



# HARD LIFE



# HERALD

## NEWSLETTER OF THE 385th BOMBARDMENT GROUP MEMORIAL ASSOCIATION



**COMBAT UNITS**  
 HQ. SQUADRON  
 548th BOMB SQ.  
 549th BOMB SQ.  
 551st BOMB SQ.

**VOL. XVI NO. 3**  
 Editor: Ed Stern  
 Printed by Interstate Printing  
 Fargo, North Dakota

**SUPPORT UNITS**  
 424th AIR SVS. GP.  
 877th CHEM. CO. (AO)  
 STATION COMPLEMENT SQ.

**November 1998**

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### President's Report

Unfortunately, the President's Reports appear for your review in the Hardlife Herald as many as three weeks after they have been submitted. This time lag means that the information you read is dated. Please keep this in mind as you read the following material:

#### Progress on Heritage Museum Monument

We have submitted all the information that DePue Monument Company has requested and we are presently awaiting a preliminary drawing to be submitted to us for the Executive Committee's review. I was assured earlier this week (October 16) that a preliminary drawing would be in hands within the next two weeks.

#### Program at Savannah Reunion Meeting

General Victor E. Renuart, Jr. has accepted our invitation to be the principal speaker at our Savannah Reunion Banquet. General Renuart has recently been assigned as Commander, 347th Wing, Air Combat Command, Moody Air Force Base, Georgia. His prior assignment was that of Commander, 52nd Fighter Wing, Spangdahlem Air Base, Germany. It was at Perle we met General Renuart, who not only participated in the dedication, but arranged for a missing man overflight during dedication.

Rev. James Vance, our Chaplain, has agreed to plan the dedication service of our monument at the Heritage Museum. In an incredibly short time after my request, he submitted a preliminary agenda for the service and made arrangements with The Heritage Museum for flowers, a bugler, bagpiper, and

con't on page 2

**CHAPLAIN**  
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 \*Paul Schulz  
 Forrest V. Poore  
 William A. Nicholls  
 \*Earl L. Cole  
 Sam Lyke  
 Sid Colthorpe  
 Robert C. Smith  
 Bob Valliere

contd from President's Report.

honor guard, etc. Based upon Jim's report to date, the dedication should be an inspiring event.

#### **Contribution to The Heritage Museum Memorial Chapel**

The Executive Committee voted to contribute \$5,000 to The Heritage Museum Chapel project on behalf of the 385th Bombardment Group Memorial Association. The Chapel fund drive is approximately two-thirds of the way toward achieving its goal. The Chapel will not be built by the time we have our Savannah meeting, but its plans should be finalized at that time.

#### **Nominations**

Past President Robert C. Smith is Chairman of our Nominating Committee. He and his Committee have been working diligently to put together a slate of candidates for submission to the Membership at our April Biennial reunion meeting. Those of you wishing to submit names of candidates should do so directly to Bob Smith (12019 N Anna J Drive, Spokane, Washington 99218-2783; telephone (509) 466-7824). As you have been previously advised, Bob Smith's Committee will have the slate of candidates which it proposes published in the Hardlife Herald at least a month before our April meeting. The purpose of this early announcement is to give the Membership an opportunity to reflect on the qualifications of the candidates proposed. Additional nominations may be made from the floor at the Association business meeting.

#### **The Association's Finances**

After deducting our \$5,000 contribution for The Heritage Museum Chapel, there remains \$10,127.44 in our general account. Our Heritage Museum Memorial Fund account contains \$16,592.00 at the time of the preparation of this report.

While we have met our Memorial fund account goal, contributions from those who have not yet participated would help in the event there are some unanticipated expenses. Cost overruns unfortunately are usually par for the course. Fund overage, if any, would be turned over to the Association's general account.

It is the general account which gives cause for concern. Publication for the Hardlife Herald costs as much as we currently have in our general account. In 1997, we received only \$2,749 in dues and donations. We are solvent by virtue of the fact that \$13,000 was transferred to our general account by the Tucson Reunion Committee.

The Executive Committee is currently considering means to generate funds as to make our organization somewhat more comfortable financially.

### *Chaplain Sez*

Greetings,

I have an 8 day clock given to me for 9 years of perfect attendance in the Kiwanis Club in Uptown, Seattle. I had it repaired just recently but it still has to be rewound every 8 days or it will not tell the proper time of day. It is an expensive Swiza-Sheffield Swiss made clock but it still needs to be kept clean and wound every 8 days or it is of no value.

You surely must have figured out where I am going with this story. But if you have not I will continue making a point.

It makes no difference what denomination, Protestant, Catholic, Hebrew, Baptist, United Methodist, Presbyterian, Moham-medan, Buddhist, or others, you need to renew your spirit regularly. Whether on Saturday, Sunday or another day your soul needs renewal to keep functional and your wealth makes no difference.

From where I am I would suggest you keep in touch with God through Jesus Christ because that has proven the best way for me. God manifests love and hopefully we will show this toward others regardless of their religious (or not) affiliation.

We can also keep our lives 'wound' up by remembering to pray for one another. I covet your prayers, especially in preparation for our Reunion in Savannah, Georgia in 1999.

Sincerely in Love  
Jim

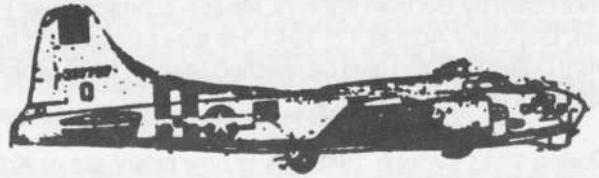


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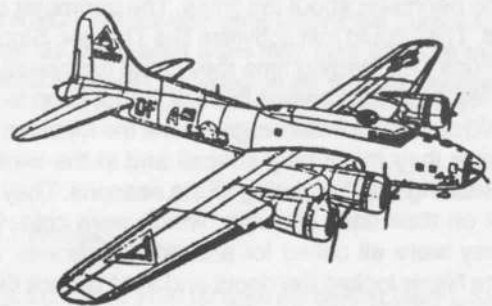
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## ATTENTION - ATTENTION

Tom Turcotte, 101 Williams St, Petoskey, MI 49770 is trying to locate members of Bob Stilt's crew of the 549th.



The Tulsa Convention & Tourist Bureau has called and given us a cordial invitation to come to Tulsa for the Reunion after Savannah. The decision will be made at the Savannah business meeting.



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## 385TH BGMA APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP PLEASE PRINT

\_\_\_\_\_  
LAST NAME, First, MI.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Street or P.O. Box #

\_\_\_\_\_  
City, State, & Zip

The annual dues are Fifteen Dollars (\$15.00)  
Life-time memberships are one payment of \$100.00  
Make Check out to "385th BGMA" and mail to:  
Verne D. Phillips  
PO Drawer 5970  
Austin, TX 78763

\_\_\_\_\_  
Spouse's Name

(   1   ) \_\_\_\_\_  
Telephone Number

\_\_\_\_\_  
Squadron or Support Unit

POW Capture  
Date  
Place  
Stalag Unit

Life-time memberships are used to perpetuate the memorial at All Saints Church in Great Ashfield, Suffolk County, England.

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Lt. Col. Les Reichardt, pilot of the Flying Fortress a B-17, was shot down by German fighters, Messerschmitts, over Frankfurt, Germany August 17, 1943. He was bussed and trained from Dulag to Dulag until he reached Stalag Luft III, which was to be his home for 2 years.

During 1943 through 1945 this is how prisoners or Kreigies lived. The prisoners were assigned a compound and within the compound their barracks. They shared their living quarters with the officers of their crew and other crews. The walls were lined with bunks, three high. In the center of the barracks was a table and a set of chairs. Other makeshift furniture was there too. In Stalag Luft III there were five compounds. Two were British and three were American. Adjoining the compounds were volagers that were areas that the Germans used to control and inspect incoming and outgoing people and materials. In the Center Compound there were 12 barracks, 5 latrines, 1 wash house, and 2 cookhouses. Every day the Kreigies had to walk the perimeter about ten times. The perimeter is about two miles. They could join activities like Theater. Since there was so much free reading time they could memorize scripts easily. They could also belong to track, band, or go to school. They could also join a fraternal group like the Masons. During the summer they might play softball and in the winter play Bridge. Reading was "in" during all the seasons. They had no time limit on their daily showers, which were cold. Once a month they were all called for a short hot shower. At nine o'clock the Nazis locked the doors and at 11 o'clock the lights were turned out. Regular breakfasts consisted of coffee, tea and toasted black bread. For lunch soup, coffee, teas and water was offered. Dinner was made up of spam, potatoes, bully beef, black bread, tea, coffee and water. On holidays special meals were served of which the highlight was dessert. Writing letters to family and friends was also a big part of the Kreigies lives. To receive a letter was the best thing that could happen to you. Letters were a way of communicating with your loved ones at home. They brought some comfort to those back home who longed to hear from their soldiers. Although people in America could write letters as long as they wanted to, prisoners could not. All prisoners of Stalag Luft III wrote letters about one page long because it was the rule. These letters going from camp were read by Breifzensors, or censors, who looked for sentences and words that were forbidden. There were 120 Briefzensors at Stalag Luft III. They read about 200 letters a day. Some of the censors believed that they read so much that they got to know the captive's families just as well as their own. The Briefzensors were required to study American slang so they could get their job done. For hours they worked to pick out phrases giving comfort to their enemies or things that would upset the enemies. Nothing political, nothing about movement of soldiers or machines, or conditions of the camp were to go through. Packages and parcels were looked through also! Vorlager personnel punched holes in canned food lids so they could not be stored and used for escape purposes. Jello, talcum powder, tooth powder

and bandaids were found missing from packages. Personal clothing, candy, raisins, tea, soup, gum, handkies, pencils, paper, toothbrush, safety pins, razor blades, shaving cream, comb, cards, toys and sewing kits were given to the owner, however. You did not receive them as often as letters since people needed permits to send them. The permits were only given out every two months along with order blanks for cigarettes. At Stalag Luft III you used cigarettes like money by trading with the Germans for other things. Only one person died in those two years at Stalag Luft III and he died of pneumonia. If somebody got hurt a German doctor was always available. Most of the time nobody got hurt since there weren't many things to get hurt on. Hair cuts and cleaning for inspection were weekly chores! Stalag Luft III was a part of many Americans lives and a part of history of World War II.

Although, life at Prisoner of War camps was tough it wasn't nearly as inhumane as the Concentration Camps of World War II. A POW camp is a confined area where Allied prisoners taken until the war ended. Concentration Camps were confined areas where Jews were herded to be used as labor or killed, final solution. Prisoners of Stalag Luft III were expected to take daily showers, change their clothes and cut their hair. They were inspected and so were their barracks. Both Nazis and Allies wanted the individual and the vicinity to be clean and healthy. At POW camps a doctor was always on hand. Prisoners at Concentration Camps were denied their rights of clothes, showers, healthcare, bathrooms and life. Concentration Camps were full of disease, malnutrition and infection. POW camp food wasn't exactly 4 star but at least it was sufficient. Prisoners at Concentration camps were lucky if they had food to eat everyday. Former POW Lt. Col. Les Reichardt commented, "Being in a POW camp was nothing like being in a Concentration camp. While we were behind barbed wire we were allowed to exist." This quote sums up the major difference in the treatment of Jews and Kreigies. The reason Jews were in Concentration Camps was to be "put out of the way." By placing the blame of the German depression on Jews, Hitler knew he could gain power in Germany. Therefore, the Jews were found and put in Concentration camps. Both camps were difficult to live in but they remain a part of history.

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Dear Ed,

My wife and I just returned from a wonderful reunion of the 548th Bomb Squadron in Fairborn, Ohio. The reunion was hosted by Wayne and Carol Detwiler. The following couples attended: David and Mary Sue Beam, Martin and Hazel Bridges, Sid and Wanda Carney, Wayne and Carol Detwiler, Henry and Dru Dworshak, Martin and Edie Girson, Charles and Irene Huber, Dale and Mary Leggett, Sam and Nita Luckie, Rev. James and Geri Vance, Herman and Doris Siederer.

We visited the Air Force Museum in Dayton and located the tree planted by the 385th. There is an enormous amount to be seen at the museum.

We really missed the friends who could not be with us and hope they will be able to join us next year.

My wife and I were recently in New York City in the Battery Park area. There are several memorials to World War II dead. On one which is dedicated to "Those who sleep in the American costal waters of the Atlantic Ocean" we found several men who were members of the 385th Bomb Group. Perhaps some of your readers will recognize these names.

**385th Bomb Groups:**

- Richard M. Gaither, Sgt. Texas
- Thomas N. Cockfield, Pvt. Mass

**548th Bomb Squardon, 385th Bomb Group**

- William F. De Elmo, Sgt. Cal.
- Regis B. Funk, Pvt. Pa.
- Richard W. Gilder, 1st Lt. NY
- Delmas Morrison, Sgt. Maine
- Fred E. Morton, 2nd Lt. MAss.



Wright Patterson Air Museum



548th Reunion Fairborn, Ohio



Memorial in front of tree.



548th Reunion Fairborn, Ohio

Dear Mr. Stern,

Approximately ten days ago my wife and myself had the pleasure of visiting Great Ashfield. We were fortunate to locate Mr. Roy Baker by knocking on enough farm house doors. We had been unable to locate the old airfield where I had been stationed during the last six months of WW II.

Roy was a delightful person who took a number of hours to escort us on the old air fields, runways and what was left of the few buildings standing. He also obtained the keys to The Great Ashfield Church, showing us it's stained glass window and a complete rundown of the Group's history during the war.

He was amazed that I was not active in the Association and encouraged me to join. I have no idea why I never joined except the possibility that my limited sixteen missions did not seem that impressive to me, or more likely I was so busy returning to college, marrying, and building a business that it did not seem important.

I would like whatever forms are necessary to join forwarded to me and to put me on your mailing list.

Roy Barker is certainly an asset to the 385th and you have a sincere and dedicated local Chamber of Commerce. We stayed two nights in Bury St. Edmonds and also viewed the beautiful gardens dedicated to the 7th Air Force.

The visit was the ending of a most pleasant three week stay in Great Britain.

Very Truly yours,  
Garry N. Bean

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Dear Ed,

Last May we went to France and took a tour called "Vintage France", which started in Paris then east, south, west and then back to Paris. We covered mostly the smaller towns, but several major wine growing areas were included in our trip.

I was on the August 1, 1944 "French Special" Mission, where we dropped supplies to the French Resistance fighters (at a very low elevation) and I wonder if anyone (an old navigator?) could tell me where that drop was located?

Sincerely Yours,  
Charles Price

---

Dear Ed,

I'm Bob Poage, a navigator from the 550th Bomb Sqd. in the 385th Bomb Group. I heard about you through my pilot - Bob Starkel in Conn. I do remember you though. I'll have to admit, I didn't keep up with the 385th B.G. - no interest. But I did stay in the reserve - got to be a Lt. Col. before they got rid of me. Bob sent me the Feb. '98 issue of the "HardLife Herald". I really enjoyed it!! Please add me to your list of members and what does it cost? I'll be glad to pay whatever the cost is. Please put me on the mailing list for the "Herald".

I'll certainly try to make the next meeting in Savannah.

And I'm planning on buying a print of the history of the 385th B.G.

I'm sorry I haven't kept up with the 385th. I'm sure I missed out on a lot of fun. Hope you are will and doing fine. Hope to see you in Savannah.

Yours truly,  
Bob Poage  
173 La Pasada CirS  
Ponte Verde, FL 32082

---

Dear Ed,

I appreciate the current and several back issues of HardLife Herald you sent. I never dreamed so much information existed on the 385th Bomb Group, but I see you are on top if it.

I will contact the publisher of "History of the 385th Bomb Group" again and give him a credit card number. He didn't ask for money when I called him.

We plan to attend the April reunion in Savannah. I am looking forward to seeing some old (I do mean old) friends there.

Thanks for the back issues of HardLife. They brought back many memories.

Best Regards,  
Edwin Perry

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**EDITOR'S NOTE:** President Mike's invitation to Roger Feller.

Dear Roger,

The Executive Committee of the 385th Bomb Group takes pleasure in inviting you to the Bomb Group's reunion to be held at the Savannah Marriott Riverfront Hotel From Sunday, April 11, 1999 through Wednesday, April 13, 1999.

The Bomb Group will reimburse you for the cost of your round-trip coach fare to Savannah and for 4 nights of your hotel room expense. The registration fee required of members will be waived in your case.

In due course, you will receive a room reservation form for the hotel and a separate registration form for the Bomb Group meeting. Please complete these forms and return them as instructed.

We look forward to seeing you in April.

Very Truly yours,  
Mike R. Gallagher  
President.



Editors Note: Two great Historical letters on this mid-air tragedy.



.....■ Ah, yes ! Life can indeed be easy when you have a friend like the person named on the next line!

Editor's note: J cUr-D  
 ~v^ ^ jr»^.  
 great historical letter  
 this mid-air tragedy

To: Mr. Don Hayes/1640 Cambridge Dr./WallaWalla, WA/ 99362

August 17,1998

Dear Don:

Your request in the June '98 HH for information regarding Timothy Crimmins and Robert Ritchie has now been read by someone (me) who was probably *the most direct POSSIBLE eye-witness* of the accident which took their lives.

First, a little background: I was in both the 548th Sqdn and the 549th. When in the 548th (I believe), I was in the same barracks with Tim Crimmins. AU of us who knew him were very impressed with his military bearing and mannerisms; he had attended The Citadel (military academy). Later on, when I was in the 549th, I was in the same barracks with Ritchie (at least, I would be almost certain that we are talking about the same "Ritchie" here). The navigator on Ritchie's crew was Bill Simmons, a man whom I had known when in CDT training at Highpoint College, Highpoint, NC. This was Bill Simmon's home town and on more than one occasion I had been invited to his family's home, along with others, for a Sunday evening dinner. Thus, I had stronger-than-usual ties to the Ritchie crew.

On April 4th, '45, I was flying in the Squadron Command Pilot's position (co-pilot's seat) on the lead aircraft of the Low Squadron. This squadron position put us below and slightly to the left of the Lead Squadron in which Ritchie was flying "low element lead" (the center of three AC) just below Crimmins who was flying "Low Section Lead" (the bottom 6 AC) . While over the North Sea, I could observe that Ritchie was getting too far forward of the AC on which he was flying formation (Crimmins). All that he needed to do was to reduce his throttle position somewhat and the resultant loss of airspeed would have caused him to drift back a little bit and he would have been in proper formation once again. However, that is not what occurred. As he got too far forward of Crimmins, he pulled up slowly and simply flew right into Crimmins' AC. My personal theory of what occurred is that as he bent his head upward and even back a little he had his left hand on the steering column and his right hand on the throttle controls the natural physical reaction of that body position caused him to pull back on the steering column. Result: He flew right up and into Crimmins I The two AC were welded together and commenced a downward spiral into the North Sea. All 20 men were lost! When we were coming back from the mission, we were able to observe air/sea rescue units searching the area of the crash. After the war ended and because I had been acquainted with Bill Simmon's family, I went to Highpoint to report to them; I thought that I owed to them a final report.

Page # 2

Right at this point, I called a man who is very active in the 385th BGA, George Hruska. He was Bombardier on Crimmins' crew but did not fly that day due to a head cold. I mentioned your letter in the HH to him and you may be hearing from him. He asked me to send him a copy of this letter to you....which I shall do.

Incidentally, I don't believe that Crimmins was a Captain at the time of the crash...although he clearly had all of the attributes required for that rank. It is my belief that he was still a 1st Lt. The mission that day was to the submarine facilities at Kiel. I can so dearly remember Crimmins\* last radio communication in the initial seconds following the impact of the AC, "Fancyfrock Q Queen ABORTING!" This reflected the dedication and discipline which were hall-marks of Crimmins. We were under strict orders to never break "radio silence" except in the event of an extreme emergency. Thus, Crimmins had the "cool" to let the formation know what was occurring even as his AC was starting its final dive to the ocean !

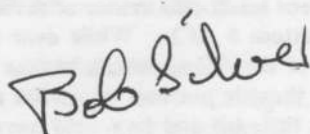
In conclusion, let me state and admit that my analysis of the cause of the mid-air collision may not be correct It is based upon my own personal flying experiences and, of course, I was not in Ritchie's seat at the time it occurred.

The address of George Hruska is : Lt. Col (Ret) George S. Hruska  
7442 Ontario Street  
Omaha, NE 68124-3563  
Tel: 402-397-1934

I hope that this information will prove to be helpful to you.

With every Best Wish.

Sincerely,



mis



•July 27, 1998

Don Hayes  
1640 Cambridge Drive  
Walla Walla, Washington  
99362

Dear Don,

I read your letter in the 385 BG Newsletter and was surprised to see the names of my former crew members. In the years since receiving my copies, I have never read a familiar name even though I was in the 385th during the war, the 548 BS.

Robert Ritchie was the pilot, William Miller was the engineer and Charlie Chambers was the ball turret gunner on my original crew. Leo Lynch was the asst engineer and gunner. I was the toggelier We all trained together in the states before shipping across to England. I don't recognize the other names. This is the story told to us about the loss although we never could get a clear picture, everything was heresay. I say "We" as there were only 2 of us left on the ground on that fatefull day, myself and Gerry Gentis, our tail gunner. At the last minute before flight time, Gerry and I were informed we would be grounded on that day in order to allow two other chaps from another crew to finish their tour and then sent home. We were disappointed as we had flown together as a complete crew since our training days. However, it was not our choice, standard Air Force routine of so called volunteers.

I don't remember the date nor where the mission was scheduled to be. It has been many years and the memory is not as keen as it used to be.

It was an early morning departure, as usual, and after watching the group and our aircraft leave, we moped around the field waiting for the return. In the early afternoon, one of the chaps on the field ran over to us asking if we heard the news. ??????? Rumor had it that our aircraft collide with another B-17 in the squadron over the North Sea while forming up and both aircraft went down in flames. Of course we did not believe it but no one was able to give us a definite briefing on the tragedy. We did not believe it as we knew Bob Ritchie was one helluva pilot and knew the B-17 like the back of his hand.

I would think your letter refers to the same people as the coincidense would be to far apart as far as duplication of names are concerned. You must be referring to my crew.

Gerry and I finished 26 missions, filjling on a different crew each time. If you have more details abo ut this incident, I would

very much like to hear from you. I t would help in my mind knowing the true facts after all these years. I recently wrote to Gerry , some months ago but never received a reply. He may not be with us any longer.

By the way, I believe now April 4, 1 945 is the correct date as I researched it in a roster the 385th published a few years ago and that date is listed Bob Ritchie as pilot.

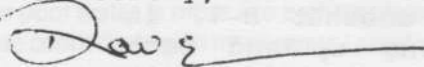
So, if you or anyone else that replies to your letter has more information, I would very much like to share it with you and the others.

I am enclosing a Xerox copy of a photo of our crew taken in the states just bfore we left for overseas. The bombardier who trained with us was Bob Muhr but I think he was replaced by Tim Crimmins on the base in England. I do remember writing letters to the families of the guys after the tragedy but never had a reply.

I had been active as a private pilot since the end of the war and flew a variety of single engine aircraft all those years until a year or so ago when I retired. Always loved flying, still do but always found it difficult to recount my war years or flying adventures to friends and otherwise who may have been interested. I did keep a diary of the missions I was on but it was short paragraphs and every few years I reread it .  
Memories.

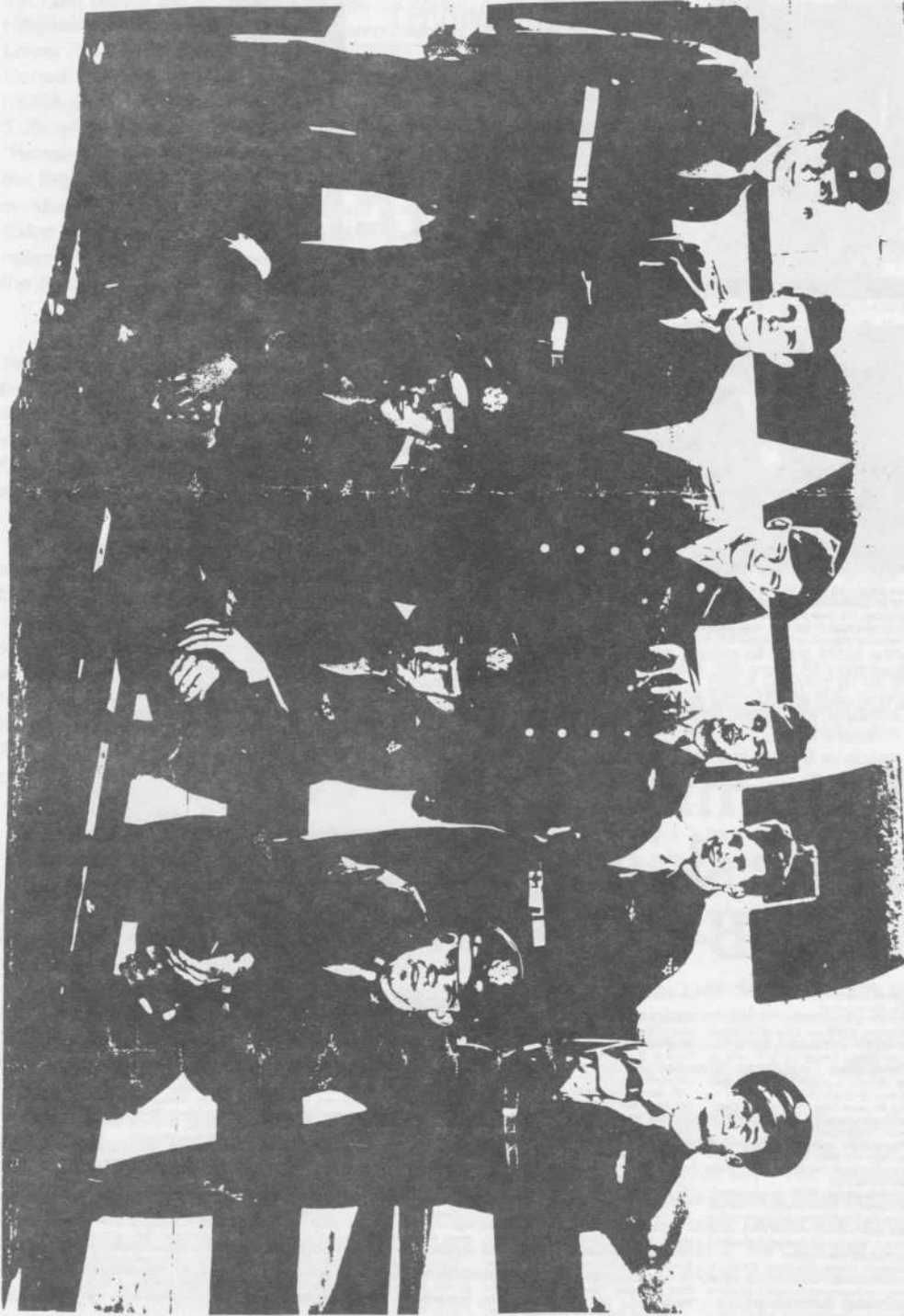
Again, if you feel like corresponding, I would look forward to it.

Sincerely,



David Schwartz

2185 Lemoine Ave.  
Apt. 2D  
Fort Lee, New Jersey  
07024



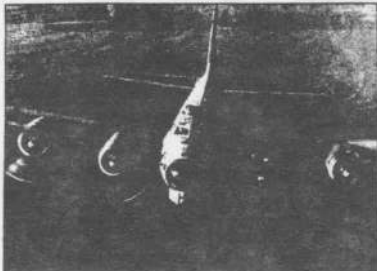
Back Row-L to R: Dave Schwartz, Togglier; Jerry Gentis, Tail Gunner; Gordon Fraser, Radio Operator; Bill Cruiller, Engineer; Leo Lynch, Assistant Engineer; Charlie Chambers, Ball Turret Gunner; Front Row-L to R: Bob Crulir, Bombardier; Bob Ritchie, Pilot; Bill Simmons, Navigator.



Green must win/B1  
**GLOBE GAZETTE**  
MASON CITY/CLEAR LAKE, IOWA



SUNDAY JULY 5, 1998



Wayne Zeigler stands in front of a B-17 bomber (right) that he flew during 28 combat missions over Germany during World War II. Wednesday, the Iowa Falls man will make his first flight in a B-17 when a restored B-17 (above) visits Mason City to kick off a three-day historical program at the Mason City Municipal Airport.



*More than 53 years ago, Iowan Wayne Zeigler flew 28 bombing missions over Germany. This week, he'll climb back into a World War II bomber.*

# Returning to the skies in a B-17

By DAVID KROTZ  
Of The Globe-Gazette

MASON CITY — Fifty-three years ago, World War II ended in Europe and Wayne Zeigler ferried his B-17 back to the United States.

He thought it would be the last time he'd ever fly in a B-17.

But 53 years later, thanks to a Mason City businessman, Wayne Zeigler will fly in a B-17 once again.

The Algona native and resident of Iowa Falls will climb into one of the four-engine bombers and take to the skies again Wednesday.

"I often wanted to fly in one again," said Zeigler. "I heard about the restored planes the Confederate Air Force has in Texas that you can ride in for a lot of money I thought, if I ever get a chance, I would get up in one again."

Zeigler's chance has come thanks to the work of Doug Rozendaal, the above-mentioned businessman who is an active flyer of vintage Warbird aircraft.

Rozendaal arranged for a B-17 and a B-24 to visit Mason City Municipal Airport for three days, beginning Wednesday. He also arranged for Zeigler to ride the B-17 on its journey from Grand Island, Neb., to Mason City.

In the process, Rozendaal helped Wayne Zeigler realize a dream that began 53 years

ago, when he came home from the war.

ZEIGLER, 74, FLEW 500 hours and a total of 28 combat missions in the B-17, backbone bomber of the U.S. Army Air Force in Europe during WWII. He even bailed out of a disabled plane over France and survived to fly 19 more missions.

He has continued to fly small planes and has racked up 1,200 flying hours since he left the service in 1945. But there was something about the B-17 and the echoes of his experiences as 20 year old bomber pilot that kept drawing him back to that dream.

He wanted just one more ride in a B-17, the workhorse bomber that helped the Allies finally defeat Nazi Germany.

ON ARRIVAL IN Europe, Zeigler was assigned to the 548th squadron of the 385th bomb group of the Eighth Air Force. For his first mission as a co-pilot, his crew bombed an oil refinery at Marseburg, Germany. The date was November 24, 1944.

"The first flak I saw exploded 20 feet outside my window," he said.

"All of my missions were back into Germany — oil refineries, rail yards, submarine pens, ball-bearing plants and big cities, like Berlin, to tie up transportation."

The planes usually carried 6,000 pounds of bombs and, compared to today's



Zeigler

planes, were under powered. "It would take us 6,000 feet to clear the fence at the end of the runway."

"The weather was always bad. If you could see the edge of the runway, you took off," he said, "and once we were above the clouds, we formed up at 14 to 16,000 feet over radio stations.

"Every group would leave the coast at a certain time, two minutes apart, following the lead group which went 150 miles per hour."

Some missions had 1,000 to 1,800 planes and a division line two hours long, one group after another, spaced two minutes apart, flying over a target for two hours.

Usually flying to target at 24 to 28,000 feet, the group leaders were constantly insisting their pilots fly tight formations so the multiple machine-guns on the planes could provide mutual protection.

"Anyone straggling behind was a sitting duck," he said. "At that time, the Germans were flying 16 to 20 fighter formations straight through the groups."

ZEIGLER COUNTS himself lucky to

have had his whole crew survive the bailout over France. With the B-17's two right engines disabled, he and his co-pilot were fighting to keep the plane straight, as it lost altitude on the way back to England. They bailed out 20 miles inside Allied lines.

A year ago, Zeigler went back to the village of Harly in France where he came down. The townspeople treated him like a hero and gave him a polished valve and other metal parts that some had saved from his downed plane.

"They told us, 13 or 14 missions was all you could expect to survive. Everyone was patriotic in those days. Even if I knew I wasn't coming back, I still would have gone out."

FIFTY-THREE YEARS later, Zeigler's love for the B-17 is still unabated. "It was an excellent plane to fly extremely stable and durable," he said. "It was heavy on the controls at low altitude but it flew perfect at 16-18,000 feet."

Retired from a career as a banker and FHA administrator, Zeigler sells real estate in Iowa Falls. His eyes dance at the prospect of flying in a B-17 again.

"I can't think of anything more elating I hope to get up behind the pilots to see the cockpit in flight again," he said. "And if possible, sit in the co-pilot's seat for a few minutes."

## Visit by bombers will give North Iowans a chance to relive history

MASON CITY — There are only about a dozen restored World War II vintage B-17's and B-24's still flying and one of each type is coming to Mason City to be on display at the Mason City Municipal Airport Wednesday through Friday.

These two bomber types carried out a majority of the strategic bombing of Nazi Germany and were produced in the thousands, yet the B-24 coming to the Mason City Airport is the last fully restored and flying "Liberator" in the world today, according to the Collings Foundation. The Stow, Mass., foundation

restored the planes and tours the flying museums around the country, offering rides to foundation donors and inside looks at the aircraft for a small admission fee.

"I spend a lot of time with WWII airplanes," said Doug Rozendaal, a Mason City busi-

nessman who was instrumental in bringing the planes to North Iowa. "It's amazing the level of commitment and courage of the young men who flew through those flak storms. Anything we can do to make people realize the terrible price we paid for our freedom is good."

The bombers will be on display at Dwyer Aircraft on Wednesday from 3 to 6:30 p.m. Thursday from 8:30 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. and Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 1 p.m.

For more information contact Rozendaal at 5151 423-0734 or Dwyer Aircraft at 5151423-6453.

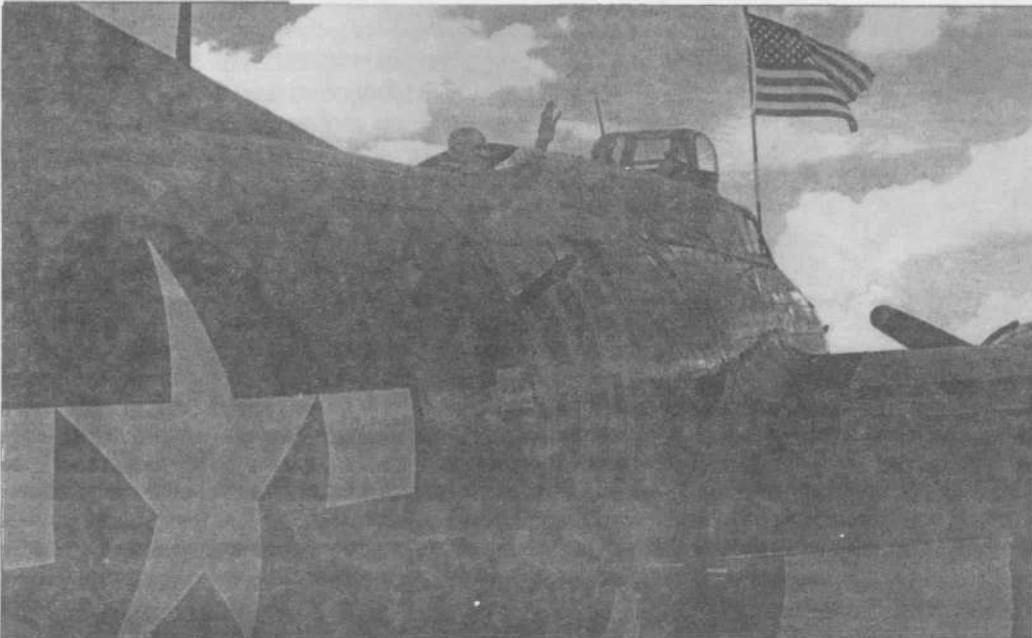


Globe-Gazette photo by DAVID KROTZ

*"I got more than I ever hoped for."*

— Wayne Zeigler, World War II B-17 bomber pilot

# Return to the Wild Blue Yonder



Globe-Gazette photo by KELU WENGL

Wayne Zeigler (above) waves from the top of a B-17 after landing at Mason City Municipal Airport, Wednesday. Zeigler (top left) was able to pilot the plane for the first time since flying in World War II.

## Veteran experiences thrill of flying one more time

By DAVID KROTZ  
01 The Globe-Gazette

Wayne Zeigler and his fellow passengers were warned after they boarded the B-17 bomber that would travel from Grand Island, Neb., to Mason City Wednesday.

"After we take off, you can go anywhere in the plane, but stay away from the hatch door leading to the bombardier compartment."

"That's the one I went out of," said

**"... I've learned a lot about myself and life from these veterans."**

— Doug Birkey, crew volunteer

Zeigler, remembering the time he bailed out over France, Jan. 2, 1945.

The Iowa Falls man, just as he did during World War II, wore a tie on his first flight in a B-17 since 1945, when he completed 28 bombing missions over Germany. The B-17, along with a B-24, was on its way to Mason City as part of a traveling museum that began a three-day exhibit at the

Mason City Municipal Airport Wednesday.

At engine start-up, he craned his neck to watch the belch of smoke and see the four big props turn. An enthralled expression filled his face.

"They started the No. 3 engine first," he said. "We always started 1, then 2, then 3 and 4. They'd hop and sputter, then it would catch and clear out. I always remember the smoke. It sounds the same — loud."

The plane, nicknamed the Flying Fortress by the British because of



Globe-Gazette photo by KELU WENGL

A B-24 lands at the Mason City Municipal Airport on Wednesday.

### Bombers

From Page A1

its multiple-machine guns, took off smoothly, not burdened by 6,000 pounds of bombs and a full fuel load like it was in the war, and quickly climbed to 3,600 feet and settled into cruise.

"It's a wonderful feeling," said Zeigler, after squirming through to the nose of the plane. Soon after, he gave a fellow passenger a tour of the entire plane.

About 20 minutes into the flight, Zeigler stood behind the pilot and co-pilot, eyeing the instrument panel and control clusters.

"It has all the old instruments and radios," he said. "But also newer radios. Other than that, it's

pretty much the same. They don't have the thick bullet-proof glass we did."

The lead pilot, Gunner Ingle, asked Zeigler if he flew B-17s. When the answer was an affirmative, Ingle climbed out of the seat and said, "Have at it. Take over."

Hands on the control wheel, eyes scanning instruments and then the horizon for traffic, Zeigler's spine seemed to straighten, his expression sharpen. After 53 years, he was back in the pilot's seat again, the place where he offered his life in the service of his country.

"It's guys like him is why this airplane is flying," said Ingle, referring to die non-profit Collings Foundation which restores and tours warbirds, planes like the B-17 and the B-24,

that were headed for Mason City Wednesday afternoon.

"This is the reason why we do all this work, for a guy like this," said 18-year-old Doug Birkey, who, like the rest of the crew, was a volunteer. "I've been involved, helping restore planes since I was 12. I've learned a lot about myself and life from these veterans."

Zeigler flew the plane for 30 minutes, heading east over the farm fields of eastern Nebraska.

"I can't explain the feeling," he said later. "It took me back 50 years. It just felt natural. It was the same feeling. It came back right away."

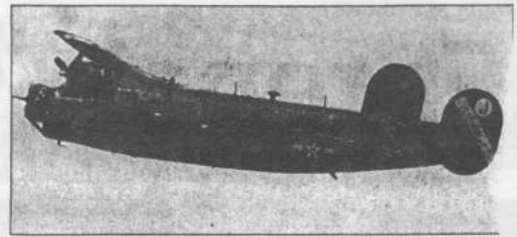
"The feel of the controls was just like I remembered, a little heavy at low altitude. I just thought about a lot of things. I got more than I ever hoped for."

# World War II pilot flies plane after 53 years

See BOMBERS, A2



Eunice Zeigler and me as I got off the B-17 after landing at the Mason City airport



Globe-Gazette photo by KELLI WEN  
A B-24 makes a flyby before landing Wednesday at the Mason Ci Municipal Airport.



Wayne Zeigler in front of B-17 just after landing at Mason City Airport, Iowa

Dear Ed,

Last July 8th was a great day for me. I was fortunate to be able to fly a B-17 Bomber again. It was 53 years after I flew back from England and landed at Bradley Field, Connecticut on June 25, 1945.

Bob Collins back east bought a B-17 G and a B-24 and restored both of them to the way they flew in combat. He decided they should not be parked away somewhere but should be flown around the United States as flying museums for people to see. They have been flying for eight years now under the Bob Collins Foundation with all volunteer crews. They fly 101/2 months out of the year throughout the United States being maintained by the crew as they go. They have become self supporting and will continue to fly as long as they are mechanically able. They charged \$7.00 each climb through or if six people will pay \$300.00 each they will give them a 30 minute ride. It was interesting that they first tried retired airline pilots with 80000 to 90000 hrs and young fighter pilots after they left the service but neither one worked out. The reason apparently was because all modern jet airplanes are computerized and there is no feel that you get with manual controls on a prop plane. They had to use pilots that had flown prop planes before.

The B-17 and B-24 were at Grand Island, Nebraska and they contacted the Mason City Newspaper for advertising prior to flying into Mason City, and they wanted an old B-17 pilot to fly in on the bomber. I was lucky to be a friend of the newsman writing the story. I flew to Grand Island early on July 8th. The excitement started to increase when we started to load at 1 pm for take off for Mason City, a two hour flight.

It wasn't long until I was standing behind the pilot looking over the instrument panel. When he found out I flew a B-17 in the 8th AF he took off his head set, climbed out and told me to climb in and take over. I flew the B-17 about 1/3 of the way to Mason City. During that time I went back 54 years. The feel of the controls and all the instruments were the same as they flew in combat. They use a hand held GPS for navigation. When we landed in Mason City there was a big crowd waiting to climb through. They could hardly wait for us to unload. The TV people were there. They put a mike on me and the cameraman followed us as I took my wife through.

My wife says, I haven't come down out of the clouds yet. I'll have to admit I think of it pretty often. Enclosed are copies of the newspaper articles that you may like to read. What a great day it was!!

Sincerely  
Wayne G. Zeigler

Dear Ed,

I still enjoy reading the "Hardlife Herald"--you do such a great job putting it together! I was interested in McLaughlin's letter about recovering the engines from Hutch's plane. We had a bull session the night before he took off on his last (25th mission) and he was really looking forward to going home after completing it. When I went to Command and Staff in Mont-

gomery, Bill Tesla was one of our administrative officers. He was an LC at that time (1958-59) and I saw him quite often. Also, my den mother was Maj. Bill Brake, also from the 550th. Small world!

Things are going pretty well with me with a little medication from the VA. Some time ago they awarded me 100% disability as a result of my POW experiences. It sure makes a lot of difference with my retired pay as an LC as I don't pay any income tax on that portion of my income. Not long ago, I located the British doctor (now a retired Brigadier) who took care of my injuries in the hospital after we were shot down over Dortmund. He is in fair health and lives on the southern coast of England; we correspond frequently.

Sincerely,

Bob Wills  
419 S Shoreline Dr  
Liberty Lake, WA 99019-9501

Dear Mr. Stern,

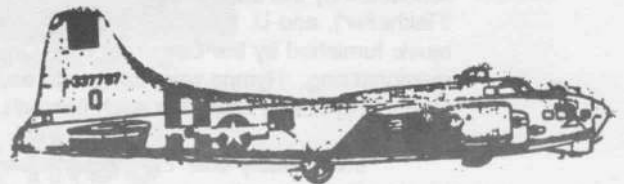
Just thought I'd drop you a line and tell you how much I've enjoyed receiving my first copies of the Herald. I was treated to a subscription by Rocky Tanguay, whom I've been writing with for some time now regarding his war experiences and life in general. He is a very remarkable man and I am fortunate to have had the opportunity to get to know him.

It is great to see that an organization such as yours is able to endure and remain active for so long after the events that brought you all together. I've been fascinated by the events of the Airwarsof WWI and WWII. While being Canadian and having relatives killed on active service with the RCAF have always been genuinely amazed by the exploits of the USAAF Bomber crews.

In the April issue you published a copy of my A-2 jacket for the 'Miss Fortune', but fortunately the contact address you gave was slightly incorrect, the house # is 764, not 704. I hope nobody had mail returned from that address, and if they have I'd love to hear from anyone again. I also have my e-mail at [marchans@cadvision.com](mailto:marchans@cadvision.com)

Let me know when membership is due and I'll look forward to future editions. You are doing a great job.

Best regards,  
Scott Marchand



**Editor's Note:** Ex-President Bob Smith of Spokane represented the 385th and presented a lithograph to the Mayor of Schweinfurt at this function. He reports that the Mayor, George Shafer was a 16 year-old anti-aircraft gunner when we bombed them. His grandfather owned the Ball Bearing factory that we bombed. He recalls that one of our bombs dropped into an oil pit and started a nasty fire.

## SCHWEINFURT



Wilbur 'Bud' Klint & Georg Schafer at Monument  
Photo by H. Higgins

To tell you I really enjoyed the trip to Schweinfurt more this time than I did in October, 1943 would be the understatement of the century. No flak, no fighters, and no rockets but just the open arms of friendship the like of which you have not seen before. I don't know when I have felt more welcome than with the first contact with our German counterparts, *The Luftwaffenhelfers der Schweinfurter Flakbatterien*. These were the same people who 55 years ago were zeroing in on us with their 88mm flak guns with the intention of driving us away from their area. This time, June 15 - 18, 1998, I was made to feel so much at home that I hated to leave!

But let me start at the beginning. In Frankfurt we were to meet at the air terminal building where a bus was to pick us up at 1100 and take us to Schweinfurt. Those of us who were arriving the morning of the 15th (our plane landed at 0940 after 19 hours of travel) were met as we cleared customs by Otto and/or Heike Gruber and escorted to the International Meeting Place in Terminal 2. Slowly the crowd came together. Some had arrived a day or two early and some of us were just coming into the area. Anyway, when it was finally determined that we had all the people either with us or accounted for, we boarded the bus and off we went toward Schweinfurt. Visiting with old friends (SSMA) that we had not seen since Omaha last October and the beautiful scenery of the Frankonian countryside made the two and one half hour ride pass hurriedly. We arrived in Schweinfurt and were taken immediately to the Panorama Hotel in the downtown area. Georg Schafer was there to greet us and welcome us to his home town of Schweinfurt. Since he had already pre-registered us and had rooms assigned, we had only to get our keys and go to our rooms to rest and clean up. When we entered our room, Bebe and I, there were two bottles of Frankonian wine and two large German Chocolates awaiting our pleasure compliments of one of Georg's 'Flakhelfer' friends. We saved them for later

After a l-o-n-g one hour rest and then getting into some passable clothes, we assembled in the hotel lobby and walked the 300 yards up to the *Rathaus* (City Hall) to have dinner with the 'Flakhelfer' group in the *Ratskellef* (below City Hall). There we participated in a buffet dinner with our German hosts. There were three former Luftwaffe pilots in attendance and the rest (40 to 50) were members of the Luftwaffenhelfers of Schweinfurt - those who were conscripted out of high school and assigned to the flak batteries around their city. This chance to interface with our German counter-parts brought about warm and friendly discussions - even though the language barrier was there, it was solved by innovation - hand signals and facial expressions. So an evening of good food, good German beer, good Frankonian wine, and good fellowship was the icebreaker needed to make a cohesive unit of two separate groups dedicated to a common goal - The Schweinfurt Memorial Monument. The revelry lasted for me until about 2100 hours! After over 24 hours awake and most of it travelling, I had to take this child to the hotel and put him to bed.



L to R: Mayor of Schweinfurt Gudrun Grieser,  
Georg Schäfer and Ginny Dumond

Photo by H. Higgins

An early morning breakfast, buffet style, was enjoyed by all of us before we prepared ourselves for a full day. At 0930 hours we all gathered at the St. Johannis Lutheran Cathedral for a Memorial Service. This was an ecumenical service conducted by the Lutheran Minister Christhild Grate, Catholic Bishop of Wurzburg Heribert Brander (a former 'Flakhelfer'), and U. S. Army Chaplain in Schweinfurt John S. Parker. The addresses of each along with the music furnished by the Cathedral Pipe Organ and a brass quintette was a tribute to those we were memorializing. Hymns were sung with each verse presented first in German then repeated in English. The Lord's Prayer was recited in each person's own language to end the service.

Immediately after the memorial service it began to rain - HARD. Everyone got wet during the five to six block walk to the monument site. It was decided that it was too wet to conduct the dedication in front of the monument, but Lord Mayor Frau Gudrun Grieser arranged to have the city theater, which is right across the street, opened and the ceremony was conducted inside to escape the rain. A Welcome Address was given by



the Lord Mayor followed by addresses by Walter Hillgärtner (Representative of the government of Lower Frankonia) and George A. Glass (U. S. Consul General, Munich). Then Wilbur 'Bud' Klint for SSMA and Herr Georg Schafer for the 'Luftwaffenhelfers' made their presentations for "Remembering the Dead". Music was furnished by the Big Band of Alexander-von-Humbolt-Highschool conducted by Rudolf Oft playing 'Dona Nobis Pacem' (Give Us Peace). 'Taps' was played followed by the national anthems of America and Germany to end the ceremony.

By this time the rain had stopped so everyone went back over to the monument for a picture taking session. When there were no more shutters clicking, the group walked the 5 or 6 blocks back to the City Hall (Rathaus) for a reception where we were hosted by the Lord Mayor and other dignitaries of Schweinfurt. The artist who designed the Monument, G. Hubert Neidhart - a former 'Flakhelfer', was introduced to the crowd and toasted. A few more short speeches and the party migrated toward visitations and new friendships made

That was the end of the dedication proceedings and from this point on it was strictly the 'Flakhelfers' showing us their city and the surrounding area. Tuesday afternoon was spent with half of our group touring SKF and the other half the FAG ball bearing factories. After the tours, we were loaded into two buses and driven along the Mein River toward the town of Nordheim, a small wine village. There we were treated to a very good German dinner accompanied by a great POLKA BAND with plenty of their local wine and beer - both were very good. The name of the restaurant was Zehnthof's in case you get a chance to try it out. There must have been well over a hundred of us seated in this one room and with all the talking and the music it was hard to hear yourself think. Much laughter and talking to new friends made with our hosts from the Flakhelfers Association. It looked as if everyone had a great time. But, as the old jet lag settled in again, we boarded the buses for the return trip to Schweinfurt and beddie-bye.

At 1000 hours on Wednesday we set off in the buses again for a tour of the city of Schweinfurt. It was really interesting to see how the city had been restored after WW II. New buildings were constructed and old, damaged ones have been restored or are in the process of restoration - the population has climbed back up to about 55,000 from a low of about thirty to thirty-five thousand right after the war. A very progressive city that is gaining in stature each day.

The tour ended at the A von Humboldt High School where we held discussions with the graduate students and teachers. The questions asked were of a nature to require in-depth answers and sometimes by more than one individual associated with the SSMA. A very good and satisfying session that was terminated when we were invited to have lunch at the school cafeteria - good food, well prepared and presented.

We left the high school and proceeded to Abram's Club on Richard Wagner Strasse to again have discussions - but this time with the officers of the 2nd Brigade, 1st US Infantry Division. They were very attentive and seemed to be very interested in anything our members had to say. This discussion went on for about a short one and one half hours and came to a close with each side wanting more time for visiting. However, we were due at the Conn Barracks Community Club for a Farewell Dinner with our friends - the Luftwaffenhelfers der Schweinfurter Flakbatterien. We met our new friends at the Club and participated in the enjoyment of both the food and the fellowship throughout the evening. Home addresses were traded - an invitation to the whole Flakhelfers group to attend our reunion in October - and heartfelt goodbyes were exchanged. All too soon we were told that it was time for our buses to depart.

The next morning was scheduled for departure to Frankfurt and home for many of the SSMAers. Again, many of our new German friends came to the hotel to wave a last goodbye and bon voyage to all. Bebe and I decided to stay another night before we headed for Garmish-Partenkirchen. As we stood there watching the bus disappear, Herr Christian Kampf offered to take us on a walking tour of the older section of Schweinfurt - this is what I wanted to see. Christian is an artist and restorer of artifacts and buildings and works out of a shop founded by his grandfather. We spent 3 to 4 hours with him (he had taken this time from



L to R: Walter Hillgarter, Georg Schafer, Lord Mayor Gudrun Grieser, Consular Aide, Bud Klint, and U. S Consul General George A. Glass observing Monument.

Photo by H Higgins

his work to accommodate us) as he gave us a history of each building and how it was or was to be restored. It was all very interesting but more than that, I felt that I got to know Christian very well. I do hope he can visit one of our reunions in the very near future - I miss him already - an interesting man.

That's it. I have speeches given by some of the participants which you might want to look over in a later briefing letter. I'll end this with a poem that was originally published in the 303rd Bomb Group Newsletter ■<nd changed slightly by Bud Klint to fit our situation in Germany.

### The Schweinfurt Reunion - June 15-18,1998

Can these old men have been the ones  
Who crewed the seventeens?  
Who manned the turrets, who manned the guns?  
Are they? - By any means?

Are these the ones we met on high  
With rockets, cannon and guns?  
In the fighter planes that filled the sky  
Are they? - Can they be the ones?

Can these be the boys, just turned sixteen  
That manned the Ack Ack guns?  
They were so young and strong and lean  
Are they? - Can they be the ones?

Yes, all these men now gathered here  
Were called to serve and fight.  
They all were young they had no fear,  
They thought they were in the right.

Wait! They suddenly look younger now;  
I see them as they were before.  
The planes roar off, airborne somehow,  
They carry bombs and men to war.

And at the alert, men hurry out  
To man the planes and guns.  
The bombers come, they're all about  
These defenders are the ones.

The bombers return but not quite all.  
Who knows what happened there?  
Some saw comrades in their fall,  
Some saw collisions in mid-air.

The fighters and the flakhelfers  
Relax and count the cost.  
They remember friends that were  
Who fought but now are lost.

The vision fades, I look about.  
We've gotten old again, I see.  
We were so young, we had no doubt,  
We felt that we would always be.

There's one more mission left to fly:  
No one comes back, but then  
We gather 'round and say goodbye  
And we thank God we had such men!

*The Bomber War; 1939-1945*

I hope you can help me. I am a British military historian and I have been commissioned to write a major book on the Combined Bomber Offensive against Germany in the Second World War. This history will aim to tell the story of all the airforces that took part, recounting their training, problems, objectives, methods, the missions that went wrong and those that went right, featuring all the crew members, pilots, navigators, signallers, gunners and bomb aimers - and not forgetting the ground crews. -

To tell this story fairly and accurately I need the help of your members. Could you, perhaps through your newsletter or magazine, tell the members about this project and ask them to get in touch with me in England? Something like his should do it:

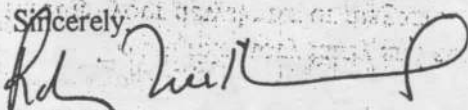
**The Bomber War in Europe, 1942-45;**

*If you flew on missions over Germany in the Second World War, or were at USAAF HQ, High Wycombe, or on one of the bomber bases in England, North Africa or Italy, British military historian Rob Neillands needs to hear from you, for a big book he is writing on the Combined Bomber Offensive. If you have a tale to tell or a memory to share, get in touch with Rob today - don't leave it to the other guy.. Write, e-mail or fax to Rob Neillands, 5 Silbury Court, Beckhampton, Marlborough, Wiltshire England, SNR 1QJ. Tel: 44-1672 539656. Fax: 44-1672 539672 or e-mail [rob@neillands.demon.co.uk](mailto:rob@neillands.demon.co.uk)*

All letters will be replied to, all contributions will be acknowledged in the book. USAAF veterans have helped with other books, like my *Conquest of the Reich*, which is available in the USA,. I am sure this appeal will get a good response and get the USAAF a fitting place in this big and definitive book .

Many thanks and I look forward to hearing from you

Sincerely,



Robin Neillands

Dear Mr. Stern

Please subscribe me to your "Hardlife Herald" and let me know what upcoming events you have planned for the group.

We met here in Tucson last November and I would still like to know about having a descendants groups who are active on the internet. If you have any members with an email address let me know.

Thank you for helping us of the next generation. The internet is a great place for us to share.

My dad was 1st Lt. Edwin James Townsend (#0754389). He was a B-17 pilot of 549th Bomb Squad. He was in England from 27 Sept. 1944 to 7 April 1945. These are some of the names of the men in his crew:

F/O Moulton, Hollis Cpl-Batuello, Mario  
 F/O Rosenbloom, Harvey Cpl - Jacobson, Lindsay  
 F/O Stout, Iray Cpl - Malkmus, Robert  
 Sgt-Podwaryn, Stanley Cpl-Dubuel, Theodore  
 Cpl-Lance, Jack

Any information will be greatly appreciated.

Priscilla Hagerty  
 2842 N Quesnel Lp.  
 Tucson, AZ 5817-6824  
 email address mrh @ [azstarnet.com](mailto:azstarnet.com)

Dear Ed,

Read the information about the April 11-15,1999 reunion from Geo Hruska. Sounds like Geo has things all lined up to go on April 11 to 15, 1999.

I still get "funny" notes from Truman Smith. He has been an e-mail pal of mine since the GREAT 1997 reunion. Thanks Ed.

We are anxious to get out of all this desert heat, but so far we are sticking it out until I get myself back together.

Our pool water is more like bath water 88 degrees F. I can't even cool it down with more water. I need a Fargo snow storm.

Lots of work is being done at Pima Air Space - New entrance, new bldgs-etc and the Challenger Center. The 390th is the same old thing.

Hope this finds you both well and happy.

God Bless  
 Ken and Veda Laffoon  
 e-mail: [laffoon1@juno.com](mailto:laffoon1@juno.com)

Dear Ed,

Had a visit from Steve Miles with a photo of a picture we sent to you for a raffle at Tucson, AZ and from the letter we received from Steven to Dear Beatie should have been to the Gordons, never the less we were pleased you had us in mind when you took the photo even though you stuck the letter on the back of the picture.

We received the photo that was the main thing and it would appear you had a good time at Tucson.

Trust you are both well and maybe meet up with you again one day.

Best wishes  
 Les and Peggy Gordon

Dear Ed,

I was going thru my desk the other day and I came up on these pictures, and thought they would bring back memories of the original members of the 385th. I was on Jerry Trudy's crew from the forming of the Group in Spokane.



Jerry Trudy and Bill Clark receiving the D.F.C. from Col. Van



Gunner of Mudge and Reichaifs Crews



Our first B-17



Gunners of the 549th Sqd.



L to R Plato Galan, Jay Mudge & Me (Joe DeGiacomo)



I'm in the middle & Sam Burns of Lt. Stone's Crew (I don't know who is on my right) Lt. Stone's crew were shot down on the way back from Victory



Back Row Eusale, Me, McGuag, & Monmy  
Front Philips, Sheffield, Mudge & Clark



Dear Ed,

Thanks for printing the obituary for Jerry Steil. We often hear about the great guys we used to fly with, but they truly broke the mold after Jerry Steihl.

He was a fine Airplane Commander. There was never any doubt as to who was boss when we were in the air, but on the ground he became the good friend with the big Nebraska smile, who would go to bat for his men at any time, and often did, though we were a trouble-free outfit and respected Jerry to the point where we willingly pulled together to try to ease the strain. I know every crew in the 549th Squadron and every crew in the 385th Group thought that they were the best, but we really believed it and we still do.

We had a few hairy ones, lots of flak..."Company front" fighter attacks...feathered engines over Berlin...oxygen adventures...almost frostbites...a few close formation propwash incidents to test our "pucker power"...but Jerry Steil always made the right decision...and we came through the war, though we lost Mort Feingold to flak over Cologne.

Jerry took his Primary Eagle Field, Do Palso, Cal. Basic at Minter Field, Bakersfield, Cal. Advanced at Douglas, AZ. We crewed-up at Ardmore, OK. RTU. Jerry was a Untried Air Lines employee before going into cadets, and was accepted into the UAL as a trainee co-pilot. He flew for United as a Captain for years before moving into management, though he opted to go back to Captain (747s) for his final years before retirement. His flying career (both Army and UAL) totaled 41 years.

In retirement he donated his work to building homes for his church group. Very characteristic of the man..Always helping someone.

Jerry was married to Sally in 1944. She came to Ardmore to be with him before we shipped over. They had five children, George, Bob, Kathy, Janet and Rusty and 6 grandchildren, Heather, David, Andrew, Geoff, DJ and John. Sally died of cancer. Jerry married Dianne in 1991, adding almost two more (almost grown) children. Jerry died with Dianne and 4 of his 5 children at his bedside in Lincoln, NE after a valiant fight with cancer.

We, his old B-17 crew, offer our sincere condolences to the family. We will not forget him...He will always be a part of our lives.

Jerry Steils Crew 549th Bombardment Squadron  
Miss Fortune #38118 385th Bombardment Group

Jerry Steil	Pilot	Nebraska/Colorado
Morton Feingold	Co-Pilot	Chicago, IL (KIA Cologne, Ger. deceased)
John Joseph	Navigator	St. Louis, MO
Don Collins	Bombardier	Walnut, CA
Roland Tanguay	Engineer	Livingston, TX
Don Abens	Radio Oper.	Geneseo, IL
Ralph Vollmer	Ball-Gunner	Lincoln, DE
Ron McInnis	Tail-gunner	Pleaston, CA

**Editor's Note:** Rocky Tanguay also wrote about Jerry Steil.

»

■QI

X



Miss Fortune #38118 tJ-1/  
Flown by Jerry Steils Crew

Dear Ed,

I wish to report the death of my husband, of 52 years, Orville R. Brown, who died June 26,1998. Orville served as a Staff Agt. with the 385th Bombardment Group in World War II. He also served in the Korean War.

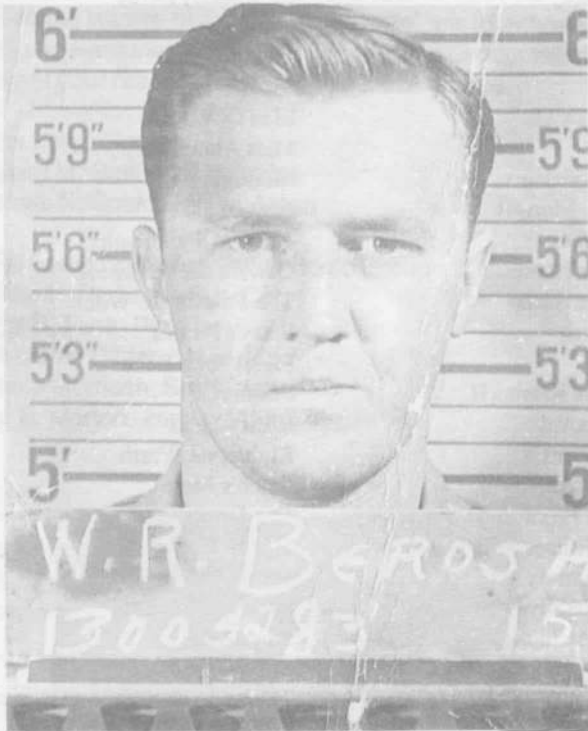
Orville was a deacon in the First Baptist Church of Hoover, Alabama. He was retired from Hayes International Corp., Birmingham, Alabama.

Sincerely

Eloise G. Brown  
PO Box 732  
Pelham, AL 35124



Fr. Tom Yosh has done a complete research job on his Uncle Walter Berosh, who was killed in the mid-air collision over Perle, Luxembourg.



Walter R. Berosh #130-05-283  
385th BG - 550th Sq - Station 155

According to his burial report, on his right side buried was: Pitts, 07703932, 2nd Lt. Grave #156; on his left was: Brown, 36447786, S/SgV#154. Both men Air Corp.



Picture of mother and daughter who visited Uncle Walter's grave at Belgium before it was brought home.

Dear Ed,

I really appreciate your publishing my plea for facts about the mid-air collision where both crews were killed, and helping me learn the details of how my buddy Leo Lynch died.

I found eleven names in the book of American Military Cemeteries so thought Lynch's crew had an extra man aboard - but if both crews were killed I should have found 20 names on the list for April 4th, '45 from the group.

By the way, you're doing a great job as Editor of the Hardlife Herald (since about 1986) and all I can say is Verne Phillips and Paul R. Schultz would be proud of you.

Best regards,  
Don Hayes

P.S. I got many more letters than every hoped for about Ritchie and Crimmin's planes and the mid-air disaster. Even "Whitey" Frederickson's brother wrote me as did Willard Hagman and Jerry Gentis (survivors of Ritchie's crew) and David Schwartz.

Schwartz & Gentis were spared as they got pulled that day to let 2 guys who only had one mission to go to finish up and go home - get in their last mission - which it really was, to their bad luck. Hagman and Gentis sent me some good photos of my buddy Lurch in England and one of Ritchie's crew. Hagman went to the Netherlands with his whole family and sent me photos of the cemetery and closeup of Leo Lynch's name on the Wall of Missing. It was great of them.

Thank you again;  
Don

Dear fellow members.

As you are no doubt aware, I'm in the process of trying to match Serial Numbers to Names for the B-17s of the 385th. Let me try one more thing.

I hope to soon get copies of the Loading Lists for all 35th missions (that exist in the archives). With these lists I can see WHO flew on which B-17 on a given date (mission). Of you remember only the NAME of your B-17, please tell me the dates of your missions (or the group mission numbers.) Then I probably will be able to make a match to its serial number. For example: tell me, "I flew on mission No. 300 (or on 34/13/46 [date]) in *the Bee Seventeen*". Another useful piece of information is the date of crashing, crash landing or ditching, along with the name of the airplane (and its pilot, if known). If you don't know the exact date, an approximation will do. (If you already know the serial number of any name listed below, that is all I need.)

Attached is the list of names that I do not have the serial numbers for. I have many others, so if your B-17's name is not listed, I probably already have its serial number.

Bill Vamedoe  
5000 Ketova Way  
Huntsville, AL 35803  
(256)881-3288

#### NAMES WITH OCT KNOWN SERIAL NUMBERS

Achtung	Aimless Wanderer
Aimless Wonder	Ain't Misbehavin'
Albatross	Angels Sister
Back to the Sack	Barbara Lee
Batchelor's Delight	Beautiful Gal
Beba (Bring 'Em back alive)	Beelzebub
Ben-J	Blitz Buggy
Butter Fingers	Buzzy
Calamity Jane	Ceiling Zero
Charlie	Charlotte Ann
Choo-Choo	Chowhound
Cinderella	City of Lakes
Crash Wagon	Crash Wagon II
Cultured Vulture	Damyank
Dartin	Dear Mom
Defuzer	Easy
Echo	Finishing Touch
Flak Shack	Flub
Flying Joker	For Whom the Bombs Fall
Francis	Fulton's Folly
Furlough Myrtle	Garry B
Gelding	Gen'l Billy Mitchell
Gizmo	Happy Daze
Heaven Sent	Hell on High
Hottin Nanny	Impatient Virgin
In Like Flynn	In the Mood
Is this S Trip Really Necessary	J for Jenny
Jeanie Beanie	Jeanne Rickey

Junior	Just Enough
Kitty's Revenge	Lady Ann
Lady Lyle	Lady Ruth
Lady Susie	Laiden Maiden
LallahV	Lenora Linda
Letty Jane	Lil' Lamsey Divey
Little General	Lucky Star
Lucky Strike	Lucky Turner
Lurline	Maiden USA
Mairzy Doats	Man O'War II
Micky	Miss Alamo City
Miss Nonalee	Moonglow
Moon's Morons	My Gal Sal
Night Mare	The Old Shillelagh II
Old War Horse	Oswald the Volunteer
Over the Hump	The Passionate Witch
The Patch	Perry's Pirates
Piscosa	Pistol Totin Babe
Powerful Katrina II	Powers Girl
Princess Vai	Ready Maid
Remember Us	Righteous Wrath
Satan's Mate	Satch's Mate
Second Front	Shy Dotty
Sioux Princess	Skirtin Trouble
Souse Family II	Souse Family III
Souse Family IV	Southern Belle
Spirit of Chicago	Sugar-Jo
Sunday Punch	Superstition
Sweet 17	This Is It
Tung Hoi	Unfinished Business
Virgie, Queen of Hearts	Virginian
Wandering Duchess	Weider's Wildcast
White Heat	The Wildcat
Worry Bird	Zoot

Dear Ed,

On a recent visit to Los Angeles I had a chance to talk with Joe Matuna who was a friend of my Dad's during the war, by phone. During our conversation, he mentioned that a friend of theirs named Bill Filter had accidentally shot himself with a pistol while over there, and had died. When I got home I noticed that Bill Filter's name was listed in the memorial pages of the 385th Bomb Group History Book. I am tempted to add this latest information to the book that I'm writing about my Dad's war years but would like to get further collaboration from any of your readers who might have known him, or the circumstances surrounding his death. Any information would be greatly appreciated. Thanks for your help.

Stephen R, Inglis  
21717 Inverness Forest Blvd. #2504  
Houston, TX 77073



Dear Ed,

Thank you for printing the letter to your wife. You repainted a vivid picture of our lives at Great Ashfield.

A few additions which might give you a laugh.

Marv Tipp being hit on the head & thinking he was a gonner. (An explosion released something from the shelf over his sleeping body.

Archie Benner leaping into the bomb shelter, (to escape bombing), and found himself up to his armpits in water.

Joe Bunting awakened during the bombing and rushed into the doorway of my little Ops office (at the briefing building) just as short Hymy Goldberg ran through the door He just disappeared into the darkness.

Lastly - same time as above. I was informed that an aircraft would blow up if we didn't move it away from the fire. I looked into Warren Cerrone's blue eyes and told him to go move it. His eyes were steady, he didn't even blink - and out the door he went, started the engine and lived!

Nice work Ed,  
Jim McDonald  
950 Mandalay Beach Road  
Ocnard, California 93035

Ed Stem:

Some of our members may be going in the area of the Air Force Academy in Colorado Springs this summer and they may enjoy seeing the B-17 memorial, a memorial I believe from the 305th Bomb Group. Am enclosing a picture of it with me beside it to relate to the size of it.

Am enclosing a memorial card sent by Mary Beth Hughes regarding the passing of her dad and my best friend, Jack Hughes. We were a team and one of the original crews of the 551st Dquadron. As I previously mentioned we had lunch together in Ft. Lauderdale over the xmas holidays. He passed away March 6, 1998 after a knee operation in which a blood clot formed. He was well known among the early crews.

Incidentally, in the Hardlife Herald, you published a letter from my friend Jacques Leroux who is a French Historian and published a book on the episodes of my crew after being shot down over France in 1943, in addition they entertained us royally for 10 days in France in the area where we were shot down. Air Fare was included. Now he is trying to do the same history and episodes of all other crews who went down over France. He would like very much to receive the Hardlife Herald and if you could add another paper to your list and send along with my paper, I would be more than happy to forward it to him regularly.

He was the first one to notice that the Old Shilleagh I and II were missing from the heading on the Hardlife Herald.

W.C.Grodi  
12089 Fairhope Rd, San Diego, CA 92128

Dear Mr. Philips,

I am writing you to see if you could send me an application for the Hardlife Herald. Burnell and Loma Cook are my grandparents. I have always enjoyed listening to Grandpa's stories about missions he flew on or funny things that happened to him or his friends while he was in the military. My dad, Phil Cook also has a membership and I grew up reading many issues of the HLH.

I know that you flew with my Grandpa, so you probably know him very well. He is still as funny as ever. He has lost a lot of weight because he doesn't have much of an appetite lately, but hopefully the doctors will be able to help him with that a little. Other than that, he is doing pretty good.

Sincerely,

Angela M Cook  
1024 Riverbend Dr, Apt. 5  
Hartford, WI53027

**EDITOR'S NOTE:** Treasurer Verne reports that Burnell was flight engineer on his Sth mission when they went down on mission to Vitry. Burnell was badly wounded on the mission and couldn't fly anymore.

Hi VemD.J. Phillips:

Enclosed is a check of \$100.00 from my brother Gary L Stone and myself for your 8th Air Force Heritage Museum. I am an associate member receiving the 385th BGMA Newsletter and enjoying it very much. Our Uncle Carl was with the 385th and I would very much like to find out more about his assignments and what missions and planes he might have been on. I believe he was a Radioman-B- 17s.

Carl Robert Cain  
550th Sq. 385th BGAAF  
World War II  
July 5, 1913-21 June 1954  
(Off his tombstone) Shell Shock-Self Inflicted Gunshot

I have called Flight Museum, Seattle and they want \$35-45.00 an hour for searching by computer. Do you have any other ideas or names I could contact. Thank you all ahead of time.

Clarence L. Stone  
9115 126th Ave NE  
Kirkland, WA 98033  
Phone:425-827-8548

Dear Ed,

In the April 1998 edition of the "Hardliffe Herald" there are serial numbers and names of missing planes. I knew I had some old pictures, so I decided to see if I could find them.

The serial number 39259 is one of those listed, but not the name of our plane "Badger Beauty".

Here is a picture of her remains taken on October 10, 1944 somewhere west of Osnabruch, Germany. The man standing in front is our pilot Dalon Severance. The other two were Tom Klement, waist gunner and Paul Kneeland, Engineer, now both deceased.

On October 5, 1944 we were on a mission to bomb in Munster, Germany. On the way home, over Osnabruch, we were hit by flak. I directed the pilot, we called him "Casey", to fly due west to try to get near our front lines. As you can see, we never made it. We thought we were lucky only one of us was hit by flak, Donald Dewey, the other waist gunner. We never made it to a clear field, instead we went through a 2 story building. In that accident Tom Daley, rear gunner, had bad leg injuries, while I suffered a brain concussion, fractured skull and shoulder injuries from a waist machine gun coming through the wall in the radio room where I was supposed to sit in an emergency.

The six good and able crew men hid the three of us who were hurt in a barn while they hid in the woods. On the fifth day we were picked up by front line infantry and medics. The medics took the pictures.

I woke up listening to screaming by the man in the next bed. He had a flame thrower on his back when he was hit. I had been out of it for a whole seven days. I woke up in a field hospital outside of Aachen, Germany. It was taken over by the Germans in "the battle of the bulge".

I knew practically none of the above, until 35 years later when seven of us met in St. Louis for a reunion.

That was a good crew to fly with.

As near as I know, the members of our crew still living are myself, the pilot, Dalon Severance, Donald Dewey, a gunner, Webb P. Lee, the co-pilot, and Fred Ranch, the radio man.

Joseph Kastenholz  
Bombardier/Navigator  
7101 N 40th St  
Milwaukee, WI53209-2244



Dear Ed.

With reference to page 3 in August 1998 Hardlife Herald, I am enclosing a list of personnel of the 550th Sqdn of a picture which I don't have a print. I was with the 550th Sqdn from May 44 thru Sept '44. I flew in "Kentucky Winner" 23 of my 35 missions and would appreciate if you would add her name to the cover of HLH. I requested in summer of 1996 and the name was added for April & August 1996 issue.

Thank you.

Robert C. "Bob" Hyde

PICTURE OF 550TH BOMB SQDN OFFICERS

Top row from Left to right:

- |     |              |                   |
|-----|--------------|-------------------|
| 1   | Mr. Feldman  | Tech Supply       |
| 2   | Lt. Snow     | Gunnery Officer   |
| 3.  |              |                   |
| 4.  | Lt. Kinny    | Ordinance Officer |
| 5.  | Mr. Thompson | Armament Officer  |
| 6.  |              |                   |
| 7.  | Capt. Warren | S-2               |
| 8.  | Lt. Cavan    | S-2               |
| 9.  | Lt. Knight   | Sqdn Supply       |
| 10. | Lt. Marshall | Personnel         |
| 11. |              |                   |

Bottom row from left to right:

- |     |                 |                |
|-----|-----------------|----------------|
| 1.  | Capt. Lancaster | Operations     |
| 2   | Capt MacSweeny  | Operations     |
| 3.  | Capt. Harrison  | Turret Shop    |
| 4.  | Capt. Shaw      | Group Nav.     |
| 5.  | Capt. Stem      | Sqdn Executive |
| 6.  | Lt. Col Tesla   | C.O.           |
| 7.  | Capt. Vance     | Operation      |
| 8.  | Capt. Huff      | Med            |
| 9.  | Capt. Willson   | Eng            |
| 10. | Capt. Carey     | Med            |
| 11. | Capt. Hambrook  | Sqdn Adjutant  |

Dear Mr. Stem,

Many thanks for forwarding the four issues of the Hardlife Herald. I read all four issues with great interest and obviously have missed some great reunions, etc. I am enclosing two checks, one for membership (\$15.00) and one for the Heritage Museum Memorial (\$100.00).

I was a 2nd Lieutenant, Bombardier 0-9229594. I flew 16 missions. I was with the 550th Bomb Sq.

When I went overseas I was with crew #9207 out of Sioux City. The pilot was Sidney L. Harris, Co-Pilot Franklin C Thayer, Navigator Milan Zanerck, Radio Operator Donald Graham, Engineer Carl Barsness, Armor Gunner Fred Hunt, Ball Gunner Edward Kuzzma, Tail Gunner George Manning.

Incidentally my last mission was the food drop to Holland that you mentioned.

Since I don't have an application, my wife's name is Nancy. We live in Naples, Florida from October 1 to June 1. I have been retired sixteen years and enjoy good health. We shall make our next reunion. Perhaps I will meet some of the old crew members. I only flew the first few missions with the original crew.

Many thanks again, I am  
Very truly yours,

Garry N. Bean  
2221 Regal Way  
Naples, FL 34110



- |                       |             |
|-----------------------|-------------|
| Orville R. Brown      | June 1998   |
| Edward P. Caledraro   | June 1998   |
| Hal R. Stockdale      | July 1998   |
| William Powell        | August 1998 |
| John Kelly Hughes, Sr | March 1998  |
| Ralph Smith           | Sept 1998   |
| Stanford I Cohen      | Feb 1998    |



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JOSEPH B KOSCINSKI  
16181 W HONEY BEAR LN  
STONE LAKE WI 54876-3010

**STANFORD I. COHEN**

# If/harmacy owner and teacher, volunteer

By Sharon Voas  
Post-Gazette Staff Writer

Stanford I. Cohen served on more than 50 volunteer organizations than could be listed here. He was so grateful for his efforts that he celebrated Sept. 21 as "Stanford I. Cohen Day." Allegheny County recognized his service with a Community Citation of Merit Award. The University of Pittsburgh showered him with service awards.

In his professional life, Mr. Cohen, a short, dark-haired cigar smoker, ran three pharmacies and taught pharmacy at Duquesne University and the University of Pittsburgh.

"He was a character and he had a lot of friends," said his daughter, Jennifer Cohen, 43, of Ithaca, N.Y. "He always takes situations where people were awkward and makes them comfortable."

Mr. Cohen would, for instance, step into an elevator packed with silent, uncomfortable people avoiding eye contact, and start pulling pranks and telling jokes until they loosened up.

Mr. Cohen grew up in Millvale, where his dad ran a pharmacy. He lied about his age and dropped out of high school at age 15 to join the Army Air Forces. At an age when he wouldn't be old enough to drive a car today, he served as tail gunner on a B-17 Flying Fortress during a tour of duty in England.

After the war, he returned to high school and then earned a bachelor's degree in education at the University

of Toledo in 1950. He taught English and biology at a Toledo high school until his father died in 1954. Mr. Cohen returned with his wife, Jean, to Millvale to take care of the family business and his family.

"He never planned on going into pharmacy," Jodi Cohen said. "He really loved to teach."

He returned to teaching at Duquesne, where he was a part-time pharmacy and business lecturer from 1968 to 1983. He taught at Pitt School of Pharmacy from 1979 until his death.

He spent a lot of time reading. "He read a few newspapers a day," Jodi Cohen said. "He read a lot of books, a lot of poetry. He was interested in everything. He was curious and largely self-taught."

And then, of course, there was his community service. Among his vol-

unteer efforts, he served on the board of directors of Mercy Hospital and Psychiatric Institute, The Jewish Home and Hospital and the Association of Retarded Citizens.

In Millvale he was, among other things, on the board of directors of the Boys' and Girls' Club of America, the ambulance authority and the police pension fund.

His volunteer efforts for Pitt included serving on the board of trustees, the Alumni Association and the Alumni Council.

Ralph P. Smith  
Horace, N.D.

Ralph P. Smith, 72, Horace, died Tuesday, Sept. 29, 1998, in Merit-Care Hospital, Fargo.

Mr. Smith was born Dec. 18, 1925, in Fargo, where he graduated from Central High School and attended North Dakota State University. He entered the military in 1943 and served in the 8th Air Force Bomber Group. He flew 34 missions during his service and was discharged in 1945. After the war, he returned to Fargo. He and Gladys Wastwiedt were married in Cedar Rapids, Iowa.

He worked for Northwest Airlines for 21 years, then worked for a California-based corporation and traveled extensively as part of their sales training force. In 1973 he returned to Fargo and farmed near Horace and Pillsbury, N.D. For 14 years he worked in sales at Gateway Chevrolet in Fargo, retiring this past year.

He is survived by his wife; two sons, Steve (Kristin), Des Moines, Iowa, Galyn (Cipdy), Ada, Minn.; two daughters, Kandy (John) Heiman, Minneapolis, Sheryl (Gordon) Elkins, Seattle; two brothers, Obert (Betty), Minneapolis, William, San Francisco; two sisters, Hilda Anderson, Fargo, Mildred (Warren) Walkinshaw, Argusville, N.D.; and eight grandchildren.

**Memorial service:** Friday at 2 in Boulger Funeral Home, Fargo

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## William 'Bill' Powell

William "Bill" Powell, 80, of Bella Vista died Tuesday, Aug. 5, 1997, at Bates Medical Center in Bentonville. He was born Jan. 9, 1917, in Philadelphia, Pa., to John and Christina Powell.

He married Yvonne Weatherill on June 16, 1951. They moved to Bella Vista from Council Bluff, Iowa, in 1978.

He was a member of the POA Board from 1982 through 1984. Powell served as chairman of the POA Board in 1983.

He was active in the Nine Hole Golf Association and was an avid bridge player.

He was an active member of the Bella Vista Community Church, a member of American Legion Post 341, and a member of Buchenwald Prisoners Club.

He graduated from high school in Waterbury, Conn., and from the University of Nebraska at Omaha, Neb.

He was a retired Air Force captain who served in World War II and was a prisoner of war in Germany.

Survivors include his wife Yvonne; one son, William L. Powell of Tulsa, Okla.; two daughters, Pamela Lawler of Mount Morris, Ill., and Sharon McKnight of Katy, Texas; and four granddaughters.

Lord, I've been told  
of a candle burned out,  
of a life you've chosen  
to keep.

I questioned at first,  
so forgive me my doubt.  
I've been answered by faith  
that is deep.

The flame with so much  
warmth to share,  
and its light that served  
to guide,

Hadn't been muffed by your  
hand that gives life,  
it burns quietly by your side.

In Loving Memory of th.  
Light & Life of

John Kelley Hughes, Sr.  
May 13, 1915 to March 6, 1998