



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



COMBAT UNITS

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

VOL. XXI, NO. 5

Editor: Ed Stern
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PREZ SEZ:

The "Schweinfurt" painting is in the process of completion. Please note the enclosed list of names who have indicated their desire for a lithograph copy of this painting. Some of you have sent me checks and thank you. Those of you who have not, please make the checks out to 385th BGMA and send to me. \$125.00 per copy.

Geo Hruska is busy with plans for our Omaha Reunion. A personal long time friend of mine is running for Governor of Nebraska Gene Spence". Should he win - the Red Carpet will be longer.

Sincerely,
Bob Smith

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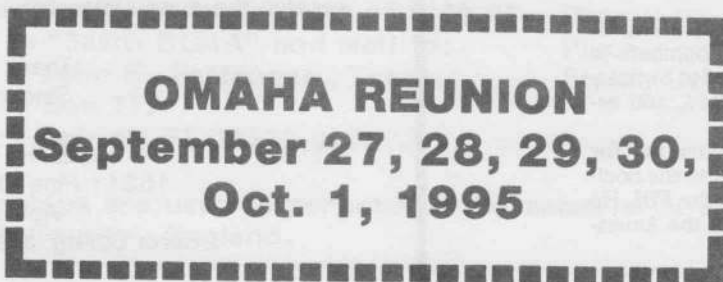
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CHAPLAIN JIM SEZ:

Greetings. . . .

I received my copy of H.L.H. August 20, 1994. I had just gotten home from the Hospital in Seattle and I sat down and read every word of the HLH. No, I hadn't been "in" the hospital because of my infirmity. I was with a family from our church that had to make the very difficult decision to take the wife-mother-sister off support systems. When I left she was comfortable, but today, August 21st, I am still waiting for that final phone call. It will come but when?

Many of us might have to make that decision for a loved one or our loved ones might have to make it for us. Either way, we're living now so we need to make the decision to live life in the best way possible.

Celebrate life!! The articles in the HLH are saying just that but are you? We all have problems - aches and pains - suffering of many sorts, but with loved ones, friends and "life" - let's celebrate.

May the God of all grace bless and keep you now and forever. AMEN!

Sincerely,

Jim Vance

P.S. Keep fit! And I pray we all will be able to meet in Omaha on September 27, 28, 29, 30, and October 1, 1995.

Garnett Taylor Tunstall, 74, dies; was FBI special agent

By **LAURA WAY**
and **STEVEN SLATER**
Journal staff writers

Garnett Taylor Tunstall, 74, of Leisure World, Silver Spring, a special agent with the FBI for years until his retirement in 1977, died of a stroke Monday, Nov. 8, in Montgomery General Hospital in Olney.

Born in New Kent County, Va., Mr. Tunstall attended Randolph-Macon College in Ashland, Va., and graduated from the College of William and Mary and the Marshall-Wythe School of Law in 1947.

During his 30 years with the FBI, Mr. Tunstall served in Chicago, Seattle, San Francisco and Washington at the field office and headquarters.

As a first lieutenant during World War II, he served as navigator on B-17 bombers in the 8th Air Force. He was interned in Switzerland from May to November 1944, and escaped back to England.

He was a member of the Virginia bar for more than 30 years and belonged to the Society of Former Special Agents of the FBI. He was on the Founders' Registry of the American Air Museum in Britain. - -



Jonn O'Donnell
Joseph C. Kolosinsky
Garnett T. Tunstall

April 1994
April 1994
Nov. 1993

Dear Ed Stern,

It is with the deepest sorrow that I report the death of my husband, Garnett T. Tunstall, on November 8, 1993.

Garnett was a navigator on B-17s with the 548th Bomb Squadron of the 385th Bombardment Group. He was a life-member of the Eighth Air Force Historical Society. He was a member of the Swiss Internees Association and the Air Forces Escape and Evasion Society. He was on the Founders' Registry of the American Air Museum in Britain.

There appears on page 5 of the August 1994 edition of the 385th BGMA Newsletter an account of the crash landing of the Gremlin Buggy II in Switzerland as published in "Strangers in a Strange Land", Volume II.

Two errors appear here. Garnett's last name is spelled incorrectly. In the article only Capt. Radin is named as an escapee. Garnett did, indeed, escape from Switzerland in November 1944 after several unsuccessful attempts to do so.

Garnett arrived in the United States in December 1944 (Washington D.C., Dec. 8th) and we were married at Christ Church, Houston, Texas on February 10, 1945 as he had been stationed again at Ellington Field.

Garnett and I always enjoyed the newsletter. You have been a great editor all these years.

I would like to be considered for membership and pay my dues, as his widow. Our interest was strengthened by its news as we had made the tour of the 385th in 1980 to England, Germany and Denmark under John Ford and in 1988, to England, Scotland, & Ireland under Al Chealander.

Thus, I would enjoy being a member in 1995 and hope to receive the dues statement in October.

Thank you
Sincerely,

Helen H. Tunstall
15311 Pine Orchard Drive
Apt. 2E
Silver Spring, MD 20906-1333

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IN DEFENSE OF THE POST OFFICE

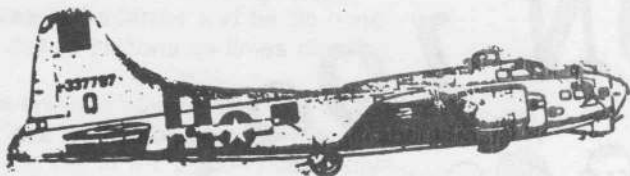
We've all heard plenty of criticism about Postal Service lately. For us, they seem to be doing a great job--at least, we don't hear any complaints from our readers. For 16¼ cents a copy, they deliver the Hardlife Herald to all parts of the country, and fairly promptly. We send an issue to ourselves, and we always get it the day after we deliver them to the Post Office. True, we have to sort them by zip-codes and tie them in bundles. And when you guys change addresses, they let us know, even if you don't. So--we can't complain.

WANTED: AIR FORCE MEMORABILIA

Jeff Spielberg, PO Box 5178, Santa Monica, CA 90409 has written us that he is a TV writer who is collecting AAF memorabilia--Silver Wings, Flight Jackets, 385th Patches, Squadron Patches, Aviator Watches, Clothes, etc. He gives references, but we haven't checked. Has an 800 # 1-800-666-9553 if you want to call him.

AFA's 50TH REUNION

The Air Force Association has scheduled its 50th Reunion for April 22-26, 1997 in Las Vegas. They suggest that Groups join them with their reunions at the same time. We will probably discuss it at the Omaha Reunion.



CONFEDERATE AIR FORCE AIRSHO 94

If this issue gets to you by October 8-9, you'll want to know that the Confederate AF AirSho is at Midland International Airport in Texas those two days. It starts with a pancake breakfast at 7:30 a.m. and there's lots of activity from there on. We didn't get the info in time for the August Hardlife.



ANNOUNCEMENT

Here's a morbid announcement for you, and we apologize in advance for it--but here it is. When we get an obituary notice, we do NOT remove the name from our mailing list, since a number of wives continue to enjoy the Newsletter. If you'd like us to drop you from the mailing list, please tell us. As we said, this is a morbid sort of announcement, but we ARE getting older!

EDITOR'S NOTE: The following paragraph is set in slightly larger type than the rest of the Hardlife Herald. It's used by the 486th, so their editor reports that the larger type is appreciated by many of their "tired old eyes".

We told him that they were a bunch of older geezers than we are.

Let us know if you'd like us to change!

MIGHTY EIGHTH AIR FORCE HERITAGE CENTER Off and Running

They've broken ground in Savannah, named a group to build interior displays, are hoping to open early in 1995. They sent us Vol. 1, Number 1 of their slick-paper newsletter with all the information. We're asked to get memorabilia together to be ready when they're able to receive it.

List of those who wish a Lithograph copy of the B-17 battle scene of the Schweinfurt painting.

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 Willard Hagman
 Robert L. Bailey
 David N. Tipton
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 George R. Ringer
 Col. Jime E. McDonald
 Danny Riva
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 Walter F. Stephens
 Forrest V. Poore
 Warren B. Diederich
 Charles G. Flynn
 Robert E. Andrews
 Archy Benner
 W.M. (Bill) Hunter
 Frank L. Bachman

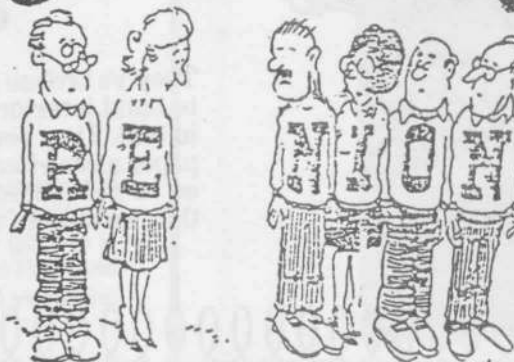
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 Dr. William E. Dickinson
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 Edwald I. Metcalf
 Col. Howard Richardson
 Andrew J. Stroke
 Richard S. Toms
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 R.E. Bennett
 Louis P. Kivi
 Stewart H. Day, Jr.
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 Roy J. Thomas
 Donald W. Bupp
 Don R. Williams
 Francis R. Fuller
 Ralph P. Smith
 Mrs. Bernice Cragoe
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 Christopher B. Pluck
 Mrs. (Marjorie) A.G. Tilley
 Sybil Silberman

Louis Massari
 William A. Maloy
 Paul C. Marince
 Martin H. Siefert
 Wilbur Sunday |
 Ross M. Blake
 Harry E. Peltzer
 Myron Loyet
 William L. Czsonka
 Richard E. Holzhan
 George B. Menkoff
 Wayne L. Horn
 Frederic Martini
 Thomas R. Kelly
 George J. Behl
 Arthur H. Weigand
 Bartlett C. Dickey
 Thomas J. Richardson
 Mary Landiver
 Col. Robert S. Landiver
 Al Corriveau
 G.K. Gentis
 Earl L. Cole
 Hugh O. Bradford
 William A. Nicholls
 Bob Smith
 Hal Smith
 E.W. Sandgren
 George Hruska
 Frank B. Walls
 Jim H. Emmons
 Bill Barham
 Ira E. O'Kennon

If you want your name added to the list, it isn't too late.
 Please send your checks to Bob Smith if you haven't paid yet.

SEPT 27,28,29,30-OCT 1

REUNION 1995



IT WON'T BE THE SAME WITHOUT U!

EDITOR'S NOTE: Don Kabitzkek sends us some interesting stories and pictures. Here are some more of them.

Seen in this photo is a parachute packer from my old 88th Service Squadron. I cannot recall his name at this time. I remember he loved to chew tobacco though.

Here he is squeezing the lead seal which holds the wires which seal the top of the chutes various flaps. The white cords you see and rubber bands which cause the flaps to fly open once the so called rip cord is pulled. This tears the wires and allows the bands to pull the sealing flaps open. Underneath the flaps is a spring loaded pilot chute which in turn pulls the main chute into its open position. This causes the main chute to come out and gently open up. If properly packed, it must open correctly. Once in a while someone would forget and leave a packing tool in there.

The chute you see him sealing is a British model. The Fortress crews liked them better than our own and most wore them. Whenever a crew was forced to bail out, they tried to bring their chutes back. This was when it was found out on certain occasions as to just what happened to the mission packing hook. Some recovered them and brought them back to the shop. The crews who jumped to save their lives would take a knife or scissors and cut out a hunk of the chute to send to their mothers, wives or sweethearts to make a blouse out of them.

The most important thing to be done to a chute was to dry and keep them absolutely dry. Moisture led to mildew and this could be fatal. It could mat the material and it might not open properly.

Incidentally, this Corporal also liked to smoke cigars. Look at his pocketfull. I eventually left this squadron in a cadre to reform a new squadron in the 9th Air Force. We felt bad at first, but when it was all over, we had a truly once in a lifetime tour of Europe and gained enough points to be among the first to be sent home upon the wars end. They were a great bunch and we missed them.



CHAPLAIN "JIM" GREAT ASHFIELD, ENGLAND

This photo and the others of similar size I was able to purchase from the "London Illustrated" which was published in London for worldwide distribution. It was like our "Life" magazine. I was lucky to be able to get them at that time.

Jim is standing to the left of the Flag. Services were conducted in a typical British styled military "Quonset Hut". In this photo, he was being assisted by two other local English ministers. He was a very genial fellow, ideal for the task, which was no easy one when losses were heavy.

Yours truly remembers well the day this one was taken. I am sitting on the left side of the aisle, with shoulder visible just above the bottom of the picture.

Here Jim was serving the 385th Flying Fortress Bomb Group. One of his biggest tasks was to smooth it for the younger flying crews who were over exposed to stories about combat, while waiting their turns to get into the fight. Being idle led to all kinds of imaginations and this had to be taken care of as soon as possible.

I did not envy the job he had.



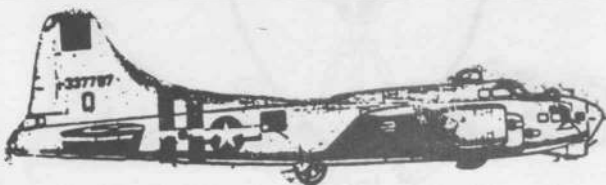
AN AERIAL GUNNER OF THE 385th BOMBARDMENT GROUP AT GREAT ASHFIELD, ENGLAND

The lot of the Aerial Gunners was not a very romantic one. They were the target of every fighter pilot of the enemy, and casualties were high. Bullet proof vests were introduced and helped quite a bit.

At one time we had a shipment of 500 replacement gunners direct from the States. There was little for them to do and some were on the verge of being mental cases. A retired Gunner who was a high officer in the American Legion went to the Commanding Officer Colonel Van Deventer and told him something had to be done quickly.

The Colonel asked the Sergeant what he would do to overcome this problem. The Sgt. recommended that a make work project involving menial labor be put into operation, such as digging ditches for better drainage, new culverts and new electric phone lines strung all over the base to improve the lot, but above all, something to get the spare gunners angry and forget the things they had been told of how combat was over Germany.

They hated the Sergeant as he was put in charge of the program. It worked well, and soon moral improved among the men. He did a lot to save some lives. He had been in World War I and learned well.

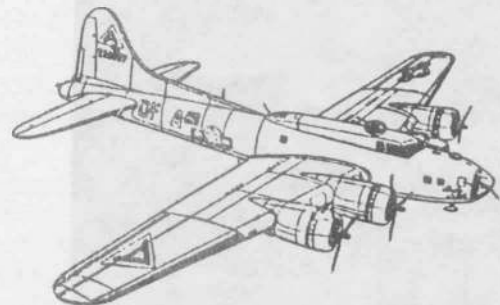


PARACHUTE PACKERS 88TH SERVICE SQUADRON 8TH AIR FORCE GREAT ASHFIELD, ENGLAND ELMSWELL

Great Ashfield or Elmswell was the railroad designation where we got on and off the trains. It was about 10 miles or so as a crow flies, and in line with the flight plan the Germans used when they bombed in Norwich. You could set your watch due to the stupid flight plan they used. It never varied.

The accompanying photo shows two of my fellow workers, whose names I cannot now recall and it embarrasses me. They were good friends. In addition to repairing and repacking parachutes, incidentally, most were of the British type, the men liked them better, they also had to take care of the gear for escaping a downed aircraft in water.

Above the man on the right shoulder can be seen a table with a chute straightened out and ready for packing. Those of us in the woodwork shop made the tables out of masonite and plywood back at Lakeland, FL. It had to be without any blemish which would catch the silk and tear it. We worked hard on these and they were effective.



B-17's OF THE 385th BOMBARDMENT GROUP, FLYING FORTRESS, OVER GERMANY

This is one of the only photos I have seen showing the 385th in the air. The squadron was identified by the huge "G" on the vertical stabilizer, or tail section. It also is from the London Illustrated magazine series which I was fortunate enough to obtain while the war was on. The negatives were destroyed and I would have been out of luck.

On the days they flew, we were awakened by the warming up of the engines just before the fuel tanks were topped off to make sure they would have enough to complete their mission without running out. They usually were in the air before daybreak so they could rendezvous with other groups and get into defensive and bombing formations before heading over the channel, there were accidents and planes were lost in these maneuvers in the dark, but the war went on.

We were proud of the Group and little did we envy the kid glove treatment they got. They had steak and we had Spam. They were pampered, and they could have it. Few were there in the early months who were able to survive 25 missions over Germany and then be sent home to work as instructors. As the war progressed and fighter planes provided protection, the mission rate was increased. At the end of nearly every mission, men got out crying and knelt to kiss the ground that they made it home.

One thing we did not like when the group circled the field, was to see red Very Pistol rockets come out of the planes. It meant there were wounded aboard. Men and ambulances jumped into action to get to the planes as soon as possible. These planes were given priority to land first. You could judge pretty close the amount of wounded when you looked at the condition of the planes. During those early months, they sure took a pasting.

One day, Col. Van Devanter brought some 8x10 photos of General Curtis E. LeMay, who was being sent to the Pacific to take over the B-29s out there, which we were to mount in frames. These we had to make by hand, and finish. LeMay was known as "OLD IRON ASS" when he threatened to courtmartial any pilot who broke formation to dodge flak. They were to stay in formation and take iron in their asses instead. He no doubt was the finest Air Force Officer to come out of the European commands. He was the one who destroyed Japan and brought them to their knees with his fire bomb missions.

Radio Operator on a B-17 Flying Fortress at his desk. He is wearing his Mae West jacket and seat pack parachute.



EDITOR'S NOTE: The final installment on Bill Varnedoe's reports.

10 MARCH 1945 / V 71 G265

Crow's crew was assigned to fly in No. 42-102481, "Kentucky Winner" and R.C. Snowden again flew with us as Bombardier. We were Right Wing of the Lead Element, Low Flight, Low Squadron. When we had a Bombardier, McDaniels didn't fly with us.

I settled into the nose, and readied everything for takeoff. No two B-17s were ever exactly alike that I flew. The position of the flux gate compass, the radio compass, the G Box, the oxygen outlet, the heated suit receptacle, the intercom control box, the place to plug in the headset and throat mike, varied all over the nose compartment. Each time they had to be hunted down. They were usually so scattered about that when I was attached to the intercom, oxygen, and heated suit, I felt like a fly in a spider web. When moving about I had to be careful not to unplug something. I always stood up for all flights. The B-17 came equipped with a chair for the navigator, complete with a seat belt. But this chair was unattached to the fuselage! I could just see me bouncing about the nose, firmly seatbelted, but chair and all rattling around. We generally gave this chair to the crew chief so that there was no place for navigators to sit down except in brand new 17s. In return, the crew chiefs could scrounge up all sorts of scrap armor plate. The pilots usually put some in the seat of their chairs. One must protect the vitals! I stacked odd pieces about the nose. Some Forts had so much, which I'm sure was not on the weight calculations, that I wondered how they behaved in the air. We also had some one-man inflatable dingies. These came in a small package like a cushion. If forced into the North Sea, they'd be mighty handy. But we also got several extra, if we could, and stacked them about as an almost useless type of armor plate, more for morale than real protection.

On this mission, the target was another Benzadrene plant, this time at Soest. Again we had a visual bomb run, but then we encountered fairly heavy tracking flack. We bombed with, as boasted by General Doolittle, "customarily good results." The Germans were getting really desperate for oil and fuel by this time.

11 MARCH 1945 / V 8 / G 266

The target this time was AN oil tank farm in Hamburg, fuel still being high on our target priority list. PFF bombing was planned due to a solid cloud cover and that is what we did. However, these tanks were located on a peninsula sticking out into a harbor, which made their identification on the PFF scope very easy, although the strike itself could not be seen, thick black smoke boiled up through the clouds to indicate that we hit the bulls eye.

We flew in No. 43-38743 with Morton W. Cousins as bombardier. Mack didn't fly, and we also had S/Sgt Walter E. Baker along. Perhaps he was an official photographer as they sometimes flew with crews.

After this mission we were given a weekend pass, which some of us again spent in London, but not before again trekking across the miiddy farm that lay between our bar-

racks and the showers. These showers left a little to be desired. There were several stalls on each side of a long hall, but there was only one mixing valve at the end of the hall. Whoever selected the nearest shower adjusted the temperature to a level comfortable to him, but when someone in a far stall turned on the water, it would be quite cold, so naturally enough, he'd go readjust the mixture. This could elicit some language from the near stall occupant who was now being scalded! This arrangement never did much for morale, to say nothing of the dirt picked up on the hike back to the BOQ. Bathing was such a chore that it's no wonder some of us tended to get a little over-ripe before passes.

15 MARCH 1945 / V 9 / G 269

The target was some railroad marshalling yards at Oranienburg, near the German High Command, with the goal of disrupting their communications.

These raids on the railroad system were giving the Germans some insurmountable problems, while they were always able to move troops and combat supplies about, it was at the expense of all, or most, commercial and manufacturing traffic, this caused all but complete collapse of the economy. The priority they gave military traffic greatly hampered the manufacturing of war goodies. This was especially so, since most plants had been scattered into small separate units with the assembly plant somewhere else. This was done in order to escape bombing which now kept these separate plants apart. So if we caused work to be done on the rail system at Oranienburg to keep the command lines open, then that was that much less available for a Messerschmitt factory somewhere.

Weather was good, although smoke and haze made sighting difficult. We bombed visually, the target was close to Berlin and we must have come within their air defenses, since the flack was extremely heavy, both barrage and tracking.

We flew in No. 43-38980.

17 MARCH 1945 / V 10 / G 270

We struck at a Chemical factory at Bitterfeld on this one. Chemicals were critical in manufacturing processes. The weather was very poor and we bombed from a higher altitude than briefed.

We flew in No. 43-38559

18 MARCH 1945 f V 11 | G 271

When the briefing officer pulled the curtain back for this one, we all "ohed" and "ahed" for the black tape on the map led to Big B, Berlin. The target, itself, was a railroad yard in the heart of downtown Berlin. Weather was to be clear (it was). 1,250 heavy bombers made this the largest raid of the war.

On the climb to altitude, our number 4 engine's supercharger in No. 43-38549 refused to work. At low altitude it was a good engine, but up where we were going, it would only draw 12 inches of vacuum, about the same as if it were feathered (shut down). But since we could keep up with the formation, we elected to go on. This was a ship assign-

ed to the 549th Squadron, but pressed into use by the 550th today.

For some reason Lancaster didn't fly on this one and our tail gunner was W.E. Stueba.

Fighters did not hit the 385th that day, but they did attack other groups, some with their new jet fighters, the ME 262's. 24 bombers were lost, mainly to the jets. Flack was also very heavy and quite accurate, the 385th lost Cock and Bloom's B-17's to the flack. Once I looked out to the left and saw a cluster of 6 flack bursts at our level, shortly, there were 6 more, closer. The next 6 were very close, and I could see the following 6 would intercept our flight path. But we were on the bomb run and could not take any action. I took a picture, but then just tried to make myself as small a target as possible, a thing hard to do when you're hiding behind 1/16th thick aluminum! The next 6 came on time and although, unlike in the movies, we never heard the actual explosion, the shrapnel hitting the B-17 sounded like someone throwing gravel on a tin roof. It did us no serious harm, however. A piece knocked the handle off the front exit hatch and other punctures here and there hit nothing vital.

After bombs away, the Group made a sharp, diving turn to the left. This was normal to throw off that tracking flack after the straight bomb run. However, this evasive action turn was so tight, that with our right outboard engine not functioning, we could not turn that sharply to the left. (We were on right wing of our element). We were literally slung out of the formation! The turn was sharp enough to carry the Group right back through the flack zone again. But, thanks to our bad supercharger, we missed that, and finally caught up with the group, also, fortunately, there were no enemy fighters in the immediate area, solo bombers were prime targets for them.

Ira, our Ball Gunner, wrote:

"I must confess that until Berlin I was confident that if some fate occurred in our Group; it would affect the OTHER CREW; but, now, and I don't want to sound too melodramatic, I suspected that misfortune could dial our number at any time and I think that conviction remained with me for the balance of our missions."

Final assessment showed that half of all B-17s (of all Groups) on that mission were damaged by flack. The appearance of the jet fighters caused quite some concern since they could out-fly anything we had. But apparently there simply weren't enough trained German pilots, and, the oil campaign had made fuel so scarce that the Germans were reported to be towing aircraft to the runways with horses to save gas.

Time for another pass, which again I spent in London.

22 MARCH 1945 / V 12 / G 275

Our crew had F/O Joseph W. German fly as Bomardier on this one in No. 43-39123, which was to be "our" B-17 from now on. We named her "Possible Straight" after her radio call, -123, which we likened to a poker hand, with implications of completing our tour. This was Audrain's Fort but he had completed his tour and it was now assigned to us.

Today, we were Right wing of the Lead Element, Low Flight, Low Squadron. Possible Straight had the new red checkered tail that identified all 385th Group B-17's and a tail letter X. The 550th Squadron had red propeller spinners and a red stripe across each wing and the elevator. The old 385th ID was the letter G in a square on the tail, but this had been changed in January of 1945. These late G's had improved the tail gunners position considerably. Not only did he now have computer sights and better access to the guns, but actually got to sit down, rather than straddle the old "bicycle seat" of the early G's.

Takeoff was at 0923 and landing at 1443, a short one.

Weather was improving so we had a visual run on some railway marshalling yards at Ratingen. This rail interdiction was in support of an anticipated crossing of the Rhine River by the ground troops. The flack was heavy and tracking, but we were only 6 minutes over enemy territory.

One thing I remember. They used to post a de-briefing narrative of POW's who had escaped from Germany. It was hoped that their story could help us if we were ever captured. Some of these stories were incredible! Like one I remember about a guy who went to a north German seaport and tried to hitch a ride on a neutral ship, but being without papers, they wouldn't let him on, so he went back into town and went to a movie, even getting in on reduced soldiers rates! It seems the Germans had so many uniforms the cashier didn't recognize his. Since he didn't speak German he had a problem in a restaurant ordering a meal, but finally got it. Next, he stole a bicycle and peddled all the way to Holland, got a fisherman to take him out to sea and was finally picked up by the English.

23 MARCH 1945 / V 13 / G 276

2nd Lt. Garry N. Bean was assigned as bombardier to our crew for this one in No. 43-39123. "Possible Straight", flying Right wing of the Lead Element, High Flight, Lead Squadron. Takeoff at 0942 and landing at 1545.

We returned to the same general area as yesterday to finish off some more rail yards at Geisecke. Although the flack was moderately heavy and accurate, all 385th Forts returned to Great Ashfield.

General Eisenhower told the press, Germany was a whipped enemy.

Someone in my barracks had a radio which was kept tuned to Lord Haw Haw on a German station, most of the time. The music was good and the propaganda so heavy-handed as to be funny.

26 MARCH 1945 / V 14 / G 278

After the success of operation VARSITY-PLUNDER, (the isolation of the Ruhr and the Rhine area) targets were dwindling. On this day the 385th returned to a target of the day before to hit a tank factory at Plauen, which put this works out of operation.

Our ship was No. 43-39123, "Possible Straight". We had in mind to paint some cards with Ace, Duce, Tray showing

and two face down with a sexy female on the cards, but it never got done. George Crow was promoted to 1st Lt. since our last mission.

Although the mission itself went smoothly and successfully, the trip home got kind of hairy. Once out of Germany we began to let down to stay under an ever lowering ceiling of clouds. A message came through giving us a whole new course with many new headings. Crow wanted to know how long the new course would take, so I began to plot and calculate all the new legs and their times. When done, George said that it would take too long, and we'd better go straight home. I then looked at the compass to see which leg we were on. We were on none of either the new or the old courses!

At that moment, the clouds had us so low the formation completely split up and we were on our own. I had no idea where we had been going while I was doing all that figuring, so I tried to match us to something on the map. But we were too low, everything just whizzed by; we were too low to see a pattern. In fact, we were really on the deck. Both Ira and I remember George lifting a wing to clear a church steeple! Well, no problem, I'd just head us to East Anglia and G-Box it home from there - except, and this was a big except, we didn't want to pass over Dunkerque, which was still in German hands. As low as we were, they couldn't miss us. But we avoided it and were soon over the English Channel. I did a 45 turn right, 90 turn left then another 45 right, this little Dog-leg let the English radar operators know we were not another German Buzz bomb to be shot down as soon as we got near the English coast. We then discovered that there were 3 or 4 other red checkered tails following US. I guess they were lost and thought we knew where we were going.!

Once over the channel, sure enough, G came in and the rest of the trip to Great Ashfield was uneventful.

Another pass found me in London once more. On this one, I did a real feat of navigation. I carried a date to her flat (apartment) on the underground in a part of town near St. Pauls. I then walked back to the Piccadilly area on the surface, going strictly by dead reckoning and instinct.

31 MARCH 1945 / V 15 / G 281

At Brandenburg we dropped by PFF on what used to be the second largest truck factory in Germany. There was no flack or fighter opposition, although we did spot a ME-262 (jet) far overhead.

For some reason we flew No. 43-39088, "Gypsy Princess," on this one in the Left wing, Lead Element, High Flight, High Squadron.

3 APRIL 1945 / V 16 / G 282

The 385th was part of a 2,200 ton attack on the naval dockyard at Kiel. The mission was judged as successful. We did see some opposition, however. The flack was pretty heavy and moderately accurate. Once I saw a huge orange burst. It seemed to me to be as big as our whole squadron formation. It was about 1 o'clock level and ahead, but sure looked awesome. I don't know what it was, but

I'm glad it had no accuracy.

The crew loadings for this mission did not survive. But it is clear that Crow didn't fly. Whether our crew picked up Muchow as a pilot and flew as a crew or if I flew with another crew will probably never be known. Muchow flew in No. -566.

4 APRIL 1945 / C 17 / G 283

We went back to Kiel again to mop up, I suppose.

This time Muchow was the pilot with our otherwise intact crew, except Paul Peckenpaugh replaced Lentz as Engineer. We flew in 43-39088, "Gypsy Princess" in the High Squadron.

The flack, while still fairly heavy, was less accurate, and there was no repeat of that Big Bang. However, the 385th did lose two crews. On the return over the North Sea, Crimmins and Ritchie collided and both went down. They were Leads of the Low Flight of the Lead Squadron. Ira remembers that one of them was in a flat spin, but the Group moved on out of sight before he hit the water; there were no chutes sighted. I gave Bill Kozosky, our radio operator, the location and he gave it to Air-Sea rescue, but nothing was ever heard from them. A person could only survive a few minutes in the icy North Sea and this area was far from home.

5 APRIL 1945 / V 18 / G 284

The target was an airfield at Unterschlaughterbach, and we again flew with Muchow as Pilot and a Wilber Wachas as Engineer in place of Lentz in No. 42-32078. "Barbara B". There was no flack. Although we were to drop visually on the target, but the weather was quite different over England and France. In fact, the clouds were so thick and high over England that we were told to assemble on a certain radio in France. On the way there, and climbing en route, we glanced to the left through a temporary hole in the clouds. There was another B-17 on a near parallel course to ours but closing toward us. Then the clouds blanked everything out again. We went up, and I guess he went down, because we didn't collide. (50-50 chance) We never saw him again.

The radio beacon was weak and several commercial stations had our radio compass swinging to several headings. I chose the correct one and we made the correct assembly, but very few of our Group found the proper assembly point. Also, many Forts of other Groups, also lost, joined our formation for a veritable rainbow of tail colors. We went on to drop by PFF on the target airfield. The official report states that the usual formation portrayal was impossible and the participating crews were simply listed and the group to which they attached themselves given. We were No. 3 position. Low Element, Lead Squadron of the 385th.

Occasionally, when the weather got bad like this, "they" would issue a recall after take-off and before assembly. You were supposed to reverse the climb on your splasher beacon and let down there. But, you could never be sure everyone got the recall signal. Now suppose some were still climbing while you were letting down, at the same place?

Many pilots got away from the splasher to let down, but then there was no control at all, and you just took your chances.

On this mission, however, when we got back to Great Ashfield, the country side was almost totally socked. We were circling in the traffic pattern to land, sandwiched between the farms below and a very, very low ceiling. This "open" area had a hazy mist limiting visibility to a % mile or less. Even the B-17 in the traffic pattern ahead was invisible! all of us had all of our running and landing lights turned on to make ourselves as visible as possible. The landing lights on the B-17 were in the leading edge of the wings, just outboard of the engines. Each of us in the traffic pattern would also shoot yellow-yellow flares from time to time to mark his position. We tried to make ourselves as conspicuous as possible because even though we might be positioned in our own traffic pattern correctly, there were many stray Forts trying to get home. And there were so many airfields in East Anglia that the traffic patterns overlapped. We were on our cross wind leg, and I was putting my maps away, when I glanced up and there dead ahead, was two bright landing lights! We converged so rapidly, I had no time to do or say anything. As they closed in a twinkling, I knew I was dead.....

Actually, the landing lights turned out to be only a pair of those yellow-yellow flares and we flew right between them, the pilot had seen them go up from the B-17 ahead of us in the traffic pattern and knew what they were, simply marking his position since he, himself, was invisible in the mist. That moment in which I was certain we'd collided, head on, was probably the scariest moment of my life. I was so weak afterwards I couldn't lift the maps! Obviously, I recovered enough to exit OK after we landed.

7 APRIL 1945 / V 19 / G 285

This mission went to an ordnance warehouse at Gustrow. Although we hit the target visually, there was no flack. However, we did draw fighters this time. Three ME-109's attacked, then a single ME-109 came straight at the formation from the rear. Lanny in the tail and Charles Stewart, the tail gunner on Burich's plane, which was filling in the low diamond, opened up on him. We speculate that one of them must have killed the pilot since the 109 kept straight on and rammed Burich. whatever else the Germans were, they weren't suicidal. Both went down. Lancaster for 'a credit for the German kill. He also almost had to pay for some warped gun barrels. A rigid SOP mandated short bursts of gunfire only. Crow interceded for him, since the German wouldn't break off his attack, and his action was deemed justifiable.

On the way back from this one, George Lentz' oxygen system failed, and George Crow sent him down into the nose with me, thinking there was an extra outlet there. But there was no extra oxygen source in the nose. However, we were letting down to a lower altitude and he was OK. Crow was glad to let down for another reason, too. The windows kept frosting over so that he had trouble flying formation with such poor visibility. Lower, the frost melted away.

We flew in No. 42-107054 on this one.

8 APRIL 1945 / V 20 / G 286

Our destination was a marshalling yard at Hof. We were back in our B-17 "Possible Straight" for this one. Although the flack was light, it was very accurate. A piece of exploding flack went up through the waist, passing between the back-to-back waist gunners and missing them by inches; but without touching either of them. Bill and Pete were happy about that. A hole in the floor and roof was the only damage.

The official strike photos show excellent results. 100% of our bombs fell within the 1000 foot circle of the MPI, and 90% within the 500 foot circle.

9 APRIL 1945 / V 21 / G 287

We hit an airfield at Schlessheim, near Munich. Flack was moderate and fairly accurate. Williams from our Group was shot down, but the bombing results were very good.

We flew in No. 43-37786, "Madam Shoo Shoo," a Fort belonging to the 551st Squadron. Perhaps they were patching that flack hole in our "Possible Straight" picked up yesterday.

We were close enough (and high enough) to clearly see the snow capped Alps.

10 APRIL 1945 f V 22 / Q 288

Another airfield was the target. This time at Nurippin. We bombed visually in No. 42-102636, "Sleepytime Gal." There was no flack at Nurippin, but there was some light but accurate flack at Whittenburg on the way back. A piece of flack struck my headset control box and bent it all out of shape so I couldn't change the settings, however, I had it set on intercom and it still worked there. This flack was not marked on our flack maps so we supposed it was railroad flack moved in overnight. In fact, the Group was letting down to get off oxygen, being briefed free of flack zones. Yet, we could see the other groups, up ahead, getting heavy flack, we wondered why our fearless leader didn't stay higher a little longer, rather than take us through it at the low altitude.

Yet it is interesting to note how good the spy networks for both sides were. We would be issued flack maps before each mission, still wet from the copying process, showing where the railroad flack had moved the day before. And it had. But the Germans were good too. Occasionally, a female voice would call us on our frequency during a mission, asking why we were 2 minutes late to checkpoint 5, and we would indeed be 2 minutes late.!

On this one, Rum Dum dropped out of formation. Here's the story of how she got her name. The crew of Jim Staber had settled on the name of Smokey Stover after a cartoon character for their Fort, but hadn't painted anything yet. But listen to David Frammer:

It's getting close to take-off time and Charles Guffy, our ball gunner, had been in town the night before drinking limey

'beer and was feeling a trifle woozy. We gave him a little oxygen and poured him into the turret. A short while into the flight when we started having all our oxygen checks, someone called Guffey a "Rum Dum". He in turn called someone else a "Rum Dum". On the next oxygen check, when the pilot called for a report, without realizing it, the reports were coming back from all stations as "Rum Dum 1, "Rum Dum 2", "Rum Dum 3", etc. After the mission was over, and we had landed safely, our pilot, Jim Staber, told the crew chief, Ken, that we had changed the name of the plane to "Rum Dum".

Howard A. Muchow had a "pickup" crew and was flying Rum Dum, Serial No. 42-31378 on this mission. Here is his story in his words:

...#378 had already completed 105 missions without an abort and the CO as well as the ground crew, were out to capture the all-time record for the Group. They knew the flack would be as thick as pea soup over and around the Berlin area and they knew the German fighters would be making their determined stand against their reaching the target. Germany might be coming to its knees, but the war was still very real.

These thoughts seemed jumbled as we climbed for altitude over the channel. And how right they seemed going into the target, with the black and grey puffs of flack raining against our old girl. It was like someone throwing gravel, only this metallic gravel was blasting through the airplane. The thought passed through my mind that the guys down below were doing a good job today. Immediately after "Bombs Away", the number 1 engine took a direct hit...then number 3 was hit. As we feathered number 3, I saw that number 1 was on fire and we feathered it. We started losing altitude and falling out of formation, when over the airways we heard bandits being called out by another squadron. A frantic call was sent out on the fighter channel for help and protection from our little friends, and there they came - three beautiful P-51's to help us down and stay with us - one high, one low, with the third dropping his flaps and gear to come alongside and give us the thumbs up and "V" sign. Then he saw the fire in number one engine and up came his flaps and gear and he moved way out. I gave the order to bail out, but the crew wanted to stay with 378 and ride it down, hopefully to friendly territory. Who wanted to check out, first hand, the stories of captured airmen?

"We were losing altitude rapidly, when suddenly ahead I saw an open field and thought I would try my luck. It was downwind and I recall thinking we could not make it...if only we could hang on a little longer and swing the old girl around and set it down. It was like a dream...we were on the ground and rolling, when suddenly we saw troops coming out of the woods toward us. Were they Germans? No. thank God. They were English...and they were just arriving to take over the open field for front line fighter support! We had made it and no one was hurt - only Heaven knows why....Upon our return to Great Ashfield, the FIRST question was "Can Rum Dum fly? The SECOND question was "How's the crew?"...But I will always remember the old girl and how she got us back into friendly territory.

Poor old Rum Dum never made it back to Great Ashfield.

11 APRIL 1945 / V 23 / Q 289

Varnedoe was assigned to 2nd Lt. Harold A. Lovegreen's crew in No. 44-6569 where it flew Right Wing, Low Element, Low Flight, Low Squadron.

By now there were no more oil targets and German factories were no longer a menace. Only tactical bombing in behalf of the onrushing ground forces remained. That is why we again went to a railroad marshalling yard, this time at Inglostat. We bombed it visually with no flack at the target. Bombs away at 1310 hours with excellent results. A real "milk run."

14 APRIL 1945 / V 24 / G 290

Our crew was back in good old No. 43-39123, "Possible Straight." as Left Wing, Low Element, Lead Flight, Lead Squadron. We took off at 0631 and landed at 1357. F/O J. Dolliver Kent replaced Don as Co-Pilot on this mission.

A special mission devolved upon the 8th Air Force to bomb with napalm some German garrisons still holding out along the French coast. The 385th was assigned Royan, France. Although there was haze over the target, we could and did bomb visually. There was no flack.

Napalm was a new weapon, and we were skittish about carrying all that gasoline inside our bomb bays. Some of our crew were smokers and the odor of gasoline was strong!

16 April 1945 Orders of the Day No. 2 from General Spaatz ended the Strategic mission of the 8th Air Force, only some tactical missions remained.

We had another pass, destined to be my last trip to London while in the Army Air Force.

18 APRIL 1945 / V 25 / G 294

We went to yet another railroad marshalling yard. However, this one was at Kolin, Czechoslovakia, near Prague. We were to bomb visually, but some scattered clouds messed up the bomb run and we, in the high squadron, were forced to go around and make another pass. This was a very, very long trip, but there was no flack. Perhaps the Germans thought we couldn't go that far, and I, too, had my doubts, but we did.

We flew as a crew but with Lee N. Withrow as Bombardier and without Mac in our old standby, 32-39123, "Possible Straight."

20 APRIL 1945 / V 26 / G 296

Varnedoe flew with 1st Lt. W. J. Karis crew as Navigator in No. 32-38118, "Miss Fortune" in the 549th Squadron. Karis was Left wing, Low Element, Lead Flight, Lead Squadron. Takeoff was at 0627 and touchdown at 1325.

On my final combat mission the 385th hit some more railroad marshalling yards at Wustermark. There was no flack or other opposition on this visual run which had very good bombing results.

The 385th only flew one more mission in the war, to Utrecht on 2 May 1945, and I was not on it. The 385th sustained the last shot fired in the war against the Air Force. It slightly damaged one B-17.

Enemy opposition to the bombing raids had virtually disappeared by the end of April, the tactical mission of the 8th was also declared at an end after the 2nd of May and no

more combat missions were flown.

On 7 May, Germany unconditionally surrendered. We shot very pistols (flares) in lieu of fireworks, and felt very very happy. We had survived!

It was a doubly good day for me as well, for my promotion to 1st Lt. came through!!

EDITOR'S NOTE: Bob Silver has sent us his diary of his missions—we've run some, will keep running them in the future. He also sent copies of Stars and Stripes issues with stories about the missions he was involved in. We don't have room to reprint all of them yet, but here are the dates and missions: May 7, 1945 (food drop), April 21, 1945 (Berlin,

Munich, Prague), April 16 (Bordeaux), April 4, 1945 (Kiel), March 24, 1945 (Ruhr), Jan 6, 1945 (Cologne, Frankfurt, Karlsruhe), Jan 4, 1945 (Ardennes), Jan 1, 1945 (Rhine River and Moselle), Dec. 13, 1944 (Frankfurt, Merseburg), Dec. 11, 1944 (Coblenz, Bingen), and Dec. 2, 1944 (oil).

Daily German Lesson

Stillgestanden
Stillgestuuden
Stand still

THE STARS AND STRIPES

Daily Newspaper of U.S. Armed Forces
VOL. 5 No. 34—1d.

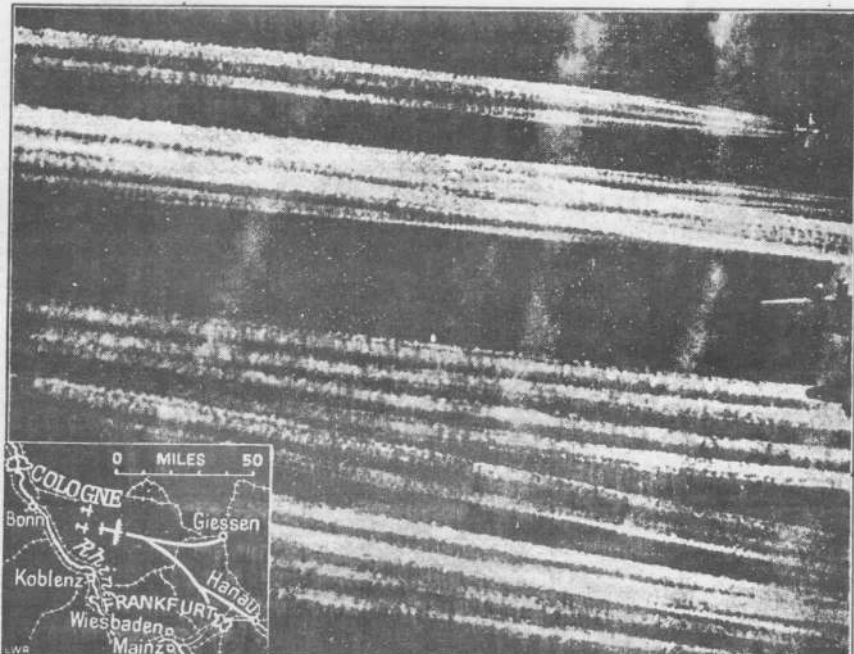
in the European Theater of Operations

WEDNESDAY, Dec. 13, 1944

Daily French Lesson

Je cherche des bibelots
J uh shay TH h day beeb-LOW
I am looking for knick-knacks

Record Bomber Force Flies Against Reich



U.S. Army Air Force Photo

Contrails crisscrossing German skies emphasize the force of heavy bombers dispatched by the Eighth Air Force Monday in a smashing attack upon rail centers in the Reich. It was the largest single-mission force in daylight, and comprised the bulk of approximately 3,200 warplanes of USSTAF—which embraces the 15th Air Force as well—flung against Germany. Map inset shows the area attacked, including Hanau, whose railyards were again pounded Monday.

Ike's Scotty Bites The T/4 Picture Man

PARIS, Dec. 12—Fala of the White House to the contrary, Gen. Eisenhower's little black Scotty with a four-star collar is no publicity hound.

When a high personage visited Gen. Ike's headquarters recently, Cameraman T/4 Albert Meserlin Jr., of East Orange, N.J., bounded up the steps of the general's caravan to snap the picture. The dog, amazed at such

Red Army Battling Nazis Irt Suburbs of Budapest

Red Army troops last night were fighting with bayonets in the north-
*~r u>.zlu—ä uh; ÖrmwvV Tr<st ^jate ^r canifal in the

1,250 U.S. Heavies Hit Reich Again

Following up the previous day's terrific assault on rail objectives in the Reich, more than 2,000 U.S. heavy bombers and fighters for the second straight day hammered rail objectives in the Frankfurt area Tuesday, as well as the Leuna synthetic-oil plant near Merseburg.

Meantime, it was disclosed that all of the synthetic-oil plants in the Ruhr now had been knocked out of production by Allied bombing.

7th Army Stab Develops New Threat to Saar

Upward of 1,250 Fortresses and Liberators of the Eighth Air Force, covered by approximately 900 Mustangs, Thunderbolts and Lightnings of both the Eighth and Ninth, were dispatched Tuesday.

A new threat to Germany's Saar Basin was developing Tuesday as Lt. Gen. Alexander M. Patch's Seventh Army, driving northeast in Alsace toward the Reich frontier, sliced through the Maginot Line defenses and reached Seitz, 13 miles above Haguenuau and only a mile west of one of the main Rhine crossings where the main motor road front northern Alsace leads to Karlsruhe, Mannheim and Stuttgart.

In addition, an unspecified number of Forts and Libs of the 15th Air Force, bad weather on the Blechhammer oil refinery in southern Silesia.

The push to Seitz, which is only four miles south of the junction of the borders of the German provinces of Baden and the Saar Palatinate, may be the opening move in a bid to flank the Germans defending the Saar Basin against Lt. Gen. George S. Patton's Third Army, which was still meeting bitter resistance in two Saarlautern suburbs.

Early unofficial reports indicated the Eighth lost nine bombers and 11 fighters, some of which were believed to have landed in friendly territory. There was no enemy fighter opposition.

Causes Nazis to Crumble

The capture of Haguenuau, accomplished Monday after the Germans had been forced to pull out of this strong position, was said to have caused the Nazi defenses in Alsace to crumble. A late Reuter dispatch said that German resistance along the 30-mile front along the Rhine from Strasbourg to Seitz had collapsed.

One of the few remaining large synthetic-oil plants in Germany, the Leuna plant, which covers one-square-mile area, has been bombed 18 times by the Eighth. Yesterday's attack was made through overcast, bombardiers employing "electronic eye" instruments.

Forging a band around the lower edge of the Saar where it bulges westward

The neutralization of synthetic-oil plants in western Germany has increased the Germans' dependence on Silesian refineries such as live Blechhammer and Odertal in the Reich, and the Oswicim plant in Poland, all within range of the 15th Air Force.

Nine in French 'Gestapo' to Die

PARIS, Dec. 12 (AP)—Nine of U Frenchmen accused of being leaders of a French version of the Gestapo—were exterminated—resistance leaders and utilized medieval-like torture chambers, according to testimony—were senicked

Tommy Gets Tea, Courtesy of Ike

British signal troops maintaining

it's a tax-deductible gift.

Write him, at 4510 SW 62nd Ave, Miami, FL 33155.

Also, he has copy of GO 846 awarding Oak Leaf Clusters to a number of 385th members. It's dated 17 April 1945. Ask for that, too.

If you'd like copies of any of those pages, Bob will send them to you if you will make a \$10.00 contribution (for the first copy, \$5.00 for additional) to the Horse Protection Association of Florida, a non-profit Florida corporation started by his daughter to rescue, rehabilitate, and care for lost and abused horses. They need financial support, and

Hash Marks

Thumb-nail Description Department
A file clerk was heard to comment to a fellow GI, "Boy, that new colonel ought to be drawing flying pay—he's always up the air over something."

SJFun on the Home Front. Pfc Francis A>Schanz spotted this item in his hometown newspaper, the Philadelphia Bul-



letin. A soldier parked his jeep besides a parking meter and a bystander said, "Better put a nickel in that meter, soldier." The GI turned and quipped) wisely, "You put in a nickel mister. It belongs to you as much as to me."

Simple of the Future, "As common as 'ST' in Tokio."

Today's Daffynition. A kiss is a course, procedure cunningly devised for the /nhual stoppage of speech at a moment, when words are superfluous.

For want of a better title we'll label this little verse sent in by Lt. Dwight A. Lee, "Ode To A Sweater Girl."

Brown and white and wooly sweater
Not enough for British weather.
Heavy coats are warmer feeling,
But of figure 'pss revealing.

GI Philosophy. A certain Pfc, moaning because his girl back in the States)*-x abruptly stopped writing, is trying to console himself with the following Ropnd Robin: "A bargain is a good buy. "A good-bye is a farewell. A farewell is to part. To part is to leave. My girl left me without a good-bye. Oh, well, she> was no bargain, anyway."

Drama in One Act. The long-suffering supply sergeant stared glassily at the combat crew member who returned his fleece-;



lined flying pants for exchange. "Okay," snapped the' sarge, "what's wrong. They look all right to me." "Yeah," replied the little guy meekly, "but they chafe me —under the

Action Front. The following communique was issued thistr morning by Sgt. John Bykowski of a? bomb group: "The boys in our barracks caught twelve rats last night. One of our traps is missing."

J. C. W.

"Bp *t. Earl _ Mazo < ■ "U.S. Army Air Force

ONE day last week the Eighth Air Force tucked away in its files another i' amazing record in an already illustrious history when a cocky, transplanted Yankee from' Georgia and seven of his Flying Fortress crew came back from the frigid, 1,300-mile trip' to Nazi war centers in Norway.

The record: 25 consecutive major missions to the most vital enemy targets in Europe since July 17 without once turning back, or "aborting," after being airborne."

With their Fortress Raunchy Wolf, 1 /Lt. Irving H. Frank, of Savannah, Ga., and Jhis'crew, in some 200 hours of combat > flyinj, hit such Nazi strongholds as (Schweinfurt, Regensburg, Hamburg, Bremen, Paris, Gelsenkirchen, Munster, A/B' mshaven and others, shooting down

gunner from Danforth, Me./-and' S/Sgff"iMflf jDli said: "You can have your Arthur M. Boyer, right.waist.gunner .from./ back, Major/ Of all i,"unchy">^oEs"i"rQuqji over Germany, the ■ crew 'agrees"ith-ifi pilot that"; the mission to ■ Munster"some weeks ago was' the "damndest, and toughest?" Lt. Frank tells the"story this way: "We were flying purple heart corner, low squadron, low group . . . before X6 even neared the target about 200 Nazi ■ fighters jumped our formation . . . what with Dornier 217s out there lobbing rockets at us and Messerschmitts, Focke' Wulfs and Junkers 88s attacking like a pack.of mad wolves, our formation came pretty close to breaking up. I never saw those Nazis more determined, not even at Schweinfurt and Regensburg. One Me 109 came head in at ut, his 20mm. guns blinking away like "the devil spitting fire, Westerman, from his nose guns, poured about 200 rounds into him and Del Whitney, in the top turret, added his share. I'm sure that German was dead before he could dive out because he came right straight org and I had to pull-up my wing to let him go under. As he whizzed by,he blew upS "just like a 'heavy piece of flak, jarrifig hell out of our ship.' Then another one skidded in,dead. He shot out a good-part of our right wing before we got him."

Raunchy Wolf's Crew

* We Never Turned Back On a Job'

nine German fighters and aiding in the destruction of numerous others in the process. In all, this crew in four months bombed Germany 17 times, France five times, Norway twice and Holland once; and, despite numerous operations in which Raunchy Wolf itself was battered severely by flak and bullets, none of the 25-mission crewmen have been so much as scratched by enemy fire. *

The Raunchy Wolf's crews, both ground and combat, as well as the plane itself, are the pride of the Fortress station commanded by Lt. Col. Elliott Vandevanter, of Washington.

< The crew is unanimous in attributing the record to: Fine handling of the plane in flight and pin-point teamwork, plus expert land conscientious maintenance on the ground by M/Sgt. George Fleet, Youngs-float, Ohio, crew chief, S/Sgt. Joe Zorzoli, Memphis, Tenn., his assistant, and the others working under them.

But behind that record is the story of an average group of Americans. ■ hailing from Maine to California, and Michigan to Mississippi, who, despite widely separated temperaments and interests on the ground, managed to mould themselves £ f * w/h into a unit that clicked like fine clockwork in the air. The 25-year-old pilot, a slim red-head, who grew a mustache because he forgot to shave it before his first mission, ran soft-drink, peanut and ice cream concessions in Boston theaters in "them days" before 1941. When war came he joined the air forces, married a Savannah girl while he was stationed there, and decided that ■ Savannah "from here on out" would be home.

That week-end in Africa Sgt. Bartholomew shepherded his Fortress crew to the nearest church, and from then on the boys of the Raunchy Wolf were known as the "prayingest" bunch of fliers in their group. Lt. Frank, immediately on his return from that, shuttle mission, assisted Chaplain Jim Kincannon in organizing Friday night services for the Jewish airmen at his station. When Lt. Farrell disappeared between briefing and station time before every mission, the others knew he was at Catholic confessions; and Lt. Watson led the crew's Protestants to church every Sunday morning when he wasn't flying.

Summing up the progress of the aerial war in this operational theater as he saw it develop and grow since July, Lt. Frank pointed out that increased American fighter support is making the heavy bomber job easier. "At first I was skeptical of P47s, then I grew to love them and everybody and everything connected with them," he said. Guessing that the war on this \$ side of the world will be won late in 1944 this battle-wise officer, who has seen and again what Germany has in "the wara of fighter" aircraft, discounts rumors "quick victory." "We're winning," said, "we're pushing the German Air-Fow® farther and farther into Germany... . biwl don't forget there is still plenty of X mHf waffe left. We found that out"rSchweinfur and Munster."

After 25 years against the Nazi without-once turning back, friends of the Raunchy Wolf/rew figure newcomers pouring into \$ the rapidly expanding "Eighth Air Jiorce, -A ought to sit back and take notice when - the "vets" tell them? don't ever sit-^A^ for an enemy jghter /weave around-^nu— shoot like hell; -stay in - tight formation over enemy landkeep the crew "working J like one team; n"; th"; groun'cjew. |

Quotes The Bible
Lt. Frank insists that he and his crew will continue their religious fervor after victory, and often he relates incidents of missions with, stories in the Bible. On one ride over Bremen, he said, "the flak was so thick you couldn't see through it . . . then as we approached the city it opened right in the middle, like the Red Sea, - and; after we passed through we looked back, and it was closed up again. Major Archie Benner was leading us that day, -and I can't

just before we hit Bremen, I'll take your -Thos.2.four. items make up ther Raunchy " group awhile, Maj. Benner,' and right after Wolf's -secret of sqccsss.- "h-

The Combat Crew

Raunchy Wolf's bombardier, 1/Lt. Frank B. Westerman, is a lanky, drawing Texan from Midland, who was a wildcat oil operator before Pearl Harbor. The copilot, 2/Lt. James L. Watson, of Brattleboro, left pre-med school to become a liar, and the navigator, 1/Lt. Martin T. "Fearless" Farrell Jr., of Pass Christian, Miss., once ran a drug store. These four ound out the 25-mission crew of Raunchy Wolf with T/Sgt. Lowell Moomaw, Greenfeld, Ohio, radio gunner, who was a filling station worker; T/Sgt. Delmar R. Whitney, Prativille, Mich., formerly a restaurant manager, now top turretter; S/Sgt. Alfred A. "Pappy" Oldfather, Mercedes, Tex., shipyard welder, turned fair gunner; and S/Sgt. Harvey Snider, Mulkeytown, Ill., mechanic, who was the Wolf's left waist gunner.

S/Sgt. Aubrey Bartholomew, ball turret



385TH CONNECTION TO WATERGATE - CAN YOU BELIEVE IT?

Here's a story out of New York magazine that is astonishing to any of us who followed the Watergate story closely some 20 years ago. You'll remember that President Nixon denied knowledge of the whole affair despite mounting evidence that John Dean, Gordon Liddy, Haldeman and Ehrlichman, Colson, etc., etc., couldn't have acted without the President knowing. After the White House tapes were revealed and the Supreme Court, by a unanimous decision, ordered Nixon to turn over the tapes to the Special Counsel, the "smoking gun" was revealed—Nixon had known about it and was in the middle of the planning from almost day-one.

With that background, read the story. Earl Mazo was our PR Officer for the first year or so in England. He was a staunch Nixon supporter, as we recall—but Haldeman didn't want him listening in, according to this story.

Coincidentally, the Raunchy Wolf story on Page 14 of this issue was written by Earl Mazo.

I WAR STORY

For our obligatory reflection on the twentieth anniversary of Richard Nixon's resignation (see "Woodstuck," page 28), we present biographer RALPH G. MARTIN'S particularly Forrest Gumpian remembrance.

I was in an airport, back in 1969, when I had an idea. I



Richard Nixon, resigned.

I called my old friend Earl Mazo, whom I had known since we covered the war in Europe together for *Stars and Stripes*. He had since become a political correspondent for the *New York Herald Tribune* and had also written one of the best biographies of Richard Nixon. My idea, I explained, was that he propose to the new president that he become the official historian for the Nixon administration; that he go to the White House every day, sit in on meetings, interview staff, and be, essentially, a

fly on the wall. Mazo liked the idea and went on to suggest it to Nixon.

Nixon was delighted with the concept. He had planned to eventually write his own memoirs and thought Mazo's detailed reporting would provide him with excellent background material. He told Mazo to "clear it with the boys and get started."

The "boys," it turns out, were Chief of Staff H. R. Haldeman and chief counselor for domestic affairs John D. Ehrlichman; neither was eager to have an outsider penetrate the White House's inner circle. They stalled and finally—Haldeman

primarily—persuaded the president that this proposal was, perhaps, problematic.

Nixon reluctantly agreed, explained Mazo, but wondered aloud at the difficulty of accumulating material for his memoirs. It was then that Haldeman came up with an alternative suggestion: Why not activate the taping system that Presidents Kennedy and Johnson had used to record selected conversations in the White House? And instead of using the push-button, manual setup, why not deploy a voice-activated machine, a system that would

I record absolutely *everything*?

Dear Ed,

This letter concerns the "Raunchy Wolf". The B-1 7F was delivered to Great Falls, Montana in 1943. It was assigned to Lt. Frank's crew. It was named the "Raunchy Wolf". The nose art was applied in Great Falls. The crew was as follows:

Pilot - Lt. Frank

Co-pilot - Lt. Watson

Navigator - Lt. Farrell

Bombardier - Lt. Westerman

TT - T/Sgt Whitney

Raido - T/Sgt Nooman

BT - S/Sgt Bartholemew

LW - S/Sgt Snyder

RW - S/Sgt Boyer

TG - S Sgt Oldfather

The aircraft was flown by the crew to Scotland, then on to Great Ashfield. On its 11th mission it was flown by another crew. On returning to base it was involved in a mid-air collision, the only survivor was S/Sgt John Adams, the Tail Gunner.

Lt. Frank's crew then flew "Winnie the Pooh" for several missions. Then they were assigned another B-17F, and renamed it the "Raunchy Wolf". On its 24th mission to Munster it was badly shot up, so the last mission was flown in "Winnie the Pooh".

A lot of the credit goes to the ground crew who worked long hours to keep the aircraft flyable.

The "Raunchy Wolf" was repaired and taken over by another crew.

I went on and joined the 305th B.G. 366th Sqdn and flew 35 more missions for a total of 60.

Sincerely yours,

Arthur M. Boyer
521 Elderberry Ave.
Ontario, Calif 91762

EDITOR'S NOTE: Art, you were young and carefree-60 missions!

Dear Ed,

As the Navigator on the "Raunchy Wolf" I'm responding to the questions raised by Ian McLachlan and Steve Birdsall in the HLH of Aug '94.

The "Raunchy Wolf's" last mission was December 30, 1943, to Ludwigshafen. We were a replacement crew on our fifth mission. Pilot-Earl Frye, Co-pilot-Richard Miller, Navigator-John Bartemus, Bombardier-Thomas Hollingsworth.

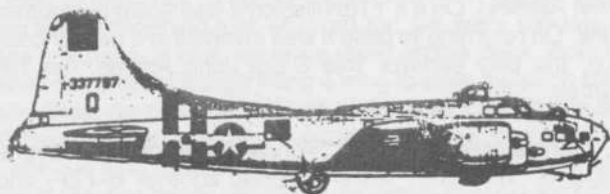
Just before the target we had to leave the formation because of mechanical failure, number 2 engine quit and shortly thereafter, number 3 gave out.

While limping back toward the channel, 6 or 7 FW-190s attacked, killing the engineer, Frank Piter in the top turret, the rest of the crew bailed out except Miller, Co-pilot and yours truly. By that time we were too low, so I joined Miller in the cockpit and we crash landed, wheels up in a field in Northern France. The plane had minimal damage before arriving at the scrap yard.

We both stayed with the French underground until May, 1944 when Miller was captured at the Spanish frontier & I was captured on the Swiss border.

After a couple of months as guests of the Gestapo, we finally arrived at Stalag Luft I.

John W. Bartemus
62 Westland Ave
Rochester, NY 14618



EDITOR'S NOTE: Here's an interesting story taken from the Second Schweinfurt Assn, newsletter, telling of an Americans observations when he was stationed at Schweinfurt in 1955.

In the 1940s, at 15 years of age, I worked as a projectionist in our local movie theater. I followed the movie newsreels every day and stayed glued to the newspaper stories of the war. I lost my scout leader on the USS Franklin in the Battle of Midway, bringing home very early the price we were paying in WWII. The news of air raids on targets in Europe were very interesting to me. I remember vividly reading of the heavy losses of men and planes over Ploesti and the devastating losses in the raids on Schweinfurt. Little did I know what lay ahead in my life regarding that city.

To fulfill my service obligation, I volunteered in 1954. I was sent to the 10th Infantry Division at Ft. Riley, KS. After Basic, I went to signal school to become a radio operator. In July of 1955, we were ordered to replace the 1st Infantry Division in Germany. My 86th Regiment was sent to Schweinfurt. I was Crew Chief of one of our mobile radio relay stations with a range that covered the south half of Germany.

One day, with one of our officers, we drove to the valley sites of the ballbearing factories. "TO SAY THAT THE AIR FORCE MISSION WAS ACCOMPLISHED WOULD BE AN UNDERSTATEMENT". We walked through a flattened scene of total destruction. In 1955 the German economy was very weak and this area lay just as it was in 1943-45. Then it hit us; the thoughts of long range Air Force missions to hit these very well defended factories; the courage, the fear, the bravery, the loss of life and aircraft, the heroes, especially those in 1943 who twice endured very deadly missions.

From what we learned in intelligence, flying into Schweinfurt was more of a hornets' nest than we ever knew. Our Regiment lived in campus type facilities at Ledward Barracks. During the war it was a Luftwaffe training center with an airstrip for small planes. 1 1/2 miles east from Conn Barracks, which had been an airfield for larger German aircraft and maintenance facilities. Throughout the area were numerous anti-aircraft sites. Surely you have seen detailed maps of all of this. We lived in and around it!

In December, '55, we were permitted to bring families to Schweinfurt. After much searching, I found a small apartment for my wife and 2 year old son. Lo and behold, it was on Cramer Strasse, on the second floor over a bakery, one block from the bearing sites. We had to evacuate once as undetonated bombs were unearthed on the street behind. The military post had 2 evacuations when construction crews turned up U.S.A.F. bombs in other areas. War has its tragedies on all sides. Our landlord's girl-friend had lost her husband and one of her twin daughters to the bombing runs.

We heard virtually nothing about what happened to airmen who bailed out in the area. Were they treated well, or tortured? Were they imprisoned there or elsewhere? We had tiny hints of an underground, but, all in all everyone was very tight-lipped 10 years later. We were treated well by the Germans. Actually, it was about this time that the new German Limited Army was formed and the local citizens beat up their own soldiers. They had had their fill of uniforms and weapons under the Kaiser and Hitler.

Letter to Robert C. Smith

Dear Mr. Smith:

It was a pleasure speaking with you on the telephone last night.

Greg Parlin and I have been working for a number of years on chronicling the squadron insignia for all the heavy bomb groups in the 8th Air Force. This has been a monumental undertaking, and we are down to five patches to enable us to go to publication. We need either an original example preferable or a color Xerox of the 549th Red Devil patch. This does have to be the original rather than a reunion patch as the book is striving to portray the original insignia which, in many cases, also reflects the local industry that produced these.

I appreciate any help you can give me and look to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Mark D. Griffith, M.D.
711 Cassell Lane
Roanoke, VA 24014
(703) 981-7723 - 800 658-7186

EDITOR'S NOTE: Lynn White, who joined the 385th to replace our T/Sgt Browning in Photography after he was shot down, has put together a personal history that contains lots of interesting stories. We'll start with this one, telling of going down on the Berlin mission of October 6, 1944.

We'll be covering some of his POW experiences in future issues. If you want the complete text, write him at 8530 So. 114th St., Seattle, WA 98178.

SHOT DOWN AT 25,000 FT

I was shot down on October 6th, 1944. Earlier in the day we had been briefed to fly at 28,500 feet and that we were going to be in the range of 350 heavy flak guns over our target. I was damn near flying "tail end Charlie" that day. In fact I think we were "lead" on the rear element. I think we lost one ship as we crossed Holland and then cut down into Germany. I think we lost this ship to a flak train. They used to have these flak guns mounted on trains which would enable them to keep you in range as long as they could. They would be traveling the same general direction as you were and they could continue to "fire away" for a considerably long time. Just before we started our bomb run somebody said "you better close up (fly tighter formation for mutual gunnery protection), we're going to get our ass shot off back here." The bomb bay doors were open, we were on our bomb run. There were ten men on the crew, I made the 11th as photographer. About this time somebody yells "fighters". I was working in the camera well, in the corner of the radio room. All of a sudden I am looking out through a hole to the ground that is at least a foot around. It's possible that we had been hit by a 20mm cannon shell. I read about this later in an Eighth Air Force book that the Germans were using new tactics. The Germans began to use our tactics whereby we had tight (close) formations you could bring massive firepower on any German attack coming in. They did the same thing. They amassed their fighters and made one pass with each of their groups. We were the second group that got hit in this manner. We got hit three times by three different groups of fighters. I would say that the whole thing didn't last over 90 seconds. When it was over we were on fire between No. 1 and No. 2 engines. Our right waist gunner was down. I tried to put on my chute, but couldn't. I did manage to get the "walk around" bottle. I then managed to get my chute on and headed for the back of the airplane. Almost every pilot that I flew with would get with me and say "Look! My crew is trained. We know how to do "this", we do "this" if we ditch. YOU get the hell out of our way, we will take care of you. But you stay out of our way, 'cause we know what we are going to do". So during this emergency I headed to the back and the ball turret gunner came scrambling up out of his turret. He was climbing so fast that he was still climbing when he was out of his turret. Our bombs were still on board. We had 5,000 lbs of incendiaries. That helps you make up your mind pretty fast also. I headed for the back and saw the waist gunner had taken a direct hit in the chest. He had on a flak suit. The lining on it was white and it looked like there were chicken feathers all over the place. I lifted the flak suit to take a look and then put it back down again, as he was a goner. I was then trying like hell to get out of the way, like I was told to do. I pulled the red handle on the door. This was supposed to pull the pins out of the hinges, then we

were supposed to kick the door and the slipstream was supposed to clear the door away so we could bail out. I got down on the door and was pulling with both my hands and feet on the little red handle and nothing happened. So I then managed to unlatch the door. The door had been hit, but it then unlatched. The door didn't blow closed. I got across the ship and lunged forward and hit it with my shoulder and went out the door. In the first two or three steps that I was taking to go out the door it suddenly went through my mind "what if I can't find the ripcord for the parachute on the way down?". I grabbed the ripcord. So now I was in the "head down" position in the slipstream and I moved the ripcord. It only takes about an inch of movement to activate the chute. When the chute opened it popped me like one would pop a blacksnake whip. I was probably at about 25,000 ft when I bailed out. It all happened so quick. We were at 28,500 when we were hit. Our B-1 7 was in a slow, flat spin and continuing to turn with smoke coming out of it. The ball turret gunner also bailed out and landed fairly close to me. I didn't see him jump, but we spent that night in a small German airbase jail. I passed out initially when I jumped. When I came to, this German fighter was circling me. I gave him a salute and he came back at me. It was a very clear day, you could see forever. I could see people running on the ground.

"HITTING THE DECK"

I kept coming down in my chute. What really got to me is that I kept thinking "my gosh, how quiet it is here", not a sound, really amazing. The ground started coming up faster. I was in level, open country, except for about a two block square area of trees. I was coming in backwards to these trees. I had heard, or been told, that I could spill air (for controlling the chute) by pulling on the shroud lines in order to change your direction. When I tried to do that I found that my harness had been so tight that I had to "scootch" down in order to get into it. What happened was that from the impact of the chute opening the risers were so far above my head that I couldn't reach them. I was trying to spill air, and I couldn't. I was thinking "I'm going to hit those trees" but I didn't. When I landed it felt like my feet came right up through the top of my head. Apparently this is when I got the crushed disk in my back that has been a continued medical problem for me since that time. I hit my head and I landed about a foot from the trees. I don't know exactly where in Germany I landed. Depending on what part of the flat spin we were in when someone jumped out of the airplane, you could be miles from each other when you bailed out. I don't know if it was the radio operator, waist gunner, or tail gunner, but two of them landed together and one of them was killed by German civilians. I saw the survivor about a week later at Dulag-Luft and his head was about the size of a pumpkin. All the discoloration was still on his head, the blue, green, and orange colors where they really beat him. Surprisingly he did survive. Hitler had declared US Airmen "Luft Gangsters" and civilians were allowed to kill American airmen on sight without retaliation.

I admired the little Jewish guy on the airplane. The reason that he came bailing out of the ball turret the way that he did was that he fired at one German fighter going down and when he sighted in on another one, he didn't have any guns. The first fighter had shot his two .50 caliber guns off. When

I was in the airplane I remember that I had a flak vest on the floor beneath me. Apparently my camera had been hit because my flying coveralls looked like someone had taken a razor blade from the knee to the crotch and just slashed them hundreds of times, they were hanging in shreds. I suspect that it was flak or something that had hit the camera and it literally blew up.

WELCOME TO GERMANY

When I landed on the ground I got out of my chute, hid it under a pile of brush and leaves. I didn't have a side arm on me. We had been told that when we went in deep not to have them as they would get us killed. (Any sign of an armed aviator would provoke the Germans into killing them) Apparently, there was a girls school nearby where I landed. Two girls found me and were screaming. Then here comes another group. You may have seen movies of the group of farmers with the pitchfork. Well, there was the guy with the pitchfork. I carried a hunting knife in my boot in case I came down in trees I could cut my harness loose. I reached down and got my knife and handed it to him (farmer with the pitchfork) handle first. That seemed to cool the situation. So then they wanted me to get my chute and I went and got it. They marched me up to a something like a big estate house in a big open central area. There were cobblestones, little houses or sheds. It looked like something that was for the workers. So they took me in there and had me stand two or two and one-half feet from the corner, lean forward and put my nose in the corner with my hands behind me. You are off balance and can't do anything.

That night a lone guy came up with a horse and buggy. He was some type of home guard and he took me to this German airfield. He was an old fella. It was just the two of us. I told him that I had to go to the bathroom. As I recall it was inside the house, but it was like an open latrine. I threw my escape photos in there and something else that they hadn't initially found on me when I was captured. I remember that they did have my escape kit, because I remember them going through the money that was in the kit. I was put with the ball turret gunner and he spoke German. The Germans asked him "Sind Sie Jude?" (Are you Jewish?) and he replied "Ja, Amerikaner Jude" (Yes, an American Jew. Then we asked for "essen" (food) and said that we "hat kine essen" (had not eaten) and they brought us some kind of soup. It was cold, but we hadn't had anything since four o'clock that morning before briefing and it tasted pretty good.

The next day they took us out to a crossroads where there was kind of a little general store and tavern, nothing else. Pretty soon a truck comes by with one long guy in it. He is the bombardier of another airplane. The story that he told me was that he was on his bombsight with the chest pack right beside him. The first time that he knew anything was when he was in midair and his chest pack was in the same position. He reached out in midair and put it on while he was falling. He would have had to have been at 28,000 or 25,000 ft in order to have the time to put the pack completely on.

MY SHORT VISIT TO BERLIN

They put on a train with one guard. Pretty soon we had to get off the train as the most of the train stations had been bombed out and went to the underground (subway). When this guard was walking with his rifle we were walking behind him. When he took off, we were right on his heels. If looks could kill, we would have been dead from the looks the civilians were giving us. We were still in our flight gear so there was no mistake as to who we were. We were in Berlin when this happened. We got off the subway and got on a bus. This is when we picked up this big guy, this big ugly guy. About this time we got caught in an air raid. We had to get off the bus and go into an air raid shelter with all of these Germans. The guard didn't pay any attention to us. When the raid was over we got back on the bus. The bus was a two-story bus with stairs winding around the back of the bus to the upper level. He had us over in the corner, out of the way where the people could get to the stairway, the three of us. This big burly guy starts towards us. I thought to myself "I'm going to get it, but I'm going to do my best to take you out. You start it and I'm going to try to end it for you. I don't know how, but I'll try." He comes walking toward me, turns around and slips me a cigarette and continues walking.

We wound up at Berlin Spandau Airbase. We were in the jail there and got a real brief interrogation. They didn't do much. What got me was they had a guard with us and every time an officer walked down the hallway the guy was "popping" to attention, with his rifle and the full works, the click of the heels. I figured "Oh, my gosh! you don't have to go through all that when you are inside". The next morning they put us on a small bus and traveled through Berlin to Frankfurt. I have never seen such devastation in all of my life. We drove through miles and miles of nothing but rubble where it looked like they pushed aside some of it with a bulldozer in order to make a path to get through it. There wasn't one living thing, not anything anybody could live in or survive in. I guess this was a result of the English doing their job (American bombed by day, English by night) where this one night they would hit between 114th street to 160th street and the next night they would hit between 160th and 180th.

ALL AVIATORS GO TO FRANKFURT

I honestly don't remember how we got from Berlin to Frankfurt. I know that when we got to Frankfurt we were each placed in little individual cells with just a small narrow bunk with room to stand beside them, that was all. The rooms had steel walls. Each room had an individual thermostat in it, whereby they could turn the heat up or down. One of the guys that was there passed the word down to us "if they turn the heat up in your room too much, beat on the door and tell them that you have to go to the bathroom. If you do that somebody else will yell in order to get the guards attention and you can turn the heat down, or up while they aren't looking." I remember it being so damned hot. Down the hall there was a latrine. So the guy

that interrogated me spoke better English than I did. I'm from down at the edge of the Missouri Ozarks and he had been going to college in Boston. He knew both the correct English and the slang in our language. One of the first things that he said was "on the day that you were shot down you sent so many planes against Germany and we shot down so many"..I said "really, that's not too bad, even though I was in one of them." he said, "yes, we know that you fly on 5% anticipated losses." We did, that was a fact. He said "did it every occur to you that after 20 missions that you were statistically dead?" He was right, I was on my 21st mission. There wasn't anything real bad. All the PR (Public Relations) photos that we had been taking as part of our job in photo. The Germans had newspapers from all over our country with shots from our own lab. I had taken a lot of them. They had a file on our bomber group that was pretty extensive. There were shots like "Johnny Jones" getting promoted, guy leaning out of the cockpit with their thumbs-up, stuff like that was being sent home. He had a big big scrapbook on my unit. I don't know what specific information he was trying to get out of me. He did ask me one thing that I specifically remember. I had shot (photographed) a change-of-command ceremony just a short time before I was shot down. Our 27 year old "full bird" colonel was going back to the war college to get his star. The interrogator asked me "who is Colonel Jumper on your base?" I said "who?" He said "Colonel Jumper." I said "you must have the wrong base, I never heard of him." I had shot the pictures of the change-of-command and Colonel Jumper had been the new incoming commander. This had happened less than a week before I was shot down and they already had the information as who was the new commander on the base. They knew that he was there, but they hadn't figured out why he was there. They had a diagram of schematic of the base, how the runways were laid out, the whole bit. He did call me back in later. He said "do you use infra-red film?" I don't know if I did right or if I did wrong, but I said "yes, we use it in a percentage of our cameras. There is no camouflage in Germany that we don't know about." They never physically abused me when I was being interrogated. They offered me cigarettes, which were issued.

(All aviators captured in Germany first went to the Luftwaffe Intelligence and Evaluation Center, Auswertestelle West, which is seven miles northwest of Frankfurt, Germany. Initially interrogations usually took from one to four weeks. When it was determined the aviator had given up all the information he was going to, he was transferred to Dulag-Luft. Dulag-Luft was a distribution center located in the center of Frankfurt/Main. Later in the war Dulag-Luft was moved to Wetzlar, Germany, which is about 33 miles northwest of Frankfurt.)

Letters to the Editor:

Dear Ed,

Irene and I were going to Minneapolis and in the mail we took along was the latest edition of the Hardlife Herald. Irene read it to me from cover to cover, and it's the first time we actually discussed World War II and the 385th Bomb Group in detail. We thoroughly enjoyed your comments and all of the information that was packed into this edition.

We have a national convention in Oregon the same week as the 385th gathering in Omaha. Good luck on your get-together, greet my old friends, and God Bless.

Kindest personal regards,

Warren Diederich
Box 406
Fargo, North Dakota

Dear Ed.

I thought I'd better let you know my new address and request you publish it in HH. Like a tortise emerging from hibernation, I'm beginning to wake up and return to a higher level of activity for the group. This includes catching up on correspondence and I seem to spend a lot of my time apologising but I've discovered that not all my mail has kept track with my moves

Enclosed are copies of some recent correspondence and I'll apologise en bloc to the group because I know people have written and not yet had answers but things this past few years have been difficult what with divorce, moving home and the pressure of a deadline I'd committed to for the last book.

David Wade tells me the 385th are hoping to be over in 1995 - I hope so and look forward to seeing you. Also enclosed are some pictures with captions/queries on the reverse - if these can be slotted in they might generate interest and further information.

All the best
Ian McLachlan
10 All Saints Green
Worlingham Beccles
Suffolk NR34 7RR
(0502) 713253



T/Sgt E.R. Fuller

Can anyone remember him and why this picture was taken?



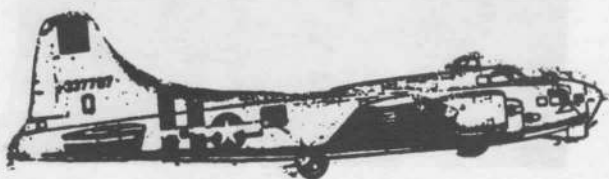
After the Luftaffe's visit - who remembers that night?



German bomb crater



Crew Bailed Out!
Wreckage of "Half n Half"
Who were the crew?



I believe this was on return from Berlin
Col. Van on left - is it Bill Tesla on the right?

EDITOR'S NOTE: No, it's not Bill Tesla.

Dear Ed:

The picture on page 23 of the Aug. HLH is of my wife Kate and myself Bill Wray. Thanks for printing it. You will note that she shows better than I do but it is true in person as well.

I was squadron leader with 548th Sq. arriving Great Ashfield in Mar 44, returning stateside, March 45. Maybe this letter may help me locate other of my crew members or other pilots who I'd love to contact.

Please thank the Gordons and if you can supply me with their address, I can personally thank them.

Sincerely,

Bill Wray
1022 Egret Court
Dunedin, FL 34698-8238



Dear Ed,

Enclosed is a poem I wrote 50 years ago when our crew was assigned "Lil Audrey". We flew our first 3 missions and they were 94-95-96 missions for "Lil". We counted over 80 flak holes after the 3rd mission. "Lil" was out of commission for a number of weeks. She was repaired in order to have her complete 100 missions - this was done later. The third mission for us happened to be Mersberg, Don Williams Crew - 551st Sqdn.

The poem was published in several parts of the country in 1944. They reprinted it here in Tioga, ND, June 8 of this year. The photo was of me also taken in 1944. (Navigator)

We spend June thru October in Tioga, ND (my home town). Retain residency in Washington but live in north foot hills of Yuma, AZ January thru March each year.

P.S. Since we couldn't keep diaries while flying combat - I have the Stars and Stripes saved - they identified our missions each following day. During the period, we flew our 35 missions.

Sincerely,

Warren L. Larson
Lt/Col. USAF (Ret)
Box 655
Tioga, ND 58852

EDITOR'S NOTE: Tioga is in North Dakota in case some of you don't know. It's up there close to Williston.

A TRIP WITH THE EIGHTH

Called from sleep and dreams of home,
We treked to eat while the moon still shone;
Then we walked again to the briefing room,
To plot our enemies impending doom.

With the cloak of darkness still like a mantle,
We took a lift to our flying castle;
To ready ourselves and be on hand
For call to stations as times demand.

With engines started and ship all set,
Our call to roll comes on VHF;
Moving out in the scattered stream
We find ourselves in the searchlights' gleam.

The runway markers are flashing past,
And the ground recedes beneath our grasp;
The task is ours-we're on our own,
To fill the position assigned our throne.

Climbing through this shadowed sky,
I pity those who do not fly;
For no one here could put in paint,
These changes seen as man nears Saint.

Fleeting mists still hide the glint,
Of ancient bodies faintly lit;
And gray dawn chases shadows on
As darkness changes into dawn.

Joining formations-'til our mighty roar
Rocks the ground and the very doors;
Of specks so far below our wings
We feel as if we all were kings.

Flying through these painted skies,
We're on a mission for our Allies;
To weaken those who fear our might,
And know themselves our cause is right.

Thru flak and fighter we struggle on
To reach our target just beyond;
And drop our load of deadly missiles,
That form a pattern among the trestles.

Limping back from our finished trip,
I pray that He will spare our ship;
That we may fly thru another mist,
And weaken those who still resist.

A second more and Lil's* wheels meet,
The lonesome way of surfaced street;
We taxi back to our hardstand,
And leave our love with the Master hand.

-Lt. Warren Leverne Larson, Somewhere in England

*Lil Audrey, our B-17 Flying Fortress

Dear Ed:

Thanks for the Post Script to Ed Hughes' letter on page 21 of the August newsletter. Your assessment of my character was pretty much on the mark. Tom Kenny and I would never have tolerated such behavior. I really can't recall any such incident ever happening. Furthermore, I have never owned any kind of hand weapons in my life. On the other hand, if one pair of hand made boots and one tailored uniform constitutes a collection, I plead guilty.

On 25 July, I reported to the VA Medical Center for a Pre-OP physical to see if I was healthy enough to undergo surgery for a knee replacement. I never left the hospital. On the 27th, I was cut from the chin to my knees and underwent a quadruple heart by-pass. Believe me that's the last physical I ever take. Everything has gone well and I am slowly getting back to normal.

Looking forward to Omaha in '95 and hope to see you and Jane then. Anne sends her best and we pray that you are both well and fit to enjoy life.

Take the greatest of care.

Leo LaCasse

P.S. Keep up the great work on Hardlife

Dear Ed,

We are going to England. We will first stop off and see my dear old friend Annie Hayward Gordon and look around her country side. Then we will go over to Ipswich and see another friend, a Ron Bengston who showed us around on the mini-reunion back in Oct. of 1984. We will get a car and show my wife around Great Ashfield area where I spent two years with the 550th Bomb Grp. Ed, I was looking over some old Hardlife papers and I ran across a report on the Tutow and Rostock missions. Well, I made the both missions and they left a little excitement out on the Rostock one. The one was a hot one and a lot of fighters on us. The target was on the water's edge, then next to it was a factory which I found out later from my old school buddy back home, when I got out of the service. Next to the factory was a couple of long buildings with the big PW on top. We went inland around the target and in from the back full throttle like hell and hit the target and headed home. We were jumped (by a lot of fighters FW's, MEI 09 & JV88's). One JV88 made a pass at us from the rear from 4 o'clock high and put a line of bullets down the right wing and hit No. 3 and No. 2 & 1. No. 3 was running hot later and 1 & 2 were knocked out. We had to feather No. 1 but No. 2 was windmilling and could not feather it from low-hydraulic pressure. We lost the group and went down to the clouds and hid in them. We wound up about 600 feet in and out of clouds and all the instruments were knocked out. We finally lost the fighters and flew toward home. We got the bell to bail out once for Coulter, our pilot, could see land from a break in the clouds. We kicked out the door after pulling out the huge pin, then got the bell to stay in. The land the pilot had seen was the frozen islands over the North Sea. If we would have bailed out we would have drifted out over the sea with 25 foot waves. We made it back to our base on two engines and cut No. 3 after we hit the runway and it started to smoke. We didn't have much rubber left with the brakes smoking. Getting back to Rostock, my buddy from back home, a pilot was down there in the PW camp on his 13th mission and found out from him when I got home from service. I asked him what stalag camp he was in and he said, no stalag camp but a PW camp in Rostock and some damn bunch of our bombers let a couple go too early and knocked out the brewery and I lost the weekly bottle of beer. I said, Ray, I am sure sorry we hit that brewery, Ouch Ray, end of story.

Well, Ed, I know this is true because I have a list of all missions from 1 to 296 on April 20, 1945, Walls was lead ship. He also came back to the states on my crew to Bradley Field Con. Well, Ed, stay healthy and see you in Omaha, God be willing. Take care and God bless,

Your old buddy,

Paul Ryan

PS Ed, I was looking at the Oct. 1993 Hardlife paper and they left my Co-pilot's name off the list. He lives in Spokane all his life He and his wife were there. Ed, we got him in LA in 1943 as a co-pilot. He was a Capt. at West Point and wanted to get overseas. He stayed in service 25 years and came out a Lt. Col. Ret.

Dear Ed,

On July 13, 1994, four of us, from our 550th crew met some 49 years later, and needless to say there's been a little change! From left to right in the enclosed photograph, we are:

Ralph Mignone - Pilot
Joseph Moran - Radio Operator
Paul K. Lovegren - Flight Engineer
Gerard Asmus ■ Navigator

The mini-reunion took place at my home in Babylon, N.Y. with Moran driving up from North Carolina and Lovegren flying from California to Washington, D.C. and driving from there to Babylon. Gerry Asmus lives out on the East end of Long Island and we've met frequently over the past several years.

Our Co-pilot, Lawrence Coggiola was contacted at his place of business in Bossier City, Louisiana but he was going to be away on business and could not join us. We had fun talking about him, in his absence, and he was unable to contradict anything we said.

It was a fun get-together, rehashing old times and one question was raised which no one could answer. It was - why didn't Asmus ever receive the Purple Heart for the wounds he sustained on our Mission to Ulm back in 1945. I know I had reported it upon our return to base, after having left our formation when our Oxygen System & Instrumentation System had been damaged by Flak.

I thought you might use the photo in the next issue of the 385th bulletin.

Cordially,

Ralph Mignone
P.O. Box 567
Babylon, New York 11702



Dear Ed,

I echo Bob Smith's comments in the latest Hardlife Herald on your effort in putting out the Herald. I enjoy receiving each copy. However, as time goes by, less and less names and events are familiar.

To refresh some memories my name is Charles Hill. I was a member of Leo LaCasse's crew #2-6 on A/C 42-30250 which I flew as AEG when it was picked up. Later I was replaced as AEG by Tex Blansit.

Fifty years later I found out from Leo that I was replaced by order of someone above him I suppose.

Also I am the gunner who lost part of his finger while stationed at Lewistown, Montana, prior to going overseas.

Our ship was named the "Yank" before we crashed at an RAF base. Second plane became "Lady Ann."

Could write a really long letter but better save some events should we meet at a Reunion.

Sincerely,

Chuck Hill
Original member
of the 548th and
385th
85 Belmont Est.
Franklin, ND 28734-8005

Would also appreciate getting Leo LaCasse's address.



**YOU KNOW
IT'S GOING TO BE
A BAD DAY WHEN:**

- You wake up face down on the pavement
- You call Suicide Prevention and they put you on hold
- You put your bra on backwards and it fits better
- You find a 60 Minutes news team waiting outside your office
 - Your birthday cake collapses from the weight of the candles
- Your son tells you he wishes Anita Bryant would mind her own business
- You want to put on the clothes you wore home from last night's party—and there aren't any
- You turn on the news and they're showing emergency routes out of the city
 - Your twin sister forgets your birthday
- You wake up to discover that your waterbed broke and then realize you don't have a waterbed
- Your horn goes off accidentally and remains stuck as you follow a group of Hell's Angels on the freeway
 - Your wife wakes up feeling amorous and you have a headache!

385th BGMA APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP

Please Print

LAST NAME, First, MI.

Spouse's Name

Street or P.O. Box #

() J
Telephone Number

City, State, & Zip Code

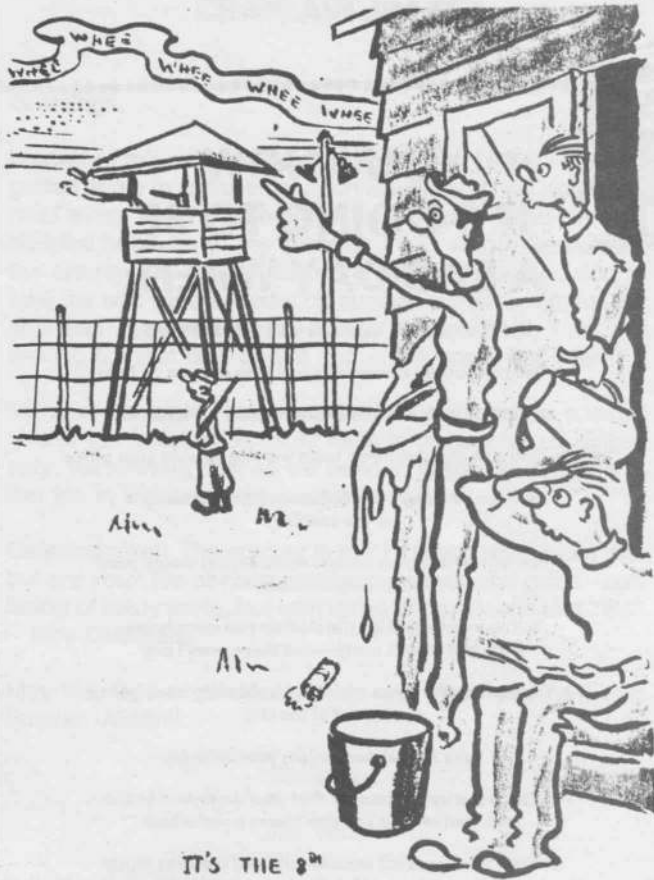
Squadron or Support Unit

The annual dues are Ten Dollars (\$10.00)
Life-time memberships are one payment of \$100.00
Make Check out to "385th BCMA" 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.

Another cartoon from the POW cartoon book.



GERMAN CITY MISSING

Of all the sports, air raids were the most popular. The 8th Air Force and RAF planes frequently passed over our camp on the way to objectives. We would stand in the sports field and cheer as if we were at a football game, calling "Over, over!"

When the Germans made us stay in barracks we would hang out the windows and yell. Then the Jerries took shots at us—and no fooling. The air raids brought hope, and though we could no longer be up there, we pulled for our buddies from below.

Dear Ed,

The Connecticut State Chapter of the 8th Air Force Historical Society, was pleased to receive an American Flag which flew over the Capitol on D-Day, June 6, 1994.

Congressman Rosa DeLauro (D-Ct) presented the Flag to the State Chapter.

Nancy and I send out best to you and Jane and trust it is not too warm for you in N.D.

Till then,

Bob Valliere

Left to Right: Ahern (Secy), DeLauro, Ruggie (Pres), Valliere (Treas)



385th BGMA

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