

HARD LIFE



HERALD

OHIO AIR FORCE GOLDEN GOOSE THUNDERBIRD WANDERING DUCHESS CURLY'S KIDS
SKY GODDESS WAR HORSE BLUE CHAMPAGNE MARY ELLEN
SALLY B ROUNDTRIP TICKET PICCADILLY QUEEN DRAGON LADY
HONKY TONK SAL RAUNCHY WOLF CHOWHOUND YANK GELDING WINNIE THE POOH
HESITATIN' HUSSY "HAYBAG" ANNIE MISS AMERICA STARS AND STRIPES
GROUND HOG LIBERTY BELLE HUSTLIN' HUSSY PREGNANT PORTIA DORSAL QUEEN WAR WEARY
BIG GAS BIRD ANGELS SISTER LI'L AUDREY LEADING LADY ALEXANDER'S RAGTIME BAND
STAR DUST LONESOME POLECAT HARES BREATH
SKY CHIEF MARY PAT
MR. LUCKY PERRY'S PIRATES SLO JO TARGET FOR TONIGHT SHACK N LADY
BARBARA B MADAME SHOO SHOO GIZMO SACK TIME JUNIOR OL' DOODLE BUG
PAT PENDING POSSIBLE STRAIGHT MICKY IMPATIENT VIRGIN RAGGED BUT RIGHT SWEET CHARIOT
ROUNDTRIP JACK HOMESICK ANGEL LATEST RUMOR MAIDEN AMERICA RUBY'S RAIDERS SWINGING DOOR
SHACK BUNNY MY GAL SAL HALF AND HALF SLEEPYTIME GAL RUBYS RAIDERS MISSISSIPPI MISS
SPIRIT OF CHICAGO BIG STINKY VIBRANT VIRGIN MISSION BELLE LULU BELLE SATAN'S MATE
SOUTHERN BELLE VAT 69 YANK OL' RUM DUM FOOLISH VIRGIN SLICK CHICK KITTYS REVENGE
MARY ELLEN III HOT CHOCOLATE RAGGEDY ANNE MAC'S HACK THE JOKER BELLE OF THE BLUE
HELLS BELLS LIL-LU STORK CLUB LADY ANN CRASH WAGON III RAGGED BUT RIGHT
PRINCESS VAL IN LIKE FLYNN FICKLE FINGER OF ? AIN'T MISBEHAVIN' MARY ELLEN II



NEWSLETTER OF THE 385th BOMBARDMENT GROUP MEMORIAL ASSOCIATION



COMBAT UNITS

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

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SUPPORT UNITS

424th AIR SVS. GP.
877th CHEM. CO. (AO)
DET. 155, 18th AWS
31st STATION COMPLEMENT SQ.

OCTOBER 1992

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PREZ SEZ:

Another year is almost over and it is time to make plans to attend our 50th Anniversary Reunion in Spokane. Bob Smith is working on a great program and is expecting a record attendance. He is working with Ed Stern, to get all the details published in the December issue of the Herald.

I urge you to respond as soon as possible - it helps the planner and relieves his mind, when he can get a fairly comprehensive early count.

Bob and Jean have the Ladies Coffee planned, but are having a little difficulty deciding on the entertainment program. If any of the ladigs have suggestions or ideas, please drop Jean Smith a note. I am sure she will appreciate it.

We wish you and yours all the best for the coming holidays. Know it will be a lot happier time than 1943 or 1944.

All the best,
Sid

ASSOCIATION OFFICERS

EDITOR, HARD LIFE HERALD

Ed Stern
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HONORARY MEMBERS

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M/Sgt John McKay Jr. USAF

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James H. Emmons
Paul Schulz
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William A. Nicholls
Earl L. Cole
Sam Lyke

**50th Anniversary Reunion--Spokane, WA
August 25-29 1993**

CHAPLAIN JIM SEZ:

A few weeks ago I preached a sermon and in it I used three words; dilemma - decision and priorities. Through out the sermon I was trying to point out what our priorities should be. In doing so I talked about hard and easy decisions that might help us make the proper priorities.

A dilemma - trying to decide to attend worship services when you have no conscious reason to attend or no conscious reason to stay home (or attend the ball game).

Well, a few weeks later I had a real dilemma myself. Because of our water shortage our new (sodded) lawn was an ugly brown. About that time the painters were going to paint our house and the weather men/women predicted rain. Now do I pray for rain because of the need of our new lawn or do I pray for continued hot-dry weather to save the paint on our house.

I decided to follow Reinhold Niebuhr's prayer, which is commonly known as the "AA Prayer".

"God grant me the serenity
To accept the things I cannot change,
Courage to change the things I can
And wisdom to know the difference."

Anyway the house was painted, the rains came 8 hours later, the grass is beginning (a little) to turn green and the paint stayed on the house.

I guess my priorities are to do what God wants done.

What's yours???

Love, -

Chaplain Jim



Wayne Eaton	1990
James R. Hamilton	May 1992
David Frammer	Aug. 1992
George Jacobsen	Sept. 1992
Albert Bird	June, 1992
Raymond L. Podolske	Date not known

BURR

ROBERT E., SR. 69, a Miami resident for 67 years, coming from Chicago, IL, died September 4, 1992. Mr. Burr was the owner of the Home Maintenance Repairman Co. A selfless person he served for 30 years in the Boy Scouts of America Troop 211, Hurricane District. He was honored to receive the Silver Beaver Award, Order of the Arrow and numerous other awards. A veteran of both WW II and the Korean Conflict, he served as Captain in the Mighty 8th Army Air Corps, based in England. A former Deacon at the Riviera

Presbyterian Church. He is survived by his wife of 48 years, Billie; son, Robert E., Jr., of Miami; daughters, Kathle S. Burr and Sherry L. Haire, both of Marietta, GA; his sister, June Burr Gilbert of Florence, AZ; grandchildren, Shannon, Scott and Roy Haire, Brandon and Ryan Burr and 1 great grandchild. Funeral Services 12 Noon, Tuesday, at **STANFILL FUNERAL KENDALL CHAPEL**, where friends may call from 11 AM, Tuesday until service time.

Stanfill Funeral Homes
10545 S Dixie 667-2518

FRAMER, DAVID, Aug. 31, 1992, beloved husband of Rose Glazer Frammer, dear father and father-in-law of Linda (Rick) Sosna and Barbara Frammer of Alexandria, VA, dear brother and brother-in-law of Sam (Dolly) Frammer of Pembroke Pines, FL and Rita Frammer of Boston, MA, adored by granddaughter Tracey Sosna, our dear Brother-in-law, uncle, cousin and friend. Graveside service Wed., Sept. 2, 11:00 a.m. at Chesed Shel Emeth Cemetery - White Road. Mr. Frammer was a decorated veteran of World War II, and a member of Temple Israel Cong., Jewish War veterans Post #346, DAV and the USO. Memorial contributions preferred to USO, P.O. Box 10367, Lambert St. Louis International Airport, St. Louis, MO. 63145. **BERGER MEMORIAL SERVICE.**



FOR JOHN GRISSINGER

Friends of John Grissinger donated \$120.00 to the Church in England in his memory.

LIFE MEMBERS#

Napoleon A. Miller, Jr.

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NOTICE

Thanks to Burnell Cook, we now have the 549th shipping orders to add to those that John Richardson sent us. Anyone wanting copies of the orders shipping the Combat Crews overseas, June 11, 1943, send your Editor a couple of bucks for mailing charges and we'll send them to you.

NOTICE

Another good 8th Air Force Book-Fated to Survive-by William P. Maher, 401st Bomb Group is available for \$7.50 through Honoribus Press, P.O. Box 4872, Spartanburg, SC 29305. It tells of his missions, of being shot down in 1944, and survival in Stalag Luft III.

EDITOR'S NOTE:

Remember a year or so ago when we told you about Retirement Homes available around the old Glasgow Air Base site? We just received a brochure from them - sounds very attractive - 1150 sq. ft. home, 3 bedroom, oak floors, full basement, single car garage - \$24,950 - \$5,000 down, \$167.84 monthly payments. Great hunting, fishing, camaraderie. You'd even have some of us stop on the way to Spokane to see you! For information, call 1-800-543-6307 - St. Marie Retired Military Communitiy, Mt. 59231.

From Sec. George Hruska

I thought that I would be flooded with requests for the picture of the Memorial Window installed in All Saints Church in Great Ashfield and dedicated when our group was there. In case you missed the notice, the offer is still open. If you would like a color picture of the window please send me a self addresses stamped envelope (#10 business size) and a dollar bill and we will get it to you by return mail.

Sent to:

George S. Hruska, Secretary 385th BGMA
7442 Ontario St.
Omaha, NE 68124-3563

WINGS OF REDEMPTION

Past President Earl Cole has published a book detailing his part in the 385th Bomb Group's tour of duty from 1943-45. It is a detailed account, complete with many pictures, and is available for \$12 plus postage. Order them from Editor - Ed Stern, Box 2187, Fargo, ND 58108.

Here's the preface - a mighty interesting book that you'll read from beginning to end.

This book is more than a mere summary of one man's experiences during the Second World War. It is primarily an effort to help the reader understand the mission and accomplishments of the legendary Eighth Air Force and the 385th Bombardment Group through the wartime sentiments and exploits of one bombardier from the hollows of Kentucky. Oftentimes, one can gain a better grasp of war through the eyes of a single individual's human experiences than solely through a test of remote events and lifeless characters. The author remains indebted to the Colonel for the privilege of examining the long and distinguished military career of one very brave American. Unquestionably, through the heroic "wings" of Cole and thousands like him. Western civilization was redeemed from the legions of tyranny.

VETERANS - VETERANS

Mark D. Bacon
24364 Pansy Ct., Apt. D
Elmendorf AFB, AK 99506
(907) 338-6007

Greetings. I WANT YOUR UNIT!!! I'm Mark Bacon and I am gathering reminiscences and photographs from all units involved in the D-Day invasion for inclusion in a fiftieth-anniversary pictorial salute. The history will be interspersed with reminiscences from both the ground personnel and aircrew perspective. I would like your unit included.

Photographs of all types are desired. I do all of my own darkroom work in my home and can make copy negatives, enlargements and so forth. I would like to have squadron aircraft in invasion markings if at all possible. All negatives, photos, or slides will be copied and sent back to you in a timely manner.

Reminiscences are only limited by the experiences you had before or during D-Day.

Thanks,

Mark D. Bacon

EDITOR'S NOTE:

Anyone with things of interest, please write to Mark.

SECOND SCHWEINFURT MEMORIAL ASSOCIATION

Did you fly Mission 115, October 14, 1943 over Schweinfurt, Germany, commonly called "Black Thursday"? If so, you are eligible to join the Second Schweinfurt Memorial Association. In fact they are looking for you. The only casualty suffered by the 385th Bomb Group was Robert S. Vandiver's navigator, Phil Vockerath. That should leave about 359 eligible to join this organization which was founded in 1975 to perpetuate the memory of those aircrewmembers who participated in this mission. This was the 28th mission of our group.

Colonel Vandiver notes that he is the only member of the 385th Bomb Group listed on the membership roster of the association and wants to let everyone know that there is such a group in existence and would like every eligible member of the 385th BGMA to contact the following for further details:

Bud Klint, Sec'y SSMA
5728 Walla Ave.
Ft. Worth, TX 76133

FROM DON KABITZKE'S SCRAPBOOK OF STORIES FROM 1943-45

LONDONS FOG

Everything they say about Londons Fog is true. During the war it was worse. We were not even allowed to use a flashlight outside after dark due to the total blackout rules.

One night while in London, I met an airman from Australia. He was a heck of a nice fellow. We went to a movie at the Palladium and had a beer after the show. We then started for the Red Cross club near Hyde Park. We had a rough idea where we were, but finally had to admit we were lost. We talked to someone in the dark who told us to go straight ahead apiece. What that was is your guess also. After about twenty minutes, we heard the sound of hobnail boots. We guessed correctly. It was Bobbie. I told him we were lost and what we were looking for. He answered with authority, "Gentlemen, you are standing under the Marble Arch", just what we were looking for.

GENERAL CURTIS E. LEMAY

The first time I saw a photo of General LeMay was in our woodwork shop. Colonel VanDeventer brought three 9x12's of him for us to make frames, stain and varnish. He was to leave shortly to return to the states and organize the 20th Air Force, the one which brought Japan to its knees, and after the war the Strategic Air Force, the worlds most deadly fighting outfit.

I can still see him with that short cigar in his mouth on the left side, a pose I would see a hundred times more as the years moved on. He was passing out photos to his friends before leaving. It was a pleasure to work on those frames.

Little did we know what lay instore for him and the fame he would gain as the years went by. Tfie men in his group learned to respect him. He was a no nonsense boss. After a mission where many broke formation and went their own way, he called a meeting and chewed them out. In the future, he told them, they would break formation under no circumstances. "You will take iron in your ass" he shouted. Hence the nickname. "Old Iron Ass". They were to stay in their seats and get iron in their asses, whether they liked it or not.

THE MYSTERIOUS DOG

On the base we had a Pilot who bought a Doberman Pincher dog. Typically, it was a one man dog. Wherever the Lieutenant went so did the dog. When his master took off and was airborne the dog went back to the Quonset hut and lay down by his bunk. Later in the day, he got up and headed for the runways. Finally someone in the Control Tower noticed it. He also realised that his master would be returning soon. It got to be a ritual among the tower personnel to look for the dog and have a pretty good idea when the bombers would start to return. The dog had an inborn sense-which they admired.

One day the dog came out to the runway, lay down and waited. The tower men noted his arrival. All of a sudden the dog jumped up and took off running south of the airfield leaping over fences in its way. He was running at top speed when he faded from sight. They wondered what got into it as they had heard nothing about bombers to return.

Later the next day they learned the truth. About 30 miles from the base, the dogs master had crash landed his Fort. Shortly thereafter, the dog appeared and went to his boss. He was not seriously injured.

Those who knew this story could not believe the facts. How did the dog know where the bomber would crash? He did he know what ship it was? There were many more questions which no one had an answer. It was like something out of a fiction story. The story of the dog soon spread all over the Isles and even back in the states. How, How, How? One day, the Lieutenant did not return. Another took his place.

INVASION OF ITALY

At exactly 5:00 a.m. on the morning Italy was invaded,a B-17 blew up in its hardstand with a mighty roar. Shortly thereafter the Colonel was on the loudspeakers telling everyone to stay low until the fire was out. Ammunition was exploding and no place for sightseers. Finally it died down and crews went to see what happened. The bombers had been filled with gas, warmed up and regassed so their tanks were full. We later heard that they felt that a short in one of the gun turrets was the cause. It sure tore a hole in the ground.

THE B-26 DILEMA

The loss of 11 B-26's at that stage of the war was an awful blow. They were sure there was a security leak and the Germans knew exactly what their mission was and had shot them all down. In the meantime, our base was closed off and nobody allowed to leave, other than essential services. Our CO was unable to leave durina the two weeks we were quarantined. It was two weeks of hell. No one told us what had happened until later. This made it the more unbearable. For two solid weeks we had lecture after lecture and security on security and keeping our mouths shut when off the base. We had officers from all the allied forces lecture us. It got boring and we were glad when it ended. The German radio broadcasts were monitored to find a clue as to what happened to those 11 planes and their crews. It mystified the allied officers as the Germans gave no hint to answer their questions.

We had some very interesting Intelligence officers talk to us. One I remember well was from the British Navy. He told a story how a young naval intelligence officer went into a pub in Liverpool and observed some young naval officers having a heated conversation at a map on the wall. To test his sense of observation, he took out a paper and pencil and made

notes of what he thought he saw. He went back to his room, sat down and wrote a full report to British Naval Intelligence. It was a complete description of the Raid On Dieppe.

A British Army Major told how a British officer was using a slit latrine in France during World War I. The Germans started to shell the position he was at, and as he lay down in a trench, he saw a piece of paper which a German soldier had used for toilet paper. He was able to read it and was astonished at what he read. He quickly took it to intelligence. It was written by the Germans wife from a small town in Germany. She described funny looking cavalrymen from some strange country going through their village heading west. They wore funny hats. To British Intelligence it meant one thing. The Turks were on the move to aid the Germans. From the date, they were able to forecast the exact date the Turks would be ready to fight on the German front.

A member of the British Diplomatic service told how the Japanese broke into the British Embassy in Tokyo and arrested the embassy staff. He saw the number 2 ranking staffer, the opposite to the number 2 in the Japanese embassy in London. He gained his freedom because the Jap in London was the Emperor's nephew. He was exchanged.

I never saw a man smoke like that embassy officer. He had a lit cigarette in his mouth for the 2 1/2 hours he talked with us. He was an extremely intelligent person and we were fascinated in what he had to say. The thing which stands out the most was in answer to a question as to what would be the most effective way of defeating the Japanese. He calmly explained the utter chaos and confusing caused by Doolittle raid on Tokyo. It took a long time to fight the fires started. He could see the city from his cell. He was sure the best way to stop the war was by firebombing and not the conventional bombs. General LeMay must have heard him.

A few days later we were ordered to East Anglia to the base at Great Ashfield. Our B-26 days were over. Here we got ready to work on B-17's.

We finally were told about the 11 B-26's. No one knew what happened. After the War I asked for the Air Force in World War II. I went through the volumes and finally found the story I was looking for all that time since. It seems that in those early days, one navigator did the navigating for his group. The brass concluded that when last seen, they were heading south over the English Channel. They were above the clouds. Somewhere, the navigator made a right turn heading west over the Atlantic. They went beyond radio range, ran out of fuel and are somewhere in the Atlantic. The blame was put on a faulty compass. This arrangement was quickly corrected. All navigators were lectured on the complete mission.

THE DONUT WAGON AND THE COLONEL

At our bomber base at Great Ashfield, we were visited regularly by the donut wagon, "Minnesota" sponsored and operated by the Red Cross, and paid for by the good folks back in Minnesota. They had a regular territory to cover each week at the assigned bomber bases. They provided free donuts and coffee to all on the base who wanted some.

Sergeant Souza, who I served under made friends with the civilian driver and each week he would bring us a huge bag of fresh donuts. The Red Cross girls were Americans. The driver asked Souza as Christmas neared, if he would consider making a small school desk and chair for a grandchild of his. Souza assigned three of us and we turned out a respectable copy with the limited material we could find. The day the driver picked up that gift, I will never forget. He just stood there for about 5 minutes crying tears of sheer joy. It was worth all the effort we had put into it.

One day, as Colonel VanDeventer was being driven up to his office, he spotted the "Minnesota" outside of the enlisted mens mess and there was a stream of people carrying something and putting it into the wagon. He ordered his driver to turn around and drive to the mess, got out of the car and walked over to see what was going on. They were carrying out flour, coffee, sugar, canned milk and shortening. The Colonel was furious.

The donut wagons had a regular supply depot where these items were given to them without charge. The Colonel addressed the woman in charge and asked her in no uncertain words what in the hell she was doing. She told him they needed supplies as she did not want to take the time and go to her supply depot. The Colonel made them unload what they had taken from the mess and put it back. He further told her that the good folks back home had donated money to supply them with all of the materials they needed and not go about taking from regular Air Force rations, and if he ever caught them stealing again, he would bar them from the base.

The Colonel was a graduate from West Point. He had the welfare of us all in all he did. We learned to respect him, and like him.

EDITOR'S NOTE: Our second winter in England brought a few new problems that we tried to rectify.

HEADQUARTERS ARMY AIR FORCE STATION 155 Office of the Ground Executive

7 November 1944

SUBJECT: Group History
TO: Whom it May Concern

1. In addition to the usual problems of supply and maintenance, two (2) additional solutions to winter difficulties were put in effect:

(a) Daily inspections of all vehicles and immediate 1st echelon repairs when needed.

(b) Complete overhaul of all heating equipment on the station and reassignment of different size stoves to achieve maximum effectiveness.

2. An Interior Guard was set up and all ground personnel given training therein. This has proven very unpopular! Of more importance is the fact that this duty sacrifices over three hundred (300) man hours per day.

3. A Manning Table of Ground Officers was constructed giving the name, rank, and photograph of each officer the the T.O. rank for the position occupies, thereby revealing all promotional vacancies and overages on the station.

4. A loose leaf book of functional charts of all (72) sections on the station was completed, giving in chart form the number and ranks of officers and EM in each department within the section. These charts thus give not only the number of men employed in a given section and sub-section but also the ratings authorized and the promotional vacancies existing, as well as the functions performed by every activity on the station.

5. The longer a group remains overseas the greater becomes the tendency for morale to decrease. Therefore, the following steps were taken to counteract such tendency:

(a) Daily afternoon movies (1400 hrs) in addition to two (2) evening shows.

(b) Requisition of chairs to replace benches in the theatre.

(c) Rearrangement of the PX to give better and faster service.

(d) Beautifying of main intersection.

(e) Personal interview with Ground Executive for prisoners upon release.

(f) Use of 3 & 4 above for loosening up promotions and redistributing both officers and EM for greater effectiveness.

(g) Establishment of a Board of Officers to review all N.C.O. reductions for other than disciplinary reasons.

(h) Creation of a new Council with broad powers to recommend ways to improve morale, discipline, recreation, and education among EM.

(i) Improvement in the messes, Via:

(1) A new K.P. set-up, which not only erases the demoralizing effect of permanent K.P. assignments but reduces the number of K.P.'s by 20%.

(2) Employing a civilian Stewart and seven (7) waiters in the Officers' Combat Mess.

James H. Lewis,
Lt. Col., Air Corps,
Ground executive Officer

EDITOR'S NOTE: Witherspoon's report on the disastrous Berlin mission of Oct. '44.

AIR EXECUTIVE'S REPORT

This month marked the beginning of winter, which brings with it poor flying conditions and a curtailment of visual bombing. The group was only able to run fourteen missions and only on three of these was the target sighted; the rest bombed by Pathfinder methods. Fortunately, the results on all three of the visual targets ranged from good to excellent, which we all hope is an indication that the strong emphasis placed on lead crew training has finally begun to pay dividends.

On the mission to Berlin, October 6, this group suffered its biggest loss to date. All eleven planes of the high squadron were knocked down by a mass attack of about seventy-five enemy fighters. This, further substantiates last month's statement that the GAF is far from licked, and is adopting new tactics in attacking bombers. In the instance of the sixth October, about seventy-five fighters massed for an attack from five to seven o'clock high, with each fighter taking and picking out a separate bombing. Our only defense being to take every precaution to keep our small twelve ship squadron in a perfect defensive formation.

The group also suffered a very large amount of flak damage which, kept the sub-depot very busy and caused us to show a very low percentage of aircraft available for the month.

We were given our own Pathfinder ships this month, carrying out the plans that had been hoped for so many months ago. Many difficulties in operations and personnel being eliminated by having them established as a sub-depot under the group training officer. There also has been much work done in new bombing methods, such as Mino-H, and new equipment set up to establish more accurate bombing on ground support missions.

HORACE T. WITHERSPOON, Jr.,
Major, Air Corps,
Air Executive Officer.

EDITOR'S NOTE: Col. Jumpers report on taking over from Col. Van.

GROUP COMMANDER'S REPORT

For the 385th Bombardment Group the month of August marked the end of a phase. The man who had put the group together had gone.

The phase just ended had been a glorious phase. In over a year of combat operations the 385th Group had rained destruction on the enemy throughout the length of the Fortress Europe. In that year the group had grown into a strong, smooth-functioning, purposeful organization. It had become a monument to the man who built it and who guided it from its infancy, and now the man had gone.

The new group commander came in filled with two conflicting emotions, one of intense pride at having fallen heir to such a splendid organization, and one of trepidation at the thought of succeeding a man so thoroughly respected and so much an object of devotion. The new group commander thought to himself that sometimes the intense loyalties which troops hold for a strong man make life a miserable thing for an unknown successor. So thinking he walked softly, almost apologetically, into the confines of the office which bore the awesome notation "commanding officer". The new boss had come into his own. Whether or not the inconstant sprite who keeps the ledgers of fate would write, "and his own received him not" was a judgement which lay only in the tribunals of history.

But the new boss found that his fears, if fears they were, were without foundation. Of course, there was Jim, his driver and self-appointed upholder of the dignity of officer.

Jim, who, when he'd disapprove some departure from custom, never hesitated to say with just the right amount of deference, "Sir, the Colonel NEVER used to do that." And there was Sam, the resplendent headwaiter in the staff mess, who was at first a little sparse in his customary flourishes. But with a little subtle psychology the new boss got them on his side. The new boss has become "the Colonel" to Jim, and Sam's flourishes are as harmoniously unrestrained as ever they were.

The entire staff, like the good soldiers they were, are as loyally at hard work as ever. The group is moving on into the new phase, strongly, on the sound structure welded in the fire of war. The new boss and the group are not looking back, but forward into the promise of the future.

G.Y. JUMPER,
Lieutenant Colonel, Air Corps,
Commanding.

EDITOR'S NOTE: A July 1944 report that gives an interesting picture of how we were "settling in" for the long haul, and Sick Quarters used Penicillin for the first time!

REVIEW OF THE MONTH

July 1944 was a completely routine month for this organization. The only circumstance which seems to invite comment is the fact that on the eighth of this month we marked our first anniversary in this theatre of operations. Comparisons between the first and the twelfth month are, of course, inevitable. Pertinent facts, statistics and comments will be found in the report of the Commanding Officer.

17 missions were flown by the group this month. 628 aircraft were dispatched on operational missions, 541 on practice formations and cross country and practice bombing flights, 59 of our men and 6 aircraft were listed as missing in action.

Life on the base continues to function along the lines of a well regulated community. It is interesting to note that upon our arrival at this base one year ago this month only the barest facilities for eating, sleeping and operations existed. Today, after months of intensive effort towards the end of improving and adding to the base, we can now look about and see in our mind's eye a comparison between the skeleton field of a year ago and the full, well ordered community which now exists. For apart from such conveniences as clubs, theatre, beer hall, gymnasium, soda fountain, social and cultural activities, there are a dozen little services which the men of the base perform for each other which all make and give the station the characteristic of a community. If a watch goes out of order, there is a man who can repair it. Should a strap be needed for the wrist watch piece, a former leather worker is on hand to supply them. A former tailor has obtained a sewing machine and does repairs on uniforms for the men. Another man makes rings which are sent home as gifts. From useless chunks of plexi-glass several men have undertaken to fashion crystals for wrist-watches. A photolab has been set up to take care of personal pictures taken by the men. All these activities are extra-curricular and in no way interfere with operations. They add to the life of the base and are, in effect, morale builders.

The navigation section, having achieved a desired number of lead navigators through the "Lead Crew School" has halted their program for the time being. However, this by no means indicates that a navigator who has not attended the school will never fly in the lead ship, for lead material is constantly sought out, tested, appraised and eventually utilized. The system for discovering the qualities of each navigator is completely set forth in Navigation's historical summary for the month.

Station Sick Quarters for the first time during its operation on this base employed Penicillin. However, no detailed report on the drug's application to a bomber group's needs can be made at this time, for its use has so far been limited and a full enough log of experience is therefore unavailable for deductions and conclusions. Future use during the months to come should result in ample material for comment.

The training section finding its quota for lead crews filled by its intensive program in that type of training, suspended the school and organized a continuous training program applicable only to lead crews. This embraces the testing of all lead aircraft, practice bombing, navigational missions, and weekly seminars of lead and deputy lead crews for the purpose of studying battle orders and operational narratives. Two aircraft have been called out of operational status and are being equipped for special training in bombing and gunnery. The addition of new subjects to the indoctrination curriculum has lengthened the program to eight days with two extra days added for bombardiers who are being checked out as navigators. Some of the new subjects which were added include, a two hour meeting with the Squadron Engineering Officer and instruction on the use of the various aircraft cameras.

A 35mm motion picture machine was installed in the base theatre this month, replacing the 16mm machine which had proved completely unsatisfactory. Plans are being discussed by the Enlisted Men's Council for broadening the social, cultural and athletic activities applicable to the winter season with its long nights and curtailed liberty runs and off-base visit for the men.

At briefing on the 3rd of August, Colonel Elliott Vandevanter, Jr., the bomb group commanding officer, advised the assembled combat officers of a new Box Formation to be flown on the bombing run, to insure a closer more accurate bomb pattern on the target.

The action came as a result of poor bombing on the day previous when the group went out to bomb oil dumps near Paris. The poor formation flown that day caused the wing planes' bombs to be outside the 2,000 foot circle, while the group leader and his element dropped their load smack on the MPI. The colonel expressed the opinion that the new formation would eliminate this malfunction.

The change is simply this: The lead squadron, first element, will fly as usual; the second element will echelon to the left, tucking in as close to the number three man as possible. The high squadron of three planes will fly to the right and above the lead element, but will also tuck in very close. The low squadron, also one element strong, will drop back a bit, and slide over to the right, forming a diamond behind the lead element. As can be readily seen, this will for a close, compact bombing pattern, provided the lead bombardier is, as usual with the 385th, accurate.

EDITOR'S NOTE: Special Services Officer Curt Osborne kept a few things going to help fight boredom in the ground echelon.

SPECIAL SERVICE OFFICE

During the month of May, 1944, the Special Service Office showed 12 movies, three times each, matinee, and two evening performances, totaling 36 shows. The motion picture projection machines both broke down and for a good portion of the month the department was unable to show any films. Fortunately, however, towards the latter part of this month the Special Service Officer managed to borrow a machine.

This has been a Gala month for stage shows. For the first time since our arrival in England we have had six stage shows in a single month. "You've Had It", "Hams Across the Sea", "Roger", "My Day", "Loop the Loop", and the "Barber Shop Quartet" were the shows. This has especially been a banner month because the station theatre was chosen to be the site for the ETO play contest semi-finals. All reports have marked this stage as the finest and it was for this reason that the semi-finals were scheduled here. The show "Roger", listed above, was the winner.

Two classical concerts were presented by the C.E.M.A., a British unit similar to our U.S.O. camp show groups.

Highlighted amongst this months activities was the Anglo-American Activities. Exhibition softball games were played for the townsmen of Elmswell, Ashfield, and Norton. A Public Address system was set up and the game was explained to the people previous to the play ball signal from the Umpire. When the game started, a play by play description was given to give the people an idea of what a ball game sounds like on the radio (wireless) to the folks back home. A variety show, made up of G.I.'s from this station was presented in the towns of Wetherden and Elmswell with successful reports after each performance. Variety shows of this type are booked well into next month for others of the nearby towns.

There were eight dances on the station, H.Q., Ordnance, Quartermaster, Sub Depot, Complement Squadron, Aero Club, and Two Officers Club parties.

In the education department, volumes of 'Army Talks' were distributed to unit orderly rooms, classes in German were held at the Officers' Club, and several more booklets, magazines, paper, and newsmags were distributed to Combat Library, Officers Recreation Room, Officers' Club, Hospital, Aero Club, Barber Shop, and Unit day rooms. Plans for Group Discussion Meetings were made.

The weekly edition of the Special Service Bulletin was published four times, giving the personnel of this station a preview to coming special service activities in all fields plus a report on the progress of certain activities that are already under way.

Stars and Stripes and Yank Magazine subscriptions continue to increase. The system used for their sales and distribution has proven successful.

A Softball tournament was started with eleven teams participating. Two games are scheduled for each evening, the first at 1800 and the second at 1930 hours. It is a double round robin tournament with the winner of the first half playing the winner of the second half in a 'little world series'. These games are played on the field behind the P.X. built by the men of this office.

The station hardball team started its season in the division National League, winning its first game.

A Tennis Court is being fixed up in the nearby town of Elmswell for use of the personnel of this station. The Red Cross Field Director is getting Tennis Balls to make this type of play possible.

Horse shoes, volley ball, squash and handball are finding more fans daily. The squash and Handball court is used every hour of every day that it is open with very few exceptions. An officers squash tourney was started. An enlisted men's tourney will start shortly with the winners of each playing off for the station championship.

EDITOR'S NOTE: As they said, we DID plow up a little of German farm land once in awhile - the Group Bombardiers report for May, 1944.

BOMBING

The bombing during the month of May was not up to the usual high standard of the Group. However, there were several missions with high bombing accuracy, namely: LEON/COUVRON, lead bombardier - Lt. Mason, ZWICKAU, lead bombardier - Lt. Goings and Lt. D'Alonzo, CHAUMONT, lead bombardiers - Lt. D'Alonzo and Lt. Cole, KARLSRUHE, lead bombardier - Lt. Thornock and Lt. Runyon.

On targets where the bombing accuracy was below average the most common explanation by lead bombardiers was poor visibility due to smoke and clouds.

One mission, Brussels-11 May 1944, was a complete failure due to accidental bomb releases by ships flying in the lead squadron- (not the group lead). The high and low squadrons dropped on these accidental releases, bombs falling at the I.P., on bomb run, and in the city of Brussels. This premature release of bombs had occurred on other missions in the past. To answer this accidental release problem, red flags have been attached to the lead ship's bombs but this has not proved wholly satisfactory. At present a system is in use whereby flares are fired from the lead ship at bombs away, however, after two missions, this system does not seem to be the answer to the problem.

Lead crew training has received high priority during the last month. Potential lead bombardiers have been doing a considerable amount of camera bombing with favorable results and practice bombs dropped when weather permits.

EDITOR'S NOTE: Our Fire Chief's report for May 1944.

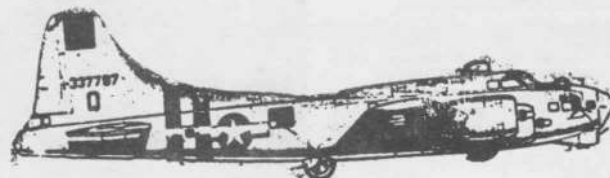
BASE FIRE STATION

During the month of May this department had two fires to contend with. On 12 May 1944, motor fire on a B-17 aircraft which was quickly extinguished. On 23 May 1944 this department had their first fire due to enemy section. An enemy plane dropped seven, five hundred pound bombs. One bomb dropped on Hangar No. 1 and set a B-17 aircraft on fire that was inside at the time. Fifty caliber bullets from machine guns on plane started going off and the men of this unit, disregarding bullets and the danger of explosion, went right in and fought the fire until it was completely extinguished. Inside this same hangar was another B-17 aircraft that was saved by the immediate action of the Fire Department. There were also a number of aircraft engines, two tractors and miscellaneous equipment that were saved from destruction. Hose lines were laid very effectively from fire equipment to fire.

At this fire the Fire Department had its first chance to try a new piece of equipment that was assembled by a member of this organization. This piece of equipment (pumper) was very successful and proved to be of great assistance. It consists of American and British couplings cut and welded together and the use of American and British spare parts and equipment all combined to form a pumper for the use of water lines or form lines.



Hymie & Scoot
Rally Dennis & Chaplain Jim's Dachshounds in 1944.
Two great little pals.



385th BGMA APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP

Please Print

LAST NAME, First, MI.

Spouse's Name

Street or P.O. Box #

() L
Telephone Number

City, State, & Zip Code

Squadron or Support Unit

The annual dues are Ten Dollars (\$10.00)
Life-time memberships are one payment of \$100.00
Make Check out to "385th BGMA" and mail to:
John F. Pettenger, Treas.
Box 117
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.

Daily Mail

THE YANK WHO'S OVERWHELMED, OVERJOYED AND OVER HERE AGAIN

We meet again! After 50 years, pilot says Thanks for my life



Flying Fortress: Smith was on a bombing mission when disaster struck

By TRACEY HARRISON

AT long last, Robert Smith was able to say thank you.

Yesterday, with tears in his eyes, the one-time U.S. Air Force pilot hugged the former Land Army girls who saved his life nearly 50 years ago.

They were equally emotional. For all those years, they believed he had died from appalling injuries received when he parachuted from a blazing bomber.

'I've always wondered who saved me,' Colonel Smith, 73, told four women who carried him three miles to medical help. 'Now I've met you and it's wonderful.'

With Anne Elliott, now 72, and Lynette Vince, Ellen Whybrow and Marie Brown, all 67, he gazed around the field where he had lain badly burned and bones on a bitterly cold morning in November 1943.

The land girls were cutting hedges on a remote sugarbeet field at Peldon, near Colchester, when they saw his parachute.



Now and then: Top, Robert Smith with, from the left, Ellen Whybrow, Marie Brown, Anne Elliott and Lynette Vince. Below: Wartime memories of, left to right, Ellen pictured with a friend, Marie, pilot Smith, and Lynette and friend
Top picture by MARK RICHAPNS

Alert

Colonel Smith, then a 24-year-old captain based in Britain, had been forced to bale out after the Liberty Belle, the B17 Flying Fortress he was piloting on a World War II mission to Germany, caught fire.

There was a terrific explosion, flames everywhere, and I got hit in the face by a flare,' he recalled.

'I told my crew — there were ten of us — to bale out. I held on for as long as I could before jumping myself.

'I saw a road, three cyclists and a huge field. Then I landed and there was pain and then nothing.'

Mrs Vince said: 'He was so badly burned there was hardly any skin on his face, and his glove had melted into his hand. He was unconscious, but we kept talking to him anyway to comfort him.'

'Then a girl we called Big

Eileen pulled down a gate to use as a stretcher. I don't know how. I suppose you just find the strength.

'Between us, we carried him to the road, which was about three miles and seemed to take ages over the furrows of the ploughed fields.'

One girl ran ahead to alert

an ambulance, which took Colonel Smith to hospital. He was there six months before going home to the US.

Sadly he discovered that four of the Liberty Belle crew had been killed.

Colonel Smith, from Spokane, Washington, now a grandfather, was invited to

visit Britain with thousands of former colleagues to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the stationing of American troops over here.

He was determined to trace his rescuers. Local historian Chris Pluck managed to find four of the eight former land girls who were involved.

'We couldn't believe it,' said Mrs Whybrow. 'This was the story we'd been telling our children and grandchildren, and then suddenly it was brought flooding back to us.'

'It's great to see Bob and it's lovely to see the other girls as well. It's almost as if it were yesterday.'

Colonel Smith and his wife, Jean, will take home a special memento of their visit, a small piece of the Liberty Belle, a motor from a camera, which was picked up in 1943 by a young boy who now farms in the area.

'Well, that's really something for the mantelpiece,* laughed Colonel Smith.'



A hard stand on the farm of Roy Barker



Inside Church - June 1992



Ed McElroy at the tail gunners position on the B-17 at Duxford Museum 385th Reunion Tour



Louise Varnedoe Wondershowwe got through the Bomb Bay?



In trips to the flight line from the 550th, we'd pass this house. There was a young lad in the yard almost every time who would wave to us.



The showers area as seen across Darsham's farm from the old 550th Squadron area.

CROSSHAIRS - September 1992 - Pg 34

Man Spricht Deutsch
Sind Minen gelget?
Sind Meenen geleygt?
Are there any mines?



Today* Ruuian Leuon
KAHKVAHSSZA-VOOT?
Whaf your iuonB?

Vol. 1—No. 288

1 Fr.

1 Fr.

Friday, May 11, 1945

Here's GI Discharge Plan Bulk of Troops to Quit ETO Within 12 Months 85 Points to Be Minimum Score

How to Score Points'

FotaU for (Hactaarge from the Army will be totalled as follow*:

- 1. Baeh mentis in service..... 1 Point
- t Each MtwnOt ta aervlee wMraeaa..... 1 ratal
- t. Baeh eamb&t award (iwMw each medal and eueh baillie participatiMi alar)..... * rotate
- € Each dependent ehIM wader IS (maximum at-three)..... IX FataU

The four item* above are (ba ONLY ivc wbfch potaw wUX be awarded. Ko point* wcu be awarded for tmrlage or dktMfdeAa "th" than children wldies to A complete Hm of medal* and campJ*na for whch yxAcit* ru to tx> awatded l) published on pa« t of today* paper.

"Interim" minimum mere for ekfIMUty tar dk* charge of EM. (Thia more ia not final. Tiv Ruai critical- score for discharge will be b*«ed on a complete tabulau«« pt petal* all wfdta*. It U expected to ixe the «ka« or aUghly lower.)..... M Petain

"Interim" minimum gear* tat eigibiHly tor charge at enheted Wane..... « Fatal"

85 Points to Be Minimum Score

Trip Tiekel Hom t—or TS Slip

ADVISED SERVICE RATING SLIP

NAME: FRANK WILSON ASN: 35492667 ARMY SERVICE RATES:

UNIT: 292nd Central Postal Dir. MOS:

TYPE OF CREDIT	NUMBER	VALUE IN POINTS	TOTAL
1. SERVICE CREDIT -- Number of months in Army since 16 Sep 40	20	1	20
2. OVERSEAS CREDIT -- Number of months served overseas since 16 Sep 40	26	1	26
3. CAMPAIGN CREDIT -- Number of Battles and Weeks Served since 16 Sep 40	4	2	8
4. PARENTHOOD CREDIT -- Number of children under 18 years old	2	12	24
TOTAL CREDITS			78

Here's an example of card which is Step One of the long voyage home. Cards are to be filled out by personnel offices and checked by VSU before they're sent in. Before you sign the card, make sure your lines in service time overseas and number of children are correct, and make sure all your medals are entered.

WWII POINTS FOR DISCHARGE

By Ned Humphreys

In a message to Congress on 14 January 1942, President Franklin D. Roosevelt charged the *National Resources Planning Board (NRPB)* with "the preparation of long-range plans...for post-war full employment, security, and building America." From this, in late 1944 evolved the NRPB publication *Post-war Agenda* which, among other things, outlined general plans for demobilization. Thus was conceived the groundwork for the Army's point system by which some 1.3 million would be discharged. Details of this point system were publicly released the evening of Thursday, 10 May 1945.

The *Stars and Stripes* Paris edition of Friday, May 11, 1945 sported a front page banner and story lead as seen above.

Service and decorations were figured from 16 September 1940, the date of the Selective Service draft. All point values were frozen by the War Department on "R" or "Readjustment" Day which was announced as Saturday, 12 May 1945.

The S&S story said "Length of service in the army, service overseas and decorations are computed only between 16 Sep 40 and R Day. However, medals and battle stars awarded later for actions before R-Day will be counted. Children born after R-Day were not to be credited to a soldier's points."

The point system finally adopted stemmed from a poll of soldiers in the field by the War Department, said S&S. Officers eligible for discharge under the point system were to have additional weighted consideration applied. The three considerations were 1) his efficiency, 2) his desires and, most important was 3) military necessity.

In the same edition of S&S the Navy announced that it was going to await results of their observation of the Army's point system before they completed and announced their own system. Further, the Navy said they will await "...the defeat of Japan" before implementing their plan.

Under the Army's system, men with combat experience were to receive 73% of the discharges although they represented only 35% of those in the Army. More than 98% of those expected to be discharged were to have had overseas service, and fathers were to make up 26% of those getting out.

Dad took children to merry old England

Willard Hagman, along with children Terry, Barbara, Debra and Lance, attended a reunion of Willard's former Bomb Group in England from May 12 to 21. Highlights of the trip were three days of sight-seeing in London where they visited the War Room used by Winston Churchill and staff during World War II. Everything was just as it was left at the end of the war. Madam Tussaud's Wax Museum was an interesting highlight in London as was Buckingham Palace, Tower of London, London Bridge, Big Ben, Westminster Abbey, St. Paul's Cathedral and Picadilly Circus.

The next two nights were spent in Long Melford, staying in a hotel where the first part was built in 1450. While there, they attended the dedication of a stained glass window at All Saints Church in the small town of Great Ashfield.

Funds for the window were provided by members of the church and donations from the 385th Bomb Group Memorial Association. The 385th has had a memorial altar in the church since 1945, in memory of the 411 airmen who were lost during the war.

They also attended the Memorial Service on May 17 at Madingly Cemetery near Cambridge where 86 wreaths — donated by former bomb and fighter groups stationed in England during the war — were laid at the Wall of The Missing.

At the end of the ceremony, a contingent of World War II planes flew over in a salute to the 3,811 buried there and the 5,125 names on the Wall of the Missing. Inscribed on this wall are the names of Joe Kennedy and Glenn Miller.

A day was spent at the former 385th base, which has been mostly turned into farm land since the war.

The English people near the old base — some of whom remember the war — held a reception and barbecue in a large grain-drying building, which sits on part of one runway which remains.

The people, of all ages, are so appreciative of the Americans who came over to help them in the dark days of 1941 after the English and French soldiers were driven from France and the evacuation of Dunkirk. London was bombed 58 straight nights and the thought that their country would be invaded was an ever-present threat.

The young people have all been told of the great sacrifice made by not only the airmen, but the army who trained on English soil before the invasion of the continent on D Day, June 6, 1944.

Three days were spent in Cambridge. While there, they spent a day at Duxford, which has the largest museum of World War II planes in England. They also visited the former 390th Bomb Group base which still has the original control tower there that was used during the war. Havan Damar of Malmo was a pilot of a B-17 stationed there during the war. The old tower is full of artifacts from the war, which includes parts of bombers dug up from crashes that happened during the war. Ian McLachlan of Norwich is the historian of the 385th Bomb Group, who was born after the war, but still has an interest in that important time in British history.

Willard was a bombardier on a B-17 stationed with the 385th at Great Ashfield from October 1944 to April 1945. He completed 35 missions. An added interest fact for the "kids" was finding their dad's barracks. All that remains is the bomb shelter.



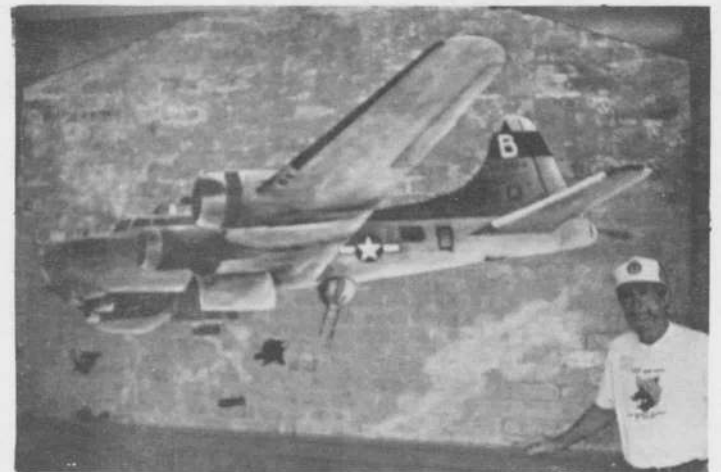
Willard Hagman



Pictured is Willard Hagman and children in a motel at Long Melford. Left to right: Lance Hagman, Debbie Janzen, Terry Sylvester, Barb Byler and Willard Hagman.



John & Ruth - June 1992



Wall painting of a B-17 at Duxford Museum
Salvaged from World War II era when painting was done.

Letters to Ian

Dear Ian,

I have just received my latest issue of the 8th AF News and note that you are the contact man for Great Ashfield and thus I assume the 385th Bomb Group.

One of the crew of a 385th BG Fortress, Jack Baugh came down by parachute a few hundred yards from my home on the 21st January, 1945. As you will no doubt know the aircraft was B-17G 42-102431 "Slick Chick". Last year I had the pleasure of taking Jack and his wife back to the farm where he landed and enabled him to meet up with the daughter of the farmer who looked after him. Later I visited them in New York while I was on my way home from a trip. During that time I also managed to talk with two other members of the crew on the telephone.

Now to eventually get to the point of this letter. Although I have photos of the crash I would like a photo of the aircraft before it crashed and wondered if you had one that I could borrow to copy. If you do I have enclosed a self addressed envelope but if you do not you can put a sticker over my address and use it.

Congratulations on your latest book. I found it most interesting. What a shame Russ did not live long enough to see some of his photos in print.

Kind regards,

Ian C. Mactaggart C. Eng,
Craig-y-llyn
Braintree Road,
Gosfield,
Halstead,
Essex
C091PR

Dear Ian:

I would like to call your attention to the February 1992 edition of the 385th Newsletter on page 9, regarding a letter you had written to "Lou" about pictures that he has sent to you.

Regarding #42-97790, "Ragged But Right", I was the original bombardier on Neil Rosener's crew. On May 12, 1944, we were shot up by German fighters and 3 of us did bail out, they were, John Storer, the Navigator, Harold Mack the flight engineer, and myself. Neil did get her "home" as most of the crew were wounded. After the initial fighter attack, the crew, that is the 2 waist gunners, the ball gunner, all got into the radio room, and they took a 20MM hit which made it impossible for them to bail out, the bail out command had already been given. The Radio operator went forward and told Lt. Rosener that they couldn't get out, in the meantime, the 3 of us already mentioned had left the ship. So he did the only thing that he could, and that was to try and get her home, which he did. I was later told that he

had only 50 gallons of gasoline left when he finally set her down. Neil Rosener, and George Flynn the co-pilot, together with his crew finally were shot down, I believe sometime in August of 1944, he ditched in the Zyder Zee and was picked up by a German patrol Boat. He wound up in Stalag Luft 111, along with John Storer and myself. Harold Mack, went to an enlisted camp, and died from pneumonia in camp. If you want to contact Neil, I am enclosing his home address, and he can verify all of the above and give you the exact date he went down, maybe it was on August 8, 1944.

Anyhow, I thought you would like the above information, if it's possible to get a picture of "Ragged But Right", I'd appreciate it, and of course I would be more than happy to pay for any expense in printing, mailing, etc. Many thanks for your courtesy, I remain,

Sincerely,
Jerry Leichtman
1349 Casiano Rd
Los Angeles, Calif. 90049

the address for Neil Rosener is:

Neil Rosener
No. Lane Stanley Hghts.
Devils Gulch Rt.
Estes Park, Colorado 90517

Dear Ian,

As I recall in one of your first letters you mentioned being the unit contact for the 385th BG. If this is still true, then you might be able to help me in identifying a B-17 which crashed in this area on 20 October, 1943.

The only details I can give you are:

The A/C crashed at approx. 14.30 hours local time.
Location: village of Echt (south of Holland)
Target: Aachen (385th) ro Julich (303rd).
At least 7/8 of the crew survived (if not all).

Only three B-17's qualify for this crash site. Two are from the 303rd (I have serial numbers! and one is from the 385th. Strange enough, the 385th B-17 does not show up on MACR listings of 20-10-1943. Can you provide further details about this A/C and crew? Name of pilot - Freyer.

By the way, how are things progressing with your latest project? I hope to finish my manuscript by the end of the year.

Very best wishes,

Ron Putz

P.S. 303rd: details of losses on 20-10-43 would also be appreciated.

41 -24629 - VK*G John Wo Tendry
42-29571 - VK*L William R. Hartigan "Charley Horse"

Letters to Ian Con't.

Dear Ron,

Thanks for yours of 19th January.

I can't help with the 303rd losses but do have some gen on the 385th ship for you.

B-17F - 42-5913 551 Squadron "Q" "Shack Bunny"

Pilot - Fryer, Lyle V. - 1 st Lt.

CP - McIlveen Clifford G. - 2nd Lt.

N - Durakor, John S. - 1 st Lt.

JB - Rinkenberger, Edwin D. - 2nd Lt.

TTG - Lisiewski, Chester J A - S/Sgt

ROPG - Cokins, William G. - T/Sgt

BTG - Good, Goerge A. - S/Sgt

TG - Car, David E. - S/Sgt

RWG - Pittman, Joseph F. - T/Sgt

LWG - Browning, Fred - T—Sgt

The target that day. was Duren. There was solid overcast with poor visibility and at 1403 hours, this aircraft turned back out of formation, "in the vicinity of Chateau d'Ardenne, France". As far as I can tell, all the crew survived and I'll copy your letter and mine to the 385th newsletter to try for more information from the group. I've a'so written to Lyle V. Fryer and Chester A. Lisiewski for their recollections. I'd be interested to know where the plane came down and whether any wreckage has been found.

I do have a photograph of "Shack Bunny" if you'd like one.

I'll look forward to hearing from you.

All the best for now,

Ian McLachlan

Dear Ed,

I think the England trip went well and I was delighted to be involved - I'm very proud of my association with the 385th. Arena Travel handled things very well and the friendship shown by the people of Great Ashfield was magnificent. We can all look back on some treasured memories.

I've got an enormous backlog of correspondence and hope my 385th friends will bear with me if there are delays answering. Adding to my pressures is the deadline for my next book. On top of all that I've got domestic problems much like those alluded to in the joke on page 25 - what a crazy world!

Best wishes,

Ian

P.S. Noting the letter about "Slick Chick", I thought you might like to publish the enclosed photograph showing her torn-off tail section. Picture credit to R. Zorn.

Ian

Dear Earl and Ruth,

Firstly, many thanks for my copy of "Wings of Redemption" - I was delighted to receive it and am proud of the personal inscription. It's a fine contribution to the 385th Archives as well as being an excellent method of handing on your experiences to your children, grandchildren, and so on.

One thing is for sure, my research continues because it means so much to me. This leads me on to the enclosed letter from Gwen Lengridge who wrote following a radio interview I did publicising "8th Air Force Bomber Stories". Gwen wants to contact a Mr. Comise Tyler who lived at a place called Oscaloosa in Kentucky. I mentioned I had a friend in Kentucky who may be able to help so I'm hoping you may be able to put an appeal into whatever newspaper exists of Oscaloosa or see if this guy turns up in the telephone book. It won't matter too much if you can't help, just let me know and I'll try another route to trace Tim Tyler.

I think those that made the return to England this year thoroughly enjoyed themselves and it was a pleasure seeing old friends and meeting new ones. Our summer hasn't been very good this year but the day of the window dedication was one of the best we've had, thank goodness.

Very best wishes,

Ian McLachlan

Letters to the Editor

Dear Ed,

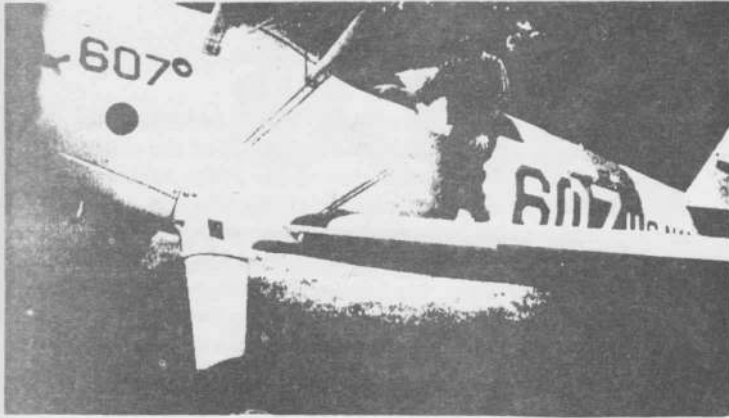
Enclosed is an article that appeared in "The Green Laker", a country newspaper in Wisconsin.

In the upper picture is my 12 year old grandson Augie Smith of Ripon, Wisconsin. He is posed on the wing of a PT-17 Steerman that has been refurbished recently. Below is a picture of myself taken almost 50 years ago on the wing of PT-17 Steerman at Orangeburg, South Carolina in 1943, class of 43H.

Thought this might be of interest.

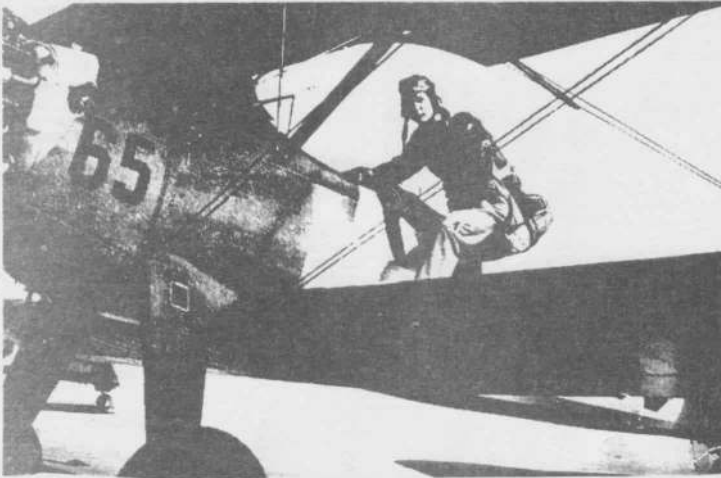
Sincerely,

Ed McCarthy
1709 SEI Oth St.
Cape Coral, FL 33990



Steermen

AUGIE SMITH (TOP), Ripon, recently went for a ride in a PI 7 Steerman, flown by Keith and Carol Myers, Ripon. This was a special moment for his grandfather, Ed McCarthy (shown below), Cape Coral, Fla., who commented, "Whoever thought 50 years ago when I stood on the wing of that plane that 50 years later I'd be here to see a grandson fly in a Steerman." McCarthy, shown in 1943 before a solo flight in the PI 7, was a BI 7 pilot during World War II. McCarthy submitted these photos for the *Green Laker's* photo contest.



Dear Ed,

After this many years your memory becomes blurred, but just maybe I can help. If some one tells me I am all wet, I will not be offended.

About who painted the Gypsy Princess, I think it was a fellow by the name of Sidney Ostrow-of Silver Springs, Maryland. A 550th member that worked somewhere at Headquarters, he used to speak on the Base Loud Speakers once in a great while and we Ground Guys, always knew who it was by his clear voice.

Maybe this will help someone else who is better equipped to find out for sure.

Resp.,

John D. Hite

Dear Mr. Stern,

I met many of your groups veterans earlier this year at Great Ashfield. It was such a pleasure to meet them. You see I have for many yd&rs been interested in the Mighty Eighth Air Force and it wasn't until this year that I thought what a good idea it would be if I could actually meet some real vets.

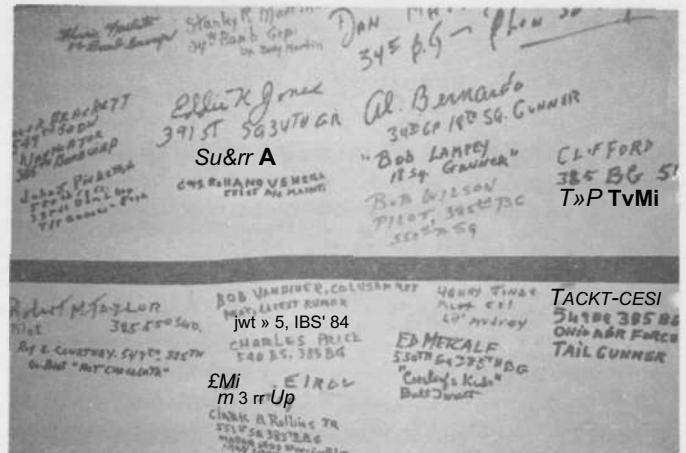
Your veterans were extremely helpful - Mr. Drue Gillis of the B-17 "Blue Champagne" who I met along with two other members of his crew sent me photos and a copy of his diary from when he was a prisoner of war. Anyway Mr. Stern, what I was wanting to ask is - are outsiders like myself allowed to join your bomb group so that they may receive newsletters, etc. about your group, as I would like to join for just this purpose. Also, would someone like myself be allowed to write to the veterans of your bomb group to ask them about their experiences during their combat tour at Great Ashfield. I will make it clear to you now that my intentions are of a genuine nature and I am not a collector of any kind and I am not a writer either, just a twenty five year old English lad who is extremely interested in the Mighty Eighth Air Force.

I am hoping to help Ian McLachlan with reference to an article that he wishes to write about the Eighth Air Force Bomber Stories, concerning a fortress from the 447th Bomb Group at Rattlesden, of which I helped a veteran find the crash site of his aircraft. Well, Mr. Stern, I do hope that you can help me with my hobby. I would appreciate any help at all, especially any addresses of veterans that were on this year's visit as I would like to thank them individually. I have written to a few and have not received any answers, but maybe if you allow me to continue to write, I may be lucky.

Yours hopefully and gratefully.

Paul Collins
36 Woodside Road
Mangravel Estate
Maidstone Kent
ME15 9AY

EDITOR'S NOTE: Paul would appreciate hearing from any of us. We've sent him some *Hardlife Heralds* and put him on our mailing list.



385th signatures on the wall at
390th Bomb Group Museum
Parham, England

Dear Ed:

We have had some correspondence in the past, mostly about our last flight over Germany. As you may remember, we were right behind Jones when Armbuster and Rusecky collided over the channel, almost taking Vaadis crew with them, but we managed to finish the mission.

The reason I am writing you now is I ran in to a couple of people at the Geneseo War Plane Museum Air Show in New York State, and of course when they saw the 385th emblem on my jacket started asking questions.

One lady whose address is Mrs. Jim Thomas, 17 Iva Mae Dr. N., Chili, NY 14514, wants to correspond with anyone who was at Merston Air Base, the 31st Fighter Group, was there. I also ran in to another fellow that finished his missions with the Hundreth Bomb Gp. and was amazed when I told him about the 385th Bomb Gp Memorial Assoc, and what it consisted of. He didn't know if the Hundreth had one or not, and had never had contact with anyone. I told him I would find out what I could. His address is George Meyer, 4 Wood Glen Pl., Palm Coast, FL 32137.

I was glad to see Bill Varnedoe was in the English contingent. My navigator-Tom Conway, and Co-Pilot, Jesse Brown were also in the group. Bill was flying off our wing during the collision and the next day when we went down. I missed the 8th Air Force founding celebration in Savannah, GA. I was there before the war started when the Air Base was formed, but sometimes we can't make them all.

Sincerely,

Neil Buell
Box 240, RD 1
Oswego, NY 13126

Dear Ed:

The 548th Engineering Section had its latest mini-reunion on September 10-12 in Nashville, Tennessee. We attended a live T.V. show ("Nashville Now") and the following day we had a riverboat ride with lunch on board. One Saturday evening we had our get-a-way dinner and needless to say a good time was had by all. The entire reunion was engineered and hosted by the Grangers and the Tenbrooks (many thanks for a job well done!).

Following is a list of the 16 members that attended and a group photo of the same is enclosed, (an asterisk denotes a first time attendee):

Alcock John	Granger, Herbert
Beam, David	Huber, Buck
Bielle, Jerry	Leggett, Dale
Bridges, Martin	Lott, Marty*
Detwiler, Wayne	Luckie, Samuel*
Friedman, Monroe*	Ragone, Anthony
Gentile, Thomas	Siederer, Herman
Girson, Martin	Tenbrook, Forbes

As you know, the 548th Engineering lost two members recently, namely John Grissinger and Waldemar Hahn. Our deepest sympathy goes out to the families of these men.

Our next mini-reunion is tentatively schedules for October 1, 1993 in Myrtle Beach, South Carolina. Anyone interested in attending my contact Marty Girson.

Sincerely,

Anthony Ragone
6 Wood Lane
Valley Stream, NY 11581



Dear George,

Glad to hear from someone from the old outfit. Haven't seen or heard from anyone since April of 1944.

Am enclosing a picture of our camp crew. We were either first crew or one of the first to finish 25 missions. We became a crew in Boise, Idaho late 42-early 43. Trained in Great Falls, Montana & Walla Walla, Washington, then flew over as a group in 1943.

I live only a few miles from John Pettenger.



Crew of the "Raunchy Wolf"

Dear Ed,

You will remember that sometime ago I told you of corresponding with Ray Bowden of his USAAF NOSE ART RESEARCH PROJECT in London.

At his request for any pictures of art work on an A-2 jacket I might have (didn't Col. Van call them walking billboards?), I submitted front and aft pictures of John Richey's OHIO AIR FORCE radio/gunner, one MILTON LANE, that's him both sides.

Milton looks a bit older here than he was back then but not much. His excuse is that he married a little English girl Ivy Fuller just 48 years ago and she converted to Yank soon thereafter, completing a story book romance of true hands-across-the sea.

This real-life love story took root a full year before young Milton landed in England. It was in the fall of 1942 that his older brother Bob Lane, an Army Infantry GI stationed in the vicinity of London, met pretty little Ivy at a Red Cross Dance.

From that time on, until he shipped out to N. Africa in the spring of 1943, the two dated steadily in all his furlough time, and then promised each other to write, to stay in touch.

But Ivy never heard from Bob. Until one day, in a letter from his mother, she was told that he had been killed, in Oran, on Easter Sunday.

It was in September, 1943, that Milt, after his ETO arrival, got his first pass to London. It was at his dad's request that he paid a visit to his late brother's former girl friend. And this he did, first thing.

And in Ivy's own words, she says, "we met, and fell in love, and for six great months on Milton's every pass to London, we made plans. We were engaged on my birthday, on February 9, 1944, and planned our wedding for June 3rd." But due to D Day (June 6), it was delayed until the 10th.

Milton's best-man was the Richey Navigator (Lt) Frank McKibbin. And several other former crew members attended.

Milton's last mission was 29 February 1944, and until he left for stateside 20 July, they lived off-base in Elmswell. It wasn't until the tenth of January following that Ivy came home to New Jersey.

And then it was on the 4th of July 1949 that Ivy Lane became a red-white-and-blue American (citizen). And with mention of the two Lane children, Barbara and Robert, and the four grandchildren, you might say this love story ends right here, that these two lovers, like, some lovers do, just ride off into the sunset and trade love pats forever.

But not so, for these two were match-mates, made in Heaven, for the purpose of their years ahead, for better or for worse.

On June 30, 1987, Milt retired from his business and immediately departed for leisure land Florida. But half-way

there, and on the very next day, July 1st, tragedy became their lot as he had a very sudden stroke that has rendered him unable to read, write, or speak these past five years. But otherwise, his health is excellent.

But not to despair. Nearly fifty years ago, Milton found himself a pearl, and the two of them are like but one. So much so, it would methinks befit a name change, to maybe Miltonivy?

Tom Helman



Fellow Crew Members of the "Latest Rumor"-Greetings!

Bob and Betty Hach and my wife Jennie and I returned from the 385th Bomb Group Reunion held in the United Kingdom the latter weeks of May 1992. A little over 100 participated, spending the first two nights in London, then to East Anglia, remaining at the Bull Hotel in Long Melford. That Saturday, the group proceeded to Great Ashfield for dedication of the stained glass window in memory of our fallen comrades of the 385th. The All Saints Church was originally built in the 12th Century and has been a project of joint maintenance shared with the good Friends from Great Ashfield and the Bomb Group Memorial Association.

After touring the runways and other remnants of the airbase, the group dispersed into groups of twos and threes to have lunch with the local friends of Great Ashfield.

The next day, we toured Bury St. Edmunds and participated in the Memorial Service at the American Cemetery at Maddingly, Cambridge. Some 3,000 attended the ceremony which included addresses by the USAF 3rd Air Division Commander, the U.S. Ambassador to the Court of St. James, Mayor of Cambridge, Member of Parliament and performance by the RAF Mildenhall Gospel Choir, the Royal Highland Fusiliers Pipers, and a flyover by the 494th Fighter Squadron. Floral wreaths were presented by various groups present. The 385th wreath comprised a square "G" enclosed by a checkerboard border. Later, with the help of my son Sam (1st Lt. USAF) who joined us in the tour, we located the grave site of our navigator, Philip J. Vockerath, who was killed over Schweinfurt, October 14, 1943. All in all, the trip was a memorable excursion into the past.

Some of us crew members have indicated the desire to have a mini-reunion to recall those dark days of 1943-44 and to update ourselves with what has happened since. First of all, we should determine who would come, where to have it, when to have it, and how long should it last. Lou des Cognets, copilot, recently had knee surgery and won't be able to come before January/February, 1993. There may be others with similar problems. I would like to hear from before we start serious planning. I am sending a copy of this letter to each of the addresses on the attached sheet. Please let me hear from you.

Sincerely,

Robert S. Vandiver
144 Deer Lake Circle
Ormond Beach, Florida 32174

B-17 #23547 LATEST RUMOR
549th Bomb Squadron, 385th Bomb Group
3rd Air Division, Eighth Air Force, ETO

Pilot

Robert Samuel Vandiver
144 Deer Lake Circle
Ormond Beach, FL 32174 (904) 672-2337

CoPilot

Louis (NMI) Des Cognets
259 Hancock Road
Williamstown, MA 01267 (413) 458-3939

Navigator

Philip James Vockerath (KIA)

Bombardier

Winston Cecil Holmes (deceased)

Aer Eng

Joseph Edward Balcerzak
3679 Beals Rd
Medina, NV 14103 (716) 798-2617

Aer Rad Opr

Allen Robert Millican (deceased)

Asst. Aeg

James Richard Leary
232 Haley Street
Watertown, NV 13601 (315) 782-2937

Asst. ROG

Earl Jackson Summers (deceased)

ARM GNR

Robert Otto Hach
987 NE 96th St.
Miami, FL 33138 (305) 758-5808

Tail GNR

James Wesley Davis
P.O. Box 374
Brookport, IL 62910 (618) 564-2526

Ground Crew

William H. Koon
104 Wedgewood Drive
Lafayette, LA 70503 (318) 235-8814

Ground Crew

Lester Crawford
2700 NE 11 th Avenue
Pompano Beach, FL 33064

Above address listed as of 23 January 1992.

Ed,

Still trying to get organized after Andrew. We came through unharmed and with minor roof damage.

The B-17 that was at Weeks Air Museum at Tamani Airport is now located 1 1/2 miles south of the museum sitting on some tree tops, with only slight damage.

1st B-17 to fly without a crew and made a perfect landing. Will send some pictures with more details in the next couple weeks. They are going to remove it with a 150 ton crane on Friday.

Jerry Donnelly
Andytown, FL

Dear Ed,

The August 1992, "Hardlife Herald", carried several glowing tributes re Return to England and Great Ashfield, May 1992. All true and I agree with the writers.

There is one point that troubled me concerning the trip at the time of the tour and I am even more troubled now as I reflect on the events of the visit that could muster only 3 hours at our WW II base (Sunday, 17 May) out of a total of nine days fast paced, sometimes hectic schedule.

I would have genuinely appreciated a full day at Great Ashfield to ponder events of yesteryear and, if nothing more, to just sit in the shade to meditate upon the scope of fate's intervention in the lives of those who served at Great Ashfield.

I do hope that future trip planners will set aside more time for the real reason for the trip a visit to Great Ashfield. Truthfully, I was thoroughly war museumed and air-showed out after the trip. I doubt if it will be possible to enjoy a trip to the Air Force Museum at Wright-Patterson or the Oshkosh Air Show for a long, long time.

Sincerely,

Bob Wilson, 550th Bomb Squadron
689 S. Washington Street
Van Wert, Ohio 45891

Dear Ed,

This letter is just intended to let you know a little more about some of us from 548th Engineering.

Anyway to get back to the two recent deaths (Waldemar Hahn, and John Grissinger).

John Grissinger's home town was Harveyville, Kansas. In 1945 after his discharge, John went to work in Alamogordo, NM for and with the program that was experimenting with rockets. John or Griss as we all called him was with the rocket program from 1945 until his death, July 7, 1992 in Titusville, FL. John was a crew chief in the 548th but I am sorry that I can't remember the name of his ship.

I guess it would be safe to say that he was also crew chief of all of the capsules and shuttles shot into space.

When the first space shuttle returned to earth and the astronauts left the ship, the astronauts walked over to a guy in coveralls and shook his hand before they went over to the dignitaries. That guy in coveralls was John Grissinger and it was on TV when the shuttle landed.

John was a personal friend to all of the early astronauts. At the 385th reunion in Atlanta in 1977, John brought photo albums of pictures that the astronauts took from space and the Moon. Those pictures are really something. Those pictures were taken by the astronauts with their own personal cameras.

John tried to retire several times, but they kept talking him into coming back. In fact, he just recently signed a new one year contract.

At our mini-reunions, Gress would tell us all about the space program and answer all of our questions, but he would never give a talk to the whole group. He said he did not want to bore the people with his work.

Waldemar Hahn Crew Chief of the Jolly Roger. Waldemar was one of the original crew chiefs.

Wally's home town was Eau Clair, Wisconsin. I guess he got a little tired of the cold winters and moved to Fort Lauderdale, FL. Wally became a high school teacher and taught until he retired several years ago.

One of the things that I remember about Waldemar is that he had an older brother that was a General. One day while we were at Great Ashfield, his brother phoned the orderly room (from London) and said he wanted to talk to Sgt. Waldemar Hahn. The orderly room said they were sorry but they could not call Waldemar to the phone.

Wally's brother said "This is General Hahn and I want to talk to my brother". Well a runner was sent to call Wally to the phone.

John Grissinger is survived by his wife Twila and 3 grown sons.

Waldemar Hahn is survived by his wife Jean and 1 daughter Laura and 2 grandsons.

As I mentioned in my previous letter about 385th members preferring to stay low key, I guess they just don't want to write about themselves.

In our little group of friends, we have Herg Granger who served in the South Carolina Legislature until his retirement and even has an Interstate Highway interchange named after him in Greenville, SC.

Martin Bridges is a retired Sears Roebuck Executive and now holds the office of Councilman in Fletcher, NC.

Dave Beam was Head of Security of Dupont's Savannah River Plant before his retirement.

These are only the few that I know.

How many famous people were in the 385th that I don't know about.

Best regards.
Keep up the good work
Marty Girson



EDITOR'S NOTE: Binks - you thought you were safe?

Ed Stern,

Here's the poop I found on Jerry Binks. First: his new address: Box 4271, Marbleton, Wyoming, 83113 - Tel. No. (307) 276-3294.

I came over from Idaho Falls, Idaho into Wyoming and then down to Danke on the western border - inquiry at a local cafe showed no one knew him, the post office girl recognized the name but said he'd left over 2 years before. I pressed her for a mail transfer and forwarding slip until she came up with somewhere around Marbleton - Big Piney area -- that's east, just over the mountains, but I had to back-track about 125 miles to reach the place. Actually, Marbleton and Big Piney are a mile apart, with no trees, they look like the same place.

The Marbleton mail girl recognized Bink's name and told me he was living in a brown and white mobile home. No one was at the mobile home, but I found him and he met me at the local cafe. I gassed up and coffeed up and here comes Jerry Binks, handsome as a cowboy movie star, and looking like a successful oil consultant, which he is still doing.

I brought him up-to-date on everything I could think of, made sure he had Fryer's phone number and made a pitch to have him attend the 50th Anniversary in Spokane on Aug. 25th, 1993. He seemed agreeable. I got the impression of a laid-back contented man who liked where he was and what he was doing with a lot of his problems behind him.

If you want to get away from everything, be in the high country where there's always fresh air, wind, and sun. You'd pick Big Piney, Wyoming. 40 miles from anyplace, no trees - it's sometimes reported as the coldest spot in the US on TV weather. Anyone who lives there has to want to be there.

The ten original 550th Squadron had **Binks, Fryer & Noel**, who ended up as P.O.W.s, **Gurgle, Stoor, Robbins, Schley, and Keeley** were killed-in-action - **Not Counting Tesla and Witherspoon**. Only two crews finished up their tours - **Warren Cerrone and Sam Dixon**. I think we can count on Warren being there **but I'll need all the info I can get on Johnny Noel and Sam Dixon - Noel was in the hotel business in Atlanta, I can check him on the way down to Florida - Dixon is a mystery which you'll have to work on with all your contacts and if you get a lead, I can swing out to Texas too. Make sure everyone contacts their crew to urge them to get to Spokane. I hope the other squadrons go along with the notion to get as many "originals" as possible, this will probably be the last for a lot of us.**

You asked what to do with any remaining funds, from this Assn., during our breakfast at Ralph Smiths. My vote is to donate them to the Flint Fund at Great Ashfield Church. After visiting Glasgow and Cutbank, Montana to see if there's any mementos there we could use to promote the 50th Anniversary, I find that due to wartime secrecy, we were a non-event and no one could even think of an old-timer with a long memory who could help-one man, Wallace 'Buster'

Ruetten, 13 West Main, CutBank, MT - Tel. 873-4493, runs an old photo shop as a sideline. I waited at his shop, but he never showed. He has other jobs and isn't on a precise schedule. I also viewed the newspaper 'Morgue' for 1942/1943 - nothing.

The same in Glasgow, too many years have passed and that was a S.A.C. base later on, closing in 1968 - Terry Whitaker, the fellow who showed me over those condo's that are for sale, would go along with a mini-reunion at Glasgow for any of that Squadron who wished to visit before or after the bash at Spokane. Incidentally, Fargo-Glasgow-CutBank & Spokane are all on the Amtrak 'Empire Builder' line from Chicago although the schedule times leave a lot to be desired.

That's it, Ed, if you can find any addresses to help locate Noel and Dixon, send them to *do* Robert Wiegandjl619 East 89th St., Bloomington, MN 55425 - Tel (612) 854-7466. I'll be getting my mail there until 1st Setp., after which I'll head south. I covered 3500 miles since our breakfast, saw a lot of country which restores my faith in America - there are a lot of places I found I would like to live out my days but, oddly enough, there are a lot of people there already doing just that and those places have become expensive playgrounds - too bad beauty always has a price.

Regards,

Art Wiegand

EDITOR'S NOTE: Art and I talked about what would happen to the balance in treasury if "die out". A donation to our Great Ashfield makes sense-but at the rate the cost of mailing Hardlife Herald goes up, we have nothing to worry about!

Mr. Stern,

A neighbor, Mrs. Charles Cavan loaned me some of her issues of "Hardlife Herald".

I'll be thirty years old the end of the month. My years have been filled with admiration and respect for all veterans. Most notable, the air crews of WWII.

I have read for years the exploits and heroism displayed by our air crews.

Could you please tell your members that someone from my generation is proud of your generation.

The pride I have is from the service and sacrifice these air crews displayed daily in the skies over Europe.

Sincerely,

Larry G. Weiss
1434 Slate Run Rd #69
New Albany, IN 47150

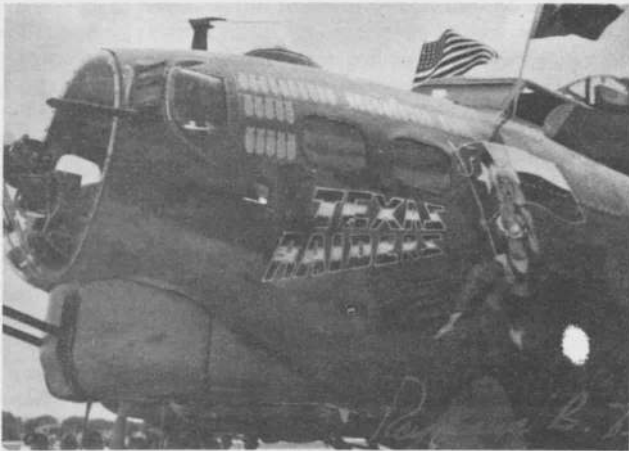
Dear Ed,

Thank you so much for your letter of 1 June and back issues of the Hardlife. While in Atlanta during June, Carolyn and I had a nice visit with Charles Smith and his lovely wife. On the way back to Saudi Arabia on a USAF tanker, we landed at Mildenhall for a two-day stop. I rented a car and toured the area including Great Ashfield.

Unfortunately, it was evening by the time I got there and Roy Barker was out at the farm. However, I did have supper at the Fox Inn in Elmswell which, as you know, has been restored in a very classy manner. Over the table where I ate, there was a beautifully framed picture of a B-17 signed by many members of the 385th. I thought you might enjoy my photo of "Texas Raiders", which is in my judgement the most authentically restored B-17G still flying today.

She is owned by the Confederate Air Force and flies out of Houston. I wish I had the money to fly that beautiful bird up to your 50th reunion next summer. But at the very least you know how honored I am to be associated with you and the 385th. I'll stay in touch. God Bless You.

Ray Tucker



Dear Mr. Stern,

Many many thanks for your help in becoming part of the 385th BGMA, 351stBS.

My dear husband J. Roy Grimes passed away Aug. 26,1990 but we were planning to return to England at some point in time.

Roy flew 17 missions from Great Ashfield. I have enclosed a photo of him and would love to write to anyone who knew him. Although he did not make the military his career he was active in the VFW and American Legion. He would have loved to be part of the BGMA 385th.

It is important to me and his 6 sons, two of whom were in the Air Force to keep Roy's memory dear and alive.

Although I didn't get to England in '92, I really want to be there at Spokane in '93 and perhaps travel to E. Anglia in '93.

Anyone who knows of my husband I would love to hear from.

Thank you and carry on this wonderful important mission.

Patricia H. Grimes
2823 Ross Road
Durham, NC 27703



385th BG, 551stBS
Great Ashfield Base
Flew 17 missions
Radio Operator T/Sgt J. Roy Grimes, 4th from left

Dear Ed,

From all accounts the trip back to the U.K. was wonderful.

Lou and I hosted the "Koon Family Reunion" at Brewton, Alabama in March which was most enjoyable. We had 85 attendees, which to my knowledge was the first one ever.

That put a big dent in our budget so we were unable to go back to "Great Ashfield."

Am enclosing a letter which was sent out to the "Latest Rumor" crew members by Colonel Vandiver. We are extremely proud to have located or accounted for the entire crew. Many hours were put in over the years to find them. When Bob Hook (gunner) retired he vowed to finish the job and did so.

We are planning a mini-reunion of the crew to be held in October.

Our best regards to you and the family.

Sincerely Bill Koon
104 Wedgewood Dr.
Lafayette, LA 70503

Dear Ed,

Enclosed herewith is a snapshot of my crew.

It is not the world's best snapshot, but it is the only one that I have. What I am sending you is a copy.

I am also enclosing a sheet that identifies each crew member. We were part of the 550th Squadron.

My pilot was 1 st Lt. Robert A. Platt.

I scarcely know how to describe our recent reunion in England.

It was the first reunion I ever participated in, and the first tour I was ever on.

It could not possible have been better.

The reception by the British people, and their expressed gratitude for our involvement in World War II was something I had not expected, considering the period of time since the war. Evidently it is still fresh on their minds, and they obviously have made their children, and grandchildren aware of it.

The reunion was a tremendous experience, and, although I did not know a single soul, it was easy to instantly relate to those who were there. And I did meet several I had flown with on missions, but who I did not know at that time. The reunion was really tremendous.

If any of my crew members see this letter, I would like to hear from them, because, over the years, I have completely lost contact.

I know that Johnny Bevilacqua is deceased, and has been dead for quite a few years now. He was from Reno, Nevada, and I had the opportunity of being with his family some twelve or fifteen years ago. They are splendid people, and treated me royally when I was in Reno.

You, Ed, told me you thought my pilot. Bob Platt, was also deceased, and probably died in the 1950's, as the result of a stroke.

To me. Bob was the best bomber pilot in the 8th Air Force. I may have been prejudiced! But he was a good man, and I say that without fear of contradiction.

I thought the June, 1992, issue of the Hard Life Herald was excellent. It gave a very good account of our reunion, and our reception by the British people, and especially the people of Great Ashfield.

I was very impressed with the stained glass window in the Great Ashfield Church.

Is there any way that you know of that I could obtain a colored photograph, or other duplication, in color, of this window, suitable for framing.

Any information in that connection would be appreciated.

With best wishes, I am

Sincerely,

John S. Pickett, Jr.
P.O. Box 717
Many, Louisiana 71449



Photograph of air crew of 1 st Lt. Robert A. Platt,
550th Squadron, 385th Bomb Group, Third Division
Eighth Air Force

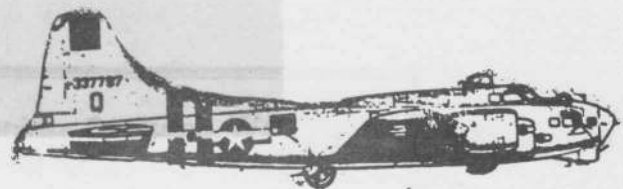


Starting at the top row, on the left hand side;

2nd Lt. Ellis J. Polland - 0-761680 - Co-Pilot
1 st Lt. Robert A. Platt - 0-761185 Pilot
2nd Lt. William J. Amis - 0-518435 - Bombardier
F/O Francis L. Aires - T-129103 - Navigator
(i.e. the young man with his mouth open)

Bottom row, starting on the left side:

T/Sgt. John S. Pickett, Jr. -18137624- Engineer-Top Turret
Gunner
T/Sgt. James J. Fitzpatrick -16136772 - Radio Man-Gunner
S/Sgt. Johnnie P. Bevilacqua - 39921566 - Waist Gunner
S/Sgt. Marvin L. Joseph - 35883851 - Tail Gunner
S/Sgt. Roland A. Picard - 39333974 - Waist Gunner
S/Sgt Thomas C. Johnston - 39704067 - Ball Turret Gunner



GRANDPA DAVE

My Grandpa Dave was a war hero. He makes World War II come alive for me. Some grandpas told their grandchildren fairy tales when they were small. My grandpa told me true war stories.

In World War II, his part was to be a flight engineer. He was in charge of the mechanical part of the plane. He also helped the pilot and co-pilot at different times. Another one of his jobs in World War II was being the top turret gunner. In that job he would fire at enemy planes. Altogether, my grandpa Dave flew in 30 missions, many of them over Germany.

When I asked how he felt when he was flying he told me he had very mixed feelings. He was scared and also proud. He said he was scared to lose his life, but he was proud because he was helping his country.

My grandpa was very patriotic before and he is still very patriotic. He is now part of the USO and serves his country as a volunteer. My grandpa shares his time in other ways too. He helps elderly people by driving them to places they need to go such as the store or the doctor. He also volunteers to bring food to poor people.

If you drive by my Grandpa Dave's house, you will see that he flies the American Flag every day. Sometimes he lets me help him take it down at night. He is very proud to be an American.

The best thing about my grandpa Dave is that no matter what happens, he will always be my hero. And he will always love my family and me in addition to his country.

Tracey Sosna

Dear Ed,

During our reunion at Great Ashfield, several of us had the pleasure of enjoying the hospitality of Chris and Mary Irwin of Upper Lodge, Wetherden. On May 16 after the window dedication, we went out to their wonderful large country home of over 500 years, to spend the day over dinner, exchanging viewpoints, tea, and walking the grounds.

I had the added enjoyment of staying at the Irwins during the reunion.

Till then...

Bob Valliere
18 Whiting Farm Rd
Branford, CT 06405-3223



Men, L-R; Blanchett, Irwin, Salvador, Dworskork,
Valliere, McElroy

385 BGMA

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