

Hardlife



Herald



Newsletter of the 385th Bombardment Group Association

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

The Mighty Eighth

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The Pledge of Allegiance



The original Pledge of Allegiance was written by Francis Bellamy. It was first given wide publicity through the official program of the National Public School Celebration of Columbus Day which was printed in *The Youth's Companion* of September 8, 1892, and at the same time sent out in leaflet form to schools throughout the country. School children first recited the Pledge of Allegiance this way:

"I pledge allegiance to my Flag and to the Republic for which it stands one Nation indivisible, with Liberty and Justice for all."

"The flag of the United States" replaced the words "my Flag" in 1923 because some foreign-born people might have in mind the flag of the country of their birth instead of the United States flag. A year later, "of America" was added after "United States."

No form of the Pledge received official recognition by Congress until June 22, 1942, when the Pledge was formally included in the U. S. Flag Code. The official name of The Pledge of Allegiance was adopted in 1945. The last

change in language came on Flag Day 1954, when Congress passed a law, which added the words "under God" after "one nation."

Currently the Pledge of Allegiance is:

"I pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America and to the Republic for which it stands one Nation, under God, indivisible, with Liberty and Justice for all."

Originally, the pledge was said with the right hand in the so-called "Bellamy Salute," with the right hand first resting outward from the chest, then the arm extending out from the body. Once Hitler came to power in Europe, some Americans were concerned that this position of the arm and hand resembled the Nazi or Fascist salute. In 1942 Congress also established the current practice of rendering the pledge with the right hand over the heart.

The Flag Code specifies that any future changes to the pledge would have to be with the consent of the President.

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

Hardlife Herald

385th Bombardment Group (H)

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Albert A. Audette '07-'09

*deceased

Honorary Members

Roger Feller Eldon Nysether Mayor Ferdinand Unsen

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The Pledge of Allegiance.

EDITORIAL

At one of our Annual membership meetings, it was voted that we publish four issues a year. However, for the past few years as I became older and slower, and received less material from the members, I was only able to assemble and publish three issues a year. Many of the articles in the last few issues of the *HH* were not directly associated with the 385th BG, but in general from 8th Air Force and other magazine articles. Unless I receive input from the membership, I plan to cut publishing of the *HH* to only one or two issues a year.

In this issue, we will read the account of our President's visit to Great Ashfield, France and Luxembourg. It was a memorable occasion for him and his wife, and his grandsons. I am sure that many of you will also remember one or more memorable visits to those places and to visit with our friends. I know that I remember my visits.

I look forward to our Reunion in Charleston, SC. Having been there after a devastating earthquake several years ago, I saw some of the damage to many of the historic buildings. But, like London, Paris, and yes, also Berlin, Charleston recovered and is now a beautiful city to visit, and enjoy the "Southern Charm" of the city. Several excellent tours have been arranged for the 96th/385th BGs. See Y'all in Charleston.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

As I write this report, I am representing the 385th Bomb Group Association at the 8th Air Force Historical Society reunion in Tucson, Arizona and I send greetings from the warm and sunny desert country. At the same time, I am looking forward to joining you, the 385th BG Association members, at our upcoming reunion in October in Charleston, SC. If you haven't already signed up, please do so at your earliest convenience. The hotel reservation sheet and the Joint 96th and 385th Bomb Groups Reunion and Activities Form are included in this issue. Other program information was included in the April 2010 edition of the newsletter. Also a copy of the Registration Form was mailed to you in a separate mailing.

It is always a pleasure to be included in the *Hardlife Herald* and in this issue you can find me not only in this President's Message, but also in the pages that follow. I had the pleasure of spending some time at the end of June and beginning of July visiting London, Great Ashfield, Paris, Normandy and Perle, Luxembourg. This was my first visit to Great Ashfield and, I must say, the visit served to strengthen my sense of "belonging" to the 385th Bomb Group Association. I visited the chapel, walked the taxiways and runways at the airfield, and shared the experiences with my wife and grandchildren. We also visited the 385th BG Memorial Museum in Perle, Luxembourg and had a wonderful evening with Roger Feller. More about these experiences is included in this issue.

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

AN FAA FUGITIVE

by Charles W. Halper

When attending an Air Show at French Valley Airport in Temecula, CA, I came upon a strange little aircraft which was nothing more than a wing and a tail, and what looked like a lawn mower engine with a propeller attached to the wing. Nearby a sign read, "Ultra-light Flights \$25." This looked like too good of a deal to pass up, so this 86 year old juvenile plunked down his \$25, donned a Flight Suit, and climbed aboard the Co-Pilot's seat.

I told the pilot he wouldn't have to lighten up for me because I was an ex-military combat pilot. He gave me a big smile and said, "Let's get lost." When out of sight of the airport, the fun began.

Finding a deep valley, he began shooting touch and go landings on the dirt field. Then flying straight up, he shut off the engine, stalled, and we fell like a stone toward the ground. With very little altitude left, he restarted the engine and climbed to a level where he let me take the controls.

He said, "Do what you want, we've got a great big parachute aboard if we need it." I started into an

inverted flight but this glorified kite looked so flimsy., I chickened out. I did a wing-over instead, a spin, and some stalls. The pilot then took a look at his watch and announced, "Time to go home."

Back on the ground, I recalled the many types of aircraft in which I've flown: Military, Civilian, Helicopter, Sailplane, Hot Air Balloon, Even as Co-Pilot on the Goodyear Blimp.

Among them, I've always felt that only two deserved to be remembered as good, old fashioned fun machines: the Bi-plane and the Sailplane. However, after this day spent at French Valley Airport, I've decided to add a third.

The little Mickey Mouse so-called airplane—The "Ultra-light".



A FOURTH OF JULY TO REMEMBER

by Tom Gagnon

I have many memories of Fourth's of July past. However, this year's Fourth of July will hold a special place in my heart.

While on vacation with my wife and two of my grandsons, on the Fourth of July, I found myself at the American Cemetery at Omaha Beach in Normandy, France. We found a French High School Band performing somber, solemn music befitting the remembrance of those who lost their lives assaulting these Normandy beaches in pursuit of

freedom for those suffering from tyranny. This music was followed by the strains of The Star Spangled Banner and Le Marseillaise. Music to make you proud. Music to make you cry.

I wandered through many rows of white headstones reading the names of the dead, and the units they served in. I paused at those that read "UNKNOWN." My grandsons, Nathan and Justin, were touched by the solemnity of the place since many buried here were

only a few years older than they.

We walked to the overlook and watched the waves breaking on the sand below. It was a beautiful sight on this warm summer's day, but, how horrible it must have been on that Invasion Day.

At the Visitor Center, we watched the film clips, looked at the pictures and displays trying to understand in personal terms the enormity of the experience that was D-Day. The boys gravitated to the placards on the wall containing brief stories of individual experiences from that day. They captured the essence of the place, a place that compiles individual experiences, contributions and sacrifices of only a few of the hundreds of thousands of stories of that day, D-Day!

Leaving the Visitors Center, we encountered the words of General Mark Clark, Chairman of the American Battle Monuments Commission:

"If ever proof were needed that we fought for a cause and not for conquest it can be found in these cemeteries. Here was our only conquest: all we asked...was enough soil to bury our gallant dead."

No further words were necessary, but could not help but to say to my grandsons, "This is what they mean when they say that 'Freedom is not free'."

My grandsons, Nathan and Justin, were touched by the solemnity of the place since many buried here were only a few years older than they.



The American Cemetery at Omaha Beach in Normandy, France.

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 à 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-----

96th & 385th 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

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.

JOINT REUNION OF THE 96TH AND 385TH BOMB GROUPS REUNION 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. Your cancelled check will serve as your confirmation. Returned checks will be charged a \$20 fee. You may also register online and pay by credit card at www.afr-reg.com/96-385bg. All registration forms and payments must be received by mail on or before September 9, 2010. After that date, reservations will be accepted on a space available basis. All new registrations accepted at the reunion will be charged a \$10 onsite processing fee. 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.
322 Madison Mews
Norfolk, VA 23510
ATTN: 96th & 385th BG

OFFICE USE ONLY	
Check # _____	Date Received _____
Inputted _____	Nametag Completed _____

CUT-OFF DATE IS 9/9/10 REGISTRATION PACKAGE	Price Per	# of People	Total
Includes Wednesday evening banquet (entrée choice) and separate Bomb Group dinners on Thursday (chicken), along with misc. expenses (hospitality, entertainment, and administrative). Please select your entrée choice(s) for the banquet:			
NY Strip Loin	\$105		\$
Salmon	\$105		\$
TOURS			
TUESDAY: CITY TOUR	\$35		\$
TUESDAY: DINNER CRUISE	\$82		\$
WEDNESDAY: EIGHTH AIR FORCE MUSEUM	\$63		\$
THURSDAY: PATRIOTS POINT	\$41		\$
Total Amount Payable to Armed Forces Reunions, Inc.			\$

PLEASE PRINT NAME AS YOU WOULD LIKE IT TO APPEAR ON YOUR NAMETAG

FIRST _____ LAST _____

BOMB GROUP AFFILIATION _____ BOMB SQUADRON _____

SPOUSE NAME (IF ATTENDING) _____

GUEST NAMES _____

STREET ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

PH. NUMBER (____) _____ - _____ EMAIL ADDRESS _____ @ _____

DISABILITY/DIETARY RESTRICTIONS _____
(Sleeping room requirements must be conveyed by attendee directly with hotel)

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 (____) _____ - _____

ARRIVAL DATE _____ DEPARTURE DATE _____

ARE YOU STAYING AT THE HOTEL? YES NO ARE YOU FLYING? DRIVING? RV?
For refunds and cancellations please refer to our policies outlined at the bottom of the reunion program. **CANCELLATIONS WILL ONLY BE TAKEN MONDAY-FRIDAY 9:00am-5:00pm EASTERN TIME (excluding holidays).** Call (757) 625-6401 to cancel reunion activities and obtain a cancellation code. Refunds processed 4-6 weeks after reunion.

LETTER TO THE 385TH BGA MEMBERSHIP

As most of you know I, Bill Varnedoe, am the Historian of the 385th Bomb Group Association. I sort of fell into this position years ago when, from the U.S. National Archives, I requested and obtained copies of the folders of all the missions I had flown with the 385th Bomb Group. Included in most of these folders were the loading lists of all the crews for that mission. At time passed, I received many questions about the Group. Therefore, I decided to acquire additional information about the Group's wartime activities.

I live far from the National Archives located in Maryland, so I recruited an ally, Frank McCawley, who lives close to the archives, to help obtain additional Group information. Over time, Frank personally visited the Archives and copied the loading lists for the 296 missions of the 385th BG existing in the Archives files (one or two mission files were missing.) These lists now occupy three full drawers in my office. Obtaining these copies was not an easy job for Frank, as the protocol at the Archives is cumbersome, very strict, and time consuming.

With only the old and rare out-of-print Leonard Mardsen history of the 385th Bomb Group to reference, I tried to get Ian MacLachlan to write a 385th Bomb Group history. Although he was, by far, the most knowledge-

able person of the group, he begged off. At a reunion, I announced that I would tackle the job, and asked the members for their assistance and input. The result was the 385th Bomb Group history book published by Southern Heritage Press. It was not completely satisfactory and not many copies were printed. Later, based on this earlier book, and a good bit of "learning experience," I completely rewrote the history of the 385th Bomb Group in a new book, *The Story of Van's Valiants*. I only publish a few copies at a time, but I keep getting orders and an occasional input of crew pictures and nose art to add to it. This book was written to preserve our 385th BG history and to be a reference book. It is now in its 7th edition! I will mail out a copy for \$25.00 which barely covers the cost of printing and postage.

With this store of information, I was made the "official" Historian of the 385th Bomb Group. However, answering questions from members and others took, and still does, quite a bit of my time and involves searching through the files as the information was filed by mission number, not by an individual's name. Over three years, by using my two-fingered hunt-and-peck expertise, I loaded all of the loading lists that existed into an Excel spread sheet, together with the mission number,

the target, the crew list, the B-17 number, and other data. It now can be alphabetized and any airman can look up his combat record quickly. This information is on a CD. Providing me a blank CD and a stamped mailing envelope, a copy of is free to anyone.

This information is the core of our 385th Bomb Group Archives. As well as this info, I also have several drawers of photographs of crews and of individuals, of Great Ashfield, of our B-17s, and of the nose art. Also In these archives there are stories and individual logs about the missions and about the time living at Great Ashfield. These 385th Bomb Group Archives are not mine but belong to the 385th Bomb Group Association. The Association By-Laws state that in the event the Association is dissolved or there is no Association Historian or Archivist, all of this information will go to the "Mighty Eighth Air Force Museum" in Pooler, Georgia.

Now to the real purpose of this letter.

I just had my 87th birthday and I am feeling the results. It is clear, even to me, that my mind is not functioning like it used to be. My memory is atrocious. I am seriously thinking that I ought to resign and hope that we can we find some enthusiastic mentally alert 2nd or 3rd generation member to take over

as Historian? If no one steps up, although I may still hang on for a short time, I am considering sending the entire 385th Bomb Group Archives to the "Mighty Eighth Air Force Museum" in Pooler while I can still feebly function.

Let me warn any potential candidate for the 385th Bomb Group's Historian that it entails receiving, on average, from one to three e-mails or letters a month from relatives of 385th Bomb Group veterans. They generally do not know of our Association, but become aware of

it when they are browsing the web for information about their kin, often a father, grandfather, or uncle. In answer to their request I generally copy a section of a roster that applies to the 385th Bomb Group veteran. I also invite them to join our Association. These queries do not seem to be slowing down with time!! In addition to these queries from the 385th Bomb Group veteran's relatives, the Historians from other groups often correspond with me regarding some technical questions.

OK! Who wants the job of Historian of the 385th Bomb Group Association?? It is a demanding and time consuming job, but it also is a rewarding and satisfying job! The "thank you" responses you receive are heart-warming and well appreciated. For the new Historian, I will bundle up and send him/her all the 385th Bomb Group Archives, and I promise to work with that individual to acquaint him/her with these historical documents.

—Bill Varnedoe

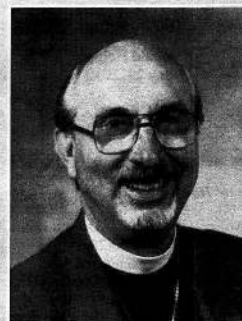
Taps

REV. JAMES H. VANCE

Rev. James H. Vance – Redmond, Washington died May 22, 2010 at age 89. James served as the Chaplain of the 385th Bomb Group Association for 15 years. James, an enlisted member of the Army Air Corps met his wife, Geri, in Spokane, WA on March 17, 1943; called her on phone for a date on March 18th; and proposed to her on March 19th. On May 16th, two months later they were married on May 16, 1943 by his father, Rev. Russell Vance. On May 16, 2010, James and Geri celebrated their 67th Wedding Anniversary.

Jim was a Line Chief for the 548th BS. Returning homes at wars end, James attended Western Evangelical Seminary in Oregon for five years. During his ministry

James served churches in Oregon, Idaho and Washington including 11 years at the First United Methodist Church in Seattle. Jim served as a volunteer chaplain for the Washington State Patrol and Seattle Fire Department. As a member of the Council of Churches, he started chaplaincy programs at hospitals in Portland and Seattle. James retired in 1986, and he and Geri moved to Emerald Heights in Redmond, WA. James is survived by his wife, Geri; sons Rod and Sid; and five grandchildren and three great-grandchildren.



ROGER FELLER - A FRIEND IN LUXEMBOURG

Roger Feller grew up with the war. He was born in 1937 in Luxembourg and learned to walk and talk while armies marched across Europe and air forces crisscrossed the skies. As a 7 year old, Roger would lie on his back in the field and watch as the bombers of the Mighty Eight Air Force passed in review above him on their way to bomb Germany. Some days more than a thousand bombers would pass by with swarms of fighters escorting.

On July 12, 1944, two B-17s of the 385th Bomb Group, on a mission to bomb Munich, collided over the skies of Luxembourg and crashed to the ground in Perle, a small farming village. Two crewmembers survived; the remaining 18 perished. One of the survivors was captured and became a POW; the other escaped with the help of the Belgian underground.

Roger's father was conscripted into the German army after Luxembourg was annexed by the Germans. Before he left, he told his family that they must save one bottle of wine to give to the first American soldier that came to liberate them. Roger

remembered his father's admonition and when the Americans arrived in September 1944, he chased a jeep down the dusty road waving the bottle of wine. In the back of the jeep hanging on to a machine gun was a big, black American GI. Roger recalled that this was the first black man he had ever seen and although he was a bit frightened, the GI's beaming smile encouraged Roger, and remembering his father's words, Roger chased the jeep until he caught the GI's attention and gave him the wine.

Shortly after the Americans arrived, Roger was drawn to the smell of bread baking in a field kitchen. There he was offered a piece of bread—the first white bread he had ever seen. Today, Roger jokes that the bread he ate when a boy, a hard, black bread, should have required you to carry a weapons permit since you could probably kill someone if you hit them over the head with it. He remembers running home to tell his mother that the Americans did not eat bread...they ate cake! He also remembers that a GI gave him his first piece of choco-

late. His mother told him it was good to eat, but instead of devouring it, he made it last two weeks, unwrapping it to take a little taste and then carefully re-wrapping it for another day.

The Battle of the Bulge raged around Perle from December 1944 through February 1945. Luxembourgers joke that Patton liked their country so much that he had to liberate it twice, once before, and again after the Battle of the Bulge.

Sixty-six years later, Roger and his fellow countrymen remember their American liberators fondly. And they remember those who gave their lives to the effort. A Memorial graces the Perle town square dedicated to the 18 flyers who lost their lives in that mid-air collision on July 12, 1944. The memorial also honors an airman from the 100th Bomb Group whose body was recovered nearby. Up the hill from the memorial is a museum dedicated to the 385th Bomb Group, filled with memorabilia collected from crash sites across Luxembourg, and items donated by surviving veterans of the 385th Bomb Group.

Only in America---do we use 'politics' to describe our processes so well: 'Poli' in Latin means 'many', and 'tics' means 'bloodsucking creatures'.

NEW WW II DOCUMENTARY PLANNED

Remembering The Fallen Heros Of The "Mighty Eighth" with Frenchman, Jean-Paul Favrais

by George Ciampa

Operating from England during World War II was the Eighth Air Force on daring daylight raids on German targets. After his retirement, a Frenchman, Jean-Paul Favrais, tirelessly researched U.S. aircraft crashes in France and has obtained names of many perished airmen from the U.S. Archives and matched them with the crash sites. This, in itself, is an amazing achievement.

Favrais continued with his pursuit locating nine families of these airmen through the internet and hosted them in France where they were escorted separately to the respective crash sites.

A proposed documentary will be a military/human interest story about the Eighth Air Force operations from England during 1943, 1944 and 1945. The "Mighty Eighth" suffered 28,000 killed and 56,000 casualties. The film will highlight Jean-Paul's relentless search of American aircraft crashes in France. His captivating stories will be told in this documentary. Included will be the experiences of families who visited the crash sites of their loved ones for closure. In this documentary we will see and hear from some of

the airmen themselves who lived through it... the Veteran Airmen of the "Mighty Eighth."

The father of Mrs. K. Stancliff was a B-17 pilot whose plane was hit by German anti aircraft fire. He ordered the crew to bail out and landed the plane on a farm with

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the trapped tail gunner still aboard. Local French farmers got them out of the burning plane, but shortly after, they became prisoners of the Germans and were taken to a hospital where the tail gunner had a leg amputated. This was in 1943. In 2006, sixty-three years later, Mrs. Stancliff was hosted by Favrais and she was brought to the farm where her father crash landed and met the

second and third generation families living there now. She visited the hospital where her father and the tail gunner were taken in 1943, and where they still have two airmen's hospital records.

In 1944 when Jean-Paul was nine years old, he saw a U.S. Eighth Air Force P-38 fighter plane crash near his home. He saw the pilot's body and never forgot the event. In retirement, he spearheaded a movement to build a granite monument shaped like the wing of the aircraft in memory of the P-38 pilot. Over sixty years later the monument was dedicated with American and French dignitaries present. Also in attendance were the pilot's sister and her son.

It is virtually unknown that the U.S. Air Force had more casualties, percentage-wise than any other branch of the U.S. Armed Services in WW II.

Funding is being sought to make this film possible. For further information, please contact:

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• gciampa@sbcglobal.net
LET FREEDOM RING—a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization; www.letfreedomringforall.org

Why didn't Noah swat those two mosquitoes?

LETTERS/E-MAILS

May 26, 2010

From: Robert F. Dorr <robert.f.dorr@cox.net>
Subject: Author, working on a book
To: fxmccawley@aol.com

I'm writing a book about the mission of February 3, 1945, where the Eighth Air Force dispatched 1,003 B-17 Flying Fortresses to Berlin and 434 B-24 Liberators to Magdeburg, escorted by 948 fighters. "Mission to Berlin" will be published by Zenith Press in March 2011. I'd like to hear from veterans who participated in this mission, including pilots, aircrew members, and ground support troops. This is an opportunity for your personal experience to find its way into a book for wide distribution, to help preserve the memory of all who served, and to tell this tale to a new generation of young readers.

Robert F. Dorr,
3411 Valewood Drive,
Oakton, VA 22124
(703) 264-8950

Note: For those 385th BG personnel, both crew and ground support, who participated in that mission, contact Mr. Dorr and tell him about your experience.

To: *Hardlife Herald*
Frank McCawley, Cheverly, MD

The Alabama Chapter of the Eighth Air Force Historical Officers were recently installed for the current year. They are Joy Dunlap, President; Chuck Bowman, VP; Mike Mitchell, Sec./Treas.; Bill Ray, Chaplain; and J. Hard, G. Taylor, C. McArthur, A. Ennis and B. Currie, board members.

President Dunlap completed 35 missions as a pilot with the 385th Bomb Group and continued an Air Force Career. He retired in 1968 with the rank of Lt. Col.

Mike Mitchell

Joy Dunlap, 1st Lt. 385th BG, 550th BS after completing his 35th mission



LETTERS/E-MAILS


**MIGHTY
EIGHTH**
AIR FORCE MUSEUM

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May 26, 2010

Mr. Frank McCawley, Editor
Hardlife Herald - 385th Bombardment Group (H)
2309 Cheverly Avenue
Cheverly, MD 20785

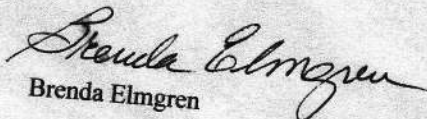
Dear Mr. McCawley,

It was wonderful to get a copy of Hardlife Herald and read your editorial. We are deeply honored that the 385th has so wonderfully supported the work on "our girl", the *City of Savannah*. The great donation from your group has enabled us to go forward with the restoration project in a timely manner.

It has become our habit here at the Museum, to look forward to Wednesdays, Fridays, and Saturdays – days when the volunteer crew will be here working on the aircraft. It is a time of great excitement. I wish each of you could be here to watch the progress. We recently had a visit from Dik Dasso, Director of Modern Aircraft, Smithsonian's National Air and Space Museum. He was, to a huge degree, responsible for the gift of the B-17 from NASM. He looked over the work that has been done on the restoration and he was very impressed. He made the comment that it would have taken NASM several years to make the same progress that we have made in a little over one year. He was very impressed with the volunteers and the care they are taking in restoring everything meticulously.

Thank you again for the generous support of the 385th Bomb Group, Please pass along the appreciation of all of us here at the Museum who are involved in honoring your past and preserving your legacy for future generations. Your encouragement and gifts mean more than you know.

Sincerely,


Brenda Elmgren

State of Georgia designated
Center for Character Education

Letters continue next page...

LETTERS/E-MAILS

To: Bill Varnedoe, Group Historian
385th Bomb Group Association

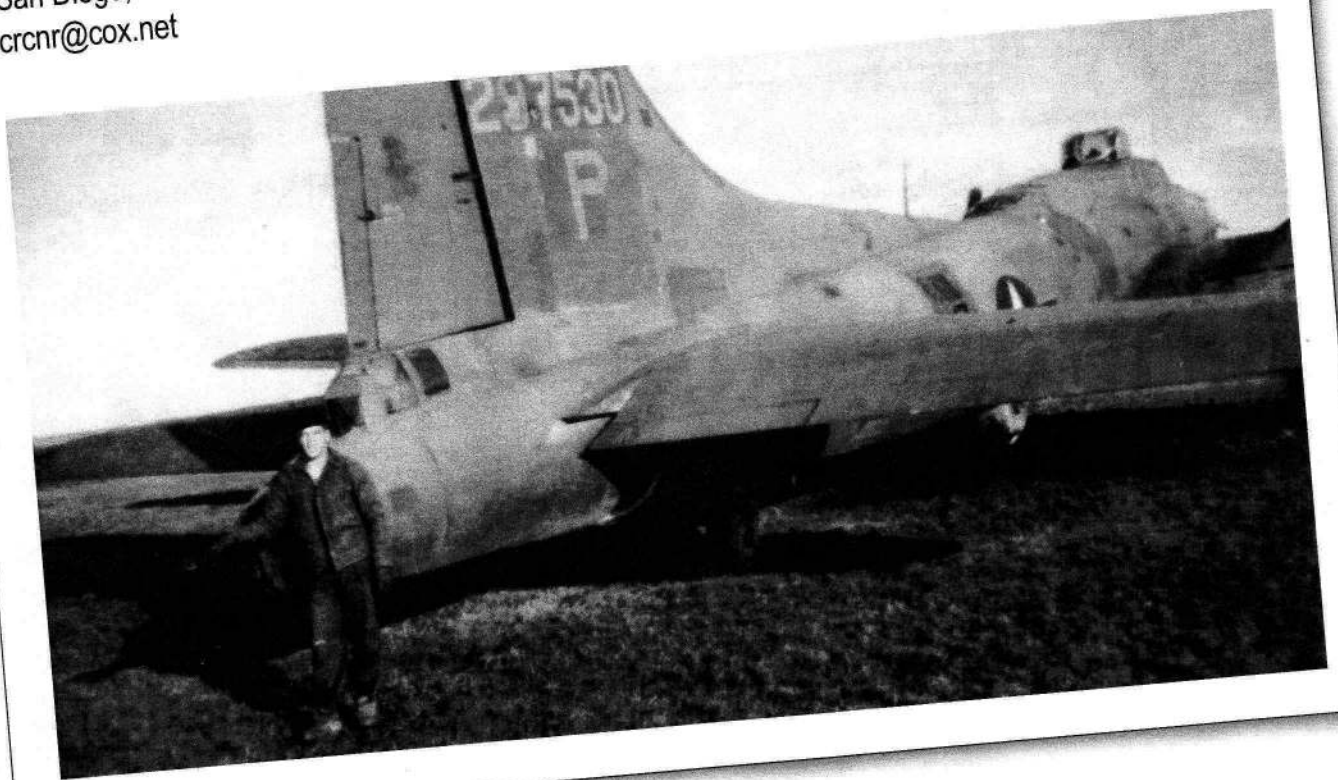
Hi Bill.

This is a photo of B-17G (Vega-Built), Serial No. (4)2-97530 of the 385th Bomb Group, taken by my father,
S/Sgt Herbert M. Covner of the 552nd Army Air Force Base Unit, circa March 1945 at his air base code-named "Apricot" near LeHavre, France.

I recall him saying that the B-17 had emergency landed at "Apricot" and wasn't deemed worthy of repair and was left on the field. (It does look very worn in the photos.) He also said he and his pals would occasionally

run up the engines and taxi the fort around, and that one lieutenant scared the dickens out of them by revving the tired engines and starting down the runway (4500 feet long with a drop off a cliff toward the ocean at the end) in a mock take off.

Craig R. Covner
7718 Laramie Court
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Taps

Floyd D. Reinken – Indianapolis, IN died May 30, 2010 at the age of 90. Floyd was a waist gunner on the Homer P. Groening crew and a member of the 549th BS. Floyd flew 35 missions from June 7, 1944 to October 5, 1944 on several different planes stationed at Great Ashfield, some of which were the Duchess, Rum Dum, etc. Retiring in 1984, Floyd was an optician for White-Haines Optical. Floyd attended many 385th BG Reunions including more than one to England. He was a member of the Southeastern Church of Christ. He is survived by his wife of 62 years, Evelyn, a daughter Judy Oakley, two grandchildren, and many nieces and nephews.

—submitted by his Son-in-Law Bruce Oakley

Jim Mulder – Jim was born in Brooklyn, NY. Upon the death of his mother, Jim (age four) lived with his uncle Wilhelm De Wolf's family in Holland, returning to New York in 1934. Jim's sister, Alice, lived in Rotterdam until 1946, and during the war she harvested tulip bulbs for food. After attending Queens College, Jim enlisted in the Army Air Corps in 1942 and received a commission as a bombardier/navigator and assigned to the 549th Bomb Squadron. On his twelfth and last mission, October 6, 1944, Jim's plane, Back in the Sack, was lost along with 10 other 549th BS planes. Jim was a volunteer at the 8th Air Force Museum.

Thomas L. Hair—Ft. Myers, FL died June 16, 2010.

Tom was a waist gunner on the Ohio Air Force under the command of Lt. Richey.

—by Thomas W. Hair, PhD

James (Duke) Skophammer – Waist gunner/Togglier with the Lamping crew. Jim flew 35 missions with the 385th Bomb Group.

—from 8th Air Force News, June 2010

Wesley R. Brown – Cheyenne, WY died peacefully May 1, 2020 at age 87. Wes was born in Pueblo, CO, and upon graduating from Pueblo Central HS enlisted in the armed services in 1942. Wes flew as a waist gunner with the 385th and on March 18, 1944 his plane was hit by enemy fire and he and his crew were forced to bail out. He was captured and held captive as a German POW for six weeks before being liberated by Russian forces. Graduating in 1949 as an associate in business, Wes managed commercial properties until his retirement in 2001. He is survived by two sons, Leslie and Gerald; daughter, Beverly Catalano; six grandchildren; and numerous nieces and nephews.

—submitted by Leo LaCasse

George Menkoff – Tulsa, OK died July 8, 2010 at age 90. George was a corporal loading the bombs on the 385th BG aircraft. Upon being discharged from the army, George attended dental school at the University of Missouri in Kansas City, MO. During the Korean War, George was a Navy Lt. serving as the dentist on a destroyer tender, USS Hammel. George was a dentist in Tulsa for 54 years, and did gratis work providing dental service to the inmates of the local jail. He enjoyed tutoring young students in algebra. He also was the wrestling coach at the recreation center where he developed a program for boys. He was a member of the Trinity United Methodist Church and sang in their choir. He also sang barbershop in the Founders Chorus of Tulsa. George is survived by his wife, Maria, son, David, daughter, Barbara Harris and brother, Eugene Menkoff.

—submitted by granddaughter Barbara Harris

385th BGA

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HAYBAG ANNIE

by Bill Varnedoe

This is the story of the 385th Bomb Group's aircraft 42-97280, the plane known as "*Haybag Annie*".

The aircraft had been transferred to the 385th BG with "Haybag" painted on the nose. On our field (Great Ashfield), an English Red Cross worker, Annie Hayward, was a very talented artist. During the 385th Bomb Group's residence at Great Ashfield, she painted the

nose art pictures and names on many of the 385th Bomb Group's planes. After some persuasion, Annie agreed to add "Annie" to "Haybag" on **280, thus the name "Haybag Annie" was born. In addition to the new name, Annie painted a self portrait on the aircraft.

It was in good fun as a play on Annie's name as Annie was well loved and admired by the members

of the 385th Bomb Group. But it was more than fun as the B-17 Flying Fortress 42-97280, "Haybag Annie," served the 385th Bomb Group honorably through VE Day.

However, we often wondered if the fellow from the other Group, who originally named it "*Haybag*," ever saw or knew about its new nose art.