

Hardlife



Herald



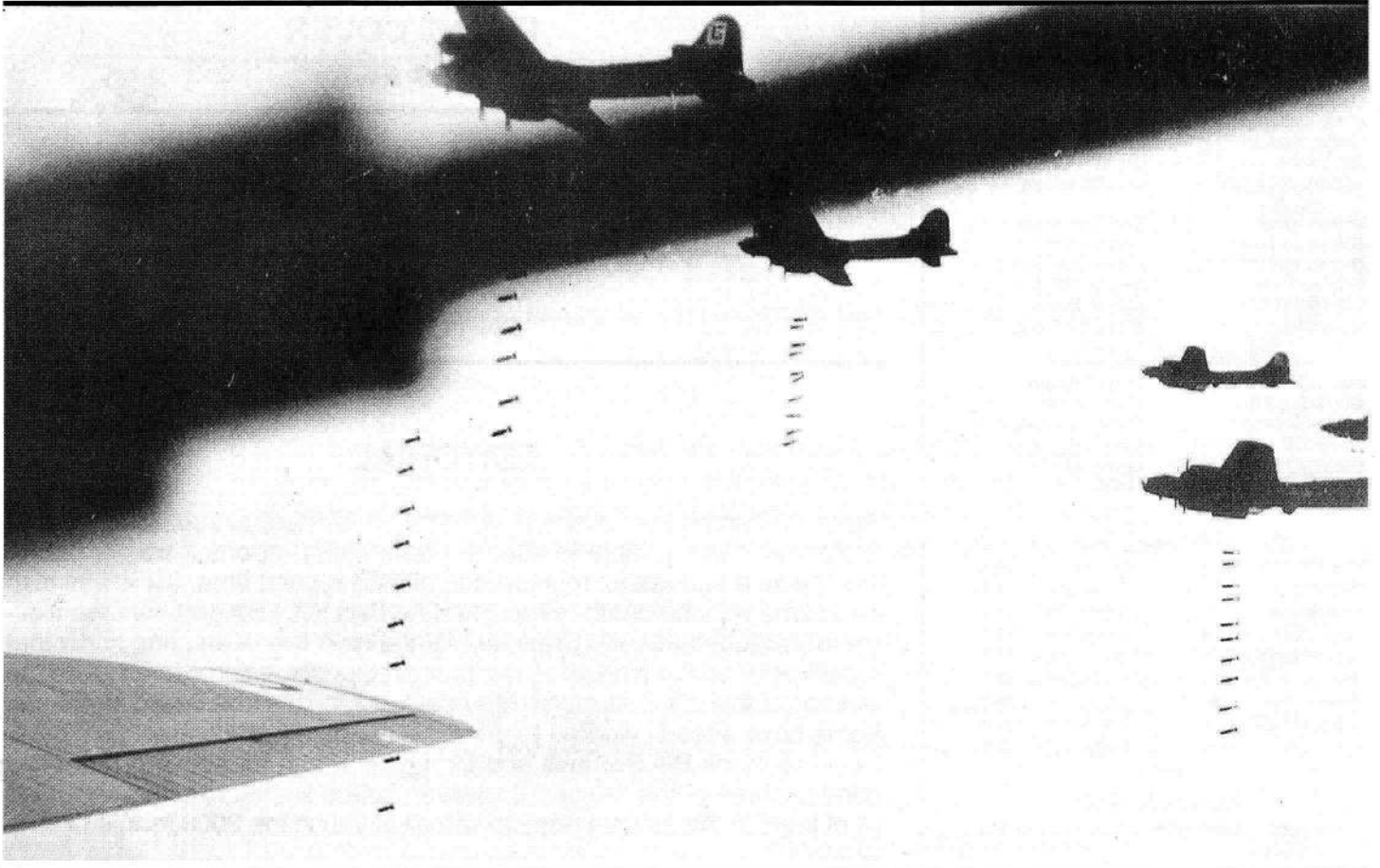
Newsletter of the  
385th Bombardment Group Association

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

*The Mighty Eighth*

Vol. 24 Number 2

August, 2007



**385<sup>TH</sup> BGA REUNION • SAVANNAH GA • AUGUST 3-8, 2008**

# Hardlife Herald

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*Frank Walls	'72-'75	*Sid Colthorpe	'91-'93
Vincent Masters	'75-'77	*Robert C. Smith	'93-'95
*John C. Ford	'77-'79	*Robert Valliere	'95-'97
*James H. Emmons	'79-'81	Michael Gallagher	'97-'99
*Paul Schultz	'81-'83	Tom Newton	'99-'01
*Forrest V. Poore	'83-'85	Leo LaCasse	'01-'03
*William A. Nichols	'85-'87	W.W. Varnedoe	'03-'05
*Earl Cole	'87-'89	*Art Driscoll, Jr.	'05-'07

\*deceased

### Honorary Members

Roger Feller    Eldon Nysethter    Mayor Ferdinand Unsen

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## FRONT COVER

"BOMBS AWAY"

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## BACK COVER

"ON TO BERLIN"

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## EDITORIAL

When I received the reports of the 385<sup>th</sup> BGA Kalamazoo, MI reunion, I regret that I was unable to attend. From these reports it was apparent that it was a successful reunion and all had a great time, but it was also a sad time with the death of President Art Driscoll. I congratulate the election of Al Audette as our President for the next two years, and know that he will carry on the work of all our past presidents. I also congratulate the election of five 2<sup>nd</sup> Generation Members as Officers and Board Members. Some have already worked to preserve the objectives of the 385<sup>th</sup> BGA. I wish to thank Bill Swindell and Dr. Lewis Smith for sending me many good pictures of the reunion. However, space limited me from including all of them in this issue. I hope to see all of you in the 2008 reunion in Savannah.

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## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

We have just returned from the 33<sup>rd</sup> annual reunion of the 385<sup>th</sup> Bombardment Group Association (BGA) in Kalamazoo, Michigan. This reunion was one of our most successful reunions, as we had the largest group of members attending the reunion events. Continued participation in the BGA activities will further honor our Past Presidents, as well as the other past BGA officers and Board Members.

On July 20, 2007, the 385<sup>th</sup> BGA Membership unanimously elected the new slate of officers for the next two years. They are: President-Albert Audette, Vice President-Thomas Gagnon, Secretary-John W. Hyatt, Treasurer-Chuck Smith, Hardlife Herald (HH) Editor-Frank X. McCawley, and Board Members Vincent W. Masters, Verne D. Philips, Fain H. Poole, Leslie L. Reichardt, Lindley R. Weikert, and Susan Stern Fineman.

I personally would like to give a special thanks to our Past President Art Driscoll for his preparation of the hospitality suite and the Friday night dinner despite his serious illness of the past year. It was a tremendous help to me in conducting this reunion. Art's dedication and devotion to the 385<sup>th</sup> BGA is something for all of us to emulate. I would be

remiss by not acknowledging the great work of Chuck Smith (2<sup>nd</sup> Generation Member) and Roy Ann for arranging and conducting the hospitality suite at their expense. I send a grateful thank you to Bill Varnedoe for presiding in the election of the new officers and board of the 385<sup>th</sup> BGA. Also, I thank the many members who sent their absentee ballots to Mary Driscoll (forwarded to Chuck Smith) for inclusion in the election of officers and board members. I thank Lewis Smith, and his committee members, James Bond and Thomas Gagnon (2<sup>nd</sup> Generation Member) for preparing the ballot, and to Lewis for providing me with a two-page list of e-mail addresses. For photographing of the reunion and sharing the photos with all, I give Bill Swindell and Lew Smith our thanks. Very special thanks go to Walter Schulte for conducting the Memorial Closing Ceremony, and to Lin Weikert for his endless efforts in coordinating and entertaining the many aspects of the reunion.

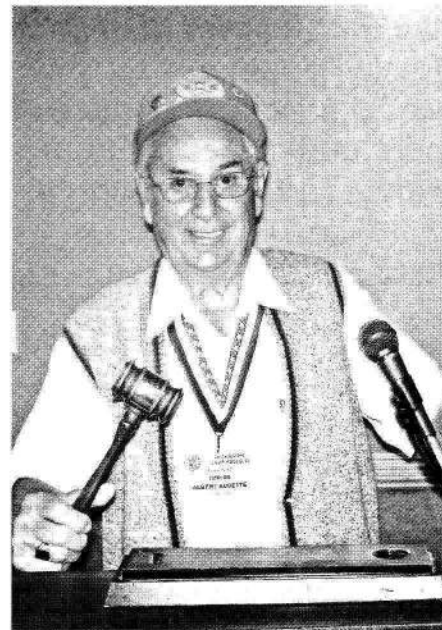
Much can be said for the many 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Generation Members who participate and assist in our reunions. All owe them our thanks.

I request our veteran life

members to donate a gift of \$100.00 to provide a three year sign-up membership of a 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> generation future member. Your generosity will help keep our organization active and solvent.

The next 385<sup>th</sup> BGA and 8<sup>th</sup> Air Force Historical Society reunions will be held in Savannah, Georgia in August 2008. Additional information will follow in future HH issues. Make your plans to attend now.

Albert Audette  
President



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## ARTHUR DRISCOLL, JR.

The 385<sup>th</sup> BGA's 18<sup>th</sup> president, Arthur Driscoll, Jr., a former pilot with the 385<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group (H), passed away at his home on May 26th, 2007 after a courageous battle with lymphoma. At that time, Art was the current president of the 385<sup>th</sup> BGA, and was finalizing plans for the 385<sup>th</sup> BGA's July 2007 reunion in Kalamazoo, MI. Art was a MRE graduate of Southwestern Theological Seminary and Doctor of Education graduate from the University of Virginia.

Art was a member of the First Baptist Church of Nashville. Prior to his service as a member and president of the 385<sup>th</sup> BGA, Art served as minister to col-

lege students from 1949 – 1965, and was a consultant to the Southern Baptist National Student Ministries from 1965 – 1985.

Art is survived by his wife of sixty-one years, Marynell, two daughters, four grandchildren, and a brother and a sister.

Prior to his death, Art had requested that Chuck Smith, our 385<sup>th</sup> BGA treasurer, serve as one of his pallbearers. Chuck was honored that Art had made such a request. Honorary pall bearers were the members of the local WWII Bomber Groups of Middle Tennessee and members of the Sojourners Sunday School Class. In addition to Chuck, Bill Varnedoe, a

Past President of the BGA, and his wife Louise, also attended the services for Art.

At the gravesite, Bill Varnedoe presented Marynell with a plaque representing Art's service as the 385<sup>th</sup> BGA President for the past two years. The plaque with a golden 8<sup>th</sup> Air force emblem mounted in the center, was a gift from the Association and was scheduled to be presented to Art at the Kalamazoo Reunion.

In lieu of flowers, Art requested that contributions be made to the 385<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group Association, c/o Chuck Smith, P.O. Box 329, Alpharetta, GA 30009, or the BSU Advancement Fund, 901 Commerce St., Nashville, TN 37202.

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## HARDLIFE HERALD VIA E-MAIL

The Board of Directors of the 385<sup>th</sup> BGA is considering sending future editions of the Hardlife Herald via e-mail to those members who have e-mail addresses, and who wish to receive them as such. The Board believes that using e-mails would reduce mailing costs and prob-

ably some printing costs. The Board would like to receive any comments and/or suggestions from members regarding this action. Send your comments to Vice President Tom Gagnon, 814 Bonnie Lane, Tewksbury, MA 01876 (snail-mail address), or [teg00@aol.com](mailto:teg00@aol.com).

If e-mail mailing of the HH is activated, the Board would require members with e-mail addresses to notify the Board with their current e-mail address, and continue to keep the Board current of any changes in their address.



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## MINUTES OF 385<sup>TH</sup> BGA BUSINESS MEETING

### 12 JULY 2007

At 0810 hours, Vice President Albert (Al) Audette called the 2007 BGA meeting to order and welcomed the attendees to the meeting. The group recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

Owing to the recent death of President Art Driscoll, Bill Varnedoe, our Historian and Past President, installed Al as President.

The following slate of BGA members were presented for election as Officers and Board of Directors for 2007 – 2009. They were:

President - Al Audette

Vice President - Thomas E. Gagnon\*\*

Secretary - John W. Hyatt

Treasurer - Chuck Smith\*\*

Editor *Hardlife Herald* - Frank X. McCawley

Board of Directors members -

Vincent W. Masters

Verne D. Philips

Fain H. Poole

Leslie L. Reichardt\*\*

Lindley R. Weikert\*\*

Susan Stern Fineman.\*\*

\*\* - Second Generation Members

A motion was made, and seconded, to accept the slate as presented. The motion was carried unanimously.

Al took a moment to recognize the POW-MIAs. As we do not have a POW/MIA flag, the members felt that the 385<sup>th</sup> BGA should have a POW/MIA flag of its own. Chuck Smith

said he would obtain a POW/MIA flag for the Association.

Lin Weikert read the minutes of our 2006 Business Meeting in October in Boisser City, LA. The minutes were accepted as read.

Chuck Smith presented the Financial Report. While not desperate, our financial condition is far from comfortable. The cost of printing and mailing the *Hardlife Herald* continues to increase and presents a tremendous financial challenge to the 385<sup>th</sup> BGA.

Chuck read a letter from our friends of the 385<sup>th</sup> Bombardment Group Memorial Endowment Trust in England regarding their 16 April 2007 meeting. They expressed their apologies for not attending this meeting, but family and business commitments precluded their attendance. Our Great Ashfield friends thoughtfully sent the 385<sup>th</sup> BGA a beautiful hand painted rendering of B-17s circling and landing at the Great Ashfield airfield. The painting was commissioned from local artist Charlotte Orford, the granddaughter of Beattie Orford who lived at the Lodge during the World War II years. The 385<sup>th</sup> BGA wishes to express its thanks to all our friends at Great Ashfield for their kindness and thoughtfulness shown to us with this gift.

The Memorial Endowment Trust continues to remain in excellent financial condition.

The 385<sup>th</sup> BGA thanks all our friends in Great Ashfield for continuing to monitor, invest, and direct these funds with such dedication. We are hoping that some of our Great Ashfield friends might be able to be with us at our August 2008 reunion in Savannah, Georgia.

A motion was made, and seconded to accept the financial reports of the 385<sup>th</sup> BGA and the 385<sup>th</sup> Bombardment Group Association Memorial Endowment Trust as presented. The motion was approved by the members.

Al asked the Second and Third Generation to stand and be recognized. He encouraged these individuals, and everyone at the meeting to try and obtain new memberships in the 385<sup>th</sup> BGA. The 385<sup>th</sup> BGA relies upon the Second and Third Generation members to continue the existence of the Association and the preservation of its history.

Dr. Walter E. Brown, Editor of the 8<sup>th</sup> Air Force News, took a moment from the 8<sup>th</sup> Air Force Historical Society meeting to express his sympathy at the loss of Art Driscoll, and to mention their close friendship. As the 385<sup>th</sup> BGA is a favorite group of his, he indicated that he would like to be able for the 385<sup>th</sup> BGA and the 8<sup>th</sup> AFHS to develop some special projects for the Savannah, GA meeting in August 2008. It was his hope that these special projects

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would increase the visibility of both organizations.

Al reported that he was considering the offering of multi-year 385<sup>th</sup> BGA memberships to Second and Third Generation individuals in the hopes of making them permanent members of our Association.

As a method of enhancing communication with members, Al said he would like to obtain as many member's e-mail addresses as possible. Along this line, a discussion among members at the meeting indicated that the Hardlife Herald could be distributed by e-mail to those addressees in the form of a PDF document. E-mailing might lower costs of producing and mailing of the HH. The Board will explore this suggestion with the help of Tom Gagnon.

Chuck Smith reported that the 385<sup>th</sup> BGA received an American Flag in memory of

Art Driscoll which was donated by some of Art's Nashville, TN personal friends. The 385<sup>th</sup> BGA wishes to thank these friends of Art for their generosity, and will use this flag as its primary American flag.

A motion was made from the floor to thank Chuck Smith and Roy Anne Donnelly for their generous donation of refreshments served in the 385<sup>th</sup> BGA Hospitality Room. Their donation amount is considerable, and their time in the Hospitality Room as host and hostess was very much appreciated by the members.

From the floor, James Bond wished to recognize Art and all of the work he had done as President. Chuck Smith reported that he had received many donations in Art's memory.

Al said he will mention Art's passing in his President's Report in the next issue of the Hardlife Herald.

Al asked if there would be any membership interest in planning and scheduling a trip to Perle, Luxembourg to visit the 385<sup>th</sup> BG museum, and to England to visit Great Ashfield. Future editions of the Hardlife Herald will provide more information on this subject.

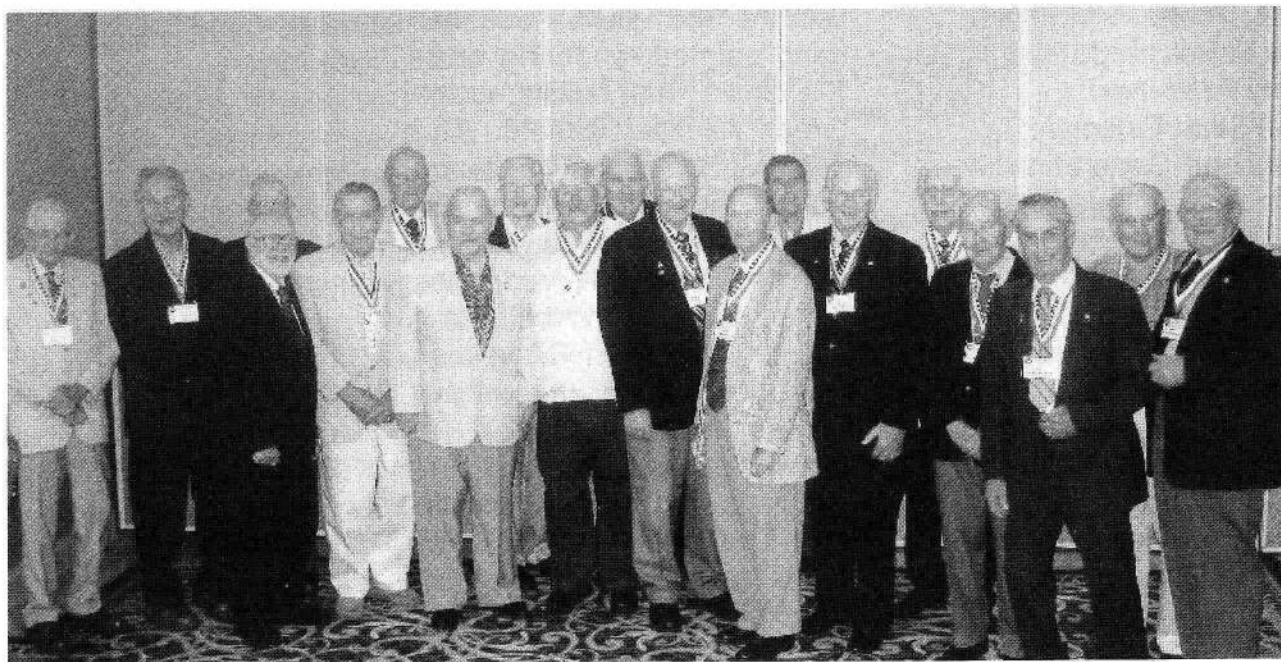
Walter Schulte conducted the closing ceremony remembering those members who have passed away since our 2006 reunion. They were Art Driscoll, William Nichols, Robert E. Andrews, Drew Gillis, Paul Rudloff, Francis Coughenour,, Robert Harvey, Arnold Miller, David S. Dennis, Henry C. Gagnon. Harlan L. Cook, and John W. Matthews.

The meeting was adjourned at 0903.

Lindley R. Weikert  
Secretary

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## 385<sup>th</sup> BOMB GROUP VETERANS





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**385<sup>th</sup> BGA 2<sup>nd</sup> AND 3<sup>rd</sup> GENERATION MEMBERS**



**385<sup>th</sup> BGA MEMBER'S LADIES**



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## THE LONG FLIGHT HOME

By Norman Lieb – 549<sup>th</sup> Squadron

I had completed my 27<sup>th</sup> mission on April 19, 1945 and was sent to the west coast of England for R&R. I was there on VE day and was looking forward to returning to Great Ashfield. On my return I was informed that I was being separated from the 385<sup>th</sup> which was to return to the United States, and then on to the Pacific area. Navigators who were considered to have completed their tour of duty were to be reassigned as navigators for the 9<sup>th</sup> AF A-26 bombers. The A-26 aircraft's crew consisted of only a pilot and an engineer and required a navigator for the flight to the States. I was happy that my tour of duty was ended and would not have to go to the Pacific. The 385<sup>th</sup> left Great Ashfield while we waited for the A-26 aircraft.

We were briefed for our flight and took off from Great Ashfield. The last point of land was to be Scotland and then on to Iceland. I looked forward to this easy flight. The war was over and all we had to do was follow the radio beam.

We took off in stormy

weather, reached the coast of Scotland and climbed above the clouds. We were flying along very nicely following the radio beam to Iceland when about an hour or so into the flight, the radio went dead. The pilot and the engineer were not concerned, but the navigator was. I had to rely on dead reckoning and that meant using metro information that had been very unreliable on my missions. At some point I had to give the pilot an ETA for descent and I wondered what I would do if I did not see land when we broke through the clouds. When I gave the pilot the OK for descent, Lo and Behold, there was Iceland. I grabbed for my maps to do some pilotage only to find all the lakes were uncharted. We continued on and came over the base and made a routine landing with a very happy crew.

We stayed in Iceland for a week and then took off for the next leg to Greenland. We took off on a nice sunny day, but once again the radio went out. I was back to relying on dead

reckoning, and wondering what I would do if I didn't see land. I did see land, lots of land—big ugly looking barren mountains. I strained my eyes to the North and then to the South, and occasionally straight ahead. We were looking for a fjord, and finally there it was.

We waited there a week for good weather, and finally took off for Labrador. It was a very pleasant flight - the radio beam took us right to the airfield, ONLY my ETA was way off! The pilot and engineer made a few checks and determined that the airspeed indicator was not working properly. That meant the pilot would have to land by the seat of his pants, AND I was sitting in the plexiglass nose watching the runway speeding up, then a very bumpy under shot landing—but safe!

Our next leg was uneventful—the war was over—we landed at Westover, Connecticut----a few more days and I was a civilian—home safe and sound.

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Middle age is when the broadness of the mind and the narrowness of the waist change places.

Why does someone believe you when you say there are 4 billion stars, but has to check when you say the paint is wet?

### *The Four Stages of Life*

- \* You believe in Santa Claus.
- \* You don't believe in Santa Claus.
- \* You are Santa Claus.
- \* You look like Santa Claus



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## LIFE BEFORE THE 385<sup>TH</sup> BOMB GROUP

by Neil Duel

Before becoming a member of the 385<sup>th</sup> Bombardment Group, at one time I was stationed in Fairbanks, Alaska with a good friend, Ernest (Mickey) McGuire. We had many tours together, and this is one of them.

While at Fairbanks, medics discovered a cave with many halves of beef which apparently had been stored there some time before. The Medics tested the beef and advised that the beef was OK to eat, and base personal were notified that the meal this one night would be beef steak. This was a real treat as the only other fresh meat served was moose burgers from moose that were shot to remove them from the runway so planes could land.

At that time we lived out in the woods in barracks that we had built. A regular little group, four squadrons and attachments with a mess hall and latrines scattered throughout the woods. That night we were about to go to chow and have our steaks, when our CO received a message from the hanger that they needed a special bomb from the bomb depot. It was an incendiary bomb that released 27 little bombs after it was dropped. Our CO had never seen one, but Mickey and I had and knew what to deliver to the hanger.

The temperature was about 40 below zero at that time and would drop to better than -50 that night. We drove to the bomb dump in our jeep, but no one was there. Every body had gone to the

mess hall to eat steak. Mickey and I located the bomb, managed to load it on a hand cart and get it over to the jeep. As it was very large, we had to load it on the hood of the jeep and tie it down. Later we learned that it weighed over 300 pounds.

Anyway we took it to the hanger and they about had kittens when we arrived inside. When they checked with the high brass, they received some special equipment and took it off the jeep. We rushed back to the mess hall as we were late for the steak meal. When we got back there the steak was all gone, but the cook did fry us up some eggs and bacon.

We went back to our barracks and noticed that the 40 some guys in the barracks were all complaining of stomach aches and were running outside and throwing up. Later they all had the runs. Our barracks was closest to the latrine, but every trail leading there was lined with people trying to get in. I don't know what was in that beef but it crippled the entire base for a week. Mickey and I and a couple of nurses in the hospital were the only ones on the base that weren't deathly sick.

The temperature went down to its usual -50 degrees that night, and the roads in our area and the trails from the barracks to the latrines were lined with soldiers too weak to move. Mickey and I ran up and down the roads with the jeep picking up guys, loading them in the jeep and hauling them to the main base about five miles away. We could haul about six guys at a

time. After we had a cup of coffee and maybe a doughnut, we would take off for another load. We ran like that all night. I never knew how many men we brought in. I know we made about 20 trips but we never lost a man and some were in pretty bad shape.

The entire base was closed down for a week. I'll never know how the medics got out of that episode. However, after it was all over, the base commander wanted to know who the two fellows were that hauled the sick to the hospital that night. Apparently the nurses had told him about us. He did send word to our CO commending us for that night's work. Ordinarily we would have received a formal commendation, but this whole episode of closing down a base in war time was squashed and off the record.

Shortly after that episode, I received my appointment as an Air Cadet, and Mickey received his appointment to Officer's Training School. I have often wondered if our appointments were the result of that night's work. When any one asks me about the high lights of my military service, that night's mission is one of them.

Editor's Note: Ernest McGuire was my 1<sup>st</sup> cousin, but he never told me about that experience.



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## A TRIP TO THE PAST

By Rick Todd

Baby Boomers, as many Americans are known, are a group of people that happen to be born between 1943 and 1965. Variations in age, heritage, religion, race, and even political affiliation make this a very diverse group with, however, one common link. We are all descendants of, or have some family relation that participated in one of the greatest conflicts in world history.

Growing up I knew that my father was involved with aerial combat in the European Theater of World War II. I knew that he and many others were part of a Herculean effort from our country that has not been matched since. As a young boy I was proud to say my Dad "was there." I still get chocked up when I tell others. What I did not know were the details. Many of us look for the answers on cable TV, but do not find the details. The details are in the minds, hearts, and souls, of the people that lived the experience.

My father, like many veterans, did not discuss his wartime experience. Many of the anecdotal stories my brothers and sisters and I heard were those of his experience in training, or down time between missions. Good stuff, many times very entertaining, but I did not have that strong link to my father's experience in

World War II until this past Spring.

I was on my way to work offshore in the North Sea and was to fly out of Great Yarmouth. At some point during the trip I promised myself I would find my way to Great Ashfield, where my father's unit, the 385<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group, was based during World War II. Our project was delayed so a coworker and I rented a car and made our way to a spot on a map. Like me, my friend is also a veteran, so was keen to help on my quest. We found our way to the area with a map I downloaded from the internet. We followed the unmarked roads, then took a turn past Kiln Farm down a long drive and through a soy field. The high crops stopped and broke open to the left and right. Before I could stop the car, we drove onto a cement surface that stretched thousands of feet in each direction. We both knew that we had found the very airfield my Dad and many like him flew from as part of a conflict that seemed unimaginable 60 years later. We had found Great Ashfield.

I walked up and down that strip of concrete trying to imagine what it had been like, waiting for the mission, preparing the aircraft, watching hundreds of heavy bombers take

off, while others from nearby airfields pass overhead, saying a prayer, and finally taking off with 9 crewmates and heading toward a great uncertainty. My coworker said, "let me take a picture of you." I thought to myself 'what for...to prove I was there?' Letting family and others know I had found it became insignificant. Allowing myself to stand on ground that so many unselfish Americans had, I cannot describe it.

At one end of the strip we found a few piles of rubble, two piles, remnants of old metal buildings, likely Quanset huts. A third pile was mostly ash colored mortared brick that I imagined had to be an important building on base. I thought it would be a nice gesture to bring a piece back home for my folks. After walking around a while we decided to leave. As many members of the group know, many parts of the field are on fenced off portions of private farms. One part of the field is a private airfield.

Using my mobile phone I called my folks to let them know, but could only leave a message. A couple hours later I returned to my hotel room in Norwich and called again. One of the first questions my Dad asked was "Did you see the church?" I had forgotten the story my Mom

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and Dad told me about the group dedication at the church in Great Ashfield.

Two weeks later I returned from offshore, immediately rented a car and made my way back towards Great Ashfield and the church. Once I had found the church, my plan was simple. I would walk around the church, find the 385<sup>th</sup>'s stained glass window, and take a photograph. This time I did not have a map or co-pilot, and I stopped at church after church in the area. Not knowing which church it was, let alone not knowing which town I was in, folks would say "Follow the signs." Without a map I had difficulty finding the town of Great Ashfield. Finally, while driving back towards the area of the air field, I spotted a church belfry over a hillside. I drove up and found the bulletin board with the very obvious posting for "385<sup>th</sup> Contact." The church was locked so I walked around the outside and found the 385<sup>th</sup> stained glass window. I took a photo, but I knew it would not be very good. I tried calling the two 385<sup>th</sup> contacts listed but was unsuccessful. I finally called my folks and left them a message "beautiful church, beautiful stained glass window, you should be proud for what the group (area towns people) is doing." As I hung up I heard a stern voice say, "Can I help you young man?" It was (I thought I would never forget his name, and I have) the other gentleman listed on the board as a keeper of the keys. He offered to give me a tour.

We visited for over an hour inside the church as he described how the 385<sup>th</sup> Memorial within the church came to be

there, and all the great people he met in the process. He described the stained glass window and what everything pictured meant, including the "loop de loop" executed by one of the group bombers to avoid a mid-air collision, which I never heard about. His wife came and brought a photo of the window for me to take home, since my camera was out of film. They showed me the book with the list of (385<sup>th</sup> BG) group members that gave their lives during the war. We paged through the list of those who died in action. 644 Names. Hard to grasp that level of loss, let alone comprehend the fact that this was only from one of the many 8<sup>th</sup> Air Force groups.

He said that he grew up in the area during the war, and had many stories of his own about the group and the experience of watching the B-17s taking off and return to Great Ashfield, and the other airfields all over the region. It was nice to see his obvious appreciation for what many Americans did for his country and the world. Many of us, including myself, have stereotyped, even bigoted views of other cultures including the British. What we don't realize is we all hold liberty in the highest regard and understand that at times it takes great sacrifice from many to maintain it, no matter what your background. Nothing you see on TV, read in a book, play in a video game, or even today, try to relive in virtue reality, can help those that were not there, to understand what so many experienced and sacrificed in World War II.

I flew home the next day out of Norwich. The tangible memento, a brick, I decided to smuggle home caused a few problems at the airport, but the British Customs officials understood my story and said it was a nice thing to do for my folks. The next day my wife and kids visited my folks. My Dad asked if any of the Quanset huts were still there. I said that I did not see any, instead I "presented" him with the brick. "Yeah, this looks familiar...let me think." He had a very serious and very hard think look on his face. I thought, cool, I brought back something special. "Yeah, I remember, the only building on the airfield that was built from brick like this was the latrine!" The brick is now used as a stepping stone in their garden. "Thanks Dad!"

There are no plaques, or trophies, or momentos, or photographs that can give respect or show sufficient reverence for what all World War II veterans have done to maintain "Liberty for All!" God Bless them all! And especially to all the veterans of the 385<sup>th</sup>, those that flew and fought, those that supported them, and those that died fighting, our deepest appreciation and thanks!

Editor's Note: The above article was written by Rick Todd, the son of William Todd, the tail gunner on Kay's crew. Kay's original crew was split up for lead crew training, and Bill flew several missions with Art Driscoll.



## LETTERS/E-MAILS

Dear Frank,

So much has been written about war experiences, but not too much about personal experiences.

Most of us in the 385<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group were young fellows in our early 20s, and very naive and lacking knowledge of life and experience. We were very fortunate in having one of our good friends who was a little or I should say a lot more experienced than we were. His name was Frank DePack.

Frank was from California and was a race horse jockey before he enlisted. Although Frank was in our same age group, he was so much mature. He was street wise and really knew his way around. He really was worldly and we learned a lot from him.

One day when we were on pass in London, we were sitting in our favorite pub and I mentioned that London was such an old city with lots of historical sites, and we were not seeing any of them. Frank got up from his chair, said that he would be back and left the pub. Frank did return in about 35 minutes and said, "Come on! We are going to see London." We went outside and saw that Frank had hired a Limo and tour guide driver. We piled into the Limo and had our own private tour of London.

We saw Buckingham Palace, Westminster Abbey, Neville Chamberlin's grave, Charles Dicken's book shop, Number 10 Downing Street, Baker Street, Covent Gardens, Peticcoat Lane, and just about anything worth seeing. It was a great tour.

Most American GIs, when they went to London, went to Picadilly Circus and visited the Red Cross Club in the Rainbow Garden Hotel, and danced with Fred Astaire's sister. However, Frank had us staying at the Esplanade Hotel in London.

On another day when we were on pass in London and were walking around the city, we passed an USO rehearsal hall with the sign saying "Leighton Brill - Director." Frank said, "I know that guy." So we went into the hall and sure enough, Franky knew Leighton Brille. While Frank was talking to him, Leighton gave the chorus girls a break and we got talking to and mingle with the Beautiful American Chorus girls. It was a most enjoyable time for us just meeting and talking with these girls.

At the air base, Franky was in charge of the 548<sup>th</sup> Squadron flight equipment shop. His job was to inspect and repack the parachutes, inspect the Mae West jackets, and make sure that the life rafts were in good shape. Many a guy that had to use a parachute came to the shop to thank Frank and shake his hand.

In June of 1945 we flew back to the U.S.A. and home. But Frank had married his English girl friend and stayed in England.

We all lost contact with Franky. However, God Bless You, Franky DePach, where ever you are for making some rough times a lot more smoother.

Best Regards,  
Marty Girson

Editor's Note: If any of the 385<sup>th</sup> BGA members have any information, current or past, about Frank DePach, please contact Marty Girson, 151 Gilmore Drive, Pittsburgh, PA 15235-5259.

# LETTERS/E-MAILS

\*\*\*\*\*  
Frank X. McCawley

Hi! My name is Art Wohl, 2630 Gateway Ave. Bismark, ND 58503, e-mail is sawohl@bis.midco.net. I recently contacted Bill Varnedoe by telephone regarding the 385<sup>th</sup> BG Newsletter, which I had just received, and he suggested that I contact you with information regarding his story "62 Years Later", page 12 in this (Vol. 24, No. 1 – April 2007) issue. It turns out that we (Wm. A. Maloy's crew ---our crew) were ordered to "stand down" at briefing that morning and Burich & crew were to fly in our formation position. We were to begin training in B-17s with Bombsights mounted in the Ball Turret. I have nothing to substantiate this information at all, but I called our Pilot, Navigator and Tailgunner and they confirmed recalling that the Burich crew flew in our spot that day. Anyway, for what it's worth---interesting, huh? I was Top Turret on our crew---to our knowledge there are five of us remaining. Sorry I didn't get this to you before the Reunion. I am not doing any traveling these days or I certainly would have enjoyed making the trip to Kalamazoo.

Hope the Reunion went well! Never did get our crew together at any time, but did manage a couple of "mini" reunions in Jacksonville, FL., and one in Minneapolis which we are happy to have done, together with our wives. The ladies were quite pleased to get to know one another. Looking back now, we "shoulda" done this much earlier---hind-site! I'll sign off now as AWOHL, a nickname I picked up when I enlisted in the Cadet program in 1942.

Best of luck to you and the 385<sup>th</sup>.

AWOHL  
7-30-07

\*\*\*\*\*  
Date: 7/30/07  
From: Shnevoegel (Leo LaCasse)  
To: AEAud (Al Audette)

Hi Al,

Congratulations on becoming President of the 385<sup>th</sup> BGA. I know that you will do well and keep the interest of the group at a high level. You may not know but it was I who suggested that you become a member of the staff back in 2003 knowing that you would some day take over the group responsibilities. It's a great honor and you deserve the chance.

You may not know this but my health has been very poor since one week after the reunion I chaired in 2003. Few people have known this and I wanted you to know because of my health I will not be attending any reunions in the future. For your information I have advance Neuropathy and am in a wheel chair at all times. It's not pleasant but I make the best of the situation. I recently had a Pain Pump inserted in the cavity of my body and for the first time in years I have been pain free. You cannot imagine the difference it has made in my life.

Well, Al, keep me posted of the 385th activities and enjoy your tenure.

Leo

Editor's Note: We wish you well Leo, and will keep you in our prayers.

# LETTERS/E-MAILS

From: tjnewton25@msn.com (Tom Newton)  
To: fxmccawley@aol.com (Frank McCawley)  
Subj: 385<sup>th</sup> BGA Reunion

The Eighth Historical Reunion in Kalamazoo, Michigan was a big success. The 385<sup>th</sup> had the largest contingency attending with about 60 people. Our hospitality room was a great gathering place and well used. It was so popular that other 8<sup>th</sup> people dropped by. Thanks to Chuck Smith and his beautiful Roy Anne. The Radisson Hotel was large, well appointed, with a pleasant staff. The city of Kalamazoo was impressive with many side trips offered. The museum across the street from the hotel was well done and a busy place. Actually, the most important part of the reunion is the chance to visit with those who have become old friends. The final banquet had 402 in attendance. We can remember when the 385<sup>th</sup> had that many and more at our private reunions. Now it is wonderful to see how many second and even some third generations are coming and taking part. Three of the Executive Board are second generation!

On a personal note, driving from O'Hare Airport because we are from a state that probably has less people than the greater Chicago area, it is a miracle that we made it to Kalamazoo. We have never seen so many big trucks. The sign said 70 and minimum 45. At times we were actually going 10 MPH. When we walked into the hotel we did not know they were on eastern time and wondered (ha) why it was so dark out. The clock said 10:20. Our daughter joined us two days later and took over the drive back to O'Hare with some side trips. The reunion is going to be in Savannah again. One complaint, from two Oregonians, is we hope the next reunion will be on the West Coast. Seattle has Boeing and is a lovely city, and Portland, Oregon has Evergreen Aviation nearby with a huge airplane museum that actually includes Howard Hughes' Spruce Goose. Both cities have many Mountains nearby and pacific coastlines and special gardens. We had a swell time and hope to see our friends again.

Tom and Darla Newton and second generation daughter, Darcy Irving.

## MIGHTY EIGHTH OFFERS NEW BROCHURE

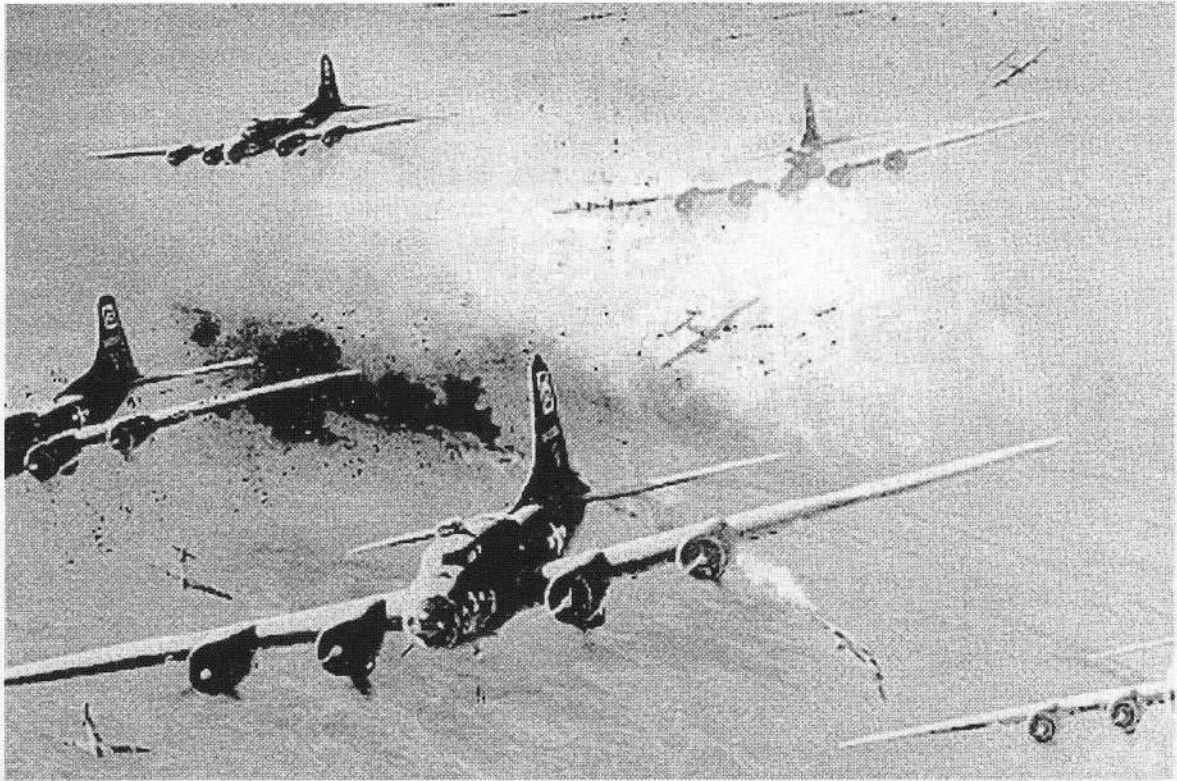
A new brochure describing the character and mission of the Mighty Eighth Air Force Museum (MEAFM) is now available.

It features the famous "Crewman" drawing by Gil Coates, photographs of some attractions at the Museum, including the Memorial Gardens and the Chapel of the Fallen Eagles. It also describes some of the major exhibit areas. Highlighted is the Roger A. Freeman Eighth Air Force Research Center's collection of archival materials, including artifacts, photographs and one-of-a-kind scrapbooks compiled by members of the 8<sup>th</sup> Air Force.

The MEAFM preserves for Americans the stories of courage, character and patriotism displayed by men and women of the 8<sup>th</sup> Air Force from World War II to the present. As a designated Center for Character Education, the Museum treasures and teaches these values for all generations.

Individual and bulk copies of the brochure may be obtained from Marketing, The Mighty Eighth Air Force Museum, P.O. Box 1992, Savannah, GA 31402 or call 912-748-8888, ext.123. For additional information, call Lee J. Maltenfort, Director of Publicity, MEAFM. E-mail addresses are [www.mightyeighth.org](http://www.mightyeighth.org) and [volunteers@mightyeighth.org](mailto:volunteers@mightyeighth.org).





385<sup>th</sup> Schweinfurt Mission  
October 14, 1943

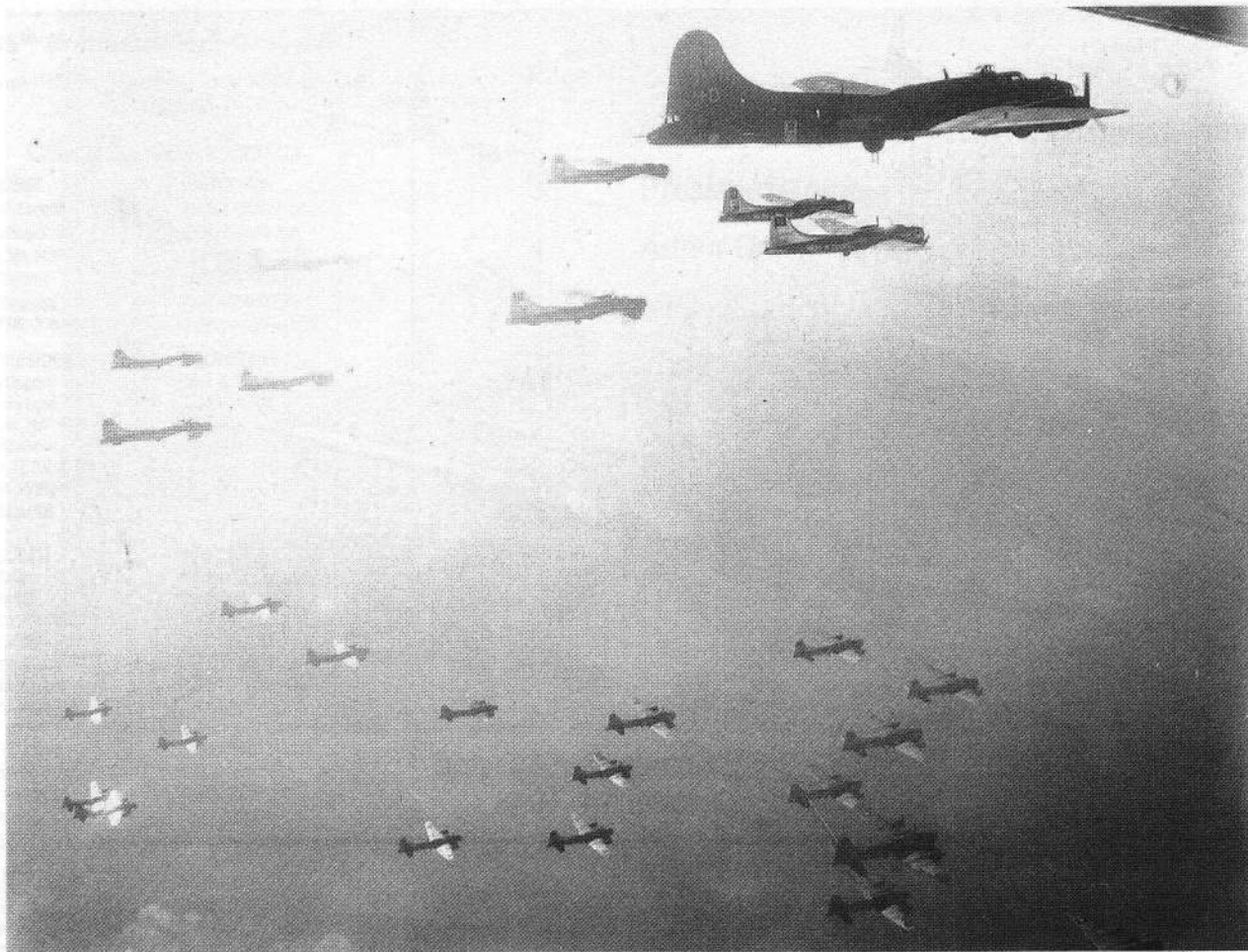
## Taps

Art Driscoll – Nashville, TN – Died May 26, 2007, age 84.  
(see page 4)

Samuel P. Luckie – Reydell, AR – Died June 26, 2007, age 86. Sam completed 25 missions as a 1st Lieutenant Bombardier with the 551st Squadron. He was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross, the Air Medal with three Oak Leaf Clusters, and the European Theatre Medal with three Bronze Stars.

Sam graduated from Mississippi State College in 1946 with a degree in Agriculture. He was a retired farmer, Veterans' teacher, and a Deacon in the Reydell Baptist Church. He is survived by his wife of 59 years, Juanita D. Luckie, two daughters, seven grandchildren, and eight great grandchildren.

By Juanita (Nita) D. Luckie



## 385th BGA

Chuck Smith, Treasurer

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