

Hardlife



Herald



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385th Bombardment Group Memorial Association

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•John C. Ford	77-'79	•Robert C. Smith	'93-'95
•James H. Emmons	'79-'81	Robert Valliere	'95-'97
•Paul Schulz	'81-'83	Michael Gallagher	'97-'99
•Forrest V. Poore	'83-'85	Tom Newton	'99-'01
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		W.W. Varnedoe, Jr.	'03-'05

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Honorary Members

Roger Feller Eldon Nysether
Mayor Ferdinand Unsen

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COVER

The cover depicts a group of the 385th BGA members and guests at the World War II Memorial located on the Mall in Washington, D.C. The group was taking a rest from a tour of Washington monuments while attending the 385th BGA and 8th AFHS reunions in Arlington, VA, Sept. 28 - Oct. 2, 2005.

EDITORIAL

Your editor enjoyed meeting with the many members of the 385th BGA during the 2005 reunion. I was pleased to see that we had a great turnout for the reunion considering it was on the East coast and a long way for many members to travel. My special thanks go to Chuck and Roy Anne for providing an outstanding "Hospitality Room." Next year we go to Louisiana near the Headquarters of the 8th Air Force. I had the privilege of speaking with the current Commander of the 8th AF, and he is looking forward to visiting with the 8th AFHS next year.

I received a good response to my plea of receiving stories and letters/e-mails from you, the members of the 385th BGA. The younger generation likes to read the stories of our experiences. Please keep up the good work and continue to send me your stories.

BACK COVER

Presidents of the 385th Bomb Group Association Art Driscoll (05-07) and Vincent Masters (75-77) visit the 8th Air Force Historical Society's Memorial Wreath at the World War II Memorial. The 385th BGA members were on a tour of Washington, D.C. Memorial and Historical sites while attending the 385th BGA 2005 Reunion in Arlington, VA, Sept. 28 - Oct. 2, 2005.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

When Bill Varnedoe passed the gavel to me as the new president of the 385th BGA, I felt the weight of responsibility shift from him to me, as it did for all seventeen former presidents, whose names are enscribed on the base for the gavel. Take time to read their names on page 2 of this issue of the Hardlife Herald. Pause to remember those who are deceased.

The 385th BGA was well represented during the Reunion of the 8th AFHS in Arlington, VA, September 27 to October 2, 2005. Of the 40 Groups represented, we were the 3rd largest group with 60 registered veterans and family members. Additional family members joined us for dinner meetings on Friday and/or Saturday evening. Our hospitality room was open daily, and helped us maintain our identity as the 385th BGA. We all thank Chuck and Roy Anne for

their outstanding job as host and hostess of the hospitality room. They would not allow a "kitty jar" in the room, but personally covered the cost of all drinks and snacks for everyone. Many, many, many thanks to Chuck and Roy Anne.

Board meetings of the 385th BGA were held on Wednesday and Saturday. The 385th BGA general membership meeting was held on Friday morning, and the minutes of that meeting are in this issue of the Hardlife Herald. The election of officers and new Board members was conducted at the general meeting. Page 2 lists the ten voting members of the Executive Board, which includes five officers, four members-at-large, and the past president. Asterisks (*) identify appointed committee chairpersons who will serve as Contact Persons for groups of our general membership, and for other Associations.

Our next 385th BGA Reunion will be held in Boisser City, LA, October 3-8, 2006. Boisser City is located directly across the Red River from Shreveport, and is near Barksdale AFB, the headquarters of the 8th Air Force. The majority of the general membership of the 385th BGA voted to meet in conjunction with the 8th AFHS during our Friday membership meeting. Put the date on your calendar, and plan to be with us to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the organization of the 385th BGA.

It may be of interest to many of our members that a new member of the board and our Secretary, is a 2nd Generation member and the son of Ruel G. Weikert, our first President.

Best Wishes for 2006,
Art Driscoll

LIFE MEMBER DONATION

Many, many years ago, the 385th BGA, formerly the 385th BGMA, offered Life Membership to all Veterans of the 385th Bomb Group upon the payment of \$100.00. Annual membership was also available to 385th Veterans and Associates upon payment of an Annual Membership fee, originally \$10.00, but has been increased several times by the Association to the current rate of \$35.00. Currently we have a membership of 530 with approximately 45% Annual and Associate Members and the 55% Life Members. With rapidly rising costs of conducting Association business, and the costs of the printing and mailing the Hardlife Herald, we are slowly using our money reserves which accumulated from the annual dues paying members. Each \$100 Life Membership went into the Memorial Trust Fund for All Saint Church and is not used to meet our budget needs. Currently, the income from Annual Membership dues does not meet our yearly costs.

Therefore, we are asking all Life Members to help us maintain a balanced budget, and possibly build our reserve funds. We will be very pleased to accept any donation, large or small. Furthermore, all Life Members will continue to receive the Hardlife Herald and other benefits of the 385th Bomb Group Association, even if they choose not to make a donation. Contributions to our Association are also welcomed from friends, and Annual and Associate dues paying members.

Sent 10 27 7/6

MINUTES OF 385™ BGA MEMBERSHIP MEETING

30 September 2005

1. The General Membership meeting of the 385th Bombardment Group Association (BGA) was called to order by President Bill Varnedoe at 0815 hours at the Sheraton National Hotel, Arlington, VA. The Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag of the United States was executed by all attending members.

2. Lacking a Secretary, the President asked one of the wives to take notes from which these minutes are compiled.

3. The recognition of members deceased since our last reunion was conducted by Art Driscoll. Art read thirty names and tolled a bell for each deceased member.

4. The site for the 2006 reunion was discussed. In 2006, the 8th Air Force Historical Society (AFHS) will not be using the same host organization that they have in the past. Mr. Ivan McKinney, Treasurer of the 8th AFHS, will host and conduct the 8th AFHS reunion near Barksdale AFB in Louisiana.

After some discussion, and since there was no volunteer to host and conduct a separate 385th BGA reunion, the members voted to again meet with the 8th AFHS in Bossier City, which is directly across the river from Shreveport, Louisiana and near Barksdale AFB.

5. The Treasurer, Chuck Smith, reported that, for the past year, we are just breaking even on expenditures and income, but this included income from substantial donations. Life members, whom make up over half of the 530 members and though not obligated for

dues, were urged to make a donation, or pay annual dues as well as the annual paying members and associate members. Chuck reported that income from annual and associate dues paying members does not meet our budget needs.

6. The President reported that the Board of Directors amended the By-Laws to eliminate the numbered vice presidents. In their place we will now have one vice president and up to three additional board members. The By-Laws now state that the Board will now consist of President, Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer, HH Editor, and four Board members. There was no objection from the General Membership.

7. Conducted under the amended By-Laws, the election of the Board was held. The following were elected unanimously:

President:

Art Driscoll

Vice-President:

Albert Audette

Treasurer:

Chuck Smith

HH Editor:

Frank X. McCawley

There were five nominees for the Board. The nominees were:

Jim Harris

Len Weikert

Les Reichardt

Vince Masters

Verne Philips.

Since all were well qualified, there was a

motion to elect all five, with one of them to be appointed as Secretary by the Board. The members adopted this motion unanimously.

Including the Past President who remains on the Board for a two year term, the current Board has ten members.

8. Chuck Smith presented a wall plaque to President Bill Varnedoe for his work as retiring President and long time Historian of the 385th BGA. "

9. President Varnedoe then passed the gavel to the new President Art Driscoll.

10. Art presented a summary report of the last summer's 385th BGA visit to Great Ashfield, Perle and other sites in England, France, Luxembourg, Belgium and the Netherlands.

11. The meeting was adjourned at 0940 hours.



Bill Varnedoe passing gavel to new President, Art Driscoll.

A TALE OF THREE DONKEYS

*(With apologies to Charles Dickens, author of
"A Tale of Two Cities")*

The "TALE" involves three donkeys at three different bomber bases in England. In the interest of brevity, an attempt will be made to write about them in the fewest words possible.

Donkey No. 1 was named "Mo." As the 100th BG circled the field returning from the Regensburg/North Africa shuttle mission, Owen (Cowboy) Roane fired 'red-red' flares, indicating a crisis aboard, then, as has been reported, Cowboy radioed the tower: "Standby! Standby! I'm coming in with a frozen ass." With that the crash truck and ambulances rushed out to the plane just as the blanket covered patient was lowered from the bomb-bay. On pulling the blanket aside, the medics found themselves staring at a tiny North African donkey, the crew's new mascot.

Donkey No. 2 was located at Snetterton Heath (96th BG) and its name was "Lady Mo." This donkey was also brought back to England from the same shuttle raid that the 100th BG had flown. "Lady Mo" eventually wandered off the airfield and was killed on the railroad tracks near Snetterton Heath in a collision with a train.

The story now begins to unravel a new twist as Donkey No. 3

arrives on the scene. Now, His Lordship's gendarmes, who kept an eye on such important things as illegally importing of donkeys as well as a myriad of things, frowned heavily on such things as illegally importing donkeys, as was being done by airmen of the 8th AF; however, such activities were being denied by the 8th AF airmen, even up to the Group Commander. So much for the hush-hush.

About a year or so ago, documents were unearthed that proved without a shadow of a doubt that donkey No. 3 had existed at the 95th BG at Horham, England. The Regensburg shuttle mission had indeed resulted in a 95th BG bomber crew returning to Horsham with a North African donkey in tow. It subsequently provided many local English children with cart rides in an improvised wagon, around the base and into Horsham village. Although the donkey survived the comparatively cold English climate for sometime, it finally succumbed to pneumonia or distemper during the winter of 1943/1944.

The problem of disposing of the animal's carcass was solved in typical bomber crew manner. Enough surplus GI clothing was assembled, including suitable inscribed dog-

tags, and the deceased donkey was attired as only a proper aircrewman could be dressed.

The next available bombing raid provided the opportunity to drop the unfortunate animal (without benefit of a parachute) at the IP. Unfortunately, no one can record the confusion and consternation of the German people assigned to Grave Registration when they came upon the body.

The above accounts clearly document the existence of three distinct donkeys on three different B-17 bomber bases in England. Donkey No. 1 (Thorpe Abbott's) died of natural causes, rumored to be tin can indigestion, and is buried on the base premises. Donkey No. 2 was killed by a train near it's home of Sneatherton Heath. And Donkey No. 3 died of pneumonia or distemper and was sent to its eternal reward in a bombing raid over Europe.

From the 8th AFHS newsletter "The Propwash," and from the 100th BG newsletter "Splasher Six."

Editor's Note: It has been circulated that some 385th BG crew on Mission 10 and 12, our shuttle run to Africa, also brought back a donkey. Can anyone confirm this? If so, please send me the story.

ONE LAST MISSION

By S/Sgt. Ralph D. Hollman (later Lt. Col. (Ret.) USAF)

On Easter Sunday, April 9, 1944, I became eligible for both the Purple Heart and the Distinguished Flying Cross. The day began as all mission days did with an early morning wake-up call. Our crew went through the morning's activities together, as was our custom, so that we were all on the same page. First stop was the wash house to clean up and shave. Then we walked to breakfast and the briefing of the day. The briefing indicated moderate flak over the target, which was fairly common. The next stop was the armament shack to check our guns, which were all in order. Next we "drew" our winter flying clothes and parachutes from the central storage area, and dressed and headed out to our B-17 aircraft, "Esky."

During World War II, I started my tour by flying five missions as a right waist gunner, but was then moved to Togleer/Gunner when our Bombardier was promoted to Squadron Bombardier. That Easter Sunday, a time long ago, was to be my 25th and last mission. Completing 25 missions was a real achievement considering that the average number of missions that crews completed was thirteen. The target for my 25th mission was: WARNEMU-

NDE on the Baltic Sea. After going on three trips to "Big B" (Berlin) in four days, I was hoping for an uneventful trip despite the flak noted during the briefing.

Take-off from Great Ashfield in England was at 0700. Our Group received moderate anti-aircraft fire over the coast of France, but most of the flight to Warnemunde was uneventful. We saw no German fighter aircraft since the U.S. had gained air superiority.

Nearing the target, we started our bomb run. I was ready and waiting, as I had armed our bombs when we left the English Channel. I opened the bomb bay doors and was waiting for signal to drop. I was recording the information on time, altitude, and course on a clipboard when we received an 88mm anti-aircraft shell to our Number 3 engine and fragments from the shell pierced the nose compartment of the plane in multiple locations. Debris from the shelling caused a wound to my right wrist and forearm, and my whole arm went numb. A piece of flak also penetrated my A-2 leather flying jacket, and shorted out my heated suit causing a third degree burn to my right wrist. Despite my wounds and the crippled engine, I dropped our bombs and closed the bomb bay doors. Then I notified

our Navigator that I was wounded. Luckily, no one else was wounded. As we turned toward our base, the Navigator stopped my bleeding and filled my wounds with sulfa powder to prevent infection.

Upon returning to base, I was unloaded at the end of the runway and placed in a waiting ambulance for a trip to the base hospital. After evaluating my wounds, I was transferred to the Regional Hospital in England. Since there were many more severely injured men in Triage, it was several hours before I was admitted to surgery. During the initial surgery, my wounds were cleaned of debris, but were left open for several weeks to heal from the inside out before final closing. I had lost the use of my right hand immediately following my wounding, but after rehabilitation I was able to regain most of its function.

I remained at the Regional Hospital for almost two months until June 1, 1944 when all ambulatory patients were returned to their respective units. The reason??? D-Day was coming and the hospital was preparing to receive many casualties. When I returned to my unit, I continued to work on rehabilitating my hand, and I worked part-time in Operations until I was returned to the States.

"Never in the field of human conflict was so much owed by so many to so few."—*Winston Churchill*

Finnegin: "My wife has a terrible habit of staying up 'til two o'clock in the morning. I can't break her of it."

Keenan: "What on earth is she doin' at that time?"

Finnegin: "Waitin' for me to come home."

A good time to keep your mouth shut is when you are in deep water.

The nicest thing about the future is that it always starts tomorrow.

No one ever says, "It's only a game!" when their team is winning.

A PLACE IN THE SKY

By Hugh McBride (L)

I hope there is a place, way up in the sky,
Where pilots can go, when they have to die.
A place where a guy can buy a cold beer,
For a friend and a comrade, whose memory is dear.

A place where no doctor or lawyer can tread,
Nor management type would ere be caught dead;
Just a quiet little place, kind of dark, full of smoke,
Where they like to sing loud, and love a good joke;
The kind of place where a lady could go
And feel safe and protected, by the men she would
know.

There must be a place where old pilots go,
When their pain is finished, and their airspeed gets
low,
Where whiskey is old, and the women are young,
And songs about flying and dying are sung,
Where you'd see all the fellows who'd flown West be-
fore,
And they'd call out your name, as you came through
the door.

Who'd buy you a drink, if your thirst should be bad,
And relate to others, "He was quite a good lad!"

And then through the mist you'd spot an old guy
You had not seen in years, though he taught you to
fly.

He'd nod his old head, and grin ear to ear;
And say, "Welcome, my son, I'm pleased that you're
here.

For this is the place where true flyers come,
When their journey is over, and the war has been
won."

"They've come here at last to be safe and alone
From the government clerks and the management
clone.

Politicians and lawyers, the Feds and the noise.
Where all hours are happy, and these ole boys
Can relax with a cool one, and a well deserved
rest.

This is heaven, my son...You've pass your last
test!"

385th Bomb Group Archival History

Retrieving Mission Data

The main United States Archives building which is located in downtown Washington, DC, is the home of the US Constitution, Declaration of Independence, and other historical United States historical documents. It is also the building where one finds genealogy data from reports, such as the ten year cycle of censuses, ship manifests, etc. Data of 385th Bomb Group missions can be retrieved from Archives II located on the campus of the University of Maryland. Archives II is a large five story building that contains the historical military documents of the wars of the United States as well as the documents of many presidents, the Holocaust data, and much more.

With such a large inventory of historical documents, security is very tight to avoid theft, destruction

and altercation of these documents. To research any documents, one must register as a 'researcher' and obtain a picture ID with a bar code. Since the September 11th incident, one is checked into the parking area and screened with a metal detector prior to entering the Archives II building. Upon entering or leaving the building lobby, a guard checks your ID and all items you may be carrying. No one is allowed to enter the research area wearing a jacket or coat, or to carry a pen, briefcase or folder. Lockers are available for storage of these items. Loose papers or personal notes are examined and stamped for approval at the reception desk prior to entering the research area. Pencils, paper and memo cards for transcribing data are provided

for your use by the Archives. Pens are not allowed, however, a laptop computer may be used for transcribing data. Items to be copied must be approved by an attending archivist. Much data stamped SECRET have been declassified, but must require a special notation by an archivist. Papers can be Xeroxed at a designated cost per sheet. Upon leaving the research area, all papers are examined to ensure no historical documents are being removed.

Data for the 385th Bomb Group (H) is contained in 65 boxes that are numerically indexed, listing their location and the contents of the mission folders within the box. However, the folders in each box may not be in any logical, numerical or alphabetical order. Folders in the boxes may list the mission, tar-

get and date of mission, or may only list a date. Most missions have two or more folders, and each folder may be in a different box.

A Service Reference Slip indicating the stack area, row, compartment and shelf number must be submitted for each box. The maximum number of boxes allowed at one time is twenty. Once received, only one box and one folder from that box may be viewed at any one time. However, the

boxes may be viewed over several days of research.

Data can be obtained from the Archives by requesting it via mail from the National Archives, Washington, DC. However, the information may not arrive for several months. You can request information about a specific mission at a cost of 15 cents per page for reproducing all papers within a folder. For any specific mission, one will receive a copy of all data,

such as teletype of the operations orders, crew lists, times of all aircraft take offs and landings, mission reports to the Group Commander and to higher headquarters, all debriefing reports of all crew members, and reports of maintenance and ordinance officers, etc. The folder may also contain MIA and aircraft accident reports. Much of the data may or may not be of interest to the requestor.

BOOK REVIEW

The Flying Circus

Jim Wright, 214 pps., The Lyon Press, 2005, \$22.95

Review by Sterling Rogers

Jim Wright was a 20 year old bombardier 2nd Lieutenant when he was assigned to a crew of the 380th Bomb Group at Davis Monthan Air Base in 1943. Touching briefly on crew training in the States and the island-hopping flight across the Pacific, he immerses the reader in the life of a flyer in the far north of Australia.

Tents in the empty land were put up by the occupiers on arrival. Air raid trenches (also dug by the occupiers) became watery traps for the unwary in the rainy season. The constant threat, and occasional reality were bombs from the Japanese Air Force, and the need to shut out the reality of death from enemy action over the mission targets.

His memories of World War II in the Pacific paint a vivid picture of how it was then, of the comradery of the B-24 crews, of the occasional hi-jinks of time off, and the unspeakable horror of combat. The former Speaker of the House of Representatives needs no advice from me about writing a memoir.

Maybe it was because he

and I are both Texans, maybe it is that we were bombardiers, or maybe because we both spent our 21st birthdays under stress - he on a combat mission, I as a prisoner of war. Whatever the reason, his words struck home with me. I shared his need to shut out thoughts of who might be on the receiving end of those bombs going out of the bomb bay. I shared his shock at the loss of friends. I was appalled at the wanton cruelty of the Japanese officer who beheaded four captured flyers, and the crew of the Japanese patrol boat who left a man pinned in a wrecked bomber and left him to drown in the incoming tide.

There are two things about the book that puzzled me. The first, I'm sure, is a matter of my own ignorance. I have thought all these years that all B-24s were equipped with Sperry bombsights. Not so. Jim Wright speaks with authority about the Norden bombsight.

The other puzzling thing is that he speaks of AT-6 aircraft in reference to bombardier training. I am absolutely certain it must have

been an AT-11 because, at the time he was finishing his training, I was a flight mechanic at a bombardier school. Bombardiers were trained in AT-11s. Besides, an AT-6 has room for only two people and no room for a bombsight. But a slip of the memory after sixty years is forgivable. Let's blame the editor.

Those things are not significant. The important thing is that this is the real story of one man's war, well told and fascinating. And it is a story about a part of the war which seldom gets talked about. The air war in Europe got lots of press, but not many have written about the airmen in the Pacific who softened up the landing zones and choked off the supply lines before the ground troops moved in. This book helps to fill that gap.

His generation is fading away fast. Jim Wright has done history a favor in recording his memories for posterity. He says he did for his children and grandchildren, and I don't doubt that, but the world should be grateful that the "The Flying Circus" is available to everyone.

385TM BGA REUNION 2005

The 385th BGA held their 2005 Reunion in conjunction with the 8th Air Force Historical Society's Reunion, September 27th through October 2, 2005 at the Sheraton National Hotel in Arlington, VA. We were the 3rd largest Group of the more than 40 units attending the 8th AFHS reunion with 60 members and guests. The 385th BGA had our own 'hospitality room' with a majority of the members en-

joying the hospitality of our hosts, Chuck Smith and Roy Anne. Many a good story and reminiscences of the past were told and retold by the members of the 385th BGA. Many of the members went on the several tours of the areas around our Nation's Capital, Washington, D.C. Especially rewarding were the tours of Arlington Cemetery and the Tomb of the Unknowns, and the World War II Memorial.

Both the old and new Boards of Directors held meetings during the reunion. The current officers and Board are listed in this issue. The General Meeting of the membership voted to hold the 2006 reunion with the 8th AFHS reunion. On Saturday evening, the 385th BGA reunion attendees were guests at the 8th AFHS dinner. Some of the members and their guests are pictured here.



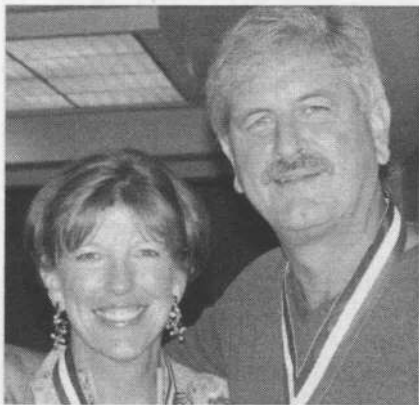
Peggy and Frank McCawley



Babs and Albert Audette



Judy and Vincent Masters



Chuck Smith and Roy Anne



Mary and Art Driscoll



Louise and Bill Varnedoe

MISSION FIFTEEN

by Roy Jillson

On April 10, 1945, we flew our 15th mission with Lt. Muchow as our pilot and Lt. Kokus, flying his 35th and final mission to close out his tour of duty, as our co-pilot. Once again we were flying "Rum Dum," one of the most famous B-17s in the Eighth Air Force for completing 105 missions without an abort. Her ground crew and the base commander were out to capture the all time record of non-aborted missions by one aircraft; however, little did we know that this was to be Rum Dum's last mission.

Our target for the day was a jet fighter base in the vicinity of Berlin. I was at the right waist gun position and Buck Krouse was manning the left waist gun as we began the bomb run. We were both on the lookout for German fighters as it was a beautiful sunny day just right for a fighter attack. We crossed over the airbase at 15,000 feet rather than the usual 25,000 feet per General Doolittle's instructions so as to observe the severe damage that had already been inflicted by the bombers ahead of us. Our bombs exploded in a hanger and on a row of brick barracks.

About fifteen minutes after bombs away, Buck and I released the cord of our flak suits as we had been briefed on some possible uncharted flak. No sooner had our suits hit the floor when the guys up front of the plane called out, "Flak at 12 o'clock level!" We were flying right into the shells that were exploding. Buck and I saw the bursts from the windows in the waist. Big, black coughing puffing bursts! Not many, but right up there with us. It was a bit late to get back into our flak suits.

We heard three distinct

slams against the plane within the next minute, and we heard pieces of flak tearing through the ship. I smelled smoke right away and looked forward toward the radio room to see if that was the location of the fire. Unplugging my heated suit and hooking on to a portable oxygen tank, I went forward to check. While off intercom, Mick Cooper, our engineer, had let us know that there was a fire under his gun turret. A shell fragment had made a hole about two inches in diameter outside and peeled back the armor plating inside producing a hole about the size of a man's head. Wood splinters and metal had sprayed all through the nose section, and set fire to two A-3 bags filled with clothing.

Another direct hit caught the No. 1 engine. Lt. Muchow tried to feather the prop to no avail. The engine started smoking and throwing oil while the prop wind-milled and ran away. By this time we realized that we were pretty badly damaged as the shells continued to explode around us. We had dropped out of formation and called for fighter support. Checking the battered plane for further damage, we found holes about two feet from the fuselage in each of the tail's horizontal stabilizers. There were many other hits around the tail, and the tail gunner notified the pilot that there was excessive vibration all through the tail section.

Buck and I noted a large flak hole close to where we had been standing, and we noted a number of holes both on the left and right wings. Our Navigator, Jack Shearman, who was standing at the time, noted a one and one-half inch hole just to left of the chin turret that entered the nose and ca-

reened out the top. He believes the fragment would have hit him between his arm and body if he had been seated at his desk.

After checking with all crew members for injuries (none reported) we came down to 10,000 feet and removed our oxygen masks. We were still over enemy territory, thus the navigator plotted a course to the nearest friendly airstrip. Lt. Muchow gave us the choice of bailing out or staying with the ship; however, he wished to continue flying until we reached an area taken over by allied forces. He reminded us that German farmers in the region were known to shoot airmen on their way down in their chutes, or run a pitchfork through those who landed. Although Rum Dum was a tired old veteran even before we took off, now she was a rambling wreck. But we had faith in the old B-17, and for that reason, to a man, we decided to ride her down rather than to bail out.

By that time we had three P-51s barreling around us looking for any German fighter hungry to take on a straggler like us. I left the waist gun and returned to the radio room. Lt. Shearman gave me the code name of a friendly landing strip where we proposed to land, and I prepared and sent a message, in code, to our division station outside London identifying our plane, advising them of our intended landing site, and that all crew members were without injury. The message was acknowledged so all appeared well.

However, while I was off intercom and on radio, the No. 1 engine started to flame, and Buck advised me to get on the intercom. Our left wing was vibrating badly and Lt. Muchow told us to

standby to bail out. He advised the members in the nose that the No. 1 engine prop was apt to fly off, and they were to go to the radio room and prepare for an emergency landing. Mick Cooper, a bit shaken owing to the blast of flak beneath his top gun turret, came through the bomb bay into the radio room with his souvenir. In his hand was a jagged fragment of a shell about the size of a quarter pound of butter.

With the two pilots at the controls, and the remaining seven crewmen jammed up against each other into the radio room, we awaited the emergency landing. Lt. Muchow greased us in on the steel mat runway, and a British fire truck arrived and put out the fire in No. 1 in a matter of minutes.

We had landed at Typhoon fighter bomber strip commanded by the British. The pilots, British, Canadian and South African, were using this airstrip for short range bombing and strafing sorties. It had been taken over by the allied forces only three weeks prior to our touchdown. Since Rum Dum was no longer on fire, Lt. Muchow fired up two engines and I transmitted a corrected message to London advising them of our landing and our condition. No one wanted to be listed as Missing in Action.

After stripping Rum Dum of everything secret and movable, we accepted the hospitality of our

British hosts. A South African pilot, who had just returned from a sortie, showed me the cockpit of his fighter. We were asked about our bombing mission of the day, and noticed the crowd of men gathering around Rum Dum, admiring the many bombs painted on her nose — one for each of her over 100 missions — and the many swastikas which recorded verified German fighters downed by her many crewmembers during her prior trips.

As we left the airstrip by an English lorry, we noticed the road was lined with foxholes and pill boxes. We passed American and German graves, burnt out tanks and overturned cars. We passed through small villages completely blasted to rubble with houses, churches and a beautiful windmill all in ruin. We passed through Holland and then back into Germany. Toward midnight near some tents on an airbase, we were given some C-rations for supper, then some cots with good old wool blankets.

The next day, after an early lunch of pork chops and apple pie, we boarded an open army truck for a five hour trip to Brussels, Belgium, where we could hitch-hike an air ride back to our base in England. We were dropped off at a private school, a haven for persons in our situation. After dinner and a shower, we received passes to

visit Brussels until midnight. Our only clothing was our high altitude flight gear.

The Belgian people welcomed us with hugs and kisses wherever we went. A Belgian gentleman who spoke English recommended we visit a famous fountain in the city of Brussels which we did. It was a large stone fountain filled with water with the figure of a naked boy who was peeing into the water. I believe the statue was called "D'Marc de Piss." According to story, the statue is of a child of royalty peeing in the direction of the enemy, and thus turning the tide of the battle. After further visiting of Brussels, we flagged down an army truck and returned the seven miles back to the school.

After a sound nights sleep, we had a rousing breakfast and then left Belgium in a British C-47 ambulance plane. A B-24 crew that had crash landed the previous day, and a wounded P-51 pilot were also on board. Instead of a group of casualties on the plane, we were a group of rowdies to the English nurses aboard. On our arrival back in England, the parting words of a pretty English nurse were, "Ohhhh, you Yanks!"

It was good to get back to the base and letters from home. No doubt Lt. Kokus was the happiest of us all. He had finished his tour and was looking forward to being back home in Indiana.

The trouble with bucket seats is that not everyone has the same size bucket.

American Lawyer: "Paddy, Why is it that whenever you ask an Irishman a question, he answers with another question?"

Paddy: "Who told you that?"

Money can't buy happiness—but it is more comfortable to cry in a Corvette than in a Yugo.

If you don't have a sense of humor, you probably don't have any sense at all.

Do you realize that in about 40 years, we will have a bunch of old ladies running around with tattoos?

McHugh: "My wife is driving me to drink."

O'Quinn: "Your'e lucky! My wife makes me walk."

WON'T BE LONG BEFORE THEY WILL BE GONE

From a Military Doctor
Capt. Stephen F. Ellison, M.D.

I am a doctor specializing in Emergency Medicine in the Emergency Departments of the only two military Level One-trauma centers. They are both in San Antonio, TX, and they care for emergencies of civilians as well as military personnel. San Antonio has the largest military retiree population in the world living here, because of the location of these two large military medical centers. As a military doctor in training in my specialty, I work long hours and the pay is less than glamorous.

One tends to become jaded by the long hours, lack of sleep, food, family contact and the endless parade of human suffering passing before you. The arrival of another ambulance does not mean more pay, only more work.

Most often it is a victim from a motor vehicle crash. Often it is a person of dubious character who has been shot or stabbed. With our large military retiree population, it is often a nursing home patient. Even with my enlisted service and minimal combat experience in Panama, prior to medical school, I have caught myself groaning when the ambulance brought in yet another sick, elderly person from one of the local retirement centers that cater to military retirees.

I had not stopped to think of what citizens of this age group represented until I saw "Saving Private Ryan." I was deeply touched, not so much by the carnage in the first 30 minutes of the film, but by the sacrifices of so many. I was touched most by scene of the elderly survivor at the

graveside, asking his wife if he'd been a good man. I realized that I had seen these same men and women coming through my Emergency Department, and had not realized what magnificent sacrifices they had made. The things that they did for me and everyone else that has lived on this planet since the end of that conflict are priceless. Situation permitting, I now try to ask my patients about their experiences. They would never bring up the subject without an inquiry. I have been privileged to an amazing array of experiences, recounted in the brief minutes allowed in an Emergency Department encounter. These experiences have revealed the incredible individuals I have had the honor of serving in a medical capacity, many on their last admission to a hospital.

There was a frail, elderly woman who reassured my young enlisted medic, trying to start an IV line in her arm. She remained calm and poised, despite her illness and the multiple needlesticks into her frail veins. She was we call a "hard stick." As the medic made another attempt, I noticed a number tattooed across her forearm. I touched it with one finger and looked into her eyes. She simply said "Auschwitz." Many later generations would have loudly and openly berated the young medic in his many attempts. How different was the response from this person who'd seen unspeakable suffering.

Also there was this long retired Colonel, who as a young officer had parachuted from his burning plane over a Pacific Is-

land held by the Japanese. Now an octogenarian, his head cut in a fall at home where he lived alone. His CT scan and suturing had been delayed until after midnight by the usual parade of top priority ambulance patients. Still spry for his age, he asked to use the phone to call a taxi to take him home, then he realized that the ambulance had brought him without his wallet. He asked if he could use the phone to make a long distance call to his daughter who lived 7 miles away. With great pride we told him that he could not, as he'd done enough for his country and the least we could do, was to get him a taxi home, even if we had to pay for it ourselves. My only regret was that my shift wouldn't end for several hours, and I could not drive him myself.

I was there the night M/Sgt. Roy Senavidez came through the Emergency Dept, for the last time. He was very sick. I was not the doctor taking care of him, but I walked to his bedside and took his hand. I said nothing. He was so sick, he didn't know I was there. I'd read his Congressional Medal of Honor citation and wanted to shake his hand. He died a few days later.

I remember the gentleman who served with Merrill's Marauders, the survivor of the Bataan Death March, the survivor of Omaha Beach, the 101 year old World War I veteran, the former POW held in frozen North Korea, the former Special Forces medic now with non-operable liver cancer, and the former Viet Nam Corps Commander. I remember

them all. I may still groan when yet another ambulance comes in, but now I am much more aware of what an honor it is to serve these particular men and women.

I have seen a Congress who would turn their back on these individuals who've sacrificed so much to protect our liberty. I see later generations that seem to be

totally engrossed in abusing these same liberties. It has become my personal endeavor, to make the nurses and young enlisted medic aware of these amazing individuals when I encounter them in our Emergency Department. Their response to these particular citizens has made me think that perhaps all is not lost in

the next generation. My experiences have solidified my belief that we are losing an incredible generation, and this nation knows not what it is losing. Our uncaring government and ungrateful civilian populace should all take note. We should all remember that we must "Earn this."

SHOOTING FROM THE HIP

by Sterling Rogers

Somebody had the idea that there was a correlation between using the bombsight and shooting skeet. I never saw any relationship, but I was only a cadet and nobody asked my opinions. At any rate, we had to go to the skeet range and fire a set number of rounds to qualify, just like any infantryman had to fire at a moving target to qualify. Miss too many birds and you were up for evaluation.

We went to the skeet range at Roswell on a dreary, overcast day. We feared the wind would get up and spoil our aim. The low-hanging clouds, however, showed no sign of motion. They draped themselves like a blanket over the plains.

I wasn't worried about my ability with the shotgun. I had never fired one before but I was thoroughly conversant with rifles, having grown up in farm and ranch country where snakes and varmints were common.

Some of my classmates were not so confident. Many of them were holding a gun for the first time in their lives. Others, more familiar with firearms, bragged about their abilities at skeet shooting, try to impress the instructors that they really were great shots. But everybody got the same ritual introduction to firing a shotgun.

When the actual firing began an instructor was posted at each station to observe and correct any errors in technique. The man who preceded me around the range was under constant harassment from the instructors. I could hear them giving him advice on how to hold the gun, and then berating him for not doing it properly.

It seemed he was shooting from the hip. That is not the proper form in skeet shooting circles. In fact, it is not the proper form in any shotgun use.

"Now take aim and lead the bird as it comes out of the house,"

the instructor would say every time. "Pull the trigger when the movement of your sight matches the movement of the bird."

The man would lift his gun, call for the bird, and blast away with the gun still at waist level.

"You can't shoot like that. You'll never hit anything," the instructor would yell. "Here, hold it like this." And again he would demonstrate, going through all the motions as if he were actually shooting. He failed to notice or recognize that the man had just pulverized the little clay pigeon, even if his technique was all wrong.

This went on at each station around the semicircle. When the score was tallied, the man had shot one of the best scores of the day.

However, the instructors were still complaining about his technique.

Editor's Note: Remember—There was the "Right Way" and the "Army Way."

LETTERS/E-MAILS

May 3, 2005

To: fxmccawley@aol.com (Frank McCawley, Editor)

From: mauseman8mm2000@yahoo.com (Chris J. Hunter)

Mr. McCawley,

I am writing on behalf of my father, George Hunter. He does not work with computers so I fill in as his secretary when it comes to typing, e-mailing, and editing. He wrote a story about one of his missions with the 385th in the summer of 1944. He did not include any names in the story. His story is attached to this e-mail. Thank you very much for your time and trouble.

Respectfully,
Chris J. Hunter
Sauk Centre, MN

August 20, 2005

To: billvar@comcast.net (Bill Varnedoe)

From: jimarisaharris@yahoo.com (Jim Harris)

I am dropping the check in the mail. I have a Houston address that the Herald can go to, so no need to spend the extra \$5 shipping it overseas:

Jim Harris
Conoco Philips
P.O. Box 4569 (Japan Pouch)
Houston, TX 77210

The Japan post is a temporary assignment. I may move to the Middle East next. After that I am not sure where I will be.

I am glad to be on board, it is an honor to be part of an organization that pays tribute to this group of dedicated soldiers and airmen who sacrificed so much for so worthy a cause, and truly sets an example that we should all strive to follow.

Regards,

Jim Harris, P.E.
CPT U.S. Army (retired)

LETTERS/E-MAILS

MIGHTY EIGHTH AIR FORCE MUSEUM
P.O. Box 1992, Savannah, GA 31402
www.mightyeighth.org

June 20, 2005

Dear Friends,

Let me share with you something that happened at the Museum. A fourth grade class from a local school visited the Museum and was escorted on their tour by a long-time volunteer and a WWII Eighth Air Force veteran. His passion about the mission of the Museum made a true connection with the children, and they left with his words ringing in their ears and his memories in their hearts. Those fourth graders were able to experience tangible objects from this defining time in our nation's history, and stroll through the memorial gardens and the Chapel of Fallen Eagles, teaching them of the sacrifices that have been made by the men and women who served in the Eighth. The collection of over 12,000 artifacts, 20,000 previously unpublished photographs, thousands of letters, diaries, and journals, many of which do not exist anywhere else, provided touchable reminders of our heritage. Along with what the volunteer shared with them about the price of our freedoms, he obviously passed on his spirit of generosity and his example of sacrifice and giving; for when he passed away this spring, the children remembered the lessons he had taught and made a generous donation to the Museum in his memory.

Your investment made this connection possible.

Like this fourth grade class, many of you have supported the Museum since its inception; it is probably hard to believe that nine years have already passed and that the Museum has welcomed nearly a million visitors. Think about it...a million visitors! They have come in all shapes and sizes, and for hundreds of reasons. Many are veterans seeking to reconnect with old friends. Others are veteran's family members, hoping for stories about their father, or grandfather...stories they may never have heard. Still others have no tangible bond to the Eighth Air Force, like the fourth grade class that saw and experienced for the first time what a true hero really looked like. That's nearly a million visitors who have left our institution with a connection to people or events that have helped define who we are as Americans, a connection that provides inspiration for our daily lives.

Just as those fourth graders did, each Museum stakeholder must place a personal value on this mission, but the ability for the Museum lies entirely in your hands. We receive no government support, and as generous as it was, the donation of school children alone will not sustain us. We need your help too. Of the \$1.6 million needed annually to operate the Museum, about 70% is generated through admissions, the Museum store, and facility rentals. The other 30% comes from supporters like you...supporters committed to making an investment that yields the type of returns outlined above. I've already written my check to the 2005 Annual Campaign. I urge you to show your commitment by investing. Your investment will mean another million people visiting in the years to come...a million people that will include many more fourth grade classes connecting with true heroes. That's not a bad return on your investment. Thank you in advance for your support of the mission. I look forward to seeing you at the Museum.

Sincerely,

(signed)

C. J. Roberts
President and C.E.O.

Editor's Note: Let us all make a donation to our heritage

LETTERS/E-MAILS

August 2005

To: billvar@comcast.net (Bill Varnedoe)
From: mkdiva2@cox.net (Marsha Mcllveen Ross)

Dear Bill,

I hope you remember me, I am Marsha Mcllveen Ross, sister of Clifford G. Mcllveen and Clarence S. Mcllveen. You have helped me so much, and I can't thank you enough. I was always having a hard time e-mailing you the items I had regarding my brother Clifford. I am trying again.

I lost your e-mail address when my modem/cable company changed my address; I lost everything. My e-mail address is: mkdiva2@cox.net. When I tried to reach you again, your e-mail had changed also. I found it on the 385th BG web site.

Last year, a friend of mine went to the American Netherlands Cemetery in Holland and brought back a rubbing of Clarence Mcllveen's name off the Wall of the Missing monument in Margraten. At the time I was corresponding with you, I was looking for the book titled "Air Gunner" by Sgt. Andy Rooney. Well, I am happy to say that now I have two copies and that my two brothers are mentioned in the book. I know you asked for copies of those reports. If you still want them I will copy and mail them to you.

I have heard from several persons that were in Stalag Luft I with Clifford. I have also learned that Clifford was flying a P-51 Mustang when he was killed in Waco, Texas in 1952.

I have contacted the Idaho Statesman Newspaper and they sent me an article (which I already had) about Cliff's death. Dave Johnson, who wrote it, was also one of the signees on Cliff's MACR (Missing Air Crew Report). I found that interesting. I scanned the article but it is a little murky.

I hope that all is well with you, and I hope to hear from you.

You mentioned you had friends here in Las Vegas. Maybe I could contact them and say hello.

Thanks again for all the help you offered me.

Marsha Mcllveen Ross

LETTERS/E-MAILS

August 25, 2005

To: Marsha,

I am glad that we are in touch again. The attachment was very readable, Thanks!! And yes, I would appreciate copies of the MACRs.

Congratulations! I have tried to get copies of Rooney's "Air Gunner", to no avail. Apparently it is a scarce as hen's teeth.

A good family friend lives in Las Vegas. She and her husband, now deceased, were next door neighbors for many years.

The 385th BG is having its reunion this year in conjunction with the 8th AF Historical Society in Arlington, VA on 28 Sept, through 2 Oct. There will be an election meeting too, and Art Driscoll will be the new President. I'll be glad to pass the torch, although I'll remain the Historian.

Let's keep in touch this time.

Bill

To: Bill

Where will the reunion be held?

Marsha

To: Marsha

The reunion will be held at the Sheraton National Hotel in Arlington, VA. Send Frank your mailing address by e-mail. The last HH will have the registration forms.

Bill

Editor's Note: A copy of the HH was sent to Marsha Ross.

LETTERS/E-MAILS

July 20, 2005

To: fxmccawley@aol.com

From: chucksmith@chucksmithindustrials.com

Frank,

This gentleman says he has not received any HHs since he sent in his postcard to Bill back around last fall 2004. Could you please send him whatever back issues you have since Fall 2004, please? He did send us his 2005 membership dues with a corrected address.

Charles K. Price
57558 M-62
Cassopolis, MI 49031-9752

Thanks,

Chuck

Note: Back issues were sent by Ed.

September 8, 2005

To: billvar@comcast.net

From: brianpeter79@yahoo.com (Brian Peter)

Bill,

As you know, I recently joined the 385th BGMA. I don't know when the Hardlife Herald is mailed out, but in case mine comes back "return to sender", it is because of the hurricane. To date, mail service has not resumed in my neck of the woods so that would be two weeks without any mail. If it has come back, I guess hang on to it until the next edition comes out and send them both to me.

Thanks,

Brian

LETTERS/E-MAILS

September 9, 2005

Frank McCawley, Editor
Hardlife Herald
2309 Cheverly Ave.
Cheverly, MD 20785

Dear Frank,

A friend recommended Jim Wright's "The Flying Circus." I have just finished reading it and found it fascinating. It is the other side of the war, the other side of the world, the other side of everything we knew in the European Theater.

I thought you might be interested in the book review for an issue of the HLH.

(signed)
Sterling Rogers

Editor's Note: Roger's review is in this issue.

1 October 2005

Re: 8AFHS Sources
For 385thBG Newsletter:

I am continuing research for publication of 8th Air Force operations against the Merseburg-Leuna synthetic fuel facility during the period May through December 1944. Accordingly, I would like to hear from any flight crew members who participated in those operations. Additionally, I would appreciate hearing the experiences of any ground echelon and S-2 unit members regardless of their association with raids against Merseburg. Please contact Craig Stier, P.O. Box 539, Oakton, VA 22124-0539 [or call 703.860.9588].

Regards,

(signed)
Craig Stier
Member 8th Air Force Historical Society

LETTERS/E-MAILS

October 2, 2005

Re: Michael Jones, Deputy Mayor of BSE

To: artdriscoll@hotmail.com

CC: Shnevoegel@aol.com (Leo LaCasse), fxmccawley@aol.com, TJNewton25@aol.com,
chucksmith@chucksmithindustrialsales.com, billvar@comcast.net

From: WDaysh@aol.com (William Daysh)

Art,

By the time you read this the Arlington reunion will be over and I sincerely hope that it went brilliantly well for you all. I just thought I would pass on to you the good wishes of Michael Jones, the deputy Mayor of Bury St Edmunds (BSE). He has been on holiday for a couple of weeks but on his return he found a complimentary copy of the June 2005 UK reunion DVD waiting for him. He called me this morning for a chat and to say how much he enjoyed viewing the DVD and the opportunity to meet you while you were in the UK — because he is very mindful of how we Brits are to you for all you did for us during WW2, in particular the many young Americans who gave their lives to the cause.

Michael is an ex-Royal Marine officer and especially finds commonality with ex-servicemen and women. After complimenting me on my production of the DVD, he added that he found himself welling up a little while watching it, at the point where the citation names are read out. He said he was particularly moved by the music of The Fallen and by learning that several crewmen were shot in the back by civilians after safely bailing out of their B-17s during those troubled times. I am sure that the members of the tour group who met Michael while they were here would like to know that his warmth for, and gratitude to, American veterans is a personal thing that goes way beyond his civic duty.

Best regards,

Bill

October 3, 2005

To: WDaysh@aol.com

From: artdriscoll@hotmail.com

CC: See above listings

Bill,

Thanks for sharing the reaction/response of Michael Jones, Deputy Mayor of BSE, regarding the 385th Tour Group and the new DVD you provided him. The reception hosted by him was very nice and your note about his military background adds meaning and significance to his warm and cordial welcome. He engaged in personal conversations with several of the group. You are a goodwill ambassador and a great PR consultant for the 385th BGA. Your creation and production of DVDs and CDs will enrich and enhance our archives and the legacy we pass on to posterity.

We had good sessions for the 385th during the 8th AFHS Reunion in Arlington. We had 28 veterans with family members that totaled sixty registered. There were 40 bomb groups and 5 fighter groups represented at the Reunion. Only two groups had a larger representation than the 385th BGA. I will serve as President during the next two years and have a good board that includes two 2nd and one 3rd generation members among the 10 voting members on the board. Our current roster includes about 500 members. We depend on our children and grandchildren to keep our Association alive and active.

Thanks again for your involvement as a friend of the 385th.

Art

LETTERS/E-MAILS

October 4, 2005

To: artdriscoll@hotmail.com

From: WDaysh@aol.com

CC: See above listings

Art,

Many thanks for those very kind words. The pleasure is all mine. It was a great honour and pleasure to meet with you and Mary, and, of course, the rest of the tour group. My only regret is that I haven't had the opportunity to meet certain other members personally, particularly those that I write to frequently.

I am pleased that the 385th was so well represented at Arlington.

Rest assured that I intend to remain a friend of the 385th and if there is anything I can do for individual members, or the group as a whole, please let me know.

Best regards,
Bill

Editor's Note: I have had the pleasure of corresponding with Bill, and viewing his DVDs and CDs. He is truly a great friend of the 385th BGA, and its members.

October 7, 2005

To: fxmccawley@aol.com

From: WDaysh@aol.com

CC: (many other 385th members)

Hi Frank,

Could I ask you to find a small space in the next HLH for a cry for help from a lady in the UK whose father was a French POW?

Chantel Crevel-Robinson has been in touch with Bill Varnedoe about her quest, but unfortunately she seems to be dealing with one period of the 385th's history that was not well recorded. This was between 18-20th May 1945 when some B-17s of the 385th were ferrying liberated prisoners between Linz and Nancy. Chantel's father was one of those prisoners, and he is extremely keen to identify the pilot who flew him home, so as to thank him for it.

So far the only lead I've had is from Bob Silver who was there in Linz at the time and managed to find two photos of the occasion, but we think that the people he ferried to Nancy from Linz were probably not prisoners of actual POW camps.

Any clues or leads from members (of the 385th BGA) would be gratefully appreciated. Meanwhile members of Dusty Dozen are also asked to put on their thinking caps on this matter and help if they can.

Best regards,
Bill (Daysh)

Chantel writes:

I have been contacting Bill Varnedoe as I am trying to find out the names of the pilots who ferried my father back to France, from Linz to Nancy between 18th-20th May 1945. My father was a prisoner of war at Krems (Stalag XVIIIB). The Russians liberated them but after that the Americans brought them back to France. It was the 8th Air Force, 385th Group.

Editor's Note: Contact Bill Daysh if you can assist Chantel.

LETTERS/E-MAILS

October 26, 2005

To: fxmccawley@aol.com

From: jzwick@cfl.rr.com

Subject: Merville, France

I was the ball turret gunner on Jim Fleisher's crew, 551st Sqdn., 385th Bomb Group. It was February 6, 1945 and it was my 13th mission. Our target was Chemnitz, and we were flying at an altitude of 25,500 feet. We had received considerable flak damage during the mission, and had lost a lot of fuel.

Below us, the front lines were moving back and forth. Having to land, we saw an airfield below, but did not know which side of the front is was located. It was Merville, France and was 6 miles inside of our front lines. However, there were still enemy snipers and boobie traps in the area. Another B-17 crew, which landed before us, was walking from their aircraft picked up a souvenir, which blew up. That is when we decided that we did not want any souvenirs.

While the ground personnel patched up our plane, we went into town and stayed at a nice house until our plane was repaired. Since enemy persons might still be in the vicinity, we took two hour shifts guarding the doors of the house. We left the house and returned to the airfield when we were advised that our plane was ready. We returned to our base at Great Ashfield.

Our complete crew finished our tours, and went back to the good old USA. We gunners completed 32 mission, and our pilot completed 35. We flew our last mission on April 9, 1945.

Our first mission on November 27, 1944 was to Bingen, Germany to knock out a bridge on the Rhine River. All our missions were flown in less than 15 weeks. I was 19 years old for all my missions, and was not 20 years old until August 11th — four months after my last mission.

Joe Zwick

October 26, 2005

To: fxmccawley@aol.com

From: MKUBR@neb.rr.com

Subject: June 2005 385th Tour

I was very impressed with the friendliness shown us while we were in England, France and Luxembourg on our tour in June 2005. These people have not forgotten what the Americans did for them, and are very appreciative. We had a wonderful time and would recommend that all 385th BGA members make the trip if they are able. A couple of the highlights of our trip were the Air and Space Museum in Paris, the ceremony at Merville, France, and our visit to the US Embassy in Luxembourg. Art Driscoll did a great job of planning the tour.

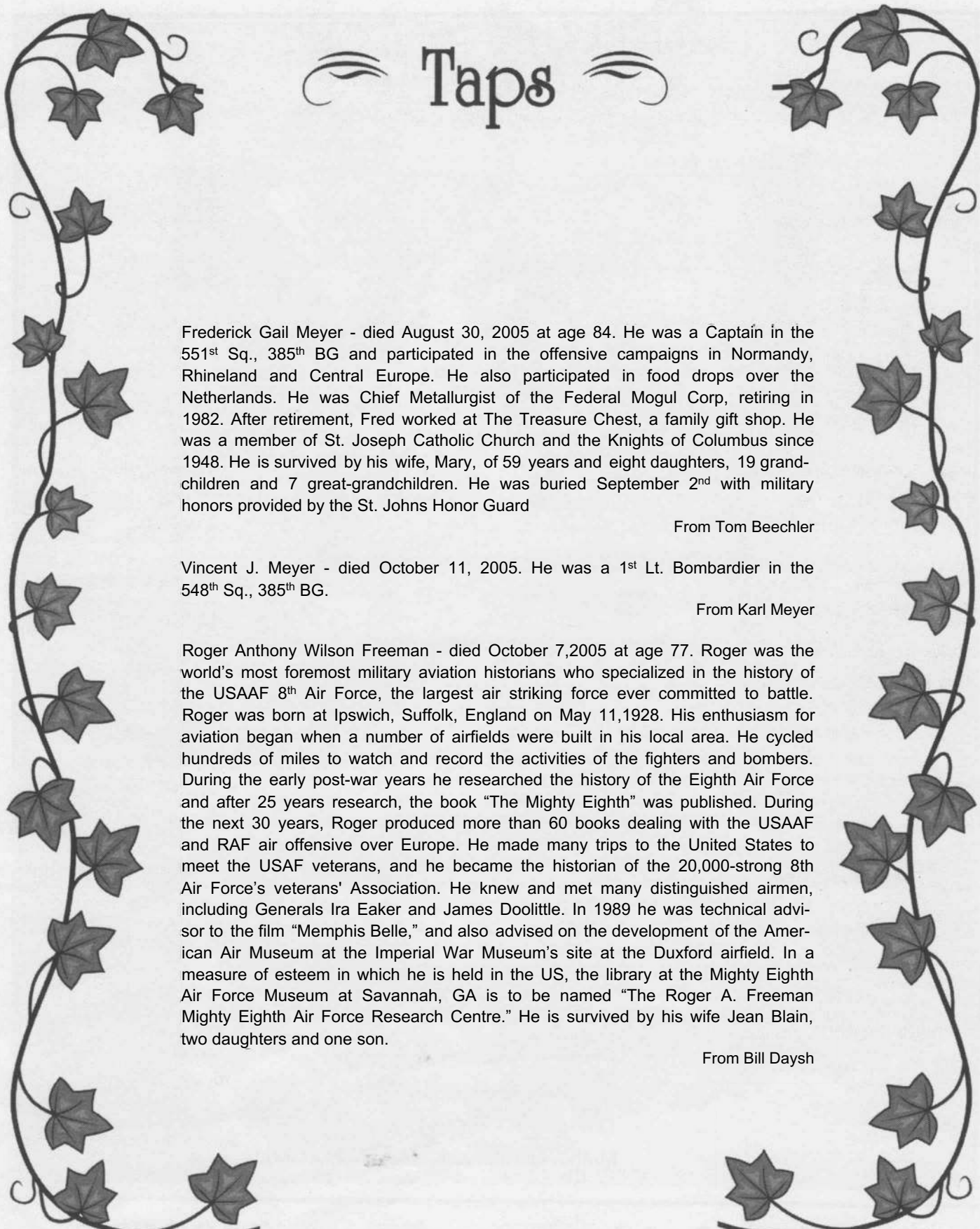
Joe W. Kubr

Ball turret gunner, Abe Keske's crew

"Madam Shoo Shoo"



Taps



Frederick Gail Meyer - died August 30, 2005 at age 84. He was a Captain in the 551st Sq., 385th BG and participated in the offensive campaigns in Normandy, Rhineland and Central Europe. He also participated in food drops over the Netherlands. He was Chief Metallurgist of the Federal Mogul Corp, retiring in 1982. After retirement, Fred worked at The Treasure Chest, a family gift shop. He was a member of St. Joseph Catholic Church and the Knights of Columbus since 1948. He is survived by his wife, Mary, of 59 years and eight daughters, 19 grandchildren and 7 great-grandchildren. He was buried September 2nd with military honors provided by the St. Johns Honor Guard

From Tom Beechler

Vincent J. Meyer - died October 11, 2005. He was a 1st Lt. Bombardier in the 548th Sq., 385th BG.

From Karl Meyer

Roger Anthony Wilson Freeman - died October 7, 2005 at age 77. Roger was the world's most foremost military aviation historians who specialized in the history of the USAAF 8th Air Force, the largest air striking force ever committed to battle. Roger was born at Ipswich, Suffolk, England on May 11, 1928. His enthusiasm for aviation began when a number of airfields were built in his local area. He cycled hundreds of miles to watch and record the activities of the fighters and bombers. During the early post-war years he researched the history of the Eighth Air Force and after 25 years research, the book "The Mighty Eighth" was published. During the next 30 years, Roger produced more than 60 books dealing with the USAAF and RAF air offensive over Europe. He made many trips to the United States to meet the USAF veterans, and he became the historian of the 20,000-strong 8th Air Force's veterans' Association. He knew and met many distinguished airmen, including Generals Ira Eaker and James Doolittle. In 1989 he was technical advisor to the film "Memphis Belle," and also advised on the development of the American Air Museum at the Imperial War Museum's site at the Duxford airfield. In a measure of esteem in which he is held in the US, the library at the Mighty Eighth Air Force Museum at Savannah, GA is to be named "The Roger A. Freeman Mighty Eighth Air Force Research Centre." He is survived by his wife Jean Blain, two daughters and one son.

From Bill Daysh



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385th BGA

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