

Hardlife



Herald



Newsletter of the  
385th Bombardment Group Association

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

*The Mighty Eighth*

Vol. 25 Number 2

September, 2008



**385<sup>TH</sup> BGA REUNION • CINCINNATI, OH • AUGUST 18-23, 2009**

# Hardlife Herald

## 385<sup>th</sup> Bombardment Group (H)

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

### Officers and Board Members

#### PRESIDENT

Albert (Al) Audette  
279 Washington St.  
Woburn, MA 01801  
(781) 933-5316  
[AFAud@aol.com](mailto:AFAud@aol.com)

\* AFHS CONTACT [fxmccawley@aol.com](mailto:fxmccawley@aol.com)

#### VICE PRESIDENT

Thomas Gagnon  
50 Bonnie Lane  
Tewksbury, MA 01876 (S)  
814 Staffordshire  
Sun City, FL 33573 (W)  
(813) 394-0338 (C)  
[Teg00@aol.com](mailto:Teg00@aol.com)

#### TREASURER

Chuck Smith  
P. O. Box 329  
Alpharetta, GA 30009  
(404) 683-2896  
[chucksmith@smithindustrialsales.com](mailto:chucksmith@smithindustrialsales.com)  
\* LIFE MEMBER CONTACT

Vincent W. Masters

389 Westview Drive  
Athens, GA 30606  
(706) 546-1324  
[jayvymasters@yahoo.net](mailto:jayvymasters@yahoo.net)

vacant

Lindley R. Weikert  
6155 Grand Vista Ave.  
Cincinnati, OH 45213-1719  
(513) 731-7116 (H)  
(513) 477-2774 (C)  
[Lweikert@fuse.net](mailto:Lweikert@fuse.net)

#### EDITOR HH

Frank X. McCawley  
2309 Cheverly Ave.  
Cheverly, MD 20785  
(301) 773-1278 (H)  
(301) 467-0609 (C)

#### SECRETARY

John W. Hyatt  
6754 East Eagle Crest Drive  
Flagstaff, AZ 86004  
[jwhyatt823595@aol.com](mailto:jwhyatt823595@aol.com)

#### PAST PRESIDENT

W. (Bill) W. Varnedoe  
5000 Ketova Way  
Huntsville, AL 35803  
(256) 881-3288  
[billvar@comcast.net](mailto:billvar@comcast.net)  
\* 385<sup>th</sup> HISTORIAN &  
ARCHIVIST

Verne Phillips

P.O. Drawer 5970  
Austin, TX 78763  
(512) 458-1359  
[merlinphil@aol.com](mailto:merlinphil@aol.com)

Leslie L. Reichardt

4128 Willowbrook  
Liverpool, NY 13090-2327  
(315) 652-3182  
[Lreich7080@aol.com](mailto:Lreich7080@aol.com)

Susan Stern Fineman

13400 Cheltenham Dr.  
Sherman Oaks, CA 91423  
(818) 789-4097 (H)  
(818) 802-9924 (C)  
[tandfineman@aol.com](mailto:tandfineman@aol.com)

### Consultants to the Board

Leo L. LaCasse USAF, Ret.  
4911 Hunting Hill Ct.  
Roanoke, VA 24018  
540-772-1907

[shnevoegel@aol.com](mailto:shnevoegel@aol.com)

### \* MONUMENTS, MEMORIALS AND ANNIVERSARIES

#### Past Presidents

*Ruel G. Weikert	'56-'72	Sam Lyke	'89-'90
*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 Nysethler    Mayor Ferdinand Unsen

## Table of Contents

### Page

2	Covers/Editorial/Officers and Board Members
3	President's Message
4	The Jeep
5	Life with My War Bride and The Very First Hot Air Balloon Flight
6	John F. Pettenger Obituary
7	Village Near Great Ashfield
8-11	385th BGA Reunion in Savannah, Georgia
12-17	Letters/E-Mails
18-19	Taps

## FRONT COVER

Floral tribute placed at Madingley American Cemetery by Ian MacLachlan at a Memorial Day Ceremony. Arrangement was requested and paid for by the Masari family to honor the 385th Bomb Group.

## EDITORIAL

The picture of the 385th Bomb Group flag as shown in the Volume 25 Number 1, April, 2008 issue of the Hardlife Herald is incorrect. I regret the error. The flag, now hanging on the wall of the entrance rotunda of the Mighty Eighth Museum in Savannah, GA, shows both the Square "G" and the Checkerboard design of the 385th BG planes, the 385th Bomb Group insignia patch, and the name of the group. It is mounted in the museum rotunda with the flags of all The Mighty Eighth's units.

The 385th Bomb Group Association's Reunion was held in conjunction with the 8th Air Force Historical Society's reunion, in Savannah, Georgia. As usual the 385th was well represented by both 385th BG veterans and wives, and many Second Generation members. Our Unit meeting recognized those members who had flown their Final Fly-By. Our Rendezvous dinner was honored by the attendance of Colonel Lux Lexion and Sr.M/Sgt Rick Sutherland, both from 8th Air Force Headquarters, who provided us with the current mission(s) of the 8th Air Force. Again Chuck Smith provided the refreshments for the 385th BG Association's Hospitality Room. Again it was well attended by 385th BGA members and families, and visitors from other associations.

---

# PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Minutes of 385th Bombardment Group Association

Annual Business Meeting

Wednesday, August 6, 2008

**At 0815 hours, President Al Audette called the meeting to order.**

Nominations for officers for the 2009/10 years were presented as follows:

**President:** Thomas Gagnon (2nd generation)

**Vice President:** unknown at this time (TBD)

**Secretary:** John W. Hyatt

**Treasurer:** Chuck Smith (second generation)

**Editor Hardlife Herald:** Frank X. McCawley

**Members of the Board:** Vincent W. Masters, Vern D. Philips, Leslie L. Reichardt, Lindley R. Wickert (2nd generation), and Susan Stern Fineman (2nd generation).

A motion was made, seconded and passed, to accept all those nominated. Thomas Gagnon (second generation) was nominated and unanimously elected President of the 385th Bomb Group Association beginning in the year 2009. He graciously accepted.

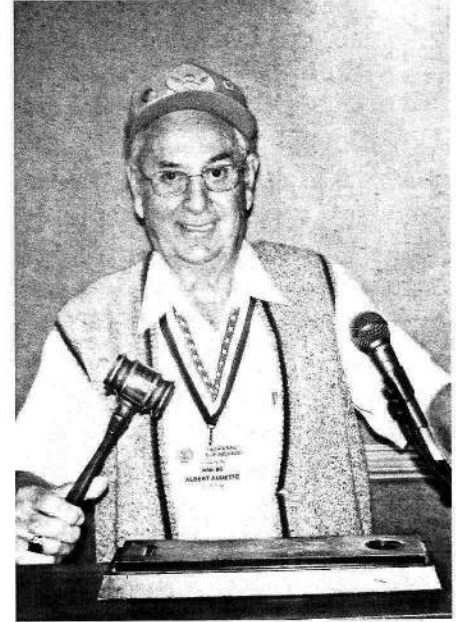
Chuck Smith (second generation), Treasurer, gave his report and stated that we are in good shape financially. A motion was made, and seconded, to accept his report, and was approved by the members.

Chuck also provided a POW/MIA flag to be displayed in our Hospitality Suite with the flags previously presented to the 385th BGA by Art Driscoll and Leo LaCasse.

After a discussion about publishing four issues of the Hardlife Herald over the three approved last year, a motion was made to return to the publication of four issues of the HH for next year, as our Treasurer indicated that we can afford the expense. The motion was seconded and accepted.

Our Vice President, Tom Gagnon presented a report on his recent trip to Perle, Luxembourg as our 385th BGA representative. He was well received and given the most enthusiastic welcome by the people of Perle. He visited the Museum dedicated to the 385th BG, and saw that it had been enlarged to accept any of our memorabilia. He was presented with a memento of his visit which was on display in our Hospitality Suite.

In the absence of our Secretary, John Hyatt, the minutes were taken by Barbara Holzhan. She also passed out small folded flags, similar to those sent to our troops in Iraq. Barbara also read the following tribute written by her father:



## The Sun Will Shine Again

As you look down upon my grave  
Do not weep or cry, because I  
am not there.  
Instead look skyward,  
For that is where I will be, in  
the wild blue yonder.

We paid tribute to those members who had died in 2008. They are:

**William A. Wesley** – Jan.;  
**Thomas Kelly** – Jan.;  
**Harold G. Cleary** --Feb.;  
**Robert C. Reeve** – Feb.;  
**Robert Smith** – March;  
**Jerome Mudge** – March;  
**Fain Poole** – May;  
**Jack Surratt** – May;  
**John Pettenger** – June;  
**Archibald Gavin** – July.

The meeting was closed at 0930.

---

---

## THE JEEP

### A Tool That Won The War

Abstracted from an Article by Bob Lassahn

The current "Jeep," now a recognized trademark of the Chrysler Corporation, includes numerous sports utility models with four wheel drive capability for the "off road" crowd, and also includes a range of luxury items suitable for the family.

The word "Jeep" has become a generic term applied to many vehicles, but today's vehicles can trace their lineage to a vehicle affectionately known as "the hero of World War II." It is only proper that we remember this unsung hero that accompanied our troops in all theaters of WW II.

In 1939 the Army began looking for a replacement for the motorcycle and sidecar dating back to WW I. Such equipment was just not up to standards, and the military issued a list of priorities to American car makers for what would eventually become the "Jeep." The specifications set by the Quartermaster Corps on July 7, 1940 called for a vehicle with: a wheelbase of 80 inches, a maximum height of 40 inches, a maximum weight of 1,275 pounds, and a speed of 50 mph on a hard surface. In addition the specs required a driving front wheel axle with two speed transfer case and provision for disengaging the front axle drive; a body of rectangular design with a folding windshield and three bucket seats; increased engine power; means for towing; a 30 caliber machine gun mount; blackout lights; and

other specifics.

Of some 135 companies invited to submit designs only three responded: Ford Motor Company, Willys-Overland and American Bantam Car Company. The first prototype, the Bantam Pilot was built for the Department of the Army by American Bantam followed by two other prototypes, the Ford Pygmy and the Willys Quad. The Ford layout would eventually become the design accepted, the Willys major asset was its 60 horsepower "Go Devil" engine. However the Willys submission was over the specified weight limit. The American Bantam design did not meet the Army's torque requirements, and the Army also felt the company was too small to supply the quantity of vehicles necessary, and they allowed Willys and Ford to modify their designs. During the bidding process for 16,000 vehicles, Willys-Overland was the low bidder and was awarded the initial contract. It designed the standardized "jeep", designating it a model MB military vehicle and began building them in Toledo, OH.

Concerns about Willys also being a small company unable to produce large quantities of jeeps, and also causing concern that Willys had only one plant and thus making it more susceptible to sabotage and other production stoppages, the government required that the vehicles also be built by Ford

who designated the vehicle as model GPW ('G'=Government vehicle, 'P'=80 inch wheelbase, and 'W'=Willys design. The two companies produced more than 600,000 Willys MB and Ford GPW vehicles. During WW II "Jeeps" were coming out of the two plants at a rate of one every one and half minute.

There is controversy regarding how the vehicle came to be known as "jeep" and it is difficult to verify any certainty of the name. The most popular account is that it bore GP for Government Purposes or General Purpose which when spoken phonetically slurred into "jeep." Still it is speculated that the soldiers were so impressed with the new vehicle they named it after "Eugene, the Jeep," the cartoon character from the "Popeye" comic strip as both the cartoon character and the rugged vehicle shared the same attributes of solving problems and could go anywhere.

Willys-Overland was eventually awarded ownership of the "Jeep" name and introduced the first Civilian Jeep. The Jeep operation has changed through many companies and the vehicle appearing in showrooms today are now produced by the Chrysler Holding LLC. Toledo, OH has been the headquarters of the Jeep marquee since its inception. Although not produced in the same factory as the WW II originals, two streets in the area are named Willys Parkway and Jeep Parkway.

---

## LIFE WITH MY WAR BRIDE

H Ilger

VE DAY! The war is over! The Squadron (551) is flying out. I chose to stay, help clean up the base, and spend more time with my girl, Nesta. We were married in July, had three days for a honeymoon, very little money, and I did not have a pass.

In August, I was on the Queen Elizabeth heading home. In September, I was a civilian and in October, I had a job. Nesta arrived in February aboard the Queen Mary along with thousands of war brides, and we had another short honeymoon.

I continued to work, but Nesta was bored staying home, so she got a job. Wishing to

complete my college studies, I asked what prominent college she had heard of. She said Harvard, and so I went there. Nesta obtained a job at the only Radio Shack in Boston. She worked and saved, while I studied and cooked. We sent for her mother. Then Nesta had Susan. And I got a job.

We bought a Ford in 1949, a house in 1950, and in 1951 Paul was born. In 1955 I became president of the school PTA, had a hernia operation, quit my job with the Boston MTA for a Think Tank in California, and Nesta had Jane. A very busy year!

We moved to California and found a place to live. However,

we returned to Massachusetts to sell the house. Then we bought a car and drove across America. Eventually we bought a larger house, and Nesta had Sally. And we took long vacations with the kids.

When all the kids finished college, Nesta got a job, we saved a lot, I invested, and we travelled. We took cruises, visited my folks in Florida, visited her relations in England, bought a condo in Hawaii, and visited more countries in Europe.

Now the kids have jobs and their own kids.

And Nesta has taken one more trip, alone.

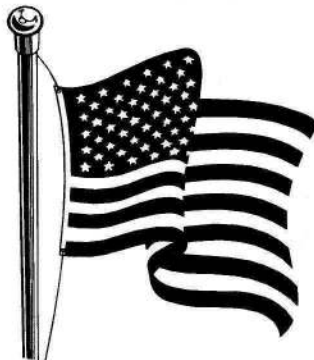
---

## “The Very First Hot Air Balloon Flight”

On June 5, 1783, brothers Joseph and Jacques Montgolfier launched the very first hot air balloon. The brothers discovered that heated air pushed into a bag would allow the bag to rise and stay afloat. They demonstrated their findings by launching a bag some

three thousand feet into the air where it remained for ten minutes. Not long after, the brothers gave a public demonstration in their hometown of Annonay, France, by launching a balloon and basket containing a sheep, a duck and a rooster some 6,000 feet into the air. In atten-

dance at this demonstration were King Louie XVI and Marie Antoinette. The balloon landed safely about two miles away with no harm to the animals. The brothers went on to further develop their findings.



---

---

## JOHN F. PETTENGER

John F. Pettenger, (1921 - 2008), was Treasurer of the 385th Bomb Group Association from 1975 to 1997, 22 years through many Association administrations. John was a strong supporter of the Association and attended many Association Reunions. Captain John Pettenger was the pilot of the Vibrant Virgin, and he and his crew were shot down on October 11, 1943. To the right is a photo of the Pettenger crew taken in front of the Vibrant Virgin on August 11, 1943. John is the 2nd from the left in the front row. Others in the photo are: CP-Ernest M. Bemis; N-David S. Leventhal; B-William P. Dorney; TTG-Robert P. Lewis; RO-Olin L. Wieneke; BTG-James H. Brown; TG-Donald E. Sanburn; WGL-Harry C. Rudberg

and WGR-John C. Leary.

John is survived by his wife, Ruth, two daughters, Cheryl Hiller and Gail Geiger, and two sons, John and Jim.

(Editor's Note: The position of the other members of the crew in the photo are unknown. If any current member of the Association can identify any of the crew, please provide the Editor with this information.)



Information provided by Bill Varnedoe and Roger Feller

Picture provided by Bill Varnedoe

---

1. Women and cats will do as they please. Men and dogs should relax and get used to the idea.

2. Official sign near a door: "Door Alarmed." Hand painted sign nearby: "Window frightened."

3. "No children allowed!" — On the wall of a maternity ward.

4. The most pathetic person in the world is someone who has sight but has no vision. — Helen Keller

5. In order to keep a true perspective of one's importance,

everyone should have a dog that will worship him and a cat that will ignore him.

6. "Persons are prohibited from picking flowers from any graves but their own." — Sign in a Pennsylvania cemetery.

7. "30 years on the same spot." — Sign of a long-established New Mexico dry cleaner.

8. Did you ever notice that when you put the two words 'The' and 'IRS' it spells "Theirs."

9. Drive carefully. It's not only the cars that can be recalled by their maker.

10. The math teacher saw that little Davie wasn't paying attention in class. She called on him and said, "Davie! What are 2 and 4 and 28 and 44?" Little Davie quickly replied, "NBC, CBS, HBO, and the Cartoon Network."

11. Long ago when men cursed and beat the ground with sticks, it was called witchcraft. Today, it's called golf.

12. Thought for the Day: "May you always have Love to Share, Health to Spare, and Friends that Care"

---

---

## VILLAGE NEAR GREAT ASHFIELD

by Bill Varnedoe

Once when I was standing down, not flying that day, I borrowed a bicycle and rode about the country side near the Great Ashfield base. I took my camera and took a few pictures to send home to the family. I still have those pictures, some of which are enclosed.

Recently I received a request from Paul Welch, a member of the 385th Bomb Group Association, asking if I had any 1944-45 photos of villages near

Great Ashfield. I e-mailed him copies of those village pictures, but told him that I had no idea of where I was at that time, just nearby.

Next thing I knew was that he had put them in an English newspaper with a request by the readers for identification of the locations. They appeared in the East Anglian Daily Times, dated April 16, 2008. Several readers responded identifying the town as being the village of

Haughley, and giving the names of the specific residents of the pictured houses, and the street names where they were located.

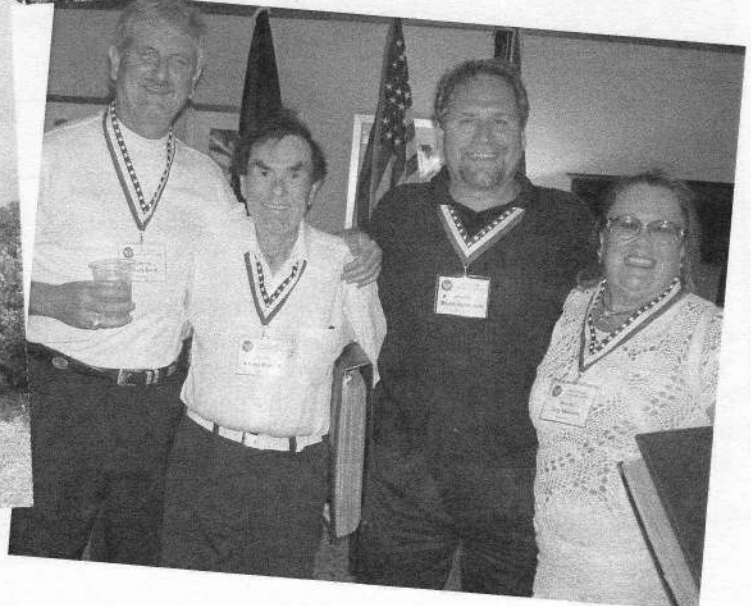
It took 63 years, but I can now label my pictures. I am sure that many of 385th BG veterans remember Haughley, see pictures below, which is south of Great Ashfield, near Stowmarket.



Note: Your editor has some fond memories of Haughley. When not on alert to fly the following day, several members of our barracks would organize a bicycle trip to the "pub" in town. Attached to the barracks wall was a "formation" plan of "crews" going to town, with each "crew" assigned a specific place in the formation. Those "flying" to town would circle our cycles into formation and proceed out the back gate. Arriving at the target, many members of the formation were shot down by fighters (girls) and others lost to flak ('alf & 'alf). Most of us "flew" home alone! And some had to "ditch" their "planes" along the road due to flak.

I would wager that Haughley was never the same after the 385th BG left Great Ashfield.

# 385th BGA REUNION IN SAVANNAH, GA

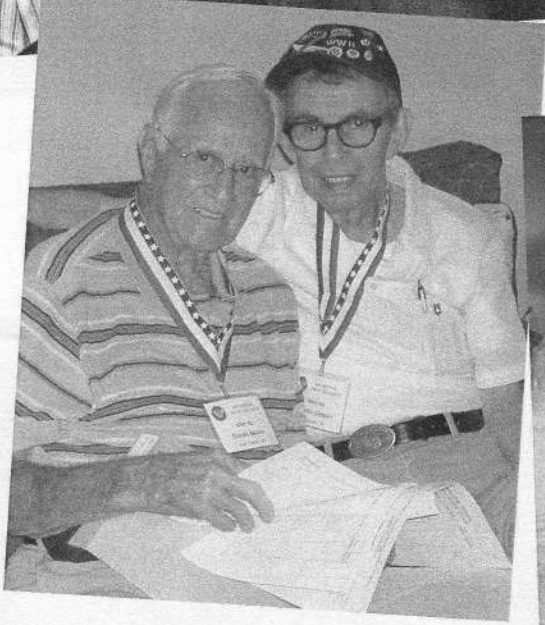
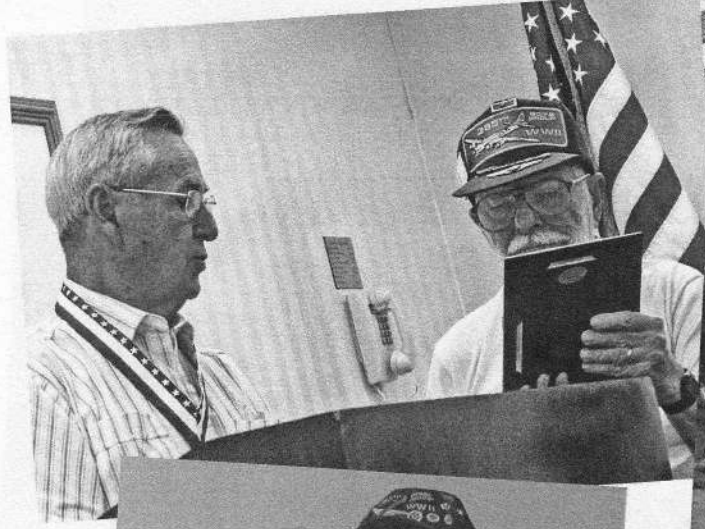




# 385th BGA REUNION IN SAVANNAH, GA

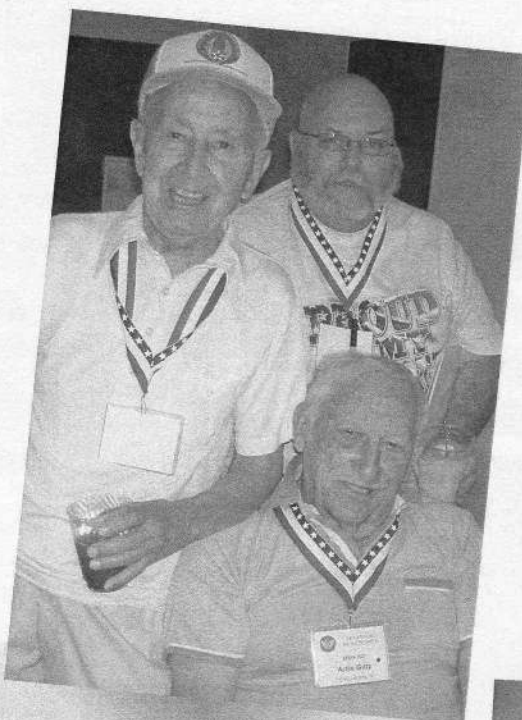


IRVING GARFINKLE 385 BG BOMBARDIER	ROSS M BLAKE PILOT B-17 385 BG POW COLONEL RET USAF	MASTER'S CREW LULU BELLE 551 SQ 385 BG	LT RALPH A 548 SQ PILOT
CAPT JOHN E RJ 385 BG OHIO AIR	PHILIP BOMSER 549 SQ	LT FRANK CRAWFORD 551 SQ 385 BG	CAPT WILLIAM 385 BG NAVY
LT ARNOLD ST 385 BG 54	H MURREY 590 SQ	TSGT DARWIN MUSHRUSH 385 BG SEPT 1921-APRIL 1994	PFC ROBERT 548 SQ
ES REICHARDT JCC LEGENSBURG 8-11-43	ELD JR LCOL 385 BG REW OF "RUSTY LOAD"	CAPT ROBERT M MCGHEE 385 BG 551 SQ POW	MSGT JOHN 551 SQ
B POTTER SQ	TSGT THOMAS HAIR 385 BG 549 SQ	TSGT CHARLES 385 BG	
385 BG EC 43	TSGT FRANK X MCCAWLEY 385 BG 549 SQ "RAGGEDY ANN"	LT ARTHUR M 385 BG 5	
HOFF G	ILT WARREN B DIEDERICH 385 BG PILOT B-17	LT A H WIEGAND SCHLEYS CREW 385	



---

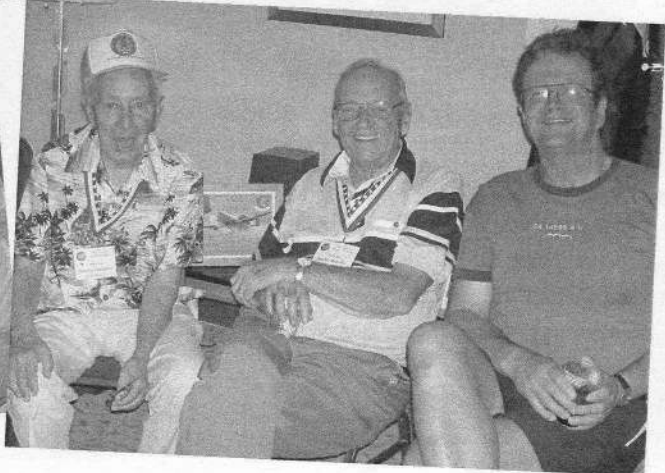
# 385th BGA REUNION IN SAVANNAH, GA



# 385th BGA REUNION IN SAVANNAH, GA



LT ROBERT M SILVER PILOT 385 BG NOV '44 - MAY '45	LES REICHARDT LCOL-RET REGENSBURG 8-17-43 POW	A L BENEFIELD JR LCOL PILOT & CREW OF "RUS"
CAPTAIN PAUL C MARINCE 385 BG 550 SQ PILOT	TSGT MICHAEL KINDYA 385 BG 548 SQ	SSGT THOMAS B I 385 BG 548
JOHN PETTENDER CREW "VIBRANT VIRGIN" POW'S	TSGT ALBERT AUDETTE 385 BG 548 SQ	L COL ARCH BENNER 549 SQ CO DEC '42 -
L W GUNNER "RAUNCHY WOLF" WE NEVER TURNED BACK 385 BG	SSGT FRANCIS MOLL 385 BG 549 SQ	SSGT HOWARD V WERL 550 SQ 385
TSGT LEWIS E CHINN 385 BG 20 MISSIONS POW	ILT CARL M GRUNDLER 548 SQ 385 BG	SSGT OSCAR WINNI 385 BG 550 S



## LETTERS/E-MAILS

To: Hardlife Herald  
Attn. Frank McCawley  
From: Joy Dunlap\*\*\*  
Subject: Aircraft Ramming (Burich) 7 April 1945

I was assigned the "Stork Club" as my primary aircraft, but I do not have a record of what (aircraft) I was flying on that mission. Barich was behind me in the low element on my port side. My ball gunner was the first to alert us as to the incoming fighter. An explosion took place and I felt an upward jolt to my aircraft. Both the tail and ball gunners were temporarily blinded from the fireball. As I looked over my left shoulder I saw an engine with the cowling and the prop still turning come over the outboard area of my port wing and fall below my field of vision.

The photo of the aircraft breaking-up in the December 2007 Hardlife Herald (page 9) could hardly be 8794 as there was not that much wreckage of the aircraft remaining, and the photo shows all four engines attached. I had, and still have, no idea of what engine that I saw falling off my port wing.

My ball turret gunner, Bruce Carol, lives in Mobile, Alabama and confirms my observations, and remembers the German fighter pilot being slumped over in his cockpit prior to the impact. Upon landing our after-flight-inspection with crew chief, Sgt Moody, revealed the aft fuselage of our aircraft was scorched from the heat of the fireball.

My Form 5 shows we were logged for 8 hours 20 minutes for this mission, and my personal briefing log confirms my recollection of the event described above.

Regards,

Joy Dunlap, Lt. Col, USAF (Ret)  
\*\*\* Pilot, 385th Bomb Group, 550th Bomb Squadron --1944/1945

From: mheard - (Mike Heard)  
To: billvar - Bill Varnedoe  
Subject: Great Ashfield Visit

Bill,

My wife and I were in Great Ashfield on May 5th (2008) and spent the day just driving and walking and looking. We had lunch at the Fox Inn in Elmswell and saw the Memphis Belle picture that you and others signed when you were there in a reunion visit years ago. It was a terrific trip! I believe that you told me that you have a broadband connection, so I am sending you a file with just a few photos that we took when in Great Ashfield. When I finish resizing the others, I will send them also if you would be interested. If there is someone else that you would like to forward them please feel free to do so, or send me the address and I will send the package to them. Let me know if these photos don't come through and I will zip them or break them down into smaller packages.

By way, I did join the 385th BGA as an Associate.  
I hope this finds you well.

Mike Heard

*continued on page 13*

# LETTERS/E-MAILS

*continued*

From: billvar  
To: mheard:  
Subject: Great Ashfield Visit

They (pictures) all came through fine! Thanks! You might want to send them to the Hardlife Herald editor. He may want to put one or two in the newsletter. His e-mail is: fxmccawley@aol.com.  
Glad to have you aboard.

Bill

From: mheard  
To: fxmccawley (Frank Mc.)

Frank,  
Bill Varnedoe suggested that I forward some pictures of our recent trip to Great Ashfield to you. Please let me know if you need anything else on these.  
My father was Lyman Heard, Navigator in the 550th Bomb Squadron (Lancaster's crew.)

Mike



*Entrance to Great Ashfield*



*B-17 wall in Fox Inn in Great Ashfield*

## LETTERS/E-MAILS

From: billvar  
To: fxmccawley  
Subject: Rum Dum

I am attaching a couple of pictures of the fate of Rum Dum to add to Roy Jillson's story in the April (2008 issue) Hardlife Herald.

After landing, Howard Muchow insisted on obtaining a receipt from the local CO for the B-17 (Rum Dum) before leaving it in British hands. Howard told me, when he returned to Great Ashfield, the FIRST question he was asked was, "Will Rum Dum fly again?" The SECOND question asked was, "Was anybody hurt?"

Later Rum Dum was patched-up and flown to France where it was further repaired. Then it was flown back to England, but on landing the wheels collapsed and it suffered further damage.

### The end of Rum Dum



Located in Honington, England, it was then salvaged. Thus, indeed that was Rum Dum's last mission.

From: billvar  
To: fxmccawley  
Subject: Animated B-17 Cockpit

Please print the following URL in the Hardlife Herald. Our readers will enjoy playing it as if in a cockpit of the plane. Using your mouse, you can look up and down, and all around. It is really enjoyable!!!

[http://www.lgproductions.com/Pano/B-17cockpit\\_CD.html](http://www.lgproductions.com/Pano/B-17cockpit_CD.html)

## LETTERS/E-MAILS

From: ianm385bg@btopenworld.com (Ian MacLaughlan)  
To: fxmccawley (Frank)  
RE: Cambridge Cemetery

Frank,

Just to let you know that we represented the 385th during the Memorial Day Ceremony at Madingley (American Cemetery) on 26th May, and placed a floral tribute which was paid for - as on previous occasions - from funds I received from the Massari family to honor the Group. Sue and I had previously paid for such tributes ourselves, but the generosity of the Massari family in memory of Louis Massari means we only need to cover the travel costs, however, this is the least we can do. My daughter and future son-in-law also attended and will take over when I am too old, so the 385th will have friends attending the ceremony for many years to come.

Unfortunately, the weather was almost as bad as last year - pouring with rain, cold, strong winds - a typical British Bank Holiday. The B-17 "Sally B" was unable to make the fly-by owing to a sick engine, but there was a spirited contribution from a B-25 and a KC-135 from RAF Mildenhall while F-16 Cs from Lakenheath saluted with the "missing man" formation.

I am sending a photograph of the wreath on a separate e-mail.

Take care, Ian

Editor's Note: I and the 385th BGA owe Ian and his family a great deal of appreciation for representing our Association during the Memorial Day Ceremony at Madingley. And we also thank the Massari family for their generous contributions over the years to honor both their family and the 385th Bomb Group. The front cover of this issue is a photo of the floral tribute.

From: ms\_graham@msn.com (Steve Graham)  
To: billvar, fxmccawley, jvmudge

Dear Sirs,

I was formerly a member of the 385th Bombardment Group Memorial Association. I had an Associate membership through my father, Donald S. Graham (Sgt. Right waist gunner on the crew of Pilot-Lt. Jerry Stalcup 548th Sqdn. 385th Bomb Group). It has been some time since I have received any information from the Association and I was wondering if it still exists. The main reason for my writing is to inform you that my father passed away on May 7, 2008. He would have been 83 years old on May 25th. I think he was the last surviving member of his crew. In 1994 I took him over to visit the air base in Great Ashfield and we had a great time...lots of memories. Although through the years he and I and my sons attended many air shows together, by far the most memorable event occurred in 2005 when we flew aboard the Collin's Foundation "Nine O Nine." My wife filmed from the ground and I took many pictures and some video in the aircraft. I put together a CD for him that my mother said he watched many times. She said he told her that it brought some closure after all these years. He loved sharing that flight with his sons and grandsons.

*continued on page 16*

# LETTERS/E-MAILS

*continued*

It looked so natural for him to be standing in the right waist once again, holding the grips of the 50, gazing out into the sky through the drizzling rain.

If the 385th BGMA still exists, please place his obituary, together with any other information I have provided, in the next issue. Feel free to send this information to any others, including the Friends of the 385th in Luxembourg or the Mighty Eighth Air Force Museum in Savannah, GA.

In the attached pictures, the "modern" picture features (l - r) my son, Stephen, my Dad, Donald S. Graham, my youngest son, David, and myself. A 1945 picture of my dad's crew (standing left to right) are Lt. Jerry Stalcup-P; Lt. C. C. Nunnamaker-Navigator; Lt. Elvey Ely-CP; Lt. Ralph Duston-Bombardier; and Sgt. Orville Ashby-TTG; kneeling (l to r) are Sgt. Bill Wilks-TG; Sgt. Rocco Spadola-RO/LWG; Sgt. Norris "Ollie" Olson-BTG; and my dad, Sgt. Donald S. Graham-RWG.

Thank you so much. My dad was my best friend, and my hero and role model. I and my family will miss him greatly. I wish you the best.

Sincerely,

Steve Graham





## LETTERS/E-MAILS

THOMAS R. CHAMBERS  
P.O. Box 4880  
Louisville, KY 40204-4880  
February 3, 2008

Mr. Charles C. Smith  
Smith Industrial Sales  
P.O. Box 1269  
Alpharetta, GA 30009-1269

Dear Chuck,

Your mother sent me a copy of the article describing the coordination and precision of staging the 1000 plane raids by the Mighty 8th. It was an amazing feat to get all of the planes at the proper altitude and on the proper azimuth at the same time. Frankly, I never had any idea of the slit timing and coordination that it took to get the job done.

I do recall watching raids of 300 to 500 planes go over each morning in January and February 1945. At that time I was in a small Eastern French village, Gandrange in Lorraine, and as we would go to our breakfast meal at 6:30 or 6:45 a.m., we would watch the B-17s in the clear blue sky. Each plane would be putting out four "vapor trails" as we called them in those days. The formations would be tight and in separate echelons as they made their way to Germany, some 35 or 40 miles away. Of course, we had no idea what the target was, but it was good to see them and to guess the effect that they would have in bombing the hell out of the Krauts.

About thirty minutes after we saw them heading east, they would be coming back. It was a different sight on the return. No longer were the formations tight and disciplined. Some were high, some were low, some eight to ten planes together, some alone, some with two engines gone, evidenced by only two vapor trails following the plane. I was appreciative of the Air Corps by this time.

But it was not always that way. I trained as an infantryman and we always had an unspoken but seething envy of the men in the Air Corps. First: they got to sleep in a warm bed at night; 2nd: they had better chow and served in a mess hall; and 3rd: girls always went for the "fly boys" before they would consider a foot soldier. I think they had a better pay scale as well.

When the German breakthrough came in December of 1944 (the Battle of the Bulge), there was fog and clouds everywhere for about the first five days. We were without benefit of either bomber or fighter support at that time. I found myself asking over and over again, "Where is the Air Corps? Where is the Air Corps?"

However, from that day on I had the most profound respect for the men in the airplanes for their support. They made life bearable for us on the ground. And to no small part am I indebted to your father for the part he played in the total organization that put (and flew) the planes in the air. With all good wishes.

Tom Chambers

---

---



# Taps



John F. Pettinger – died June 11, 2008 (obituary on page 6)

Elmer Rasmussen – died November 16, 2007 at age 82. Elmer was from West Point, Utah. He was a waist gunner on the Harold A. Kay crew of the 549th Bomb Squadron.

J. Wesley Sullivan – died November 2007 at age 86. Wes was a co-pilot on the William N. Whitehead crew, and completed 35 missions with the 385th Bomb Group in March of 1945. Wes lived in Salem, Oregon and was a Hall of Fame Oregon journalist, well known for his personal columns and editorials. His columns often carried articles about flying and about the 385th Bomb Group. Wes was the retired chairman of the Statesman Journal editorial board where he earned a number of journalism awards, including a Nieman Fellowship at Harvard and a Distinguished Service Award from the city of Salem.

Fain H. Poole – died May 11, 2008 at age 90. Fain had 28 year military career as an Air Force pilot which included service with the top-secret "Project Aphrodite" mission. In addition to his service in WWII, Fain served in The Berlin Airlift, Korean and Vietnam Wars. He earned the Distinguished Flying Cross, and many other meritorious medals. Lt. Col. Fain Poole retired at McCord AFB in 1970. He is survived by his wife, Christine, daughters Carla Hodge, Nancy Rawlins Pattie Carrier, stepsons Gary Hall and Blaine Smith, and stepdaughter Nancy Rawlins, and numerous grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

Donald S. Graham – died May 7, 2008 at age 83. Don was the right waist gunner on the crew of Lt. Jerry Stalcup (548th Bomb Squadron). Don also served in the U. S. Navy aboard the aircraft carrier USS Valley Forge (CV-45). A highlight of Don's life was a flight aboard the B-17, "Nine-O-Nine", with his son and two grandchildren, and where he occupied the right waist gun position. He retired from Pullman Standard Corporation with 32 years service. He is survived by his wife of 59 years, Elsie; sons, Rick and Steve; and sister, Jean Helton; and numerous grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

James Hughes – Williamsburg, VA, died December 14, 2007 at age 88.

# Taps

Archibald Garvin – died July 28, 2008 at age 86. Arch was a pilot of the 385th BG, 551st Bomb Squadron and was a member of the crew of the “Golden Goose” completing 35 missions in April 1945. Arch was a graduate of Wharton School, and was an agent with USAF Special Investigations (OSI). He retired as a Lt. Colonel in July 1982. He was a board member of the Military Officers Association (MOAA) and served with the Retiree Activities Office (RAO) at Willow Grove Joint Reserve Base, PA, and was a salesman during his working years. He is survived by his wife of 58 years, Jean, and his son, Scott, and three grandchildren.

Archie V. Benner, Jr. – El Paso, TX died September 2, 2008 of an apparent heart attack at age 90. Born in Gulfport, MS, he moved to El Paso with his parents at age 2. Graduating from Texas A & M with an Architectural Engineering degree, he joined the Army Air Corps and received a commission as a 1st Lt. and earned a pilot’s rating. Archie was commander of the 549th Bombardment Squadron, also known as “the Bombing Devils,” and was one of the “kindergarten pilots” because, as Squadron Commander, he led numerous missions before his twenty-fifth birthday. Archie was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross, the Air Medal with three Oak Leaf Clusters, the Presidential Unit Citation, and the EAME Theater Ribbon with three Service Stars. After WWII, Archie was stationed at several different bases including Biggs Air Field as Assistant Chief Civil Engineer, and later to Kelly Air Field as Chief Civil Engineer. Upon retiring as a Lt. Colonel in 1978, he returned to El Paso. Archie is survived by his wife of 39 years, Bonita, two sons, four daughters, eleven grandchildren, twelve great-grandchildren, and two younger brothers.

In a former issue of the Hardlife Herald, Richard E. Molzan was listed in TAPS as having died on September 10, 2007. Below are words written by him on July 7, 2007, a few months before his death:

“The Sun Will Shine Again”

As you look down upon my grave

Do not weep or cry because I am not there.

Instead look skyward for that’s where I will be,

In the wild blue yonder.

Presented to the Hardlife Herald by his daughter, Barbara



Today's view of a former runway of the 385th Bomb Group (H) base at Great Ashfield. The picture was taken by Mike Heard on May 5, 2008 while he and his wife visited the former 385th Bomb Group (H) airbase. Mike, a Second Generation 385th BGA member, also supplied several of the photos depicted in the E-Mails and Letters section of this edition of the Hardlife Herald.

---

---

## 385th BGA

Chuck Smith, Treasurer  
P.O. Box 329  
Alpharetta, GA 30009 USA

PRSR STD U.S. POSTAGE PAID RIVERDALE, MD PERMIT NO. 5165
--

Address Service Requested



\*\*\*\*\*AUTO\*\*MIXED ADC 20495  
A08  
Eric Gagnon  
P.O. Box 236  
Cape Neddick ME 03902-0236