forgotten to release a new locking mechanism on the elevator and rudder controls. The Boeing model was deemed, as a newspaper put it, "too much airplane for one man to fly." The Army Air Corps declared Douglas's smaller design the winner. Boeing nearly went bankrupt.

Still, the Army purchased a few aircraft from Boeing as test planes, and some insiders remained convinced that the aircraft was flyable. So a group of test pilots met together and considered what to do. They could have required that Model 299 pilots to undergo more training. But it was hard to imagine having a more experienced and expertise than Major Hill, who had been the U. S. Army Air Corps' Chief of Flight Testing.



Boeing Corporation's Model 299.



**Crash of Boeing Corporation's Model 299.**

Instead, they come up with an ingeniously simple approach: they created a pilot's checklist, with step-by-step checks for takeoff, flight, landing, and taxiing. Its mere existence indicated how far aeronautics had advanced.

In the early years of flight, getting an aircraft into the air might have been nerve-racking, but it was

hardly complex. Using a checklist for takeoff would no more have occurred to a pilot than to a driver backing a car out of the garage. But this new plane was too complicated to be left to the memory of any pilot, however expert.

With the checklist in hand, pilots went on to fly the Model 299 a total of 18 million miles without an accident.

The Army ultimately ordered almost thirteen thousand of the aircraft, which it dubbed the "B-17." Because flying the behemoth was now possible, the Army gained a decisive air advantage in WWII which enabled it to maintain a devastating bombing campaign across Nazi Germany.

Reference: <http://www.atchistory.org/History/checklist.htm>

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Both liberty and property are insecure, unless the possessors have the sense and spirit to defend them.

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## JOINT REUNION OF THE 96TH AND 385TH BOMB GROUPS OCTOBER 11–15, 2010 • SHERATON NORTH CHARLESTON, SC

Monday, October 11	
2:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m.	<b>Reunion Registration open</b>
2:00 p.m.	Hospitality rooms open through Thursday night (exact hours tbd) Evening and Dinner on your own
Tuesday, October 12	
8:00 a.m. – 8:30 a.m.	<b>Reunion Registration open</b>
9:00 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.	CITY TOUR (description follows)
3:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.	<b>Reunion Registration open.</b> Additional hours will be posted at the registration desk if needed
6:00 p.m. – 10:30 p.m.	DINNER CRUISE (description follows)
Wednesday, October 13	
8:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.	MIGHTY EIGHTH AIR FORCE MUSEUM (description follows)
6:00 p.m. – 10:00 p.m.	Cash Bar Reception
7:00 p.m. – 10:00 p.m.	Joint Banquet with entertainment
Thursday, October 14	
9:00 a.m. – 10:00 a.m.	Separate Bomb Group Business Meetings
10:15 a.m. – 11:15 a.m.	Presentation: "Advances in Remotely-Piloted Aircraft"
1:30 p.m. – 4:30 p.m.	PATRIOTS POINT (description follows)
6:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.	Cash Bar Reception
7:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.	Separate Bomb Group Dinners
Friday, October 15	Farewells and Departures

### CANCELLATION AND REFUND POLICY FOR ARMED FORCES REUNIONS, INC.

For attendees canceling reunion activities prior to the cut-off date, Armed Forces Reunions, Inc. (AFR) shall process a full refund less \$10 per person cancellation fee. Attendees cancelling reunion activities after the cut-off date will be refunded to the fullest extent that AFR's vendor commitments and guarantees will allow, less the \$10 cancellation fee. Cancellations will only be taken Monday through Friday from 9:00 a.m. until 5:00 p.m. Eastern Standard Time, excluding holidays. Please call (757) 625-6401 to cancel reunion activities and obtain a cancellation code. Refunds processed 4–6 weeks after reunion. Canceling your hotel reservation does not cancel your reunion activities. Each must be cancelled separately.

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

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

All tours, unless otherwise stated, require a minimum of thirty-five people.

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## 96TH AND 385TH BOMB GROUPS REUNION TOUR DESCRIPTIONS

### **CITY TOUR – Tuesday, October 12**

Begin the day with a two-hour guided tour of the Holy City, named for its many picturesque churches. Favorite sites include the Battery overlooking Charleston's harbor and Fort Sumter, colorful Rainbow Row, the Citadel, and White Point Gardens. Arrive for lunch and shopping on your own in the Market Area, Charleston's historic marketplace surrounded by restaurants, eateries, and shops of all types.

9:00 a.m. board bus, 1:30 p.m. back at hotel.

\$35/person includes bus, guide, and historic area admission. Lunch on your own.

### **DINNER CRUISE – Tuesday, October 12**

Come discover the history, beauty and fun of cruising Charleston Harbor while having dinner aboard the Spirit of Carolina. The evening will consist of great food, entertainment, and fun under the stars as you cruise Charleston's historic harbor. Enjoy a classic four-course dinner starting with the Traditional Charleston She-Crab Soup, Spirit Line Salad, and a choice of five different entrees which could include Grilled Beef Tenderloin, Honey Bourbon Glazed Stuffed Chicken, Fresh Fish Selected, Carolina Crab Cakes, or Lowcountry Shrimp and Grits all served with chef's choice of accompaniments, beverage, and house dessert. (Vegetarian, Vegan, and diabetic selections are available. The menu changes seasonally.)

6:00 p.m. board bus, 10:30 p.m. back at hotel

\$82/person includes bus, escort, and dinner cruise

### **MIGHTY EIGHTH AIR FORCE MUSEUM – Wednesday, October 13**

The Mighty Eighth Air Force Heritage Museum was created to build, maintain, and operate into perpetuity a living memorial to the men and women who served with the United States 'Mighty Eighth' Air Force. It consists of a nationally recognized museum and historical repository, where serious study and casual informational research may be performed by the general public using the museum's database. The museum accurately displays, exhibits, and portrays the sacrifices, daily activities, and accomplishments of all segments of the 'Mighty Eighth' Air Force team. Spend the day enjoying one of the world's most powerful museum experiences. With vintage aircraft, artifacts, photographs, the thrilling 'Mission Experience,' and personal stories, this museum has it all. Lunch includes a hot buffet with two entrees. The ride will be approximately two hours in our comfortable, air conditioned, restroom-equipped coaches.

NOTE: If you are a member of the museum, please show your membership card at reunion registration for a refund of the admission price.

8:00 a.m. board bus, 4:30 p.m. back at hotel

\$64/person includes bus, escort, lunch, and admission.

### **PATRIOTS POINT – Thursday, October 14**

After lunch on your own, spend the afternoon touring Patriots Point, home of the largest naval and maritime museum in the world. Visit the carrier *USS Yorktown*, the submarine *Clamagore*, and a replica of the Vietnam Support base. Priceless war planes used during wars and conflicts spanning from WWII to Desert Storm are featured aboard the Yorktown's 40,000 square foot hangar bay and atop the 888 foot flight deck. Patriots Point is also the home of the Congressional Medal of Honor Society and their official Medal of Honor Museum with tons of interactive exhibits.

1:30 p.m. board bus, 4:40 p.m. back at hotel

\$41/person includes bus, escort, and admission.

**SHERATON CHARLESTON AIRPORT HOTEL – CHARLESTON, SC**  
**(800) 325-3535 (843) 747-1900**

The Sheraton Charleston Airport Hotel is conveniently located at 4770 Goer Drive, N. Charleston, SC 29406, strategically located near the historic downtown district and the Charleston International Airport. The hotel is approximately 3 miles from the Charleston International Airport. If you are driving, please call the hotel directly for accurate driving instructions or if you are flying in, please note that the hotel shuttle runs every 20 minutes. You may contact the hotel upon arrival at 843-747-1900. This hotel offers 289 spacious rooms. Each room features a coffee/tea maker, iron/ironing board, hairdryer, microwave, and free wireless high speed internet access. Recreation enthusiasts will enjoy an indoor/outdoor heated pool, fitness facility and golf courses nearby. The Sheraton Charleston Airport is a non-smoking hotel. Handicapped rooms are subject to availability. Please request these special accommodations when making your hotel reservations.

The hotel provides complimentary parking for its guests. Check-in time is 3:00pm; check-out time is 12:00pm. **Monikers**, open 6:30am-2:00pm and 5:00pm-10:00pm, features a hearty full breakfast and lunch buffet everyday with á la carte dining available as well. **Bogies Bar**, open 4:00pm-11:00pm, offers American cuisine and local favorites. Enjoy your favorite libations in a fun and inviting pub atmosphere.

The Sheraton Charleston Airport offers complimentary airport shuttle service to and from the Charleston International Airport. The shuttle runs every 20 minutes on the hour to and from the airport. Please call (843) 747-1900 upon arrival then wait by taxi/shuttle stands outside of baggage claim for the shuttle to arrive. Space is limited on complimentary services, so you may want to make other arrangements. The hotel shuttle takes all guests to and from the Tanger Outlet area, if desired. The hotel also provides a complimentary shuttle service to & from Downtown Charleston for SPG members. You may sign up upon check in. The 11 passenger seat van runs 4 times a day.

The hotel offers complimentary RV parking for guests staying at the hotel. Should you need full hook-ups contact the Charleston KOA Campground at (843) 797-1045 or (800) 562-5812. They are located at 9494 Highway 78, Ladson, SC 29456, which is approximately 11 miles from the hotel. Make your reservations as soon as possible due to limited space and availability.

Should you need to rent a wheelchair for the reunion, ScootAround rents both manual and power wheelchairs by the day and week. Please call their toll free number at (888) 441-7575 for details. All prices quoted include delivery fees.

**Vendors, Schedules, and Prices are subject to change.**

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

**96<sup>th</sup> & 385<sup>th</sup> JOINT BOMB GROUP REUNION - HOTEL RESERVATION FORM**  
**REUNION DATES: OCTOBER 11-15, 2010**

NAME \_\_\_\_\_ SHARING ROOM W/ \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

TEL. NUMBER (\_\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ STARWOOD PREFERRED GUEST # \_\_\_\_\_

ARRIVAL DATE \_\_\_\_\_ APPROX. TIME \_\_\_\_\_ DEP. DATE \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ # OF ROOMS NEEDED \_\_\_\_\_ # OF PEOPLE IN ROOM \_\_\_\_\_ HANDICAP ACCESS  
\_\_\_\_\_ KING BED \_\_\_\_\_ 2 DOUBLE BEDS

In the event room type requested is not available, nearest room type will be assigned.

**RATE:** \$109 + tax (currently 12.5%) Rate includes breakfast buffet. Rate will also be offered 3 days before and after reunion dates, based on availability.

**CUT OFF DATE:** 09/09/10. Late reservations will be processed based on space availability at a higher rate.

**CANCELLATION POLICY:** Deposit is refundable if reservation is canceled 72 hours prior to arrival.

All reservations must be guaranteed by credit card or first night's deposit, enclosed.

\_\_\_\_\_ AMEX \_\_\_\_\_ DINERS \_\_\_\_\_ VISA \_\_\_\_\_ MASTER CARD \_\_\_\_\_ DISCOVER

CREDIT CARD NUMBER \_\_\_\_\_ EXP. DATE \_\_\_\_\_

SIGNATURE (regardless of payment method) \_\_\_\_\_

**MAIL TO:**

**SHERATON CHARLESTON AIRPORT HOTEL \* 4770 GOER DRIVE \* N. CHARLESTON, SC 29406**  
**FAX TO: (843) 744-2826 \* ATTN: RESERVATIONS**



# ANOTHER B-17 THAT CAME HOME

The following *Stars and Stripes* 1944 article was transcribed from the 398th Bomb Group Historical Microfilm.

Note: Due to wartime security, Nuthampstead (home base of the 398th BG) is not mentioned in the article.

## TO: STARS AND STRIPES FOR GENERAL RELEASE AN EIGHTH AIR FORCE BOMBER STATION, ENGLAND -

After literally losing the nose of his B-17 Flying Fortress as a result of a direct hit by flak over Cologne, Germany on October 15, 1944, 1st Lt. Lawrence M. deLancey, 25, of Corvallis, OR returned to England and landed the crew safely at his home base. Each man walked away from the plane except the togglier, S/ Sgt. George E. Abbott, Mt. Lebanon, PA, who was killed instantly when the flak struck.

It was only the combined skill of Lt. deLancey and 2nd Lt. Raymond J. LeDoux, of Mt. Angel, OR, Navigator, that enabled the plane and crew to return safely.

"Just after we dropped our bombs and started to turn away from the target", Lt. deLancey explained, "a flak burst hit directly in the nose and blew practically the entire nose section to threads. Part of the nose peeled back and obstructed my vision and that of my co-pilot, 1st Lt. Phillip H. Stahlman of Shippenville, PA. What little there was left in front of me looked like a scrap heap. The wind was rushing through. Our feet were exposed to the open air at nearly 30,000 feet above the ground. The temperature was unbearable."

"There we were in a heavily defended flak area with no nose, and practically no instruments. The instrument panel was bent toward me as a result of the impact. My altimeter and magnetic compass were about the only instruments still operating and I couldn't depend on their accuracy too well. Naturally,

I headed for home immediately. The hit which had killed S/Sgt. Abbott also knocked out Lt. LeDoux back in the catwalk (just below where I was sitting). Our oxygen system also was knocked out so I descended to a safe altitude."

"Lt. LeDoux who had lost his instruments and maps in the nose

**"Just after we dropped our bombs and started to turn away from the target, a flak burst hit directly in the nose and blew practically the entire nose section to threads."**



1st Lt. Lawrence deLancey's crippled B-17 at Nuthampstead.

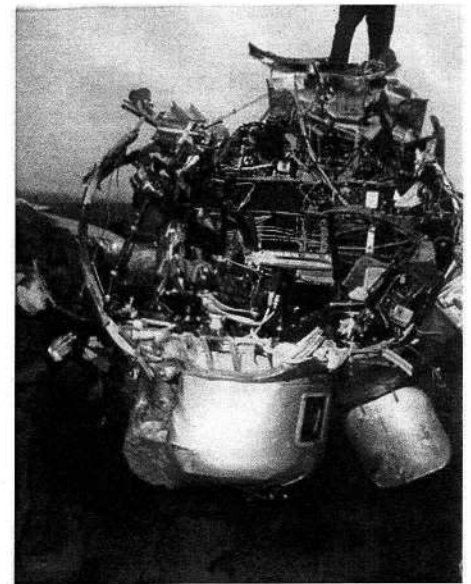
did a superb piece of navigating to even find England."

During the route home flak was again encountered but due to evasive action Lt. deLancey was able to return to friendly territory. Lt. LeDoux navigated the ship directly to his home field.

Although the plane was off balance without any nose section, without brakes (there was no hydraulic pressure left), and with obstructed vision, Lt. deLancey made a beautiful landing to the complete amazement of all personnel at this field who are still wondering how the feat was accomplished.

Other members of the crew include: T/Sgt. Benjamin H. Ruckel, CA, engineer top turret gunner; T/Sgt. Wendell A. Reed, Shelby, MI, radio operator gunner; T/Sgt. Russell A. Lackman, Rockport, MA, waist gunner; S/Sgt. Albert Albro, Antioch, CA, ball turret gunner; and S/Sgt Herbert D. Guild, Bronx, NY, tail gunner.

Originally printed in *398th Bomb Group Remembrances* by Allen Ostrom, pages 45-46, published 1989. Transcribed September 2003 by Lee Anne Bradley, 398th Bomb Group Historian.



Nose View of deLancey's crippled B-17 at Nuthampstead, October 15, 1944.

## RESTORATION PROJECT UPDATE



Work continues on the very difficult, time-consuming, and monotonous job of cleaning the underside of the wings on the aircraft. This final exterior cleaning chore has been—we thought—close to being finished on two occasions. Both declarations of victory were premature, as rapid progress down the wings has been stifled by

real challenges on the wing tips.

The goal of our restoration is to have the B-17, "City of Savannah" restored to its original factory condition. You can be part of history and the Museum's B-17 Project. The Museum appreciates all financial gifts, and for \$100 or more you will receive a certificate of participation, suitable for framing, which

recognizes your part in this historic Museum event.

Please make checks payable to "B-17 Project" and mail to: Mighty Eighth Air Force Museum P.O. Box 1992 Savannah, GA 31402

If you would like to make a donation by credit card, please call Tameka Ford at 912.748.8888 ext. 101.



## THUNDER OVER MICHIGAN

### The Last Great Gathering of Fortresses and Legends

From August 5 thru 8, 2010, the Willow Run Air Show, located outside Detroit, MI, organizers are expecting 8 to 10 B-17s, 2 B-24s, 12 P-51s and other WWII aircraft to be on display, as well as a flying ME-262 and an ME-109. This unprecedented event will be a once in a lifetime opportunity to see an air show like no other.

The 8th Air Force Historical Society (AFHS) is a sponsor of the event and will be hosting veterans, family members and their guests. Attendees registered with the 8th AFHS

and staying at their hotel, within their room block, will have preferential coach transportation to and from a private tented seating and viewing area, as well as free access to several of the B-17s offering "walk thru." The AFHS admission price will include lunch, transportation, center seating area, a large buffet "Welcome" dinner Friday, a lunch and dinner at the Air Show on Saturday, and a Gala Banquet Sunday evening. A fully stocked 8th AFHS communal hospitality room will be available.

The host hotel is the Crowne Plaza, Detroit Metro Airport with a room rate of \$89+ tax per night. The hotel has complimentary airport shuttle, and free parking.

For additional information, see your 8th Air Force News Magazine, the Society web site ([www.8thafhs.org](http://www.8thafhs.org)), or call Tom Gagnon at 813-394-0338.

Excerpted from the March, 2010 8th Air Force Magazine

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Life is short!

Break the rules! Forgive quickly!

Kiss slowly! Love truly! Laugh uncontrollably.

And never regret anything that made you smile.

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# ONLY A TRUCK DRIVER

by Marty Girson

A few years ago while touring the Southwest I looked up a friend who was also in the 385th Bomb Group. I asked him why he never attended any of the 385th BGA reunions. He replied, "He was only a truck driver." I explained to him that without truck drivers no airplanes would fly. The drivers were a very essential part of the Army Air Corps.

The truck drivers delivered the fuel to each and every bomber on their hard stands on the base. They delivered the oxygen, replenished the ammunition and the repair parts that may have been damaged on a mission. They brought the bombs to the bomb dump, and to the airplanes. They delivered food to each of the mess halls. And they took all base

personnel both to and from their respective mess halls. They delivered the fuel for the cooks to cook the food. They also delivered the coal to the wash rooms and bath houses to heat the water for showers and washing.

Furthermore, the drivers transported the flight crews to the Operation's building for the mission briefings, and to the equipment building to get their much needed parachutes, Maywests and oxygen masks, etc. The gunners were driven to the gunnery buildings to obtain the guns, and then out to the aircraft. Officers and radio operators were driven to their respective briefings and then to their aircrafts.

Upon completing a mission, the drivers would take returning crews

from the planes to the de-briefing buildings and then to the mess hall and finally back to their barracks. Ambulance drivers took the wounded to the hospital. The drivers also drove the base vehicles that took all personnel between areas on the base. And, Oh Yes, the truck drivers also drove the shuttle bus for all to go on pass to Ipswich and back to the base every evening.

The 385th Bomb Group had a great motor pool and transportation system, and the Officer in Charge who set it up and ran it was Charles C. Smith. Charles did a great job.

In 1975, Charles, the 12th BGA President – '93-'95, and his wife, Peggy, hosted the 385th BGA reunion in Atlanta. It was a great reunion.

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## PEARL HARBOR, DECEMBER 7, 1941

On December 7, 1941, Lt. Roy Reid, co-pilot, and the rest of an eight-man crew were coming into Hawaii from San Francisco in a B-17 after a fourteen-hour-plus flight. About fifteen minutes out from Oahu they saw their first glimpse of land, Diamond Head. It was a welcome sight after the long flight.

Approaching Hickam Field, they saw black smoke rising from the ground. They were shocked to see at least six planes burning fiercely on the field. Gone was any doubt as to what happened. Unbelievable as it seemed, they knew they were now

in a war. As to dispel any doubts, two Japanese fighters came from the rear and opened fire on the B-17. Bullets hit the plane and the cockpit filled with smoke. The pilot, Lt. Roy Taylor, and Reid would have to land the plane amid the pandemonium.

Seconds later, they landed with the front half of the plane on fire and much of the back end of the plane missing. There was black smoke everywhere. Reid did what he had been trained to do: He hit the brakes. When the plane stopped, Reid applied the parking brakes before he climbed out on the

wing and jumped to the ground. Reid was never sure why he applied the parking brakes before jumping out of the plane, except, that is what co-pilots did no matter what was happening.

The B-17 piloted by Lts. Taylor and Reid was the first plane to be shot down at Pearl Harbor. The next day, December 8th, Lt. Reid climbed up into the B-17 cockpit and discovered four bullet holes in the armor plate behind his seat. He was one of the lucky ones on that "Day of Infamy."

From an article by Bill Sanders, *The Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, December 7, 2007

## LETTERS/E-MAILS

Re: YOU WILL BE MISSED

From: ghoidra@yahoo.co (George Hoidra) March 12, 2010

To: Ladies and Gentlemen of the 385th Bomb Group Board,

I was disappointed to learn that we will not enjoy the pleasure of your company at our reunion later this year in Tucson, however, I fully understand your reasoning and respect your decision to "be in cooler climate."

As you look ahead for the next few years, I wanted you to know that our future reunion plan is to go to Omaha, Nebraska (late July dates) in 2011, and we are currently in negotiations at this time with hotels in San Antonio, on the Riverwalk (late July dates) for 2012. Hotels in both locations will have outstanding accommodations, as well as enough hospitality space to accommodate individual needs.

As a side note, and not wanting to detract from your upcoming reunion in Charleston, I wanted to make you aware of another historical event about to occur that your Society will be hosting (please see page 11). This event will most likely never occur again, simply due to the cost of aircraft fuel.

I am making you aware of it only because you may have members of your Group who live in the vicinity who are unable to attend your reunion, but could possibly attend the air show with children and/or grand-children and climb through the B-17's for free. Mark Copeland and I have personally been working on this project for over a year in direct conjunction with the air show coordinators and this is going to be an outstanding presentation, one never to be repeated.

The information that you have just received has not been released to the general public as of yet (although it is in the next 8th AFHS Magazine due to hit your mail box within the next 2 weeks), and we already have 3 separate Groups who want to make this their reunion, and have over 265 people committed to attend. These are very good numbers, and I personally expect them to double.

As I said, this is in no way a solicitation for you to change your reunion plans, but merely advance information of a very historical event about to occur that you may wish to share with your members. Any cheap publicity that we can receive from your Group is always appreciated, and it will come back to benefit the 385th in the long run.

I wish you all well with your plans for 2010, and please know that I will do my best to be there in Charleston to share in your reunion, and to help Chuck and Tom run the Hospitality Suite. Marc Copeland will also most likely be attending, depending upon his work schedule.

All the Best

George Hoidra, 8th Air Force Historical Society

*Letters continue next page...*

## LETTERS/E-MAILS

To: George Hoidra  
From: Tom Gagnon  
March 12, 2010

Thank You George. Of course you and Mark are more than welcome to join us in Charleston. And thank you for the heads up on Detroit. I know that I am planning to attend the event in Detroit and hope to be bringing one of my sons and possibly a couple of my grandsons. I would be remiss if I did not comment on the proposed locations for 2011 and 2012. Both are excellent choices, but I fear July dates will give us a similar problem as Tucson. I was stationed for 3 years @ SAC Hqs., just south of Omaha and can attest from personal experience to the heat and humidity there in the summertime. Although I have never been to San Antonio and would love to visit, July would not be the time of the year I would choose. Why the continued fixation with July reunions dates? Are we really attracting enough additional nextgen attendees to warrant putting our more elderly members in this heat? Your two proposed sites are fine sites for a fall reunion. I would love to go to both. I hope you will consider different timing.

Tom Gagnon

From: msp05915@cpinternet.com (Mark Copeland)  
To: Tom & George, CC 385th BGA Board  
March 15, 2010

Thanks for the invite Tom. I will see if that weekend is clear. One of the reasons that we have moved our dates to the summer months is to attract more "Next Gen" members. A goof like myself, who has an 8 year old daughter in second grade, can't afford to pull her out of school for three or four days in the Fall. That is mainly the reason why we are gathering in the summer months. I sincerely hope that the 385th BG will consider coming back to the H.S. in the future. All the Best!! - Mark

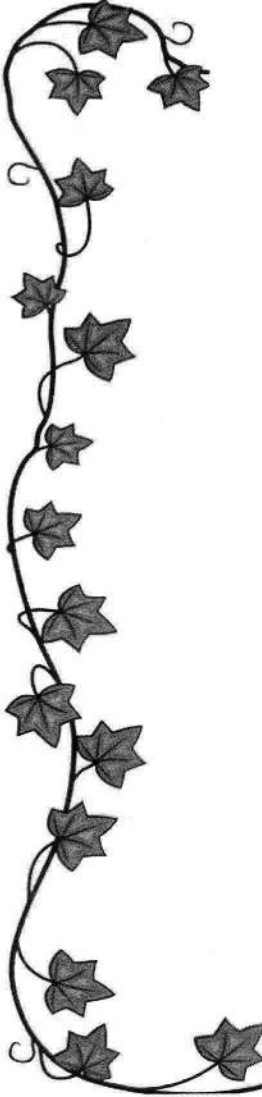
March 30, 2010

Hi Frank,

Hope this finds you and yours all well and happy. I finally got around to writing a little something about the 385th's Transportation department. Just thought Chuck Smith would like to know how much his father was appreciated. Sure glad they changed the reunion to Charleston. If you can use the article, I think Chuck would like it. Best wishes and hope to see you in Charleston - Marty Girson

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## Taps

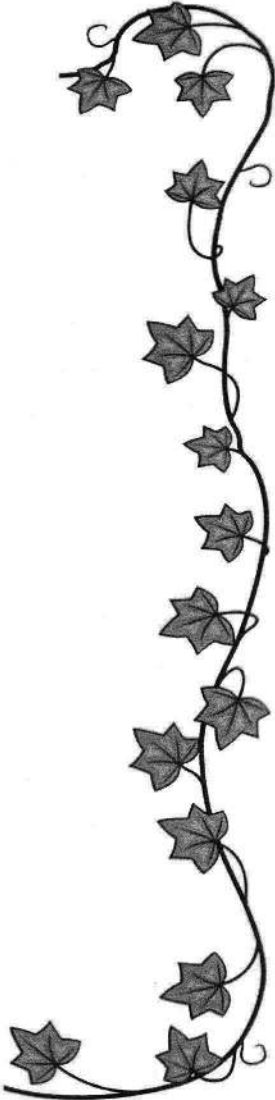


**Leonard Anthony Mika** - Born in Detroit MI in 1924, he died January 11, 2010 at age 86. Leonard was a member of the 385th BG and flew as a Ball Turret gunner, and as a Flight Engineer on *Madam Shoo Shoo*. He was a graduate of the University of Michigan and worked as a Special Agent in the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms, U.S. Department of the Treasury. Leonard was a member of the American Legion, the 8th Air Force Historical Association and the World War II Middle Tennessee Bomber Group Association in Nashville, TN. Survivors include his daughter and son.

—Submitted by his son, *Leonard R. Mika*

**William Joseph "Bill" Lynch** - Shawnee, Kansas died January 23, 2010 at age 86. Born April 19, 1924, in Kansas City, Bill served as a 1st Lieutenant with the 385th BG as a co-pilot. A graduate of the University of Kansas in 1950 earning a B.S. in Business, he was employed by the Atomic Energy Commission, retiring in 1978. Bill is probably well known for building his own open cockpit biplane in his home garage, which he went on to fly for many years. He had many adventurous flights including two to Alaska. He also appeared on the Art Linkletter Show. Over the years, his award winning landscapes have been enjoyed by many persons. He is survived by Janice his wife of 60 years, by daughter, Cheryl, his brothers, Thomas and Robert, and his sister, Helen, his granddaughters, great-grandchildren and great-great grandchildren.

**Peter J. Byrne** - died May 13, 2009. Peter was a Technical Sergeant and Flight Engineer and flew 35 missions on the *Honky Tonk Sal*.



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## A TOAST TO THE FLAG

by John J. Daly

Here's to the red of it-  
There's not a thread of it,  
No, not a shred of it  
In all the spread of it  
From foot to head  
But heroes bled for it  
Faced steel and lead for it,  
Precious blood shed for it,  
Bathing it Red!!

Here's to the white of it-  
Thrilled by the sight of it,  
Who knows the right of it,  
But feels the might of it  
Through day and night?  
Womanhood's care for it  
Made manhood dare for it,  
Purity's prayer for it  
Keeps it so White!!

Here's to the Blue of it-  
Beauteous view of it,  
Heavenly hue of it,  
Star Spangled dew of it  
Constant and true!  
Diadems gleam for it,  
States stand supreme for it,  
Liberty's beam for it  
Brightens the Blue!!

Body and soul for it,  
Oh, and the roll of it,  
Sun shining through!  
Hearts in accord for it,  
Swear by the sword for it,  
Thanking the Lord for it,  
The Red, White and  
Blue!!

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# 385th BGA

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## THE "RUPTURED DUCK"

How many of us remember the lapel pin called the "ruptured duck?" According to Mike Polak, author of a book called *"Official Price Guide to American Political Memorabilia"* explains how the term originated.

As service personnel left the military (discharged) during World War II, an insignia to indicate an honorable discharge was issued. The insignia was an eagle inside a wreath to be worn on the uniform. Brass lapel pins and rings with the insignia were also issued.

It is estimated that over 12 million pins, rings or badges were issued to the discharged personnel. It was thought that the eagle looked more like a duck and because the individual was heading home, a saying, "They took off like a ruptured duck," was born. Thus the name Ruptured Duck was born.

As a collection item, the pins are worth about \$5-\$7, depending upon the condition.

