

Hardlife



Herald



Newsletter of the
385th Bombardment Group Memorial Association

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The Mighty Eighth

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Chapel of the Fallen Eagles
The Mighty Eighth Museum
Savannah, GA

385 REUNION • HAMPTON, VA • OCTOBER 22-27, 2003

Hardlife Herald

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Honorary Members

Roger Feller
Eldon Nysether
Mayor Ferdinand Unsen

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Notices

- **Reunion:** Mark your calendar now for the October 22nd - 27th, 2003 reunion in Hampton VA. President Leo LaCasse has a great agenda planned for the reunion. This is a reunion you do not want to miss. More later in future issues of the Hardlife Herald.
- **2005 REUNION:** Now is the time to make your proposals for the 2005 reunion. Make the proposal as complete as possible by including location, why it is a good location, who will be the host, etc. If proposing a different format than previous reunions give details. Hosts can prepare a sales pitch to give at the 2003 reunion. Mail proposal to Bill Varnedoe, 5000 Ketova Way Huntsville AL 35803. Please send proposals by April 2003 if possible.
- **Editors note:** What are your thoughts on a 2004 reunion & annual reunions?
- **2003 DUES:** If your Hardlife Herald address mailing code does not show LM999, R03, or A03 your 2003 dues are due. Please mail your dues in the amount of \$25.00 to 385th BGMA c/o Verne Philips PO Drawer 5970 Austin TX 78763

Notice of Proposed By-Law Change

Amend Article IV, Executive Board. Section 3 and Section 5 to read as follows:

Section 3. The Executive Board shall meet at each regular meeting of the members, and at such other times as may be called by the Chairman or by a majority of the Executive Board members. Meetings may be conducted by teleconferencing or by email.

Section 5. A quorum at any meeting shall consist of a majority of the members of the Board, then elected and/or appointed, and serving, who have not advised that they are unable to attend the meeting, either in person, by teleconferencing or by email. A majority of such quorum may decide any question that may come before Board. For teleconferencing, no answer shall be construed to mean, "unable to attend," and for email questions, no reply within two weeks of posting of the question shall be construed to mean, "unable to attend."

PRESIDENTS REPORT

By Leo A. LaCasse, Col., USAF, Ret.

For those of you who have been fortunate enough to be on a junket to Perle, Luxembourg, you will understand when I tell you that we were received as "Their Heroes" and treated as such. From the time we arrived until our departure we were treated as family and our every need catered to with urgency. No greater friendship exists between a foreign country and our own Association.

So many highlights on the Tour. I will not bore you with all of them, I will however, hit those points I consider of interest to all.

First the Peace Forrest in Bastogne

We were met at the Forrest by hundreds of Luxembourgers, Belgium and French masqueraders dressed in WWII GI uniforms and a parade of eighty WWII vehicles. There were Jeeps, Half-tracks, 2 1/2 Ton Trucks, Ambulances, Radio Communications Vans, Motorcycles and Sedans all in mint condition and appropriately camouflaged. The soldiers, equipped with Springfield Rifles escorted our group to a spot on the edge of the Peace Forrest where plaques and trees are planted for units who have been honored in the Battle of The Bulge in Bastogne. A tree and a plaque honoring the 385th BG was located and dedicated to all the men of our Group. Since the plaques cannot stand alone on the name of the unit, Lt. Maurice Neysether's name appears on

the plaque to represent all who served in the 385th from 1943 to 1945. Maurice is the Bombardier who pinpointed our bombs on the Germans who had surrounded our allied forces in the winter of 1944 in Bastogne.

Secondly the presentation of a Flag in honor of the 385th Memorial in Perle

A US Flag flown on the mast of the US Capitol in Washington, D.C., carefully transported to Arlington Cemetery in Virginia was folded by the Honor Guard of the Unknown Soldier's Tomb, a Purple Heart with four silver oak leaf clusters pinned on the Flag, one each for the Crew members of Capt. White and Lt. MacDonald and the one civilian executed by the Germans for not revealing the whereabouts of the one crew member who bailed out and survived, was officially presented to Frank McCawley and myself and in turn presented to Ferdinand Unsen, Mayor of the Principality of Rambaugh, Luxembourg as a Memorial to our fallen heroes. A letter written by U.S. Senator John Warner to the people of Perle was read and also presented to the Mayor for safe keeping in the 385th BG Museum. In my limited French I delivered my presentation in French so all the people of Perle would hear it first hand. Unfortunately it was never translated in English for the U.S. Ambassador to understand. I guess blunders are expected in such situations.

Highlight number three

After the Memorial Services a parade in our honor passed in review and the local band escorted us to the 385th BG Museum site. There the Square immediately in front of the Museum officially named the Maurice Neysether Square and the Museum was dedicated and officially opened to the public. The downside of this ceremony was the two B-17 Models obtained from Father Thomas A Yaszcz as a gift to the Museum had not arrived and only the brass plaque and a Jacket hand made by the aunt of a member of Curly's Kids Crew could be given to the Museum. Once the Museum doors were open it was bedlam. We witnessed the artistic display of memorabilia that Roger Feller and his staff organized for viewing. The arrangements of the articles in the Museum would make any professional curator envious. This is a first class Museum, a must see for all members and place for 385th artifacts to be protected for the legacy of the Group. It is here that we of the 385th BG will be remembered into eternity. Following the dedication we adjourned to a local hotel for a delightful evening sponsored by Mayor and Mrs. Unsen. The next day our Tour members reciprocated with a dinner honoring Mayor and Mrs. Unsen, Roger and Jeanny Feller and the Museum Staff. It was at this dinner that Eldon Neysether, brother of Maurice presented the Museum with 2500 Euro dollars

and \$1000 for the 385th BGMA. A generous gift given at a time when it was most needed by both recipients. Our sincerest appreciation to Eldon who is an Honorary Member of our Association. Thank you Eldon.

Highlight number four

On a guided visit to Saarbrucken, Ed Stern questioned the guide about a concentration camp located in the area during WWII. The guide acknowledged that such a camp existed but was reluctant to take our group to the location. To quote her, "Its not a place to take visitors since we are not very proud of the past". At Ed's insistence we were driven to the camp site and witnessed a deplorably kept area depicting a monument to those killed in the camp for such reasons as being Jews, homosexuals, having TB, syphilis or other deformities considered unworthy of the superior race envisioned by the Corporal, Hitler. We saw the inescapable pool where prisoners were thrown in to drown from fatigue. The grass was a foot high, evident that very few visitors came to witness the site where the needless slaughter of innocent people was probably a game to many of the camp guards. The only bright statement made by the guide after our visit was, "A law recently enacted in Germany makes the denial of the Holocaust a crime punishable by law". A very long time waiting for such a law.

Other areas of interest were the Cruise on the Moselle River. The boat we boarded would make the Waldorf Astoria

appear second class. A great cruise, fine food served with class, fine wine and a wonderful day spent relaxing and enjoying the vineyards on the slopes of the Moselle River.

A visit to a wine factory where we enjoyed a tour of the facility and a wine tasting in the main dinning room of the factory. Third generation owners poured a full glass of wine to each of us to taste and give our opinion on which wine was the best. We tasted the earliest to the oldest, the least expensive to the most expensive and the wine never stopped until it was time to board the bus. What a way to forget your troubles and get a much needed rest on the return trip home on the bus.

A half day in the city of Luxembourg, a most beautiful city, only to give us an appetite to return and spend more time at some future date. On our departure from Esch-sur-Sure we stopped in Rudesheim for lunch a short visit of the area. On to KonigsWinter for the night before a full day in Cologne where we witnessed the celebration of CorpusChristy, a religious holiday, on the grounds of the Cathedral. In the afternoon the Cologne Cathedral was opened to the visitors and a guide gave us the history of the Cathedral. Then on to Rotterdam for two nights with a tour of Amsterdam and a boat tour of the canals and lunch in the city. Our final tour took us to a GhourdaGhouda Cheese factory where much of our Euro dollars were spent and finally our tour at the Flouriade where

insufficient time was left for the group to properly enjoy the International flare of the event. Leaving from Schipol Airport seemed like a breeze compared to our departure from home. I suspect that many US dollars were dropped in the duty free shops before leaving. I believe the compatibility of the group the entire time we were together was the reason for such a wonderful and successful tour.

Luxembourg Roster

John and Joanne Pickett
Donald and Nancy Baker
John and Ed Stern
John Stern
Decky Stern Thornton
Frank and Peggy McCawley
Susan (Susy) Stern Fineman
Bill and Jeanette Moebius
Maurice Nysether
Joe and Marge Kubr
Beverly and Don Hunter
Luke Fannin
Anthony and Pamela Metcalfe
Roger Feller
Yose Raposo
James Harris (Jim)
George Menkoff
Leo A. LaCasse



CHAPLAIN SEZ

By Rev. James H. Vance

Sholam My Friends,

Which means 'Peace', 'hello' and 'good by' and is a word that covers this my last "Chaplain Sez". I wish all of you peace and since I can not say hello to you in person I am saying "good by" with this message regarding Christianity. The words that I am writing are from a message I gave at a Worship Service I conducted when I was Chaplain in a retirement facilities back in 1974. I gave it a title "The Three C's of Christianity".

The first "C" is CREED. Christianity is a body of historic beliefs and a way of life based on a creed. And a creed is a brief statement of the essential points of religious beliefs agreed

upon.

The second "C" is CULT or Church which really means a system of ritual and worship. And this means any institution for worship and teaching conducted by clergy in an organization or church.

The third "C" is CONDUCT. To have a Creed and a Cult are not ends in themselves. They must minister to ethical and spiritual ends. Bishop Gerald Kennedy gave this illustration.

It is related that a teamster once visited Rabbi Yitshak to ask him about a problem which troubled him greatly. It seems that his work often made it impossible for him to attend the services in the synagogue, and

he thought that, perhaps, he ought to change his job. The Rabbi asked; "Do you carry poor passengers free of charge?" "Yes" replied the teamster. "Then" said the Rabbi, "you serve the Lord in your occupation just as faithfully as I do when I am in the synagogue."

Christianity is a creed, and a cult but it really relies on the conduct that one conducts in every day life. It is not enough to have a creed or belong to a church. The real expression of Christianity depends on the way you serve HIM in your every day way of showing His Love.

Shalom My Friends.
Chaplain Jim Vance

Statistics of 385th Bomb Group

By William W. Vamedoe Jr.

I have compiled some statistics about our aircraft in the 385th Bomb Group. These dates were taken from the date of assignment to the 385th to the date it was scrapped, shot down, or flew back to the U.S. after VE Day on 22-23 June 45. This data is probably typical for all 8th Air Force Groups. 285 different B-17s flew combat in the 385th. Of these, the average life was only 6 Months, 8 Days! (This was pretty close to the duration of the average crew, if they completed their quota of missions. Some crew durations were much shorter, of course, since many were shot down way before reaching their quota of missions, other lead crews were longer.) 18 aircraft lasted less than one month. 6 lasted over 20 months, but only 2 flew the first mission and lasted longer than 2 years, ended out the war and flew home in 1945.

Longest lived were:

- 42-31117, *Daisy Mae*, lasted 3 Years, 4 Mos, 7 Days. It was the only one to escape the scrap heap immediately after flying home in 1945, but only for a short time.
- 42-30094, *Belle of the Blue*, lasted 2 Years, 2 Mos, 11 Days. One of the originals, it made it all the way through combat and flew home after VE-Day.
- 42-3335, *Fickle Finger of ?*, lasted 1 Year, 11 Mos, 15 Days. It was an original that made it all the way through combat, but was scrapped before flying home in '45.
- 42-30186, (no name), lasted 1 Year, 10 Mos, 18 Days. Also an original making it all the way past VE Day, but was scrapped before flying home.
- 42-31378, *Rum Dum*, lasted 1 Year, 4 Mos, 29 Days, before crash landing on mission no. 288 and being scrapped soon after.

Very short lived B-17s were: 42-30285, *Roundtrip Ticket*, 42-97776, *Remember Us*, 42-107037, (name unknown); and 43-38035, *Anxious Angel*; each of which lasted only one day.

THE SOFT LIFE SIDE

by Marian Gallagher

There is an advantage to growing older ... one's treasure chest of memories is enriched each new year. Having recently celebrated a BIG birthday, I reminisced about the "good old days" and how much I miss the things of my past that are now gone.

Most of all, I miss the sound of a "human voice" at the other end of the telephone. Now, when I seek information, call to verify a purchase, or have a question about my electric service I am greeted by a computer that immediately informs me "for reasons of training or quality purposes this call may be monitored." After that comes the barrage of options: "If you are calling from a touch tone telephone, press 1; if you wish to speak to Santa Claus, press 7; if you know the extension number of your party, press 5 followed by the pound sign now," etc., etc., etc.. I usually wait until the irritating voice announces "All of

our lines are busy now but your call is very important to us. Please wait until the next operator is available and your call will be answered in the order....." and then I HANG UP! If my call is important why doesn't someone talk to me?

I became nostalgic about postage stamps as I was making out monthly bills. I had 34 cent stamps leftover so I had to buy a goodly number ones to make up the proper postage. While sticking the wonderful "no lickums" on envelopes, I remembered the pretty pink 3 cent stamps that carried our first-class mail to anywhere the USA. At Christmas time we mailed our greeting cards for only two cents if we didn't seal the envelopes, which meant besides saving money, all we had "to lick" were the stamps!. We had penny post cards, special delivery letters which were special because they were hand delivered at our door day or night, and 6 cent air

mail stamps that sped love letters to our sweethearts over seas! I remembered mailboxes on every street corner, two deliveries a day, morning and afternoon, and knowing my mailman's name.

And with great joy I remembered the mail... post cards, letters, bills and one or two magazines. No junk mail, no sheets and sheets of advertisements, no catalogs, no books of free coupons, no platinum, gold or silver charge cards, no catalogs, no requests from dozens of unfamiliar charities, no surveys, no catalogs, no political propaganda, no vacation brochures, and NO CATALOGS!

Wouldn't it be a nice gesture if each of us were to write a real letter, not an e-mail, to someone this month? Like that old saying during WWII, we could "Keep those cards and letters coming!" and at the same time keep the U. S. Post Office happy!

Editors Column

From what I have received it is obvious that communities around our country are honoring the heroes of WWII. Two of our past presidents, Sam Lyke & Bob Valliere are two who were so honored. I am sure there have been many many more. Being a part of our home town has enriched our lives as well. So our individual histories continue along with our memories of that long ago conflict. We were blessed to come home to do our part on making America

the wonderful country it is today.

Since it has been six months since our regular Hardlife Herald was published I will be unable to get all the material I have received in this issue. So if your stories or information is not included please be patient, I will try and get it in the February or May of 2003 issues.

In the following issues I will have an up date on e-mail address that were listed in the August 2002 roster Issue of the

Hardlife Herald. Book reviews of several books authored by former 385th Bomb Group personnel. The Three Trees, by Charles W. McCauley, Forever Yours — if I ever get home alive, by Howard A. Muchow and The Diary of a Service Man by Robert Ralph Hartman. Information about a great little CD by Bill Daysh of Elmswell England with a lot of good pictures of Great Ashfield. Much, much more, hang in there.

Tom

FEATURE STORY

“Journey to Oberürsel”

By Sterling Rogers - Author of Hunkered Down

I had no real sense of the destructive force I was releasing as a bombardier. My young mind simply couldn't envision the havoc wreaked on the ground below me. Even the defensive act of firing the guns of my chin turret was a machine-against-machine sort of thing. It lacked the personal element of ground combat.

That all changed one night in the railway station in Frankfurt. As newly captured prisoners we were being moved to the interrogation center at Oberürsel when the air raid sirens sounded. It was night. All the lights went out instantly. The Frankfurter Bahnhof became a vast dark cave with only the gleam of light from locomotive fires showing here and there as they uncoupled from their cars and fled into the open countryside.

Our guards herded us along the platform and down a stairway into the basement. At the very bottom (I think it was the third basement level) we were pushed into a room with only one exit. That was locked and the guards disappeared. A light bulb on a drop cord glowed dimly in the middle of the room.

I could not hear the sirens

nor the planes above us, but I heard the explosions and felt the trembling of the earth. The one dim light went out. We sat in total blackness as plaster from the ceiling began to fall on our heads. The din of explosions increased and seemed to center directly over us. The noise, and its accompanying concussion, made me deaf. The cordite smell of high explosives permeated the air. Although there was a constant coughing from the dust of the falling plaster I did not hear it. I only knew it happened because the men next to me were physically convulsed by their coughs, just as I was. And we sat shoulder to shoulder and knees against backbones, packed together like sardines in a can.

I have no idea how long the raid lasted. It seemed interminable. As time went on the pieces of plaster falling around us became mixed with chunks of the masonry core of the building itself. If the concussion didn't kill us, it seemed we would be buried in the rubble.

And then it stopped. I still couldn't hear anything but realized the trembling of the earth had ceased. I couldn't see anything. The darkness was total

and the air was filled with grit. It grated on my teeth and in my lungs. The acrid smell of explosives was overpowering. People began to try to move about, to feel their way in the dark. Gradually I began to hear the barking of coughs and the voices of others.

A flashlight beam broke the darkness. A German sergeant ordered us to come out single file. We went up the debris-covered steps and out the door into a nightmare world. What had been a busy railway station was now a massive pile of rubble. Only that ceiling over our heads had held up. Everything above it was demolished. We had come down flights of concrete stairs and along echoing corridors originally. We walked back up a mountain of broken masonry lighted by a ghostly moon shining through the still swirling dust.

Grim guards marched us out through the dark streets to a rail siding where they loaded us again on the train to continue our journey to Oberürsel

Sterling Rogers, 550th Sqdn, was a POW

Freedom Isn't Free

War	Involved	Killed in Action	War	Involved	Killed in Action
Civil War	3,213,000	204,100	Korean War	5,720,000	33,629
World War 1	4,734,991	53,402	Vietnam War	8,744,000	47,382
World War II	16,112,566	292,000	Persian Gulf War	541,000	145

FEATURE STORY

“October 1944 Disastrous Mission Revisited”

By Edwin B. Perry

Fain Pool's article in the May 2002 Hardlife Herald caught my attention as our crew was on that mission. It was about 3:00 AM on the morning of 6 October 1944 when the CQ (charge of quarters) awakened us and informed us we had a mission that day. We dressed in our regular mission uniforms which by this date were fairly raunchy. We then were transported to the mess hall for breakfast. We knew if they were serving powered eggs and milk the mission would be a milk run (fairly easy mission), but this morning the chef was cracking fresh eggs and asking how we wanted them cooked. Also, there was ham or bacon, and fresh milk available. We all moaned for this was a good indicator we were in for a rough mission.

Following this good breakfast, we were transported to our respective briefings. Nick Stabile, our co-pilot, and I entered the briefing room and proceeded to the big black boards to check our position in the formation. We found 'PERRY' chalked across the airplane wing outline which gave us our location in the low squadron formation. This wasn't the best of news as the good breakfast indicated we were in for a rough mission and here we were assigned to the low squadron. When the briefing officer uncovered the mission route map and announced our

target for today was to be Berlin, Germany our premonitions were confirmed.

After the briefing, Nick and I were transported to the hardstand where our airplane was parked. We preflighted the plane, however we knew it would be mission ready as the ground crew always had the airplane in top condition. The ground crews were the unsung heroes of the 385th Bomb Group. They often worked all night to ready these planes for the next day's mission and they did an outstanding job. We owed them more than we could say but many times we failed to express our gratitude.

We took off and joined our squadron formation. The group headed out over the English Channel, test fired our guns and continued to climb in route. The lead squadron turned onto the bomb run at the IP but the high squadron over shot the IP for some unknown reason. Our low squadron which had been trailing the high squadron cut the IP short and as a result was second behind the lead squadron. As the high squadron corrected back to the bomb run, it then was in the third position and in a somewhat loose formation. This put them in a vulnerable position for an enemy fighter attack. Our tail gunner Jake Jacobson then had a front row seat for the events to follow. A large group of German fighters came out of the clouds above, fifteen at a time,

and shot down the entire high squadron consisting of eleven or twelve B-17s in a matter of minutes. Jake relayed this disaster to us over the interphone as he called out each airplane that was failing out of the sky. Needless to say, our whole crew was hollering, "Bail Out, Bail Out!!". This was reportedly the worse loss ever suffered on one mission by the 385 Bomb Group.

We cleared the target area following a heavy flak barrage braced for another fighter attack. This, however did not happen as the German fighters probably spent their ammunition on our high squadron or were running low on fuel. We were able then to return safely to Great Ashfield. The base housing area was really lonesome until replacement crews arrived. Fred Nestler, our navigator, said he met one crew member from the high squadron at a BGMA reunion a few years ago. He had successfully bailed out and was interned in a German POW camp until the end of the war.

Fred Nestler's diary has been invaluable in recalling events from that long ago time at Great Ashfield. Thanks to him we are able to record these events for posterity.

FEATURE STORY

"An A-Fair to Remember"

By David Schwartz

I looked up, and suddenly, there she was. Silhouetted against a backdrop of cottony cumulus clouds, she was sparkling, bright and statuesque, glistening as though she knew I would be there. I approached her, my heart pounding, wondering if we would recognize each other after 59 years of being apart. My face began to glisten from the few welled up tears of a long ago relationship that would culminate in a close encounter, perhaps for the last time. I approached this living, breathing beautiful figure of my past and ran my hands over her outer shell, feeling her vibrating pulse, alert with the readiness of another journey we will take together.

This was Yankee Lady, a B-17G a veteran of the conflict in Europe during World War 2, refurbished with pride and tender loving care. All of her armament, electronics and instrumentation were in place representing the thousands produced and manufactured over 60 years ago.

Ten people were to be her complement of a visiting crew for a flight to show off her ability as one of the worlds greatest fighting aircraft of the day, the savior of many lives and countries during one of the major conflicts of the century.

Prior to climbing into the fuselage to take my place with

the others, a conversation with the crew relating my experience and position as crewmember in the aircraft during 1944 and 1945, I was invited to once again, take my place as a Toggelier/Bombardier in the nose of the ship. The plexiglass bubble was my home for 26 missions over the European continent. When all were on board, the rear door was closed, check list reviewed by the pilot and copilot and then, start engines. The wonderful sound of the huge radial engines, puffing smoke as they started one at a time the roar, the vibration, controls and instrument check, were deeply imbedded in my memory, and now in reality, it was happening again. Seated on the bombardiers chair, viewing the runway, picking up speed and then the take off, caused time to reverse itself in my mind. I was 19 years young again, back in time. It all came back. I could feel the clumsiness of the flight suit in which my body was wrapped, the layers of clothing beneath the leather outer shell, my flak vest, mae west and chest chute, helmet and communications system covering my head. Heated inner suit, oxygen mask and microphone all plugged in to their proper electrical systems were checked and double checked for proper operation

Through the bubble, I watched the terrain below

recede as we climbed, leveling off to a cruising altitude. I imagined the other aircraft forming up with us, on either side of our wings over the English Channel eventually, squadron by squadron, in battle formation on the way to our target over the European continent. Airborne and enroute, communication silence within the aircraft and the group was mandatory to prevent giving the enemy our location mid route. Time again for checklists.

Aboard Yankee Lady, our current touring aircraft, the Norden bombsite and the many switches connected to its components were inactive. I could feel part of my memory returning. My mind again went through a routine, checking each, setting the intervalometer, oxygen regulator, switches and dials and with all in readiness, the trip to the bomb bay, in full flight gear squeezing through the hatch with portable oxygen bottle in hand, heavy leather gloves on to keep the below freezing temperature from finding its way through my flight suit, pulling the cotter pins from each of the bombs on the rack to activate the fuses and then squeezing and crawling my way back to my station. The flak from the enemy antiaircraft guns below, enemy fighters trying to destroy the B-17s as they proceeded to the target, sadly and with fear, watching as some of our aircraft

were hit, fires, explosions, destroyed, falling to earth, waiting and looking for those who were able to jump from the aircraft, hoping their chutes would open.

BOMBS AWAY. The turn around, heading for home, constantly on the alert for more enemy fighters until over a friendly territory when we could relax until touch down at our home field.

Back again to reality. It is amazing how the mind reverts to a time long ago when put into an environment simulating that period. It takes a while for the swirling of events to cease and then find yourself back in a new day, year, and century, away from that war, unfortunately facing another. This was an exhilarating experience. A dream fulfilled of just one more flight in a B-17 without the thought of the fragility of life.

The time is now. The annual Reading Air Show is in full swing with World War 2 bombers, fighters, thousands of men, women and children, some in uniform of the Air Forces, others dressed as mem-

bers of infantry regiments of the United States and of the enemy, civilians in clothing of the 40's, tents, mash units, jeeps, weapons, carriers, big bands playing the sweetest music of the century, Vendors selling souvenirs, and a long table serviced by a wonderful group of people from the Army Air Forces Historical Society based in Oradell, New Jersey. These accomplished, educated, knowledgeable, friendly and helpful veterans and caring men and women were on hand to answer as many questions about the Air Corps of World War 2 as were asked by the many who approached them. Through helpful information supplied by these dedicated people, there were many who were able to find information about their relatives and friends who were lost during that war, the towns and villages and airfields where they were stationed, supplying some with available literature relating to their quest. The knowledge they shared with the visitors about the men and women, equipment and places was vast and imparted a sense of new

and additional facts of the past knowing the way, it was during those years. The patriotism and dedication through their constant investigations of the events of that time of our lives is overwhelming. The members of this chapter of the AAFHS are a proud, understanding, friendly and gracious group. All heroes in their own respect. A table of Air Force artifacts, souvenirs, books, uniforms and equipment were for sale was set up for all visitors interested in owning a piece of an era to be remembered. A working authentic Norden Bombsite at one time a secret weapon of the U.S. Air Force, was open for view with narration by a knowledgeable member of the group and drew numerous people to that station.

These three glorious days of the Reading Air Show will be repeated again next year. Anticipating the excitement of this year's event, the glorious weather and the most wonderful people, visitors and participants, June 2003 should be marked on your calendar as a time not to be missed.

Life Begins at 80

Reprinted from B-17 Combat Crewmen & Wingmen

I have good news for you. The first 80 years are the hardest. The second 80 are a succession of birthday parties. Once you reach 80, everyone wants to carry your baggage and help you up the steps. If you forget your name or somebody else's, or an appointment, or your own telephone number, a promise to be in three places at the same time, or can't remember how many grandchildren you have, you need only to explain that

you are 80. Being 80 is a lot better than being 70. At 70 people are mad at you for everything. At 80 you have a perfect excuse no matter what you do. If you act foolishly, it's your second childhood. Everybody is looking at you for symptoms of softening of the brain. Being 70 is no fun at all. At that age they expect you to retire to house in Florida and complain about your arthritis, (previously called Lumbago) You ask everyone to stop mumbling

because you can't understand them. (Actually your hearing is 50% gone.) If you survive until you're 80, everybody is surprised that you are still alive. They treat you with respect just for living so long. Actually they seem surprised that you walk and talk sensibly. So please, folks, try to make it to 80. It's the best time of life. People forgive you for anything. If you ask me, life begins at 80.

Air Stories [385BG] "Off The Record (9)"

By Frank R. Mays, Author of "And No Purple Heart"

After flying a few combat missions, days of the week no longer mattered. Each day was the same as all others - just another day. There was no thought of - Is this Sunday? Wednesday? - no - they were all the same - combat was every-day.

By the time our full formation of 35 B-17 bombers climbed to mission altitude the sky began to lighten on the horizon. Gathered together liken to a flock of huge birds - the formation headed into where the sun would rise. Turning my ball turret in a Westerly direction I could see stars still blinking in the dark sky. Five miles below my turret, the earth seemed peaceful, in the grip of sleep. A deep drone came from the four engines and vibrated throughout the bomber

fuselage - varying in feel and sound as they came into synchronization and out again.

Finally, the sun peeped over the horizon and began it's quick rise in the sky. It was impossible to miss the beauty of nature as night turned to day. War - and death - seemed so far away.

That quickly changed as black plumes of bursting flak popped around the bomber. Over the target - flying through a hellish cloud of hot shrapnel bombers fell from the formation - some headed directly for the earth in a sickening spiral - other fell back struggling to keep up with the group. German fighters appear and make short work of shooting down the straggling B-17s. As quick as it began - it is over.

Then it is back to watching

the skies for threats to the formation, and once again all becomes peaceful. Below there has formed low clouds with silvery-cottony tops. It is noticed many colors appear and form a rainbow mingling with the billowing cloud tops.

I stare at what I see in disbelief! There below is a complete circular rainbow and the shadow of my bomber is in the direct dead center. I know this is our shadow because of our place in the formation, and I see shadows of all the remaining bombers. The shadowy wings and fuselage form what appears to be a cross?

The colors of the circular rainbow gradually fade from view as the formation turns to a new heading home.

I wonder - is this Sunday?

On the Light Side

A teacher at school asked for some students to tell a story with a moral at the end of it. The first little girl said, my Grand-Daddy is a farmer and we have lots of egg laying hens. One day we were taking our eggs to the market in a basket on the front seat of his pickup when he hit a big bump in the road and all the eggs went flying and broke and made a mess. And took her seat. What's the moral to the story asked the teacher? Don't put all your eggs in one basket was the reply, "very good" said the smiling teacher.

Next little kid raised his hand

and said Granpa is a farmer too. But we raise chickens for the meat market. One day we went into the barn, and found the hen laid twelve eggs, but when they hatched there were only ten lives chicks and the moral to the story is: Don't count your chickens until they hatch. That's a good example said the teacher.

Turning to young Thomas, what's your story Tom? My Grandpa told me he was a flight Engineer on a B-17 and one day he was on a real rough mission and they got shot up pretty bad. And he had to bail out. So he took with him a full

bottle of whiskey, a sub machine gun and a machete. He drank the whiskey on the way down so it wouldn't break and then he landed in the middle of 100 enemy troops. He then killed seventy of them with the machine gun before he ran out of bullets. Then he killed twenty more with the machete till the blade broke. And killed the last ten with his bare hands. "GOOD HEAVENS" said the horrified teacher, "What kind of moral did your Grandpa tell you from that horrible story?" *STAY THE HELL AWAY FROM MY GRANDPA WHEN HE'S DRINKING.*

Mini-Bio of Richard James Lewes

I am Barney Lewis (lewisb@hurco.com), a son of T/Sgt. Richard James Lewis, radio operator and gunner for the 385th BG, 549th BS. My brother and I believe he crewed on the Hustlin' Hussy, but we are reasonably certain there were other planes: As we understand it, the Hustlin' Hussy was shot down over Frankfort in January 1944, but dad was still racking up combat missions in February of 1944.

Individual Sortie Record

1 Sept. 6, 1943	Dieppe
2 Sept. 9	Beauvais
3 Sept. 15	Paris
4 Sept. 16	Bordeaux
5 Sept. 23	Kerlin Bastard
6 Sept. 27	Esens
7 Oct. 4	St. Dizier
8 Oct. 9	Marienburg
9 Oct. 10	Munster
10 Oct. 11	Schweinfurt
11 Nov. 5	Gelsenkirchen
12 Nov. 11	Munster
13 Nov. 13	Bremen
14 Nov. 16	Rjuken
15 Nov. 19	Gelsenkirchen
16 Nov. 26	Paris
17 Nov. 29	Bremen
18 Nov. 30	Solingen
19 Dec. 5	Bordeaux
20 Dec. 11	Emden
21 Dec. 13	Kiel
22 Jan. 4, 1944	Belmesnil
23 Feb. 3	Wilhelmshaven
24 Feb. 6	St.Andre-de-l'Eure
25 Feb. 10	Braunschweig

After completing his combat tour with the 385th dad was assigned to the 482nd BG, 803rd BS based in Oulton. He flew as many as 13 operational sorties with the 803rd. I have

read that the 803rd was equipped with Carpet and Mandrel jammers and flew screens for RAF night missions, but this is about all I know. Dad came home in August of 1944, was demobilized in December 1944, and was discharged in October 1945.

Dad didn't remain a civilian for long, reenlisting soon after I was born in 1948. We spent much of the Korean War in various air bases in Japan before moving on to New Mexico in 1953. It was there he received training on the care and maintenance of nuclear weapons systems, which became his primary career path until retirement. From New Mexico he served tours in Mississippi, Louisiana (where my brother, David, was born), California, Okinawa, Kansas, Alaska, and finally Indiana, where he retired from active duty as Chief Master Sergeant in 1964. Upon discharge he was given the Air Force Commendation Medal.

After his discharge dad taught school in Indianapolis, retiring in 1978 to a hilltop near Spencer in Southern Indiana with his assortment of anti-social goats and other critters. He died of a rare form of leukemia in Bloomington, Indiana, in 1988.

As for me, I served in the Air Force from 1969 through 1973 with the 1159th Tactical Operations Squadron, Headquarters Command. I have been married to Teresa for 32 years and we have three children: Eric, Jocelyn, and Aaron.

My current position is Director of Asian Marketing and Sales for Hurco Companies, Inc, a multi-national manufacturer of computer-controlled machine tools. Next month I will make my 65th 'mission' to foreign climes. As I repose in my first class chair, wrapped in a cozy blanket in a pressurized, air-conditioned (albeit somewhat dry) 747, I *always* think of dad and his comrades and what they accomplished in WWII and the Cold War that allow me the opportunity to repose, wrapped in a blanket, etc. Thank you very much.

Dad was not, by any stretch of the imagination, taciturn: he could be garrulous, even a bit extroverted; he was everyone's friend with a gift of gab that fit well in the ethos of small town Indiana; but he rarely spoke of WWII experiences. Most of what I know, or understand, is from information my brother and I found in steamer trunks and bureau drawers after his death or from you fine fellows of the 385th, and this website.

Recently my brother found the following excerpt from our Aunt Nora's sketchbook (dad's older sister). It was written from memories of dad's first day home from Europe. It may contain much that could be viewed as apocryphal by some, but I think it effectively captures a moment in time and a point of transition. I include it with this somewhat overlong mini-bio and hope you enjoy it.

We were all there. We sat

around the supper table listening to Dick talk. It was his first night home and he sat with his arm around Vi's waist and beamed at us. He had flown in from Labrador. The war wasn't over for other families, but it was for ours. Our fly-boy was home and tears and smiles tangled our feet and left conversation dangling in midair as we all talked at once. Nobody cared. Dick was home again after 25 missions in Major Doolittle's bombers and 13 in Mr. Churchill's night fighters. Home, safe.

It had been like any other war, I suppose. It was blood, sweat, and tears for them-waiting at home for us. A 'no news is good news' said aloud for courage, but with a feeling of 'please God, let him be all right' inside. We waited-in line for butter, for nylons, for gasoline, for busses, for our brothers and husbands. The lines grew and so did our fear as gold stars were seen in windows and even the V-mail letters seemed fewer and smaller.

But he was home now after two long years and we listened while he talked-of London in the blackouts and the fogs, of the bomber moons over the Thames, of the Ruhr Valley and the long lonely flights on target without fighter escort. He talked on and on something he rarely did, and he never did again. It was like a dam broken, a paper wall that a surprised clown crashed through. When he slowed down even a little, we would prompt him.

"What's it like being home?"

What's the best thing about it?" I asked. He stopped and looked around at all of us. At dad, gray and bent, his hands gnarled from heavy work: There were no young men left for the oil fields; at mom, her hair yellowed from the nitrite at the powder plant; at Vi, her eyes never off him for an instant; at baby brother, seventeen and about to enlist in the army; at me, at Les. Then he looked at Vi again, and ran his fingers through her hair. But it wasn't Vi, it wasn't us-his eyes looked far away and he seemed to stiffen a little and withdrew to someplace we could not come. For a minute I thought he wouldn't answer, I felt maybe-I shouldn't have asked. And then, soberly, he said, "The best thing? Funny-I even dreamed about milk shakes when I was in England, and when I landed I walked to the soda bar-they had a beauty there-but I didn't even get an ice cream cone. I got a package of peanuts and went outside to look at them at them-lights. They had lights on the landing field. Yes, that's the best thing-lights on the landing field." He blinked. We were quiet. Then he grinned and bit Vi's ear.

It was a long time ago, that The war is "cold" now December nights are lighted by Santa Claus lanes, sputniks-and stars, as always.

And lights on the landing field.

Mission: Supplies for the Resistance



STILL IN UNIFORM - Wilbur "Rally" Dennis, now 83, writes of flight to France.

Not all bombing runs during World War II delivered explosives, as indicated by the following reports by Wilbur "Rally" Dennis, who was a lieutenant colonel in the U.S. Air force before he retired.

His article about a flight July 14, 1944, from England to deliver supplies to the Maquis - the French resistance - was published in the New York Daily News, the Chicago Daily News and other American newspapers that year.

After the war, Dennis now 83, served in the active reserve, and retired to this area in 1973; his wife Lee, had spent summers on Spofford lake. They lived in Peterborough for 21 years and moved to Keene six years ago.

Taken from "The Keene Sentinel"
Nov. 2nd, 2001

Bartlesville honors... Sam Lyke (Past 385th president)

Excerpt from an article by Joe L. Todd for the "Bartlesville Examiner-Enterprise", Aug. 21, 2001

Lyke was sent to Stone, England. He said the British people loved the American flight crews. He was embarrassed when the British people called them heroes.

"The heroes were still over there or came back missing arms or legs, or were blind," he said.

Lyke was stationed at Barry St. Edmonds, England. The British people were wonderful because of the years of war they had endured. He arrived in England on Oct. 2, 1944. He was scared when he flew his first mission on Nov. 11, 1944. His first mission was, to the Rhine River and the city of Koblenz. The first five missions were to Koblenz to bomb factories and marshaling yards. He said the tough raids were Regensburg and Schweinfurt because of the ball bearing factories. The men did not fly directly to the targets, because the Germans could discern the target of the mission and German fighters would be

waiting. At one, mission to Schweinfurt, 60 planes were shot down, killing 600 men. The mission was a running battle for seven hours.

The German fighters could fly at speeds of 400 miles per hour. One time, Lyke thought one time he was dead when German fighters attacked his plane head on. Could see the flashes from the German 20 mm guns on the fighter planes. Those rounds were used to blow up the B-17 and set it on fire, all at the same time. The German pilots had to fly a pursuit curve to attack the B-17s. The bombers shot down more German fighters than the American fighter planes. The Ohio Air Force, a B-17, shot down 16 German fighters on one mission. The gunners on the B-17s were not trained to shoot down fighters, they were trained to keep them at bay.

The B-17s flew in tight forma-

tions and the German pilots would fly up through the formation and do a barrel roll, trying to spread the formation. The German planes had heavy army on the belly.

Lyke saw two P-51s chasing one German. The German was doing split 'S's trying to escape. The German bailed out and the two Americans circled him. He saw the German salute the two Americans and they returned his salute.

The B-17's flew so close the wings overlapped.

Lyke's crew was the lead plane on the Dresden raid. The briefing for the Dresden raid said the German government was planning on moving the capital out of Berlin to Dresden because the Russians were approaching Berlin. To keep the government from moving, Dresden was destroyed. Colonel Jumper lead the Dresden Raid.

Buffalo Theory

...A herd of buffalo can only move as fast as the slowest buffalo. And when the herd is hunted, it is the slowest and weakest ones at the back that are killed first. The natural selection is good for the herd as a whole, because the general speed and health of the whole group keeps improving by the regular killing of the weakest members. In much the same way, the human

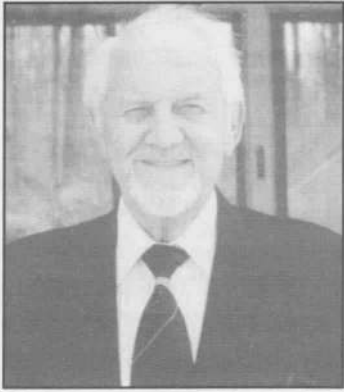
brain can only operate as fast as the slowest brain cells. Excessive intake of alcohol, as we all know, kills brain cells, but naturally it attacks the slowest and weakest brain cells first. In this way, regular consumption of beer eliminates the weaker brain cells, making the brain a faster and more efficient machine. That is why you always feel smarter after a few beers."

We have never been likely to get into trouble by having an extra thousand or two up-to-date airplanes at our disposal. As the man whose mother-in-law had died in Brazil replied, when asked how the remains should be disposed of. "Embalm, cremate, bury. Take no risk."

Winston Churchill

If we should have to fight we should be prepared to do so from the neck up instead of from the neck down.

General Jimmy Doolittle



Lt. Robert A. Valliere

Valliere Named Memorial Day Parade Marshal

Reprinted from the Branford Review Weekend, May 25th, 2002

8th Air Force veteran Lt. Robert Valliere will deliver the address and lead the units as Branford's Memorial Day Parade Marshal. Born in Brooklyn, N.Y., Robert A Valliere graduated from prestigious Stuyvesant H.S., NYC. He earned a degree in mechanical engineering from Michigan State University and was called to service in 1943 with the coast artillery. After basic training he was accepted in

the Air Corps for training as a navigator. After receiving a commission, as a navigator and also rated as an aerial observer, he was assigned to search, rescue and sub patrol in the Gulf of Mexico.

Assigned to the 8th Air Force, 385th Bomb Group in England, Valliere flew combat missions in the Flying Fortress, B-17, over Germany and Czechoslovakia and dropped food at low level to German occupied Holland, where the Dutch were starving. He returned to the State, 1st Lt., and was assigned as instructor in celestial navigation to the B-29 navigators.

His awards include the Air Medal, Presidential Unit Citation, several campaign medals, the Erasmus Medal (Dutch), the

Hague Medal (Dutch), and the Vlaardingen Medal (Dutch). Married for 52 years to Nancy, they have two daughters, Patricia Massa and Roberta Wisniowski, 5 grandchildren.

Valliere directed the family business, manufacturing and importing, in NYC and East Haven for 45 years, before retiring in 1993.

He is currently the Adjutant of American Legion Post 83, a director of Manna/Chowhound Brotherhood. He served as President of the 385th Bomb Group Association, served as Treasurer and a director of the Ct. Chapter of the 8th Air Force Historical Society, and is a member of the Royal Air Force Bomber Command, the DAV and the VFW.

Speech Given by Robert A Valliere at Memorial Day Activities

Good Morning.....

My name is Bob Valliere. I am a veteran of World War II, and served with the 8th Air Force, in England, flying as a navigator on a B-17 flying fortress bomber on missions to Germany and Czechoslovakia.

I also took part in dropping food to the starving Dutch who were under German occupation for 5 years.

Let me say that I am honored to have been asked to be the Grand Marshal of our parade today. And I am pleased to have as aides today my friends George Ahern and George Firth.

Memorial day... the dictionary simply states "A day to honor dead servicemen." That's a short statement of a very important fact. It is so much more than that!!! It should include that we must remember why they served their country - defending our way of life - and defending our most cherished symbol - Our Flag.

Today we are here to honor those veterans who have served our great country, and are no longer with us. We should never forget those who gave their lives for us.

The tragic day of September 11th has awakened us, and as in previous disasters, we turn to the flag to show our support. And yet there are those among us who do not favor protecting the flag, and are opposed to the Amendment which would mandate respect. How sad that they think in this way.

The numbers tell us that many, many servicemen gave their lives for our country. In WWI, WWII, Korea, Vietnam, Desert Storm and even today, against terrorism, men have died so that the American Flag will fly proudly.

Monuments to their memory are being built each year to help us remember them and their scarifies. Here in Banford our Boys Scouts and Girls Scouts have placed flags on 1200 veteran graves. We thank them for their

support.

Placing flags at the graves in an International event, taking place in England, France, Belgium, Holland, Luxemburg and other countries where our heroes are buried. All this is to honor our deceased veterans.

So understand how important the flag is. The greatest monument to those veterans is the flag. It is a bond between the living and the dead. Honor the flag and we honor those veterans. Respect the flag and we respect those veterans. They are the reason that the flag flies proudly.

Many thanks to the students of St. Mary's School, who will be distributing circulars explaining the correct way to honor our flag. Be sure to receive one and read it.

And lastly, on behalf of the parade committee, I would like to thank you all who are here to show your patriotism.

God Bless Our Flag, God Bless Our Veterans and God Bless America!!!!

LETTERS

To Hardlife Herald,

May, 2, 02

I recently spent a wonderful day at the 8th AF Heritage Museum in Savannah, GA. Our memorial in the garden is lovely and the new Chapel of the Fallen Eagles is a beautiful structure and will be dedicated this month. Enclosed is a sheet from the Mighty Eight News and I urge members to send a donation, no matter how small to this part of the museum.

Jay Dunlap
Pilot
Dec. '44-May '45

Even though we are all young at heart, somehow, time and age seem to catch up with us. Then it becomes a race between father time and all of us youngsters who relive those years of our youth and try to reach beyond the finish line to start our time all over again. Perseverance, physical and mental abilities are all on our side, if we try not to give in to the darker side.

All of us remaining in body and spirit in the 385th Bomb Group are believers in this creed with the hope we can continue on. We gave our share during those years and would like to perpetuate the friendship and camaraderie that we established.

A two and a half year lapse in time between reunions is much too long for us to wait to say hello again, to trade stories of the past, the present and our wishes for the future. There are too many variables which could disrupt our time together at this wonderful event. We should be able to celebrate this festive reunion on an annual basis. Any longer period will not help our cause. Our numbers do not increase.

If you are of this opinion, drop a line to Tom and tell him so. Perhaps we can plan our next reunion in the not too distant future. Let's continue to celebrate the 385th.

David Schwartz
548th Bomb Squadron

Editor's Comment: What do you think?

Tom,

Sue & I attended the Memorial Service on May 27th at the Cambridge American Cemetery. It was, as always, an honour to be there and lay a wreath on behalf of the 385th. It was once queried about the funding for the wreath and I'd it made clear that we pay for this ourselves on the basis that it's the least we can do to express our thanks and appreciation for what the 385th achieved during World War Two and for the kindness, generosity and friendship we've enjoyed from members of the 385th BGMA over many years. There were over 100 wreaths laid and the weather was perfect for the occasion. Warm, a light breeze and the sort of summer clouds, fair weather cumulus, that were high enough to allow the flypast while adding to the beauty of the day.

Chaplain Colonel David Broyles from the 48th Fighter Wing opened the service by reminding us that there were now 3813 honoured dead at Madingley (two were buried this year after being discovered in the wreckage of their aircraft off the English coast. There are 5126 commemorated on the Wall of the Missing and Chaplain Broyles reminded us not only of those remembered at Madingley but of the many who survived the war but had similarly offered their bodies, minds, hearts and energies. Sue and I have been privileged to meet many such veterans - the risks they took were the same but God and good fortune saw them safely home.

Following Col Broyles came Her Majesty's Lord-Lieutenant (Leff-tenant, don't forget) of Cambridgeshire, Mr James P Crowden who has represented the Queen at the service on numerous occasions over the years. He spoke of the feelings in Britain following the tragic events of September 11th last year and how the British people at once saw the need to stand shoulder-to-shoulder with the USA, just as our two Nations bonded those many years ago when the USAAF endeared itself to the people of East Anglia.

The final address was by Major General Kenneth W Hess, Commander of the Third Air Force, whose father had served with the 389th BG during World War Two and was shot down in February '44 but luckily survived. In thanking his father and those we remembered on this occasion, Major General Hess observed that their memory acts as the guardian of our freedom. How true.

Following Major General Hess, we paid tribute to the veterans and their family members in attendance then laid the wreaths following which came the Moment of Silence; a firing of volleys; flag raising then taps which faded as four F-15C Eagles from the 493rd Fighter Squadron thundered overhead in a "Missing Man" salute. That really brought a lump to your throat. Then the RAF's salute ripped across the sky as 3 Harrier GR7's from 1(F) Squadron honoured the American fallen and, as the roar the jet engines faded, there came a sound that stirred the spirit - four Cyclones - a B-17 - "Sally B" to be precise. The occasion was solemn but a spontaneous cheer broke out as the Flying Fortress swept low over ahead then curved round over the Cambridgeshire countryside to make another salute. Four times the B-17 crossed the cemetery evoking echoes from the air that one shook as Groups like the 385th took the battle for freedom into the heart of a tyrant's territory and beat him. The cost was dear but, as someone once said. Freedom is not Free.

Best Wishes
Ian McLachlan

LETTERS

Hi Tom,

I've been trying to E-mail this to you for some time but I'm having problems with the machinery so I've had to write. The subject is the superb line drawing of B-17 'Latest Rumour' by local artist Geoff Pleasance. I wondered if some of the vets would like one? The picture measures 18 x 12 1/2 and they are for sale at £5 each plus postage around £2.50 - Total £7.50 (whats that about \$12-13)? The best bet I think would be to place one bulk order organized from your side to save on international money transfer costs. Either contact me a hardlifeG2@yahoo.co.uk or Geoff at orwell@clara.net

All the best,
Mark

MIDDLE TENNESSEE GROUP

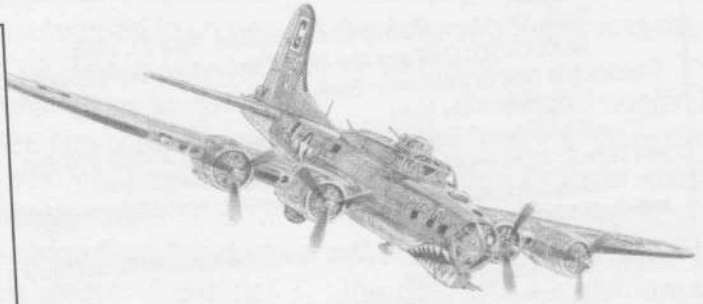
by Art Driscoll

Clark Rollins, Jr. and other members of the 385th BGMA help start and keep a local group active in Nashville, Tennessee. The WWII Bomber Group of Middle Tennessee has been meeting monthly for more than three years. Clark hosted the first luncheon meeting at Richland Country Club on October 8, 1999. Five of the 17 charter members served with the 385th at Great Ashfield, including: Roy Buck, Art Driscoll, Tom Harrison, Leonard Mika, and Clark Rollins.

Current membership totals 96 WWII veterans who served in Three Theaters of Operations - European, Mediterranean, and the Pacific. We represent several different units of the Air Force, including the 5th, 6th, 7th, 8th, 9th, 15th, and 20th. About half of the membership shows up for luncheon meetings at the University Club of Vanderbilt University on the first Friday of each month. Average attendance was 24 during the first year, 40 during the second year, and 45 during the third year.

The agenda for luncheon meetings has featured two or three members who are scheduled to share their personal stories about training and combat during WWII. Most of their stories have been interesting, entertaining, and instructive. Some have never been told before. Many of us did not share these experiences, even with our spouse and families, until after the 50th Anniversary Celebration of D-Day and other significant WWII historical events. Books written by Tom Brokaw about the so-called "Greatest Generation" have opened the flood gates of personal war stories, hidden from family and friends for more than half a century.

Clark Rollins and Art Driscoll were on the original steering committee that plans programs and guides the activities of the group. New leadership is involved each January by a rotating system of committee membership. Other members of the 385th who have served on the steering committee, include Leonard Mika and Vance Archer. One of the special events is an Annual Christmas Dinner enjoyed with our wives and friends. Leonard Mika has served for two years as chairman of the planning committee for this enjoyable event.



GLASGOW ARMY AIR FIELD 1942-1943

by James A. Rea

At this airfield, gallant US Army Air Corps airmen trained to fly and fight with the Boeing B-17 Flying Fortress during the darkest days of WWII. Heavy bomber crews completed final proficiency phase training here before being assigned to aerial combat in Europe and North Africa. The combat squadrons polished the vitally important skills of formation flying, precision bombing, aerial gunnery and navigation.

The Montana airbases were constructed in record time by the US Army Corps of Engineers. By the first anniversary of the Pearl Harbor attack, B-17 aircraft were landing at this air field to ensure liberty and freedom from Axis Power tyranny. The 2nd, 385th, 390th and 401st Bombardment Groups all performed crucial Organizational Training Unit (OTU) missions in Montana. There were B-17 training bases located at Cut Bank, Glasgow, Great Falls and Lewistown.

The Montana trained squadrons flew at total of 1263 combat missions, dropped 71,128 tons of bombs, lost 548 aircraft and shot down 1018 enemy aircraft without ever turning away from a mission. They earned Presidential Unit Citations with valor and fortitude over Leipzig, Oscherslaben, Regensburg, Schweinfurt, Steyr and Zwickau. Assigned to the Mighty 8th and 15th Air Forces, the unwavering courage and unbowed bravery of airmen from this Montana airfield shines as this nation's bright pride.

James A. Rea, PO Box 255, Glasgow MT 59230, a military historian, is working on the history and lay out of the Glasgow Army Air Field. He has been unable to locate a base map or layout. He has requested our help. Does any of our members that were stationed there have any old maps, photos etc that they could give to James. James has sent your editor numerous pictures, some old & some new, which I hope to print in future issues of the Hardlife Herald.

LETTERS

Mr. Newton

My family and I are looking for anyone who has served with S/Sgt William H. Bowles ASN# 34316769. He was a tailgunner on a B-17 attached to the 548th Bomb Squadron, 385th Bomb Group from April 1943 till the end of the War. He flew over 100 missions and had to bail out twice over the English Channel. Here is some information that we know about him. Also, do you know how I can get a book on the 548th BS, 385th BG. Does the Association have one?

Sincerely,
Dan Martin

Enclosed is an attachment containing the photograph of my Great Uncle William Bowles and rest of the crew. Don't know when this was taken but we know that he was a member of the 385th Bomber group 548th Bomber Squadron in 1944. I am researching my family tree and hope that you may post this photograph and any info below in order to find his wife Alice. They were only married a few months when he died in 1950 in Japan.

From, The Moore County News, Thursday, April 27, 1950

BIOGRAPHY: Carthage War Hero Killed in Air Crash: SG. Bowles and 34 others meet death in Japan. Their U.S. Army Transport Plane Crashes Into Side of a Mountain Peak.

Happened in the Night

Sgt. William H. Bowles of Carthage was one of 35 men who died when a U.S. Air Force transport plane crashed Friday night on a mountain peak 27 miles southwest of Tokyo. There were no survivors. Searchers said the c-54 plane appeared to have hit the rugged tip of 4,800-foot Hirugatake and skidded in explosive flames about 200 feet down the south slope.

It was less than 20 miles from Tachikawa air base, its destination on a flight from the Philippines, when it crashed during a rainstorm shortly before midnight Friday.

The first ground party to reach the scene-20 men of the 16th Reconnaissance company of the First Cavalry division, led by First Lt. Danwood Reimer of Seguin, Tex., said the bodies were widely scattered. Their report did not mention the state of the bodies, but Tsutomu Kobayashi, a Japanese police sergeant, who was one of the first to arrive, said the 20 that he saw were badly burned.

The dead included three women, two children, 15 army officers and nine enlisted men. Sgt. Bowles was a graduate of Carthage High School, class of 1941 and soon after finishing school he enlisted in the Army Air Force in August 1942.

After he entered the armed forces he attended air mechanics school at Amarillo, Tex., and the Boeing factory at Seattle, Wash., before attending gunners school.

He received his wings; on April 12, 1943, and shortly thereafter he was sent overseas to the European theater in some of the hardest aerial fighting of the war. He served as a tail gunner on an Eighth Air Force Flying Fortress.

On one of his missions into enemy territory in 1944 his plane was shot down over the English channel. He and the other crewmembers had to bail out over the channel. The crew was adrift for seven and a half hours on a raft before they were finally picked up. On four other missions the bombers in which he flew lost an engine due to enemy action and on another the navigator of his ship was killed by flak.

From the time of his arrival overseas in 1943 until the end of the war Sgt. Bowles was right in the thick of the fighting, flying well over a hundred missions over enemy territory during this period. Many of his bombing operations included attacks on industrial targets at Emden, synthetic rubber factories at Gelsekerchen, railroad yards at Frankfurt and Munster a ballbearing factory at Paris and a Nazi long range bomber base at Bordeaux, as well as many missions over Berlin and other Germany targets.

His achievements in the war reads like a "who's who." On four occasions he received the Air Medal and three or four times he received the Oak Leaf clusters. He was also the recipient of the Distinguished Flying Cross for courage and extraordinary achievement while flying over the English channel.

After the war was over Sgt. Bowles re-enlisted in the army. For a while he was stationed in the states, but about eighteen months ago he was sent overseas to Japan where he was stationed at the time of his death.

Schoolmates will remember him as a very quiet unassuming young man, but a lad who always rated high in his scholastic studies in school, and who took part in many campus activities. He rated high with his classmates and wherever he went he seemed to be able to make friends."

Headstone Inscription stated William H. Bowles North Carolina
Tsgt 374 AF Troop Carr GP WWII

Please let us know if you can use this info, and look forward to hearing from you. Thanks,

Amy and Dan Martin
dadmartin@charter.net

The names of crew members are on the front of photo that the crew members signed. These are the names that I can make out on the photo. S/Sgt. William H. Bowles - Tailgunner, S/Sgt. S.W. Eastbooh(k)?, S/Sgt. L.D. Ward, S/Sgt. E.J. Bertrianunie, S/Sgt. W.H. Ballu, Lt. S.A. Reed - possible co-pilot, letter to our family dated 13 March 1944, William talks about being assigned to a crew that included his former co-pilot, Lt. Reed. Lt. S.A. McColl-possible pilot, he is in the lower left of the photo as you look at the photo. Two officers and one enlisted man I can not make their names out on the photo.



LETTERS

Tom,

My name is Bruce Bennett. My father, R.E. Bennett was a member of the 385th. Since my fathers passing in 1997, I have spent many hours looking through his wartime remembrances. Needless to say I have now decided to try to visit great Ashfield and Perle.

Is there going to be a 2003 tour? If so, I would love to participate. If not, who would I contact to put together my own personal tour?

This is something I really need to do. I believe this is the least I can do to honor his memory.

Thank you for any help.

Bruce Bennett

Bruce.Bennett@NationalDistributing.net

Hello Tom,

Thought you might be interested in reading this? Here is my take on the Thursday (8/22/02) event at the National D-Day Memorial in Bedford Virginia. I noticed the local paper quoted something I said, and there were several photos of the Memorial Arch. I really enjoyed the day and wish there was more of this sort of exposure for the Memorial.

Today (Friday and Saturday) I am in the "recovery mode" ! Just laying around doing a lot of nothing! Let me tell you.

I had not said anything about it to anybody - but several weeks ago - when I was not feeling so well - reaction to some new medication - I received a request to do a little PR work for the National D-Day Memorial in Bedford. I told the people I would be there - and at the time was not sure I would be anywhere? That is the way of us old farts (vets)!

Yesterday - the old adage of the military, "hurry up and wait", came back to mind. Here is the deal.

The "RAT" line - new cadets entering Virginia Military Institute - Lexington Virginia - all 400 of them were bused to the Memorial site for a look/see visit. (required 11 touring buses)! Along with the 400 came "Generals" and a large bunch of upper classmen dressed in their all white uniforms. The new class of cadets started this past Monday! A four year ordeal.

Three D-Day veterans had been asked to lecture the visitors - me - one of the three. The tour was scheduled to start at 1 pm, but with the problems encountered loading and offloading the cadets into four squads - not mentioning the time frame slipped an hour and a half due to prior problems of the cadets doing a 2-1/2 mile double-time march on The Blue Ridge Parkway - some being sent to a hospital - the event got underway at 2:45 pm. A sight to see, the young men and women assembling around the buses, into four squads - all dressed in camouflage fatigues - gun belts - and black combat boots!

The three veterans were placed one at the main arch - and one to each side some 100 feet away from the arch. The plan was for each vet to lecture 50 cadets at a time on what they did on D-Day. One vet was a Grunt and went ashore in the second wave. Another vet was a sailor and helped ferry troops ashore. I was the third. No script - just say whatever one wanted the Rats to hear about their part in the invasion.

You must understand - the Memorial site is about 5 acres of concrete and stone! On top of a hill - in open sunlight! Not a full grown tree in sight - with a shade temperature of 94 degrees (F) - under an almost cloudless sky - it was likened to a rock being heated on a stove top - Hell being down the road only a quarter mile! We vets were issued bottles of frozen water and I drank more water in one day than I usually drink in a week! A bottle of frozen water thawed in less than 5 minutes. Never needed to visit the Men's Room. Sweat evaporated as fast as it poured out and hit clothing.

Here I must cut to my part as I cannot say what went on with the other two vets as we left the scene quickly after it was over. I told each squad basically the same thing - as best as I could remember - adding some and leaving out some as I faced the four groups.

I looked into the faces of these 18 - 19 and 20 year old young adults and saw myself some 59 years ago when I went through military basic training. I never saw so many straight spines standing upright - not even when I was back there at 18! The upper classmen had already snapped a kink in the physic of these youngsters. They were on their way to becoming Ladies and Gentlemen in a future military! Possibly, a third would not make the first two years - 23 having been drummed out in the first five days! Hopefully - maybe 75 would make it through and become Officers and Gentlemen/Gentlewomen. The balance would elect a private life upon graduation.

I talked about 10 minutes then asked for questions. I was surprised as I fielded about 25 questions from each group. It seemed each squad spent more time with me than the other vets? At one point I had two groups backed up waiting to get before me? I purposely cut my talks short to keep things moving. The "Rats" really seemed interested in what I was saying and their questions told me they were listening and very interested - without prompting from the upper-class guides! In fact - I also watched the faces of the upper classmen and saw the same expressions as on the faces of the Rats. I was extremely gratified to say the least.

That which I remember most were the facial expressions on all. Everyone made me feel they knew me and would liked to sit aside and talk one on one - in a "Grandfatherly" way? Most enjoyable feeling existed - and when each group was completed - ready to leave my station - there was a grand round of applause! What a nice day!

The show was over, and I left the site about 4:45 for a 45 minute drive home.

At home I took an Ibuprophen because my back and legs told me I had pushed them a little far! It will take a week for my feet to cool down. I slept the night "like a log." Feel okay now - just spent time remembering how lucky I was to have faced these young adults and hopefully made a little difference in their life. I remember telling them, "This Memorial is dedicated to men that made the ultimate sacrifice - such that we could gather today - to remember - and I know each of you will pick-up the torch, making America a better place for those who follow."

Frank Mays

Dear Sir:

Our crew was assigned to the 548th Sqd. 385th Bomb Group in the fall of 1944. I was the navigator and in the 548th Sqd. all navigators were issued a 3"x5" Gee Homing Card. I am enclosing a copy of the Gee Homing Card.

The Gee Navigation System was a very important navigation aid, yet is seldom mentioned in print. The Gee Homing Card appears to be unique to the 385th BG. Would like to know the navigator or navigators that originated the Gee Homing Card.

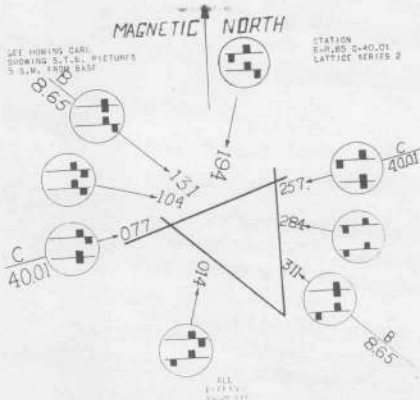
Sincerely

Dr. William E. Dickison

P.O. Box 204

Sault Ste. Marie, MI 49783

WDD@Sault.com



R.F. UNIT TYPE INFORMATION			
TYPE	STUD	LATTICE SERIES	INFORMATION
25	1	NO	(4)
	2	50	(3)
	3	NE	(6)
	4	EA	(2)
	5	SW	(5)
24		ITALIAN	
27	105 to 110	CH (CHANNEL)	4

Bulletin Board

Dear Friends of the Manna Association and the Chowhound Brotherhood,

Sadly I have to report that today, Sunday, HRH Prince Claus, husband to our Queen HM Queen Beatrix, died at the age of 76 years. He was the son in law to HRH Prince Bernhard. HRH Prince Clause had been ill for some time, suffering from Parkinson's disease and prostate cancer. The Government Information Service said today that he died from Parkinson's and pneumonia. It is a sad day for our country, Prince Clause was much loved by all.

Sincerely

Hans Onderwater, Secretary, Food and Manna Assoc.

Mr. Newton

"Looking to make contact with anyone who may have known my father, Donald James (Chris) Arvas, who was a pilot in the 385th/548th, at Great Ashfield in March-April of 1945. Members of his crew were: Leff Mabie, Lee R. Schofield, Ken D. Wright, Norman M. Nielson, Logan L. Gerheim, Walter A. Hungler, Ed P. Baumgartner and Robert B. Smith. Please contact Chris Koser, 9509 Forest Dell Dr., Edmonds, WA 98020 or koseredm@earthlink.net."

Thank you so much for your help on this!

Chris Koser

Editor Note: I have lost track of Norman Nielson also and would like to hear from him.

Sep 20, 2002

Last World War I flying ace dies quietly at 106

The only surviving pilot from the Royal Flying Corps in the First World War has died at the age of 106. Flying ace Hubert Williams was the last of a breed of pilots who risked their lives every time they flew their biplanes into combat. They were in danger both from the enemy and from the flimsiness of their own aircraft. Great-great grandfather Hubert died quietly in a Cardiff nursing home 84 years after his last mission over enemy lines. Tributes were paid yesterday to Hubert and his colleagues in the Royal Flying Corps, which became the Royal Air Force in 1918.

Hubert cheated death when he was 22 years of age - he was shot down over Macedonia in Northern Greece in his Sopwith Camel biplane. He was pulled unconscious from the wreckage by villagers before being taken to a hospital in Malta where his life hung by a thread. It took him nine months to recover before he was able to return home to Britain.

Hubert had been transferred to the Eastern Mediterranean after spending much of the conflict bombing German trenches on the Western Front in France and Belgium. Widower Hubert said of his exploits, "I'm no hero - I just consider myself a remarkably lucky man to have survived." Many of his fellow air pioneers were killed but Hubert was proud to survive to see the age of supersonic flight.

One of the highlights of his long life came when he took the controls of Concorde on a flight to New York to mark his 100th birthday.

At the age of 102 he received the Legion D'Honneur award from the French Government. The RAF will pay tribute to Hubert at his funeral next week. A wreath displaying the Royal Flying Corps badge will be laid at the ceremony by a senior officer. World War One Veterans Association chairman Dennis Goodwin said yesterday, "Hubert was the last Royal Flying Corps pilot still alive."

"It is truly the end of an era and marks the passing away of the band of pioneering pilots who were brave beyond the call of duty."

"They knew that every time they went into the air that the odds against them returning alive were heavily stacked against them." "Britain owes a great deal to these gallant men who were prepared to lay their life on the line for their country."

Hubert joined the RAF in World War II, training pilots to fly and reaching the rank of squadron leader. After the war he worked for 42 years running a successful electrical business in Cardiff.

Hubert was just 20 when he signed up in 1915 to fly over the trenches even though he was told life expectancy was "only hours!". He joined up because the pay of two shillings and eight pence a day was better than the army and navy. Within weeks he began his flying "training" - seven hours flying around a field in a glider. He was stationed first at Avignon and then saw his first action flying over the trenches during the Battle of Somme in July 1916.

He said at the time of his French award, "I can remember the bombing, the shrapnel, shells going off all around, the guns flashing. It was terrible. There was smoke everywhere. I could hear people screaming and there was masses of blood. I lost a lot of my friends. I can remember waving to one colleague as we were flying and the next second he was a ball of flames. He had been shot down by a German plane and I expected the same thing to happen to me at any second."

Hubert was flying a Sopwith 2F1 Camel which was equipped with two bombs suspended by wire and two machine guns. The plane was made of wood and could fly at only 65mph at an altitude of 5,000ft but only for an hour at a time before its fuel ran out. If the plane's wings were damaged by gunfire it would be patched up using a mixture of Irish linen and cellulose.

Hubert's daughter, Mrs. Marcia Cornish, 70, said, "The family is very proud of him. He was a modest man who never spoke of his time in the Royal Flying Corps until the last few years of his life." Although the airplane had never been used in combat before World War I, it greatly influenced the course of the war.

385th Bomb Group,

I am building a website about ground crews of the 385th Bomb Group. I am also looking for any names of medical personnel and name of the hospital on Great Ashfield.

Any help would be greatly appreciated.

Thank You
Carl Hannon
carlhannon@yahoo.com

Bulletin Board

8/9/02

Dear Tom,

Here's a good suggestion in the next newsletter. For people who visit Great Ashfield, there's a taxi available. I used it on my visit, he took me around for 2 hrs or so for \$20. Between the 2 of us, we found most everything. Bill Daysh of Elmswell evidently tried to help someone recently.

Regards
Ed Stern

There has been a little comment about the subject but I do not believe it has received the prominence it deserves. For the years of Hard Work he put in as editor of HLH I think Ed Stern should have a "STANDING OVATION"! He did a splendid job and I know that the 385 BGMA is better for it.

Thanks
Charles K. Price

Ed. Note: Right On!

September 20, 2002

Dear Air Force Contact:

I am an American Indian decent person researching WWII history. I received this address from an Air Force organization in hope of contacting elderly WWII veterans who have memories to share. I hope this inquiry can be placed in a newsletter, on a web-site or announced at reunions. I am also searching for duplicates of WWII era photographs.

I would like to correspond with WWII Army Air Force Veterans. Persons of different ethnic backgrounds (Italian, Jewish, Hispanic, Arabic, etc.) are encouraged to reply. I especially would like to correspond with any veteran of American Indian ancestry.

I am also searching for WWII era Civil Air Patrol pilots (especially women). If anyone knows of such person, please help me contact them.

I'm wanting to know of unusual experience during the war. This could be encounters with foo-fighters, hauntings, premonitions, extraordinary coincidences and other topics.

For a project on sex, dating and romance during the war years I'm seeking personal stories. Topics include: where did you take your favorite girl for a night on the town? also, "Dear John" letters, military hygiene lectures, bawdy marching lyrics, unusual marriage proposals, bisexuality and lesbians circa 1940's, favorite pin-up girl, etc.

I'm researching animals during the war and would be interested in any veteran whose unit had animal mascots. Also, memories of visits to zoos, etc.

Any response to any of these diverse topics is appreciated.

Thank You,
Robert J. Clark
PO Box 685
Collinsville, Illinois 62234



Taps



DECEASED

A.J. Johnson	
George F. Flynn	
Thomas Morgan	
Joseph Sarmuksnis	
Gene O. Yawn	
Gerald O. Steil	March 1998
Lester A. Wise	August 1998
Stephen Vargo	January 1999
M. Kemp Coopwood	April 1999
Albert Riggle	August 1999
W. "Kelly" Melillo	September 1999
Anthony Klasinski	December 1999
Lou Fyda	2000
Martin H. Siefert	April 2001
Fred Thienburg	April 2001
Bruce Ey	October 2001
Richard L. Basian	January 2002
John H. Coleman	January 2002
Charles C. Mawer	January 2002
Edwin H. Garrison	February 2002
Orville B. Ross	May 2002
Thomas M. Wallner	May 2002
Marvin Tipp	June 2002
Lester J. Crawford	June 2002
Herman W. Supplee III	July 2002
Clarence E. Fauber Jr.	August 2002
Douglas A. Rosholt	August 2002
Cameron Cathey	September 2002
Myron G. Sanchez	2002
Robert S. Summers	2002

Taps

William J. Dansro

Member of Sudbury Senior Strutters
Sudbury - William J. Dansro, 78, a resident of Sudbury for 40 years died Feb. 5, 2002. Immediately after graduating from high school in 1942, he entered the US Army and served with the U.S. Army Air Corps. He was stationed in England with the 385th Bomb Group.

Marvin Tipp

Marvin Tipp of Bellview WA died June 29, 2002. Marvin was in the Intelligence Office of the 385th Hqs. and did most of the photo interpretations of targets the 385th bomb. In late 1944 he moved to the 4th Wing Hq and continued to do his work with "Mickey" photo shots. Marvin was elected as 2nd vice-president of the 385th BGMA and served until ill health forced his resignation.

Lester J. Crawford

Lester J. Crawford age 80, of Fellsmere Fl. died on June 9, 2002. Served in the 549th Squadron of the 385th BG, of the 8th Air Force during WWII. He was the Ground Crew Chief for Col. Vandivers "Latest Rumor."

Charles C. Mawer

Charles C. Mawer, age 84, died in Fort Collins, Co. on January 3, 2002. He flew 30 missions with the 385th, 25 as lead crew. Not the least of his memorable missions was the 385's trip to Merseburg in Nov. 1944, when engines 2 and 3, the oxygen line, and the fuel transfer line were shot out over the target. This resulted in a forced landing in Denain, France, but no Purple Hearts. Charles was recalled to active duty during the Korean Conflict. He attained the rank of Major.

Clarence E. Fauber Jr.

Clarence E. Fauber died August 31, 2002. Clarence was a pilot with the 549th Sqdn. 385th Bomb Group at Great Ashfield England. He flew 24 missions between March 10th 1945 & April 18th 1945. Other 385th BGMA members that flew with Fauber are Arthur L. Schaefer & Gerald W. Donnelly.

Lt. Col. Orville B. Ross (RTD)

My dear husband Lt. Col. Orville B. Ross (Rtd) passed away on May 22nd, 2002 after a short illness. He was 86 years of age. He served with the 385th Bomb Group as a Navigator Bombardier and was stationed in Great Ashfield during the war. He joined in 1940 and retired in 1966. Among his medals he was awarded the Croix De Guerre with Gold Star by the French Government.

I never tired of hearing all the amazing stories he had to tell of his life in the Airforce.

He will be sorely missed by all who knew and loved him.

Sincerely Mrs. Diane I. Ross (Wife)

Thomas Martin Wallner

Thomas Martin Wallner passed away on May 16, 2002. Born in Sacramento, Tom was a lawyer and trial court judge for more than 40 years. When the United States entered World War II, he enlisted in the Army Air Corps where he was trained as a pilot. He was assigned to the 385th Bombardment Group in England and participated in now legendary air battles over Germany.

Douglas Alton Rosholt

Here is the news of the death of my husband of 61 years.

Doug served in the 385th Bombardment Group at Great Ashfield, England. He flew 35 missions as a top turret gunner.