


OHIO AIR FORCE GOLDEN GOOSE THUNDERBIRD WANDERING DUCHESS CURLY'S KIDS  
 SKY GODDESS OL' WAR HORSE PICCADILLY QUEEN BLUE CHAMPAGNE MARY ELLEN  
 SALLY B ROUNDTRIP TICKET RAUNCHY WOLF CHOWHOUND YANK GELDING WINNIE THE POOH DRAGON LADY  
 HONKY TONK SAL "HAYBAG" ANNIE MISS AMERICA STARS AND STRIPES DORSAL QUEEN WAR WEARY  
 HESITATIN' HUSSY LIBERTY BELLE HUSTLIN' HUSSY PREGNANT PORTIA ALEXANDER'S RAGTIME BAND  
 BIG GAS BIRD ANGELS SISTER LI'L AUDREY LEADING LADY LONESOME POLECAT HARES BREADTH  
 STAR DUST **HARD LIFE**  **HERALD** MARY PAT  
 SKY CHIEF MR. LUCKY PERRY'S PIRATES SLO JO TARGET FOR TONIGHT SHACK N LADY  
 MADAME SHOO SHOO GIZMO JUNIOR OL' DOODLE BUG  
 PAT PENDING POSSIBLE STRAIGHT MICKY ROGER THE DODGER IMPATIENT VIRGIN RAGGED BUT RIGHT SWEET CHARIOT  
 ROUNDTRIP JACK HOMESICK ANGEL HALF AND HALF SLEEPYTIME GAL RUBY'S RAIDERS SWINGING DOOR  
 SHACK BUNNY MY GAL SAL LATEST RUMOR MAIDEN AMERICA LULU BELLE MISSISSIPPI MISS  
 SPIRIT OF CHICAGO BIG STINKY VIBRANT VIRGIN MISSION BELLE SLICK CHICK  
 SOUTHERN BELLE RAGGEDY ANNE OL' RUM DUM FOOLISH VIRGIN



NEWSLETTER OF THE  
**385th BOMBARDMENT GROUP MEMORIAL ASSOCIATION**

**COMBAT UNITS**

HQ. SQUADRON  
 548th BOMB SQ.  
 549th BOMB SQ.  
 550th BOMB SQ.  
 551st BOMB SQ.

**VOL. VXII, NO. 5**

Editor: Ed Stern  
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**OCTOBER 1990**

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**Prez Sez:**

Greetings to all our brave members of the 385th BGMA. Lets have letters from you on any subject you care to write about. Our Editor informs me there is a shortage of news for his newsletters. Lets not let Mr. Ed down, he is doing such a good job, so lets write something and keep this thing going.

Sorry I can't brag about my garden, as Ed recently did to me, but the weather didn't cooperate. Mary and I recently had a super weekend in St. Louis visiting in the home of Rose and David Framer. The Donnelly's from Florida, Hruskas from Nebraska, Rienkens from Indiana, Lykes from Oklahoma and the Framers from St. Louis met for a mini-reunion. Ed Stern said no way to St. Louis in August. He missed a lot of fun.

Plans are progressing smoothly for the Tulsa 1991 Reunion. Get your reservations in. Start saving money for gas and air fares - looks like they are going up.

Sam Lyke

**13TH REUNION - 48TH ANNIVERSARY**  
 Official **TULSA, OK — JUNE 5-9, 1991**  
**50TH ANNIVERSARY REUNION — SPOKANE, WA - 1993**

## Positively the LAST Word on the Fargo Reunion!

You who attended the Fargo Reunion —remember back to the opening night festivities at Bonanzaville, when you sat for quite awhile before dinner was served?

You may as well know what happened. Your host committee kept wondering while they passed a couple of pieces of sliced tomato, then some bread, then some potatoes, and then the melon, which was supposed to be dessert. We relaxed when the chicken and corn finally came and everyone got enough —and the cookies were good for dessert, even though they were supposed to be served with the melon. Then came the coffee —not enough, no saucers, sort of chintzy, even by North Dakota standards.

So —several months later, we were asked how the dinner went, and we boasted about people liking the chicken so much we had a number of requests for the recipe.

"Yah", we were told by our friend "I don't suppose anyone had eaten chicken with grass before". And he told us that the Van bringing the food had turned too sharp as it came into Bonanzaville area, that when they opened the doors, they found the dishes had fallen off the shelves, that a number of pots had spilled their contents.

That explains the unusual way of serving, the delay, the lack of saucers, the shortage of coffee. And, speaking for the Reunion Committee, We're happy we didn't know about it when it was happening.

## Dues Notice

You can find out the status of your Dues by checking the address label on the Hardlife Herald. If it says 90 after your

name, you are paid up for 1990. Bills aren't sent out—please send your \$8 yearly dues to John Pettinger to keep current—or \$100 for Life membership. You won't be dropped for non-payment of dues—but we count on them to pay for printing and mailing the Hardlife Herald —gets more expensive all the time!



### Richard M. Miller

Retired Air Force Lt Col. Richard M. "Dick" Miller died Saturday, Sept 1, 1990, at the Shaw Air Force Base Hospital.

Born in Cleveland, Ohio, he was a son of the late Harry and Lillian Hershey Miller.

Mr. Miller, who retired from the Air Force after 28 years, joined the U.S. Army Air Corps in 1942 as an aviation pilot. He was a command pilot in World War II, a prisoner of war in Germany and served during the Korean and Vietnam wars.

He received the Purple Heart the Distinguished Flying Cross and the Air Medal.

He was a member of the Order of the Daedalian Air Force Association and the Pee Dee Senior Golfers of South Carolina. He was past president of the Retired Officers Association, and was associated with the American Family Life Association.

Survivors include his wife, Juliette Newton Miller of the home; one daughter, Kelly M. Crumpler of Fayetteville, N.C., two grandchildren and several nieces and nephews.

Memorials may be made to Multiple Sclerosis, the Retired Officers Association Scholarship Fund, or a charity of one's choice.

Louis Pennow

Lynn Stuckenbreck — July '90

Richard Miller — Sept. '90

General Curtis LeMay — Oct. '90

### 385th BGMA APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP

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\_\_\_\_\_  
City, State, 8 Zip Code

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

The annual dues are Eight Dollars (\$8.00)  
Life-time memberships are one payment of \$100.00  
Make out check to "385th BGMA" and mail to:  
John F. Pettenger, Treas.  
Box 11 7  
Laurel, FL 34272-0117

POW Capture Data  
Date  
Place  
Stalag Unit

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

**Editor's Note:** Here's an extract from Air Force Combat Units of World War II, edited by Maurer Maurer, USAF Historical Division, Air University, 1960. It was sent to us by Totton J. Anderson.

### 385th BOMBARDMENT GROUP

*Constituted* as 385th Bombardment Group (Heavy) on 25 Nov 1942. *Activated* on 1 Dec 1942. Trained with B-iy's. Moved to England in Jun 1943 and assigned to Eighth AF. Operated primarily as a strategic bombardment organization until the war ended, striking such targets as industrial areas, air bases, oil refineries, and communications centers in Germany, France, Poland, Belgium, Holland, and Norway. Received a DUC for bombing an aircraft factory at Regensburg on 17 Aug 1943 after a long hazardous flight over enemy territory. Led the 4th Wing a great distance through heavy and damaging opposition for the successful bombardment of an aircraft repair plant at Zwickau on 12 May 1944, being awarded another DUC for this performance. Other strategic targets included aircraft factories in Oschersleben and Marienburg, battery works in Stuttgart, airfields in Beauvais and Chartres, oil refineries in Ludwigshafen and Merseburg, and marshalling yards in Munich and Oranienburg. Sometimes supported ground forces and struck interdiction targets. Attacked coastline defenses in Jun 1944 in preparation for the Normandy invasion and hit marshalling yards and choke points during the landing on D-Day. Bombed enemy positions in support of ground forces at St Lo in Jul 1944. Attacked German communications and fortifications during the Battle of the Bulge, Dec 1944-Jan 1945. Bombed troop concentrations and communications centers in Germany and France, Mar-Apr 1945, to assist the final thrust into Germany. After WE Day, hauled prisoners of war from Germany to Allied centers

and flew food to Holland. Returned to the US in Aug. *Inactivated* on 28 Aug 1945.

#### AIR FORCE COMBAT UNITS—GROUPS

SQUADRONS. 54<SZA: 1942-1945. 549th: 1942-1945. 550th: 1942-1945. 551st: 1942-1945.

STATIONS. Davis-Monthan Field, Ariz, 1 Dec 1942; El Paso, Tex, 21 Dec 1942; Geiger Field, Wash, 1 Feb 1943; Great Falls AAB, Mont, n Apr-Jun 1943; Great Ashfield, England, Jun 1943-Aug 1945; Sioux Falls AAFld, SD, Aug-28 Aug 1945.

COMMANDERS. Col Elliot Vandevanter Jr, 3 Feb 1943; Col George Y Jumper, 24 Aug 1944; Col William H Hanson, 2 Jun 1945; Maj Totton J Anderson, c. Jul 1945-unkn.

CAMPAIGNS. Air Offensive, Europe; Normandy; Northern France; Rhineland; Ardennes-Alsace; Central Europe.

DECORATIONS. Distinguished Unit Citations: Germany, 17 Aug 1943; Zwickau, Germany, 12 May 1944.

INSIGNE. None.

Andy also sent us the following two autobiographies that were listed in the UN Military Academy's 30th Class Reunion book issued in 1969. Nice updates on Col. Van and Col. Jumper—even 21 years later.

<i>JUMPER, George Y.</i>	<i>Colonel (Ret)</i>	<i>Air Force</i>
	<i>Sacramento, California</i>	
married: Anita		
children: George Y. jr. (Capt USAF - Hon Grad, U. of N.M.)		1942
	(married with one son)	
Anne (Sacramento State 1966 - married)		1944
Eric (Lt USAFR - U. of New Mexico)		1946
	(married with one son)	
Geoffrey (high school)		1952
Mary Ellen		1962

A busy Air Force career that included National War College, 1955 command of Bomb Wings in Japan and Kansas and an Air Division in Kansas and the Lowry AFB Technical Training Center, ended in retirement in 196J. A second career started as Manufacturing Program Mgr for Titan II and moved to Logistics Manager in Product Support Division of Aerojet General Corp in Sacramento after two years. An interesting job which currently is slowed up by Viet Nam war. Recommendation to future retirees is to stay away from defense industry. Pay is good, work very interesting, but being subject to whims of politics and diplomacy, stability is lacking. Get into an operation which sells goods and services in the civilian market.

VANDEV ANTER, Elliott jr (Pete) Brig General (Ret) Air Force  
No. Virginia

married: Helen Henry	1947
children: Karen (m. Curtis L. Chapman - June 1964)	1941
Sally	1949
Peter	1951
Brooks	1957

From pilot school I was assigned to a heavy bomb grp in Calif where they said that in six years new comers might work up to pilot. Eighteen months later in the Philippines the hoary ones had disappeared and I found myself piloting a B-17 in the first American bombing attack of World War II against Japs landing at Vigan. When our bases were destroyed, we operated from Java until that island was overrun by the Japs. Returned to US in July 1942 for 30 day tour of 25 major cities in company with 5 Americans and 10 Englishmen, among first combat veterans of Pacific War returned as "Exhibit" for War Bond Sales Campaign. We rode in parades, spoke at rallies, kissed babies and dated movie stars (I had Dottie Lamour — remember her?). It was different, all right, but once was enough. Then I formed and trained a B-17 grp, took it to Europe in 1943. A few months later - Schweinfurt - then things got easier. At end of 1944 I went to Pentagon to mastermind Air Force strategy. As it turned out my biggest job was to figure what to do with all the bases we had strewn around the world. Time out in 1947 to marry Helen and enjoy pleasant sojourn at Air Univ. Back to thinking game as planner for SAC and four coveted years commanding SAC wing of new B-47 jet bombers. The National War College equipped me for international planning at SHAPE and the family enjoyed four years in France. Then came the day in 1959 when the flight surgeon called me to his office and said, "Hate to tell you this, but you have a serious heart condition." Didn't realize it that instant but these words meant premature change from Air Force career to a new profession. Retired on disability, I retreated to the Virginia countryside to start as a writer. It has been another challenge carrying both exhilaration and frustration. I like the freedom that goes with writing but find it excruciating at times to get my thoughts down on paper. A motive that keeps me writing is chagrin at the way we professionals have abandoned the field of strategic thinking to the academicians and journalists. Family: elder daughter teaches school, younger trains and shows her own horse, boys progress admirably in school, Helen keeps us all on the ball.

From the Sioux Falls Argus-Leader, Wed., Aug. 15, 1945 - We celebrated! We can't print it all, but please read paragraph 2, referring to the death of a 63 year old man, and then go to paragraph 4. That's what they thought of 63 year olds in 1945. (Not they - we!)

Feverishly awaited news of Japan's surrender terms touched off in Sioux Falls a pandemonium c'. shouting, cheering and horn-tooting that all but drowned out the whistles that began sounding the joyous tidings at 6:15 p. m. Tuesday.

A riotous celebration on the eve of V-J day, being observed here today by closing of business places and with evening prayer services in churches, witnessed thy accidental death of a 63-year-old man and the arrest of a motorist who will be charged with manslaughter. Police Capt. J. M. Gibson said.

**Pedestrian Victim**

The victim was Arthur Valentine, 624 1/2 North Spring ave.- who was hit at 7:35 p. m., police reported, by a car driven by Henry Rauch,

1124 North Main ave., while walking across Main avenue from east to west about 58 • feet north of Third street. Valentine died a few minutes later at a local hospital.

Witnesses said the aged man, packing plant laborer, was hurled high into the air by the car. headed north, and landed on the pavement. Medical examination revealed skull and jaw fractures and a broken femur. Officers said the

body was badly mangled. CMpt. Gibson and Patroimen Russell Dernau and Horace G. Young noted in their report that Rauch, whom they lodged in the city jail, was "very obviously intoxicated and Could not control h—"

**Girls Get Kissed**

The GI's who were roundly kissed on V-E day in various European cities reversed procedures here on V-J day and local girls simply gave up trying to keep lipstick on, struttlghl as they were spun from one soldier to another.

□ \* w

**K-Rations Taboo**

He was only a corporal, curly hair standing triumphantly through sundry rents in a battered straw hat and flaming red tie tied in a bow directly under his left ear, but even a second lieutenant listened respectfully as he told a small group how to cook. But they broke up slowly, although in disgust, when he began a discourse on K-ration preparation.

□ □ □

**Blonde Bombshell**

The tall blonde attached to a striking captain, sighted and shouted "bombs away." She swung her arm and a battle struck the E. C. Olson window. The bottle, through some-odd freak, was the only thing that broke. An MP said quietly, "You shouldn't do things like that."

□ ♦ □

**A Pal Indeed**

One diminutive' GI, no doubt a tall or turret gunner, proved to all onlookers Tuesday night the value of keeping in physical trim. He was carrying—bodily—a dazed buddy who was fully 50 pounds heavier and a foot taller, and he asked no one for assistance. His buddy needed help and the gunner's reactions were the same as they would have been oh the field of battle or in a flak-riddled bomber high over Berlin.

□ □ \*

□ □ □ □ □ **LIFE MEMBERS** □ □ □ □ □

**William F. Solometo — 220**

**Vela Cole - 221**

**Vincent P. McLaughlin — 222**

**John R. Cunin — 223**

**Lefferts L. Malrie — 224**

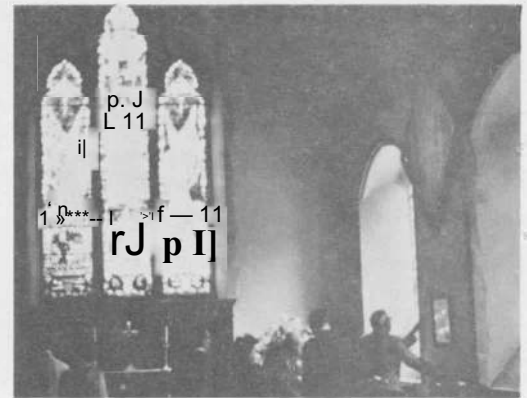
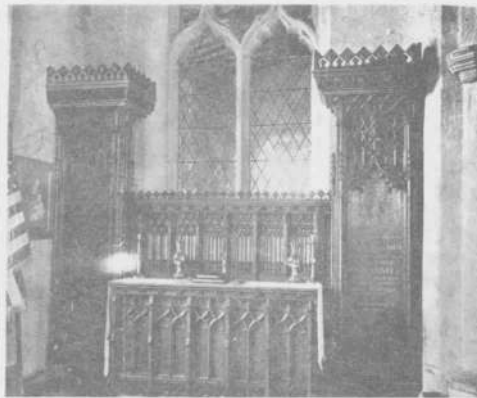
**Lindley R. Weikert - 225**

### 385th Memorials around the Country and in England (pictures courtesy John Pettinger)



Plaque at Arlington

Plaque & tree at Dayton



All Saints Church, Great Ashfield



Air Force Academy Memorial Plaques

Kneeling cushion in Cathedral at Bury St Edmunds.

The stained glass window being planned for Great Ashfield will be our last project. We had the altar, shown above, built in 1945-46.

Reprinted from Military Reunion News, July, August 1990.

## CHRONICLES: THE BATTLE OF BRITAIN

By Warner Stark

France surrendered to Germany on June 25, 1940, leaving Great Britain to carry on alone. The Germans had overrun France and the Low Countries so quickly they were in a quandary as to how to proceed.

An invasion plan had been proposed to Hitler on June 5. Neither the Navy nor the Army could agree on what to do next but both services recognized the need for total aerial supremacy over the invasion area. Reich Marshal Goring believed the Luftwaffe could gain control over the proposed landing areas and, in the process destroy the RAF and force England's surrender.

While the invasion planning went ahead, the Luftwaffe marshalled its forces. By July 1 three Luftflotten (roughly equal to an Air Force) were ready to do battle. These units had a total force of 3,600 first line aircraft of which 2,700 were operational.

The British knew an invasion was the next step. They also knew the Germans had to have aerial superiority for it to succeed. RAF's Fighter Command under Chief-Marshal Sir Hugh Dowding had four Groups with a total strength of 871 single engine fighters of which 644 were serviceable.

While the supply of aircraft caused concern during the battle, the RAF's real problem was the lack of fighter pilots. This despite the fact that other RAF commands and the Fleet Air Arm had been stripped of suitable replacements and a number of foreign volunteers had been taken in.

The RAF had some advantages. Their radar and associated fighter control system, backed up with an Observer's Corps usually gave adequate warning of incoming raids. The system allowed efficient deployment of fighters to meet the enemy. Fortunately, the Germans never fully appreciated the system's importance so failed to attack it with any vigor.

The RAF's Spitfires and Hurricanes were initially slightly inferior to the main German fighter the Bf 109, in terms of firepower but roughly comparable in performance. Technical advances during the battle would slowly close this gap. British fighters were markedly superior to the other classes of German aircraft.

It is hard to fix a start date for the Battle of Britain but most historians use July 1, 1940. By then the battle had entered its first phase characterized by harassing attacks on British shipping, ports, and installations along the coast. The German strategy was to assault easily reached targets to draw the RAF into combat and destroy the fighter force.

The plan failed since the radar/observer net gave ample warning of raids, enabling the RAF to attack the bombers and avoid dog fights between fighters. This phase of the battle ended

in the first week of August with a serious setback for the Luftwaffe. RAF losses had been heavy but acceptable.

When the British rejected Hitler's peace overtures in mid-July he began preparations for Britain's defeat. On August 1 Hitler ordered air attacks On Britain from August 5 on. In this phase the Luftwaffe concentrated on forward fighter bases, radar installations, and other targets in southern England. The Luftwaffe unleashed large numbers of small forces to attack multiple ground targets and draw the RAF into combat. During the two worst days, August 8 and 15 the Germans flew 1,485 and 1,786 sorties respectively. The RAF managed to hold its own but at the cost of exhausting front line squadrons.

Dowding let his subordinate commanders handle the Germans while he ensured an adequate flow of aircraft and pilots to the front line squadrons. He also replaced exhausted squadrons with fresh ones. Dowding also changed tactics, switching from the large pre-war mass fighter formations of 12 or more to the German method of more flexible units of two to four aircraft.

On August 23rd the Germans began the third phase of the battle. Having seen success with the previous combat they began mass assaults. Using formations of 100 or more bombers heavily escorted by fighters they forced their way through to RAF fighter bases to destroy them. The escort fighters would deal with any RAF fighters that rose to intercept.

*Continued on page 4*

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Dear Ed,

This is a report of our recent trip to Holland.

On invitation of the Dutch Government, Frank Walls and his wife, Winnie, Bob Valliere and wife, Nancy, were again in Holland for the celebration of the 45th Anniversary of the Food Drop Missions. We were met at the Amsterdam airport (Schipol) by the Committee for Food and Freedom including Col. Arie DeJong (retired) and his daughter, Paula. Also our friends Herman & Truus Assenberg of Vlaardingen, whom Nancy and I had befriended back in 1985, also were there as a surprise to greet us. The group (Chowhound) was then taken to the VIP room for short official greetings by Col. DeJong, Chairman of the Dutch Food and Freedom Foundation, Col. Gilligan, U.S. Airforce Attache, The Hague, and the Polish Military Attached. Transportation was by bus to Camp Crailo, and Army base where we were given our rooms for the week. Accommodations were pretty good. The facilities enabled both Chowhound and Manna (the RAF group) to be housed together which made for better comradeship. The Manna Association consists of food droppers from England, Australia, New Zealand, Canada, and Poland, all having flown with the RAF. In 1985 only three Poles were allowed out of Poland to attend. Now, in 1990 there were ten Poles with wives, and given ample freedom. What a change!

April 29, 1990 (Sunday) - The first day of the celebration coincides with the first day of the food drop by Manna in 1945. We attended church service in English/Dutch in the Oude Kerk "Old Church" of the town of Rijswijk. At the church, I met for the first time Janice Butterman, a woman who had sent me newspaper clippings of the 1985 trip and with whom I have corresponded in the past five years. The sermon was based on Exodus 16 wherein the Lord told Moses he would rain manna from heaven. The service was quite emotional, this was followed by a reception by the Mayor and Town Council. Traveling in five busses with four military police escorts enabled the group to make mileage and time and we were able to cover 16 towns during our week's stay. I will not describe all our stops in this report. We went on to Ypenburg Airbase which is one of the main 1945 drop zones southeast of The Hague and a reception by the Rijswijk Town Council.

*elijke luchtoperatie boven Nederland*

■ Een B17 Vliegende Fort van de Amerikaanse Luchtmacht vloog met vier bommen boven de Oude Kerk van Rijswijk op de zeventiende van deze maand. De bommen werden afgegooid op de parochiekerk van de Oude Kerk van Rijswijk. Dit doet L. van 't Hof weten dat de Amerikaanse Luchtmacht in 1945 de Oude Kerk van Rijswijk bombardeerde. De foto is afkomstig van de Chowhound Bestuur.



April 30, 1990 (Monday) - "Queen's Birthday" - In Vlaardingen, a town of 70,000 most of them out to greet our busses as we arrived. The streets lined with shouting, waving people. We paraded from the parking lot to the town hall through the joyous people all wearing an orange ribbon in honor of the royal family. At the town center, where all the people gathered, seats had been put up for us. The band played songs from the 1940's and a famous female vocalist (the sparkling Dutch singer Marie-Cecile Moerdijk) sang and thousands of orange balloons were just waiting to be released. The band played "Deep in the Heart of Texas" for the Americans-the "Land of Hope & Glory" for the Manna group. The Vlaardingen Womens Chorus group in old Dutch costume sang songs. The Burgomeister Van Lier gave his greeting and thank you speech from his lofty steps outside the ancient town hall entrance. When he asked for all townspeople to applaud and give thanks to us amid the thunderous applause thousands of orange balloons ascended skywards and for several moments the bright blue sky became a flaming orange glow. What a fantastic sight and sensation! All the veterans said that the day in Vlaardingen will never be forgotten.

May 1, 1990 (Tuesday) - To Rotterdam and a reception at the large department store Bijenkorf, and a lunch. Then to the harbor for a cruise around Rotterdam.



A DUTCH WOMAN presented this photo to Bob Valliere on his visit to Holland recently. As a young girl, she carried a sack of food with friends, following the combined British and U.S. food-drop.

May 2, 1990 (Wednesday) - To Amsterdam and another harbor cruise, and welcome by the Mayor. A visit to the Heineken Brewery with the President of Heineken and unlimited beer and herring and cheese. . a grand time was had by all, needless to say. A demonstration of parachuting was given by several parachutists on the lawn surrounding the convention center. Special Heineken Delft Steins, made especially for the occasion and inscribed with Manna/Chowhound markings were given to us as mementos of our visit.

May 3, 1990 (Thursday) - On the way to Haarlem, the busses stopped at the tulip fields at Vogelenzang which was

a drop zone. Several names were called of men who actually participated in dropping food at that drop zone and we gathered for the photo. Instead of taking the short walk into the fields, Frank Walls decided to stay in the air conditioned bus and enjoy his comfort. At lunch at Valkenburg School a woman gave Frank and I a photo showing her 45 years ago as a child carrying the food we had dropped. Dinner was in Katwijk Aan Zee, the Swan Restaurant, which was given by the Minister of Defense. A painting was presented to the Minister of B-17 dropping food and it was a checkered tail to represent the 385th Bomb Group. The nose name was "Ole Doodle Bug". I, of course, let it be known that the plane was of the 385th marking.

May 4, 1990 (Friday) - To Achterveld. Here in the little school is where the truce was negotiated for the food drops. The usual welcoming speech by the Burgomiester, some refreshments and wreath laying. Then off to Soesdijk Palace where Manna and Chowhound formed up with medals on Blazers marched behind a Dutch military band in review for Prince Bernhard. Following the march, we had refreshments and presentations and we talked with the Prince, who negotiated with the Germans for the temporary truce during the food missions. Late afternoon found us in Dronten, a town about 25 years old and part of the land that Holland has added by reclaiming many square miles of Zeider Zee. In Dronten there is the Bent Propeller Memorial, which is the propeller from a Lane they found which had gone down in the sea. At that very spot they made the memorial and every year the RAF Air Gunner's Association, 150 strong, come to Dronten for the memorial service. We became part of that, this year, with many wreaths being placed and many forces being represented. A fly-over of the Battle of Britain Flight (Lancaster, Spitfire, and Hurricane) took place, taps and even many school children placing wreaths at the "Bent Prop".

May 5, 1990 (Saturday) - A visit to Soesterburg Air Base, an American Jet installation of the 32nd Tactical Fighter Squadron, USAF. We toured the hangers, the officers club, and then a scramble was sounded for our benefit. This enabled us to see how two F-15's can get into the air in less than five minutes. May 5th is Liberation Day and we then went to Wageningen to join in the parade and review by Prince Bernhard and Prime Minister Lubbers. The crowd along the streets of the parade in the small town was estimated at 250,000. We wove through the three miles of crowded streets touching the people lining the streets. One could see the elderly who would nod their heads and shed some tears in thankful remembrance. Some of us reached out to touch those extended hands in acknowledgement. Here again we witnessed a fly-over by the Battle of Britain Memorial Flight. Saturday night, a farewell dinner at the camp since Sunday was departure day for home. Manna Association held their annual meeting while in Holland and I was made an honorary member of their association, to my surprise and appreciation.

Words cannot express the full picture showing the hospitality of the Dutch people towards us, the few, who were there representing thousands who participated not only in the food drop missions but those who served our

country during the war. The Dutch people, those who were there in 1945, and the school children who know and understand the meaning of "Manna" send their thanks via a few of us to all the food droppers and those who helped Holland out of the "Hunger Winter".

I will never forget these wonderful, eventful days in Holland.



OVER THE AREA WHERE HE DROPPED FOOD in 1945, Bob Valliere was presented with a bouquet of tulips recently, by the Burgomeister of Vogelenzang.



Bob Valliere (left) and Frank Walls (right) at Soesterburg Air Base - 32nd Tactical Fighter Squadron, USAF, Holland, May 5, 1990.

Bob Valliere  
550th Bomb Squadron  
18 Whiting Farm Rd., Branford, CT 06405





**Editor's Note:** It's hard to come up with *any* stories or letters from ground personnel. Maybe paddlefeet can't write.

Read this, from 7th Photo Recon Newsletter, and send some of your memories along!

## 1 STUCK AROUND THE BASE..

Reprinted from "Army Talks for the Eighth Air Force", March 1945

"What did you do over in Europe?"

"I was in the Eighth Air Force."

"Oh, how exciting! What did it feel like, flying over Germany?"

"Ma'am, I didn't fly over Germany, or anywhere else. I stuck around our base in England."

"Do tell me what it was like."

Well, what was it like? You could tell them about your job...

Skipping to "Behind the Scenes" on page 18, we have this account:

"There are many on the base who have no direct part in a mission. They are like the stage managers, the scene shifters and the rest who never take a curtain call. Yet business would soon stop if they weren't around. The Air Corps, as much as the rest of the Army, moves on its stomach - and its jeeps and trucks. Mess and transportation have to be on the beam all the time, and on a base they have many additional calls made on them. Combat Crew Mess, for example, must check its menus regularly with the medics. Some foods do not digest at twenty thousand feet. Times of meals change from day to day, according to operational requirements. Fliers can get something to eat, if they need it, at any hour of the day or night, and any of them will tell you how much a hot breakfast, with fresh eggs cooked to individual taste, and good coffee, mean at four in the morning, before a mission.

Transportation, primarily designed for operational requirements, is called on for help in all manner of jobs. Five thousand miles is a fair average for the general purpose vehicles of one base to cover in a day. The servicing of this fleet is a big undertaking, and many a motor pool has to do business with a sadly shrinking staff. On this field, for example, there are now sixty men instead of

the original ninety, yet somehow they keep the motors humming and vehicles in serviceable condition.

A group or squadron or other headquarters on a field is no different from any other insofar as paper work is concerned. There is always a seemingly endless stream of reports and other documents to be prepared. The clerks have a big job to do. Through their hands pass much of the material which shapes policy at higher headquarters, for the base is the place where theories are tested and facts come to light. The staff control clerks must maintain an hourly check of the status of planes and crews, of supplies of fuel and film. The S-I section employs 30 officers and 50 enlisted men to take care of the intricate personnel records. One of the biggest jobs is done by the stock record section of the sub depot, in maintaining a tally of the innumerable items that pass through their hands.

A very different type of service is given by the firefighting platoon. They have to deal with fires in the field's installations and with crash fires. The first part of their job is like that of any town fire department, though they have additional chores, such as servicing 1,500 fire extinguishers every month. Eighteen of their twenty-one men are on call at all times. They spend a lot of time just sitting. When they move in on an emergency they have to move fast; nothing bums faster than a crashed plane. The tower alerts them before take-off and return, and they send a crash truck there and to the end of the runway. On this base they have had to tackle several domestic fires, and put out the flames on defective plane engines, but as yet none of the planes have burst into flames in a crackup on the field."

In separate organizations, the radio and radar maintenance men carry on work similar to that of the men in the sub depot. The volume of their work mushrooms continuously. The radio men are now accomplishing approximately three times as much routine work as they did when they first hit the base. They, too, have designed and built much of their testing equipment. As soon as the planes came in from the missions they check the sets and go over any reported malfunctions. They spend much of their time in the tents and shacks out by the hardstands, where they work on the spot. These line shops are now almost as well equipped as the headquarters, through ingenuity of the men, who know their work so well that each unit can be relied upon to run itself unless a big job comes up.

The radar section didn't exist when the base was established, and even now it is a place of dark mysteries where only a few experts know their way around. They have had to keep abreast of the tremendous development of radar in the past year, and at the same time train a growing staff. Like the radio workers, they operate day and night, and owing to the complexity and delicacy of the instruments, their maintenance headaches are many and large. *Editor's Note: Our radio and radar men were among the many unsung heroes of the war and to whom many of us owe our lives.*

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## DARK MYSTERIES

(from pages 13 and 14, ARMY TALKS IN THE EIGHTH AIR FORCE, 10 March 45)



An amusing story from North Dakota's Horizon magazine. If only Hazen had kept her! Hazen, for your information, is way out West — almost as far from Fargo as Tulsa is.

# North Dakota's Only FLYING FORTRESS

## A 26,000 POUND B-17, A TON OF TROUBLE

---

BY FERD FROESCHLE

---

For two or three years after World War II, you could buy a half-million-dollar airplane for \$350.

There are people in Hazen who will tell you it was no bargain.

Stuck with an embarrassment of surplus B-17s, the Air Force was offering them to institutions for "educational purposes" at close-out prices.

And so the Hazen community came to own North Dakota's only Flying Fortress and, along with 26,000 pounds of airplane, a ton of trouble.

Lyle Benz, a young Air Force veteran, was coming home to Hazen to establish an airport south of town. As a flight instructor who had flown B-17's, he was well qualified to operate an airport and to offer pilot training, which was being subsidized by the government under the GI Bill.

When Benz approached the Hazen Community Club for help in promoting the new airport, someone recalled the surplus airplane program.

"Why not," the club decided, "get one of those Flying Fortresses and park it at the airport as an educational feature and, of course, as an attraction."

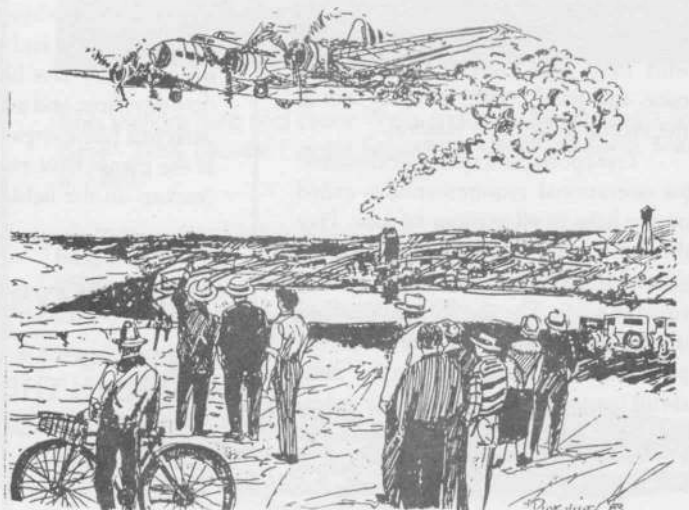
Why not!

The program, as distilled from the grapevine, was that a local educational institution would submit the necessary papers, a payment of \$350 would be made to the government which would then have an Air Force pilot fly it to the nearest commercial airport, and from there it was up to the buyer to come and get it.

The conventional wisdom on delivery ran something like this:

"Give the pilot who brings it a fifth, and he'll set it down in the cow pasture of your choice."

Fair enough — \$350 and a fifth, and the Hazen airport would feature a Flying Fortress, something most Hazenites and many other North Dakotans had never seen, except in pictures and newsreels.



A committee of three was set up, including the postmaster, the clerk of the school board, who was also a vice president of the bank, and this writer, who was then editor of the local newspaper. The committee didn't have much of a problem raising a little more than \$350 in contributions from local merchants, even though enthusiasm for the project could be described as varied.

So the papers were filled out, signed, and word was awaited as to where and when the airplane would be available.

The government accepted the offer and then administered the first surprise.

"Your plane is in Oklahoma. Come and get it."

A problem, but not insurmountable. Benz said he would go to Oklahoma by bus, taking along his young brother, a sophomore in the local high school, to act as his co-pilot. What he needed mainly, the 97-pound Benz explained, was someone to help "stand on the brakes" during the landings.

To help recover the costs, and perhaps even make a profit on the project, the committee had a plan that called for the plane to be brought to the Bismarck airport and parked there until Hazen held its big summer celebration, the Old Settler's Picnic. On the first day of the celebration the plane would be flown to Hazen, landed on the new airport's 2,200-foot sod runway, and an admission charge would be made for all the hundreds of people who no doubt would want to witness the event.

Early in April, Benz and his truant brother, John, left by bus for Altus, Oklahoma, where the Air Force had a few thousand acres of surplus planes.

Bus fare proved to be only the first of a series of cost overruns.

When the brothers got to Altus, another surprise was waiting. The Air Force would not allow the plane to take off with the gasoline which had been in its tanks since World War II. The tanks had to be drained and a new supply of gasoline bought.

"Send money," came the message from Altus. A B-17 uses something like 500 gallons of gasoline just to take off, and it would take an estimated \$400 worth of gas to make the flight to Bismarck.

Back in Hazen, the committee made the rounds of local donors again, breaking the bad news and soliciting the funds it would take to get the plane on its way. It was more difficult than the first round of solicitations.

Things in Altus weren't going all that well either. Although the plane assigned to Hazen had only 20 or so hours in the air before it was parked, some standard equipment such as radios and supercharger controls had been removed by the Air Force. Benz had the foresight to take a small airplane radio with him. The superchargers could be wired for low level flight.

Lyle announced by phone they were taking off for Bismarck.

"How did the flight go?" was the first question when the next phone call came.

"Well," was the answer, "we're back in Oklahoma."

The Benz brothers and the B-17 had flown northward as far as South Dakota when the weather closed in on them. They had turned around and headed for open skies which they didn't find again until they were back over Oklahoma. There they made a forced landing, with two of the four engines smoking as they gulped gallons of oil.

Lyle said residents of that area had seen the plane, apparently in trouble, and reported it to the Oklahoma highway patrol which found it on the small field where it had landed.

"Send more money," was the gist of that message, too.

Hazen now owned an \$800 airplane which was still in Oklahoma with empty gas tanks and low oil reservoirs.

The next fund solicitation obviously wasn't going to be a snap, and so the brothers were sent money for the bus fare home while the committee pondered possible steps in the Flying Fortress program.

It was a tough solicitation. Donor enthusiasm was low at best; there were signs of open antagonism as the committee again made the rounds, but another \$400-plus was raised and by the end of May the two Benz brothers again were in Oklahoma, replenishing the oil and gas supplies and doing a few mechanical things to insure a better flight to Bismarck. They also checked the weather carefully.

On Memorial Day, 1947, committee members were pacing the Bismarck airport, scanning the southern skies for the B-17 which was expected early that afternoon. By sundown there was still no trace and no word. It was a dismal and frightening evening before a phone call came from Pierre, South Dakota.

"We had to land here," was the report. "Engine trouble."

Bus fare from Pierre wasn't a serious problem, but by now Hazen had a \$1,200 airplane at the Pierre airport with empty gas tanks, a low oil supply and ailing engines.

Neither the banker, the postmaster, nor this writer had any stomach for the next solicitation. In fact, it was getting uncomfortable to go into any Hazen shop or store on routine business. But there wasn't any choice. The Pierre airport people were hinting there might be parking charges if the sickly airplane stayed around too long.

Another \$400 was distilled from blood, sweat and pure gall. Two days before Old Settler's Picnic, the Benz boys were back in Pierre getting the plane ready for what was scheduled to be its final flight.

There were heavy rains in Hazen the night before the plane was due, raising some concern that the runway might not support the heavy bomber. But the day dawned bright and clear, and the sandy soil seemingly had soaked up most of the moisture without turning into a bog.

Volunteer ticket salesmen, ticket takers, guards and Boy Scouts were on hand to insure that everyone paid the one-dollar admission charge to witness the landing.

Two things had been overlooked by the committee. One was that a lot of people didn't even want to be around when the unlucky airplane was attempting to squeeze into the tiny field. Besides that, it was almost as easy to watch the whole drama from off the field as on. Admissions fell far short of projections.

Plans for the plane's arrival called for circling Hazen twice and then landing around two o'clock in the afternoon.

Shortly after two the Flying Fortress appeared on the southern horizon, presenting a startling reincar-

nation of wartime scenes. It was trailing long streamers of smoke from two of its engines, and Air Force veterans who had gathered to watch turned pale as they mentally calculated prospects of a safe landing.

There was no triumphant circling of the town. The plane homed in on the airport, a little too high and too fast, perhaps, because half the short runway was gone before the wheels touched down, and all of it was gone before the plane stopped.

Getting the Flying Fortress out of the plowed field beyond the runway proved less difficult than expected, but as it was being taxied to its parking spot, it left deep ruts in the soft runway. Then some spectators got in the way. Benz hit the brakes, the plane nosed over, and two engines caught fire as their props hit the ground. The fires were only momentary, but the bent propeller blades were semi-

permanent, lending the appearance of a war weary survivor.

Admissions for tours of the plane proved to be the next disappointment. Most people simply bypassed the 25-cent fee by coming around when the airport was unattended.

Fund solicitations in Hazen were difficult for months afterwards, and virtually impossible for the three members of the B-17 committee.

For the next four years the plane sat in its parking place overlooking the Knife River valley around Hazen. The airport had gone out of business and the owner of the land came to the Hazen Community Club one day and asked that it get the airplane off his property.

That request was followed by a stroke of luck. A company from Florida offered \$2,000 for the plane, and the offer was snapped up.

After weeks of tinkering, including

some prop straightening at the local blacksmith shop, the plane took off one day into a brisk northwest wind.

There was one more problem. Under terms of the sale by the U.S. government to the Hazen School District, surplus property such as airplanes could not be disposed of without government permission. Consequently the school board clerk-banker was notified that he was to appear in federal court for violation of the terms of sale, and the federal people indicated they would not be gentle about it.

North Dakota's Sen. Milton R. Young entered the negotiations at that point with the result that the legal infringement not only was forgiven, but Hazen also was permitted to keep \$1,600 of the sale price to reimburse it for its expenses.

There is no record, however, to show that anyone ever thanked the members of Hazen's B-17 committee.

## Letters to the Editor:

You maybe will be interested to know that my book concerning THE MUNSTER RAID, and "Black Week", has recently been updated and republished by TAB Books Inc., PA., 17294 in flexback (6" x 9"). The updated edition includes many additional accounts and different photographs, from veterans of both sides, which I've received since 1984.

Enclosed are the first three reviews that I've received from the U.S. during July. TAB are selling the book for \$17.95 but the 95th B.G. Association bought a bunch of books at 40% discount from TAB and are selling them at \$15.00 each post paid. If you're interested in the book and want to get it from the 95th BGA instead of TAB the 95th veteran to contact is/ Mr. Ellis Scripture, 1636 Wyntre Brooke N., York, PA, 17403.

Alternatively, as there's quite a considerable amount in the book concerning the 385th B.G., it lost two BI 7 crews during the mission, those of William Whitlow (Evaded) and John Pettenger (P.O.W.), it might be worthwhile for the 385th B.G. Association to consider buying at least 25 copies from TAB at 40% discount for sale to its veterans and Associate members.

Last Saturday the temperature in Suffolk was 99 degrees F, an all time record high for the U.K. The climate, it seems, has gone slightly berserk.

All well here in Bacton and at the 390th B.G. Memorial Museum at Framlingham, which includes several 385th B.G. WWII exhibits.

Best wishes to you and yours.

Sincerely,

Ian Hawkins  
29 Birth Ave, Bacton, Stowmarket  
Suffolk IP14 4NT

**Editors Note:** We received a copy of this book — it's terrific — a **must read** for all! Order yours from the 95th. There are 23 items about 385th. You won't want to put it down.

## Review of Ian's Book

THE MUNSTER RAID: BLOODY SKIES OVER GERMANY by Ian Hawkins. EXCERPTS FROM BOOK REVIEWS JULY 1990: (Newsletters)

From the U.S. Air Forces Escape and Evasion Society, Missouri, USA. This book is a "must" for everyone who has flown combat; loaded with photographs and is one of the best written books I have ever read; Don't miss reading this one. \$17.95 and worth it.

From The BI 7 Combat Crewmen and Wingmen Association, California, USA. Vividly details the Munster Raid during "Black Week" of October 1943; A Fascinating historical narrative; the author displays his scholarly talent for accuracy and clarity in his written re-enactment of the Munster Riad enhanced by many one-of-a-kind photographs; transports you back in time; highly recommended as an historical masterpiece.

*Letters to the Editor con't.*

From The Confederate Air Force, Texas, USA. "Black Week" is known for its enormous American aircrew and airplane losses; brings the air attack on Munster to life by skillfully combining first-hand accounts; and outstanding job; extremely well researched; didn't want to put the book down, hated to see it end; it's a "must" for all who love WWII airplanes and admire the men who flew them.

Dear Ed,

John Hutchinson has written to me with the information that 2nd Lt. J.A. Montgomery was flying "Mr. Smith" when the aircraft went missing 20.6.44, and that you supplied the info.

I have written back to John, but I must drop you a note as well to thank you for providing what is to me vital and interesting details to add to the caption that I am building up after obtaining this marvellous and to me, a new photo not seen before in a book or magazine. To me, a photo without any details attached is just nothing. To be able to quote name of the type, the unit it was flying with when the shot was taken, and to list names of men that might be standing there, with a rough date - the whole picture comes alive, in my mind, anyway.

As I said to John when I acknowledged his first letter, the crews of the 8th (and 9th) A.A.F. are my heroes, and I now realize that I have been collecting material since my school days in London since WWII. As a hobbyist you just collect books and mags., first all it was to make model aircraft and now I find the experiences of the men (not much older than me) mind shattering, when you realize what they put up with, day after day.

You must come in contact with a lot of your fellow comrades as editor of your Group News and I bet new stories are still coming out, even now.

Over here we are all excited over the release of the new film which is really a fiction on the famous "Memphis Belle" film (which I have on video). I think it is a great tribute to a fine plane that five B-17's could be found in flying condition to make the new film possible. On our TV we saw the original crew visiting the field and meeting the young actors. They were the lucky ones to have survived. I've been to Madley in Cambridgeshire and seen the beautiful memorial with the list of names, now we have this madman to contend with in the Gulf. I would hate to be a politician in the hot seat at any time.

Well as usual, I've typed more than I intended (I type with two fingers to be kind to your eyes! - you can't read my left-handed scribble).

Let me say "thank you" again. They say in religion a convert is worse than a natural and I was in the army post-war, and this hobby of mine is now a way of life. My wife gave up years ago trying to get the house painted!

If you can find time to write to me, I would look upon it as an honour. Just to have John's letter heading on file, all historical and marvellous stuff for my files. I would love to have your's al well.

Cheerio for now,

Ron Durand

The White Cottage, Furze Hill,  
Kingswood, Tadworth, Surrey, KT20 6HB

Dear Ed Et Jane,

We thought we had better send you the enclosed photo in case you want to help Joe Menkoff with his reunion in Tulsa. This photo was taken by a garage proprietor who his associated with an Ex M.P. Veteran who incidently got permission from your government to send 200 trees to England to replace some of the ones we lost in East Anglia when we had the Hurrican in 1987. Nice Guy.



Photo of wood carving donated by Les & Peggy Gordon of Stowmarket, England to be raffled at Tulsa Reunion 1991.

I have written to the East Anglian Tourist Board of **1992** reunion and sent them a photo and how, when and why so it may appear in one of their Bulletins if it does I've asked them to ask any guys who receive it if they can think of someone who could qualify.

I'm now off to see the post office about sending the carving to Joe Menkoff and send this letter off.

Kind Regards to you and Jane,

Sincerely yours,

Les Et Peggy Gordon  
39 Combs Lane, Stowmarket  
Suffolk, England, IP14 2DD

*Letters to the Editor con't*

Dear Mr. Stern,

Recently I visited Fred Born's after being out of touch for a long time. Fred mentioned that annual dues for the 385th BGMA are \$15.00. My check is enclosed.

I was bombardier on the crew of the Sleepytime Gal; Fred was pilot, Ed Lowe copilot and Bill Shelly, navigator.

It has been 45 years, but the Newsletter brought back a flood of memories — almost as if it were yesterday.

Regards

Maurice O. Nysether  
424 Carlo St., San Marcos, CA 92069

**Editors Note:** The dues are only \$8.00.

Dear Ed,

The target was Berlin, the date August 6, 1944. We were starting the bomb run. The plane on our left wing must have received a hit from flak because smoke started to pour out of one engine. At the first puff of smoke, the waist door opened and one of the crew bailed out. Shortly afterwards, the smoke ceased and the plane continued on to target with us.

The last we saw was the parachute opening and he was falling towards what appeared to be the target area. We often wondered what happened to that crew member. He sure fell into a hot spot that day. Does anyone know if he survived?

Sincerely,

Elmer Snow  
139 Runnymede Road, West Caldwell, N.J. 07006

PS: Our crew was from the 551st Squadron. Vic Ferguson's crew.

Dear Ed,

I am sending a belated thank you for the nice time I had at the Fargo reunion. This was my third reunion, having previously gone to Colorado Springs and Dayton and this was the best one so far.

The fact the North Dakota was having its 100 birthday made it more interesting. We, here in North Carolina, had our 200 birthday in 1989 so we have a 100 year jump on you folks.

I am enclosing a photo of our crew. The pilot was Alexander S. Sherry, not shown in the picture as I suppose he was taking the photo. Reading left to right is Donald Points, Altoona, PA, BT; John Desmond, San Francisco, CA, W.G.;

James O. Kelley, San Francisco, CA, CP; James M. Bond, Edenton, NC, TG; Bill Moebius, Racine, WI, Nav; Ronald J. Webster, Rockford, IL, TAR; Kent Wagonseller, Fruitland, TX, RO; and Milo Poteat, Hickory, NC, Eng.



We had Moebius, Webster and Bond at Fargo and we know that Poteat, Points and Wagonseller are all dead. So far we have been unable to locate Sherry, Kelley and Desmond. I believe Sherry and Kelley stayed in the service after the war ended and I think Sherry was in the Air/Sea Rescue. If any of our Hardlife readers know the whereabouts of Sherry, Kelley or Desmond, I would appreciate hearing from you as we would like to get them to Tulsa next June.

Our crew was late getting to the 385th but we managed to get in 24 missions with the 551st squadron before the war ended. We flew our missions on Lil Audrey, Lady B Good and Hells Belles. We had Three missions to Berlin and returned on number one with all four engines, number two with three engines and number three on two engines. I was sure glad we never had to go the fourth time.

On the Dresden raid on March 2, 1945 our group lost four crews which were Tipton, Krahn, Tripp and Vaadi. One of the crews was in our hut but I do not know who the pilot was. The engineer was Fink from Iowa, the tail gunner was Dahl who was killed by the Hitler youth, the radio operator was Lipschecz, also killed, and I think the waist gunner was Brown who came back to the 551st after the war ended to tell us about the other crew members. I believe the ball turret gunner was Ford who was on sick call and missed this mission. Can anyone tell me who was the pilot of the plane this crew was on and if any of them have been to a 385th reunion?

I guess this letter is long enough. Hope to see you in Tulsa.

Sincerely,

James M. Bond  
507 W. Queen St., Edenton, NC 27932

Dear Ed Stern,

I have had a most remarkable experience re: The 385th.

Vern and Lavone Philips invited the area members of the Group to their home last Sunday afternoon. They were remarkable men and their wives likewise. Each wanted to tell me of his special memories of my Jim - Chaplain Jim -

*Letters to the Editor con't*

and they brought pictures and books to show me - then we sat and talked - and I was deeply touched by their memories of the war and England and how each continued his life up to now. I thought later I wished I had taped it.

We then joined the wives and had dinner and visited some more til time to leave. It was something I'll never forget.

I have read most of the newsletters you sent me and found myself remembering again those days in our young lives. What a powerful cohesiveness that experience was to all you young men. (War is not like that now.)

About the reunion in Tulsa -I shall think about it - don't want to make a decision yet - but I deeply appreciate the invitation.

It was kind of you to get in touch - after all these years. I am most grateful.

Sincerely,

Auda Porterfield  
3515 Greystone Dr., Austin, TX 78731  
Formerly Chaplain Jim Kincannon's wife.

Dear Ed,

Our last correspondence you replaced the missing page of issue Feb. 89 Pg. 7 with a complete booklet -I save all issues but \$5.00 is enclosed.

My home town Tioga, North Dakota - member of American Legion there over 45 years now.

I contacted Artie Owen when there on a trip last month - one of our crew members. Send him a copy of the Hardlife Herald and you've got a new member. Our pilots Don Williams/John Rea and bombardier William Garvenly are members - per Feb. 89 page 7 were list John Hirscher and M. G. Stewart, deceased some years ago. Whereabouts of Darrell Clalo (Calif.?), Walt Reconielli (PA?) and John Paybride (Louisiana?) is not know to me. (If you have a current address on John Rea would appreciate - was in Columbus Ohio and could'nt locate him by phone. The Lucky Bastard Club (copy enclosed) is important to me - note General Doolittle's and Eugene B. LeBailey's signatures.

We get to No. Dak. several times a year.

Warren Larson  
17524 No. Road, Bothel, WA 98012

Dear Ed,

Enclosed is my change of address for the 385th BG Newsletter which I greatly appreciate receiving. We haven't

met since the '77 reunion when John McKay and I were fortunate to participate in that marvelous event. I retired from the USAF in September of that year. I've also recently retired from the Northop Corporation after ten years which included six years in Saudi Arabia (1980 - 1986) and four with the B-2 Division in Los Angeles, CA. I'm not certain the B-2 will survive the budget wars, but it is an incredible airplane. I'm back in Saudi Arabia again as a staff aide at Royal Saudi Air Force Headquarters in Riyadh. All of the slides used in my presentation of the history of the 385th back in '77 were lost in a warehouse fire several years ago, but when I return to the US in a couple of years, perhaps you and others could loan me the resource materials to reconstruct it. I visited Great Ashfield several years ago and spent a few quiet moments on the site of the airfield remembering those of you I was so fortunate to meet. I suppose one of the reasons I have such an affection for the B-17 and the men who flew her is that my Dad was a flight engineer in the 2nd Bomb Group at Langley Field that pioneered the early days of the B-17. He died in a crash in April 1942.1 was once carried on your rolls as an Honorary Member, but regardless, I want each of you to know that I am very proud to be associated with you in any way and hope to meet you again at a future reunion. Until then, thank youf or a marvelous newsletter.

Ray Tucher



Target For Today

AAF Photo 1943

Dear Ed,

I had an immense surprise last nite - a call from "Sqdn Leader" Bowers who was the Sr. RAF officer at Gt. Ashfield, when we arrived!

Seems he read my letter to Hardlife, realized I was alive and called. I thought someone was "pulling my leg" with a great British accent - since I knew he was older than I - and I'm ancient!!

We had a nice chat and I'd like to write to him.

Hardlife is well done and very interesting! I appreciate your work.

Thanx,

Jim McDonald  
950 Mandalay Bch. R., Oxnard, CA 93035

Letters to the Editor cont.

Dear Mr. Stern,

Thank you for mailing Hardlife Herald to me regularly. It is a most interesting publication which I read to the last word.

Please continue to mail it to me. I am well over 80 years of age and have many happy memories of the time - nearly 50 years ago - when I was an RAF Liaison officer with both VIIIth and IXth U.S.A.A.F.

Only a few nights ago I had the pleasure of a long phone call to Colonel James McDonald. Some 'nut-case' - a telephone operator at Station 155 - told me in 1944 that he was no longer in this world! What a pleasure to speak to him again.

All good wishes to those of the 385th Group who remember me in the early days.

Yours sincerely,

Ronald P. Burrows  
12 The Ridgeway  
Hitchin Herts, SG5 2BT, England

Dear Friend of History Preservation.

I am preparing a photo/narrative anthology of prominent er-sonality people who served the military (USO, combat duty, state side, overseas) in WWII, Korea, and Vietnam. I should appreciate any photo/information in a military environment with a narrative of the activities and dates of service. This manuscript will be of obvious historical significance and a preservation of a piece of history in which you were a contributor. All suppliers will be acknowledged.

Also, if you have contacts with other people who have achieved success in the entertainment, sport's, political, or other fields, please ask them to respond. I will make photo copies of your photos and other material and mail them back to you. John Campbell who recently published "War Paint, Fighter Nose Art, WWII to Korea," will help me with photo reproduction.

I have already researched material at the Maxwell A.F. Base, Gunter A.F. Base, Pensacola Naval Air Station, Terrel Texas Glider Museum, RAF and Imperial War Museums in London, and have good photos and information on James Stewart, Clark Gable, President George Bush, Glenn Miller, etc. I hope to reach at least 150 to 200 different personalities and I look forward to your being a participant.

I do sincerely appreciate your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Wm. VanOsdol, Ph.D.  
100 North University Drive, Edmond, Oklahoma 73034

**Editor's Note:** We don't remember any "prominent personality people" in our outfit - except for me! Any of you add to the list?

Mr. Gerry Donnelly,

I am a member of the 385th Bomb Group Memorial Assn, from which I obtained your name and that you might be of assistance in locating two crew members with whom I flew a combat tour in the 8th AF.

George Bartley was plane commander and pilot. I was co-pilot. Our original navigator was Richard W. Charles who was relieved from the crew when we were about half way through the tour and assigned to a special project with the RAF.

Charles was replaced with Donald E. Gilbert. Gilbert had been hospitalized for some reason and his crew was lost. When he was released from the hospital he was assigned to our crew and completed his tour with us.

I am enclosing all the information that I have with this letter.

Richard W. Charles, 0-807981, 1st Lt. Navigator. 548th Bomb Sq., 385th Bomb GP. Great Ashfield, AAF Station 155. Charles called Pittsburgh home but when we left for England his family lived in New Jersey. I believe his father was a professor at Princeton University. He once told me that he would get out of the Army as soon as the war was over and go to school at a University in or near Pittsburgh. At that time he intended to study law.

Donald E. Gilbert, 0-685589, 1st Lt. 548th Bomb Sq., 385th Bomb GP. Great Ashfield. AAF Station 155. All I know about Gilbert was that he was from Pennsylvania. He often referred to himself as "Coalminer". He hated the Army and intended to get out ASAP.

Lamar Peeples  
P.O. Box 1773, Coos Bay, OR 97420-0340

Dear Mr. Stern,

I am doing some research on the 551 st BS during its stay at Great Ashfield, Suffolk, England, c. 1943-1945.

My reason for writing is to see if you would be willing to publish an insert in an issue of your Newsletter concerning the whereabouts of Marvin W. Henderson, a member of the 551st. He was a sergeant in a communications unit and was from the State of Washington which is the extent of the information I have. Any assistance would be most appreciated!

Very truly yours,

Fred L. Charlton, 8th AFHS #7676  
1410 Grant St., Bellingham, WA 98225



*Letters to the Editor con't.*

Dear Ed,

My wife and I just returned from a visit to Great Ashfield, and I have some interesting information to pass on to everyone from the old "385".

Our famous three trees are no longer three trees, as you can see by the enclosed photograph. We now have two, with a third coming up in the place of the one blown down by the severe storms that Enaland exoerenced this past year.



Two remaining of three trees at Great Ashfield. Note sprout coming out where third one blew down in storm.

My niece took us out to Great Ashfield and we found the old "All Saints Church". It was very lonely and out all by itself in farm country, there wasn't a soul around. As luck would have it, a gentleman by the name of Roy Barker came by on his way home for lunch. He stopped and backed up when he saw us taking pictures of the church and outside memorial. He shouted 48th? I answered No! 49th. He explained that he was on the "Yankee Watch" and that the 548th was stationed on his farm during the war. It was his father's and grandfather's at the time. We left to go to a local pub for lunch and promised to stop back and meet him. He finished his business, got the key for the church and let us in to see the inside memorial, the book of names of all the departed members of the 38t, the American Flag and the church. It was a great experience. Then he took us all in his van and we toured the whole base. This guy knew a great deal more about it than I did. We toured the remaining concrete, Hanger No. 1 site, and even picked out my old hardstand, now planted with crops. He could tell by the growth where it was. He took my picture on my hardstand, then we kicked around the dirt from some sort of debris for souvenirs. He said they are always digging up bits and pieces "of the old days". All I could find was a bit of hose and hose clamp, not much, but a great deal to me, and a piece of fossil. We then went down into the old underground tower bunker, which I didn't know existed. It was so strong that they couldn't remove it. This gentleman took all this time off to show us around, and had maps and several copies of the Hard Life Herald with him for reference. We found one building standing, which was used when



BI 7 at Duxford Museum, England

we became path finders, where they stored their special equipment. One the wall was the squadron numbers and colors, all four, and still readable. I thanked him for taking all this time off to show us around and he replied, "You took the time to come over here, during the war, didn't you?"

We went home to meet his family and have a "spot of tea", and had a remarkable tour of his home. He had reconstructed two old houses and made a mansion of it for himself and his family. He is very proud of it. He and his wife showed us a poster they have been working on for consideration for design of the new stained glass window going into the church over our memorial. It seems that he and three others are on the committee for this purpose. Note the Empanage "tail", 3 trees, runway, group design, group no. and insignia. It looked great to me.

I couldn't believe my luck in having met this man and will always cherish the memories of our visit. I am sure that if you print any part of this letter, and any of the enclosed pictures, he will read about it, as I know he gets a copy too. I did threaten to refer him to others, who might take the trip to Great Ashfield as I did, and he didn't mind a bit. He assured me that all the local people consider themselves a part of the 385th family still.

If you are reading this Roy, I am sure that you must realize how grateful and appreciative we both are for your kindness.

We did get to the Duxford Museum, and saw all the old war planes including two B-17's and a whole hanger devoted to the 8th A.A.F.. I took a lot of pictures, and we also took another trip to the American Cemetary at Cambridge, a most moving and memorable experience.

My trip was topped off by meeting all my wife's relatives after not having seen them in eleven years, and spending time with them all. My wife was a G.I. war bride from London and still has a large family there. The weather was still as we remember it, cool, always cloudy, and sometimes raining, but we had a very enjoyable time of it, and hope to go back again.

Lester and Dorothy Crawford  
549 Sgn Engineering  
Crew Chief "Latest Rumor"  
2700 NE 11th Ave., Pompano Beach, FL 33064

Letters to the Editor con't.



Dorothy & Lester Crawford at Duxford Museum England. American Hanger - entire wall illuminated sign with Group insignia. Here's ours.



BI 7 at Duxford Museum, England



BI 7 at Duxford Museum, England



Memorial Chapel All Saints Church, Great Ashfield.



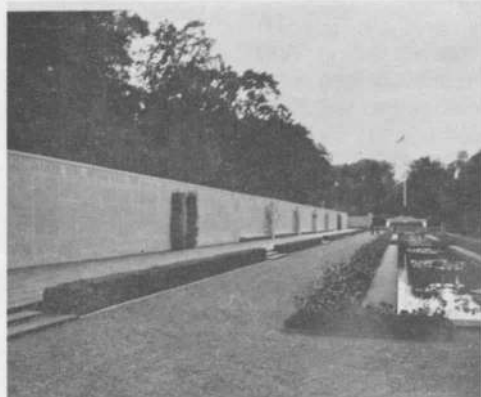
Roy Barker & Lester Crawford holding book of deceased names.



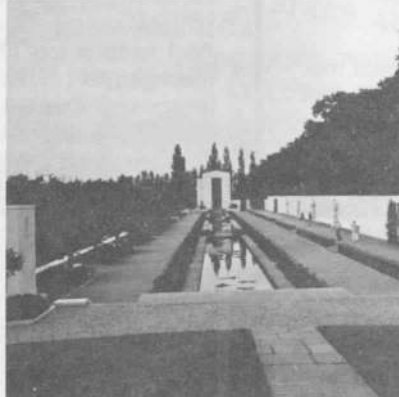
Site of hanger No. 1 at Great Ashfield.



Lester & Dorothy Crawfora



American Cemetery at Cambridge



Memorial Wall.



Memorial building ceiling.

Dear Mr. Donnelly,

Thanks so much for returning my call regarding the 385th and assistance in locating my father's crew. As I mentioned, I should have worked on this long ago, but that is history...

Following is a list of the names on my father's crew:

- Pilot, Charles W. Lundsberg, 1 /Lt.
- Co-Pilot, J.M.Ellzey, 2/Lt.
- Navigator, Robert E. Smallman, 2/Lt.
- Bombardier, John W. Rise, 1 /Lt.
- Top Turret Gunner, Cosmo Rabasco, T/Sgt
- Radio Op/Gunner, Forrest O. Sampson, T/Sgt
- Ball Turret Gunner, William R. Sizer, S/Sgt
- Tail Gunner, Edward D. Morgan, S/Sgt
- Waist Gunner, Jack M. Walker, S/Sgt
- Photo Man, Alexander J. Behr, Sgt.

I mentioned that a Mr. Harold E. Jansen from the Netherlands is an air war historian who was writing a book about the USAAF and some of the missions. In particular he mentioned a B-17, the "Reluctant Lady" from the 385th Bomb Group, 548 Sq.

He said in his letter that he had contacted the association but that no crew members were on the roster. Hopefully this may have changed, or at least if we publish this information someone may know about the crew. I will also continue through the VA and Social Security Administration to see if I can locate them somehow through this method.

I'm looking forward to becoming a part of your memorial organization, and possibly attending one of the reunions in the future.

Sincerely,

Wes Lundsberg  
1736 Russet Lane, Sycamore, IL 60178

The Eighth-Air Jfnrre Historical Society  
fHasBachuBttte (Chapter



Dear Ed,

Thanx for the info on B-17 "Mr. Smith" which you sent me in your July 23 letter. I appreciate it and I know Ron Durand, in Surrey, England, will. I have already passed the info on to him and told him that, with the tail number, pilot's name, and the date the aircraft went down, I should be able to get more complete information from the now-available Missing Aircrew Reports (MACR), at least the names of the remainder of the crew.

Yesterday, I received a new membership application for the 8AFHS for Roy D. Larson, 83 Wheeler Road, Marstons Mills, MA 02648, sent to me by his brother as a birthday present (70th). Roy served in the 385BG from 1943 to 1945. You may already have him on your membership list. Roy will join fifteen other 385th vets in our Mass. Chapter membership of 615. There are a couple of other 385ers who I have written to (along with over 300 others) inviting them to join us and support our effort to build a memeorial museum to those who served in THE MIGHTY EIGHTH. Maybe through your newsletter you can encourage those outside the fold to come in. They don't have to be active but we do need their support.

Thanx again for the info you sent.

Cheers!

John Hutchinson  
116 Walnut St., Clinton, MA 01510-2612

**Editor's Note:** Roy, are you a member? If not, send \$8.00 to John Pettenger and join!

*Letters to the Editor con't.*

Dear Ed,

I note in the August 1990 *Hardlife* that you suggested that Stephen Miles use the square G rather than the red checkered tail on the window at Great Ashfield.

May I offer some dissenting votes? Since we put in 26 missions under the red checkered tail, naturally the members of Crow's Crew favor that symbol! Red Checkered **means** 385th to us. Is it possible to work both symbols in?

Also on 6-8 August, the surviving members of Crow's Crew held a mini-reunion. All, except the ball gunner, Ira Barnes, namely: Bill Varnedoe-Navigator, George Lentz-Engineer, Leroy Lancaster-Tail Gunner and Audry Alton, remarried wife of Don Black-Co Pilot and her new husband, Tom, a B 26 WWII pilot; met at George's fine log house near Boyertown, PA for our 5th crew reunion. Since our ranks are thinning so rapidly, we resolved to meet again in 2 years rather than every 5 as we have been doing. Next time at my place.

Sincerely,

W.W. "Bill" Varnedor, Jr.

**Editors Note:** Anyone else want to express an opinion?

Dear Mr. Stern,

Yes, I should like to receive future *Hardlife* *Heralds*. Please note the changing of my address. Just before my unfortunately too short vacation, I received another *Hardlife* *Herald*.

I read the query of Harry L. Slovan about additional infor-

mation about the B-17 "Mission Belle" that crashed in Holland around December 1943.

As I keep a log of all crashes during WWII in the Northeastern part of the Netherlands, it was quite simple to give an answer. This B-17F belonged to the 388th B group and was lost during the December 11, 1943 Emden Mission. Four crewmen were killed, six captured. The bombardier of this ship, Marion E. Wiles was in the same compound as William A. Nicholls. Both tried to escape from Barth POW camp but were caught in the act. I forwarded the additional information straight to Harry L. Slovan.

On May 24, 1944 during a Berlin Mission, the B-17G 42-31742 of the 548th B Sqn came also down in the Northeastern region of the Netherlands. It appeared that only both pilots were still in the B-17 when it was on the turning point to go down. However, both could bail out and were captured. This ship had a good fighting spirit, as during the crash it partly demolished the house of a Nazis with the collaborating Dutchman. I should like to procure additional information. A crew list I will write down on the overleaf.

Pilot, 1st Lt. R. King  
Co-Pilot, 2nd Lt. W.H. Clark, Jr.  
Navigator, 2nd Lt. O.Y. Harris, Jr.  
Bombardier, 2nd Lt. I.a. Eyda  
TTGnr. S.Sgt W.H. Rubble  
R.O., T/Sgt. M. Seiberling  
Ball T. Gnr., S/Sgt. L.A. Parsels  
L.W. Gnr., S/Sgt W.E. Lape  
R.W. Gnr., S/Sgt S.S. Roland  
Tail Gunner, S/Sgt. C.S. Wofsy

Regards,

Klaas Niemeijer  
Boerhoorn 56  
9481 HZ Vries; The Netherlands

# 385 BGMA

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