

CHAPLAIN JIM'S THOUGHTS

Hello Fellow Vets,

I want to thank Ed Stem, our Editor of the HLH, in public, for continually putting out a fine newsletter. Printing his letter written after VE Day certainly brought a lot of memories. The "home-by-Christmas" sure was a hope that passed two Christmas's. I remember saving all my gifts until Christmas Day and then opening them. Boy what a day with tears galore.

Time has passed, since those days, faster and faster. So don't wait to do those things you have been wanting to do. Like mowing the lawn, washing the windows or getting back to attend your place of worship.

As a chaplain, I don't keep reminding you of your need for religious regularity because I "have-to" but because I truly believe it is the best way of life. Try it you'll like it!!

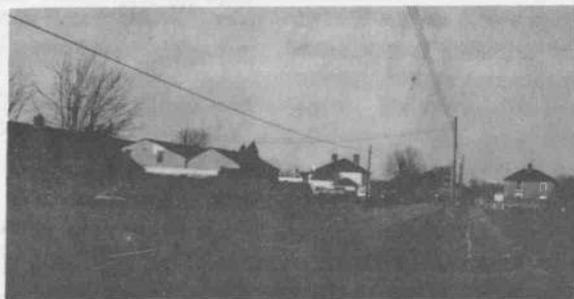
That's one sermon. Now here is another.

Jesus chose to die and he gave up His spirit without any reactions of violence on His part. He heard voices that were for and against Him. he experienced violence of which we cannot ever imagine whaX-it was like. And yet He was Victorious over all of these things and He went through all of these experiences for you and for me.

How do we react to what Jesus has done for us?

Sincerely with Love.
Jim

Editor's Note: Memories! Thanks to John & Lucy Ellise for these.



The old Depot and Cottages (once our home)
Ashfield Road Elmswell. 1994.
What happened to the Water Tower?



Great Ashfield 1994



Facing West Ocean Grove Lane, Botany Bay Farm, on right
A frozen fruit business on the site of former hanger. 1994



The only remaining Nissenhut Gt. Ashfield 1994



Gt. Ashfield 1994



Shop corner - looking out at Baker's second mill.
Elmswell 1994



Elmswell Church 1994
The 80 foot elm trees that once surrounded it gone, Dutch
Elm Disease



(One Derelict Hut) Botany Bay Farm House in background
1994



1994 Gt. Ashfield



Elmswell Post Office (Leeks Shop as it was) Feb. 1994



What's left of Baker's Mill and Site of the old Albatros
Garage (Next Railway Crossing) Elmswell 1994



The Fox Elmswell Level Crossing Feb. 1994



Gt. Ashfield 1994



Charles Coleman	March 1996
Earl Cole	August 1996
Gene Silberberg	August 1996
Darren P. McGuire	
Dari G Messenger	
John Basaraba	June 1996
Edward F. McCarthy	March 1996
Robert L. Yates	March 1996

Robert L. Yates

Robert L. Yates, 80, Big Lake Village, Mo., died Monday, March 11, 1996, at the Fairfax, Mo., hospital.

Mr. Yates, who was well known in Falls City, was the superintendent and concessionaire at Big Lake State Park from 1958 until retiring in 1981. Before that he was employed by the Phillips Service Station in Mound City; at a defense plant in Kansas City, Kan., and was manager of the Black Oil Co. in Mound City until 1958.

Born in Mound City on Feb. 26, 1916, he made his home in Mound City after his marriage to Elaine Wyman in Tarkio, Mo. on May 3, 1939, and they moved to Kluisas City in 1941. He was graduated from Mound City High School and was a B-17 pilot in the 8th Air Force in England during World War II.

Mr. Yates was a member of the Falls City Elks Lodge; Masonic Lodge, Mound City American Legion Post and the St. Joseph Chapter of the Missouri Restaurant Association, of which he was a past president. He was a charter member of the Mound City Lions Club and had served on the board of directors of the Missouri Restaurant Association.



Boyd 'Jack' Henshaw

Boyd "Jack" Henshaw, 75, of Samish Island, died Saturday, Sept. 17, 1994, at home.

The son of Boyd and Alma Henshaw, he was born July 3, 1919, in Mount Vernon.

He was raised and educated in Mount Vernon, graduating from Mount Vernon High School in 1937, and from Mount Vernon Junior College in 1940.

He enlisted in the U.S. Army and served as a B-17 co-pilot with the 8th Army Air Force.

On May 23, 1942, he married Lucille Thomas in Seattle.

Mr. Henshaw lived in Seattle from 1946 to 1974, working mostly in the automobile business.

He retired and settled on Samish Island in 1974.

In Seattle he was active in the Shrine and Scottish Rites, and retained his membership in Masonic Lodge 9.

During his retirement he enjoyed golfing, hunting, crab and clam digging and reading "War and Peace."

Obituaries

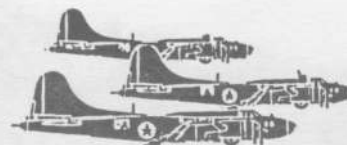
Gene W. Silberberg

Gene W. Silberberg, 72, of Plano, Texas died Saturday morning at the Life Care Nursing Home in Plano, Texas.

Born in Chicago, Ill., on March 17, 1924, he was the son of the late Walter and Annette Brophy Silberberg.

He was a member of the Christ the King Catholic Church in South Bend, Ind. He was a project engineer for Clyde Williams and Associates in South Bend, Ind.

He had served in the Eighth Division of the U.S. Air Force during World War II. He was a life member of VFW Post 6308 in Sun City, Ariz.



BARBOURVILLE — **Earl L. Cole Sr., 82**, retired lawyer, retired Air Force colonel who flew 35 combat missions during World War II and received a Distinguished Flying Cross, husband of Ruth B. Cole, died Wednesday. Services 2 p.m. Saturday, Knox Funeral Home. Visitation 6-9 p.m. today.

COLE



Earl L. Cole Sr., 82, of Barbourville, passed away Wednesday evening, August 21, 1996 in the Knox County Hospital. He was a

son of the late Charles G. and Mattie Hays Cole, born on Feb. 21, 1914 in Knox County. After high school, Mr. Cole went to Union College for two years and then enrolled at the University of Kentucky, where he graduated from law school in 1937. During World War II, Mr. Cole served in the United States Army Air Corps, where he was stationed in England. He flew 35 combat missions with the 385th Bomb Group H, 8th US Army Air Force. He retired as a Colonel from the U.S. Air Force on Feb. 21, 1974. He was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross and the Air Medal with four oak leaf clusters. On Feb. 21, 1940, he united in marriage with Ruth Blankenship in Lexington and to this union three children were born. In 1956, he and his family moved from Lexington to Barbourville. Until his retirement in 1994, Mr. Cole was an attorney with the firm of Cole, Cole and Anderson.

Mrs. E. Cole
Box 289
Barbourville, KY 40906

Dear Ruth,

I was greatly saddened to learn of Earl's passing away recently, I will miss him, especially at reunions. I am so glad now that I had the membership give him that standing ovation in Omaha.

As President of the 385th Bombardment Group Memorial Association, I want to extend the condolences on behalf of the Officers and the entire membership to you and your family. Some of us knew Earl more than others, but all those who had contact with him liked him and spoke very highly of him. He will not be forgotten.

Sincerely,
Bob Valliere, President

LICENSE PLATES

Roy Batey sent us a license plate from the State of Washington which reads "385 BG". Said he drove around with it but never ran into anyone else from our outfit. If anyone is collecting license plates and wants it let us know!.

Here are a few more license plates people have sent in:



BULLETIN BOARD

LIVE LIKE "NORTHERN EXPOSURE"

Remember that popular TV show-and how nice it was living in Alaska? Here's a chance to experience something similar-we've mentioned it a few years ago-a property is being developed out of the former Glasgow (Mt) Air Base. Most of the town has been purchased and will be turned into a retirement community named St. Marie. It's in the Northeast corner of Montana, about 40 miles south of Saskatchewan. There are some 1200 homes, a theatre, library, hospital, and school buildings. Boeing owns 1,000 acres. Currently, 300 people live there. Write Valley Park Inc., St. Marie, MT 59000.

COURAGE & AIR WARFARE

A few years ago, some took part in answering a questionnaire with regard to the human element in air warfare. Author Mark Wells (Col. USAF at the Air Academy) explores in depth the subject of morale and the extreme psychological and physiological stresses involved. It's the first detailed study in the history of air warfare. The book can be ordered from International Book Services, 5804 NE Hassolo St., Portland, OR 97213-3644.

"WALL OF VALOR" Donation

Join the company of Valiant 8 AF'ers whose names are inscribed on the 'WALL OF VALOR' of the Memorial Gardens at the Mighty 8th Air Force Museum in Savannah, Georgia.

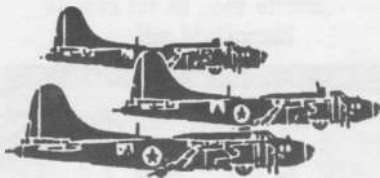
Your Memorial is 4" X 12" on handsome, indestructible granite. Send rank, full name, squadron, and bomber or fighter group (or other unit) of 8AF. Cost is \$ 100 for 24 letters. Add \$ 1 for each extra letter. Example:

TSGT CLIFF BACHMAN
360 SQ 303BG

Quickest way is to use Mastercard or Visa. Call 1 -800-544-8878 between the hours of 8 AM and 5 PM or send check to WALL OF VALOR, Mighty 8th Air Force Museum, P.O. Box 1992, Savannah, Georgia 31402. There are also larger memorials and/or crew memorials available. For info call us.

Your donation is helping create the beautiful memorial garden and preserve it forever.

Join your 8AF buddies in this great undertaking. It is our memorial.



DELINQUENT NOTICES

Please check your address label, which indicates your dues status. If it shows R94 or earlier, you haven't paid your dues since 1994 (there are 97 of you). If you want to continue receiving the Hardlife Herald, please write me and we'll continue to send it. If we don't hear, we'll drop you after the December issue.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Bob Douglas suggested that we show telephone numbers with your letters, for easier communication. Good idea! Actually, Bob suggested that we get out a new roster and add telephone numbers for all the members. Frankly, that's too much of a job for your poor old editor and our publisher. Let's be satisfied with your number along with your letter!

ADDRESS ON LARRY AT1YEH REQUEST

The August Hardlife Herald had a request for help in finding Larry Atiyeh. Where to send the information was left off by mistake (our first mistake in 12 years as Editor). If you know anything, write to John Demeden, 5 Rue De Hostert, L-8509 Redange Attert, Luxembourg. It would be nice if we could help.

COFFEE MUGS

Want a coffee mug with 8th AF Emblem in full color, your aircraft and our Group number on the other? Write to Thomas Tiles Inc, 2572 Arboretum Ci, Sarasota, FL 34232. They're \$ 15. Sometimes we feel like we're "shilling" for a lot of stuff, but we feel we should mention items that sound interesting, even though we know nothing about them. It's up to you!

RAID

One of our WW2 friends who served in Patton's Army called our attention to a book about a raid Patton ordered in March 1945 to free son-in-law who was a POW-looked like a suicide mission to those on the raid right from the start. A gripping story-about 280 pages that you won't want to put down. We found it in our Public Library. Highly recommended, although the 8th AF had no part in it.

Author's name -- Baron

MIGHTY EIGHTH AIR FORCE HERITAGE MUSEUM

News from the Heritage Museum tells us they now have a complete restaurant, serving both Museum visitors and doing catering. In addition, Walter Cronkite and his wife visited the Museum, and Walter reports that it stirred his memories of his 2 flights in B-1 7s during the war as a correspondent. He went on missions to Wilhelmshaven of Feb. 26,1943 and to Caen on D Day. He said that the Museum's Mission Experience Theatre was so realistic he almost wanted to bail out-exceedingly well done.

EDITOR'S NOTE: Wonder what 17 months in a POW camp was like? Bill Nicholls wrote a great story of his recollections (leaving out a lot of misery and boredom, we're sure).

MEMORIES OF STALAG LUFT 1

by William A Nicholls as told to Doris E. Nicholls
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November 1980

On the screen were sepia images of something I thought I'd never see again - Mathew-Brady-like shots of the prison Camp near the Baltic Sea, where I spent seventeen and a half months of World War II. In his dimly lighted livingroom, our quiet-spoken former navigator told me of a story of these shots. He had taken pictures on the flight from our field in Suffolk, England, over the channel, looking out of the plexiglass bubble that was our doubtful shelter from enemy flak. Stuck and I shared the nose of the plane, he was the navigator, and I was the bombardier. When our B17 was hit over Holland, the engines caught fire, and he, clutching the camera, slipped cautiously out of the escape hatch, as though he were trying out the temperature of the water in a pool. When we were captured, the Germans confiscated the camera, and Stuck supposed it was destroyed until the camp was evacuated in the spring of 1945. Someone told him that it was in the intelligence office, broken, but with film still in it. What had he to lose? He taped it together and clicked away for the remaining exposures. When he had it developed, he found he had clear color shots of the approach to the target and precise but brown-tinted pictures of Stalag Luft I and its guests.

The slides brought back memories and details I'd forgotten as I recounted my adventures to the family and friends who were almost gratifyingly anxious to hear about life as a Kriegsgefaneener. I hadn't remembered the wild mixture of uniform parts, with Eisenhower jackets, sweaters, and officers' blouses, nor the fact that from the ankles down we were dressed variously for hiking, basketball, and bowling. Not quite the glamor boys of the service on greasy, dingy, baggy trousers and jackets, but the wide grins and cocky air did somewhat redeem the image. I was a father who had never seen his daughter, a husband who hadn't seen his wife in almost two years, a real six-foot lanky Yank at 135 pounds, and one of the oldest second lieutenants in the Army Air Corps, I supposed. We found out later that our names had been crossed off promotion lists when we were ill-advised enough to get shot down.

I had followed Stuck out of the escape hatch when orders came from Pappy, our pilot, to bail out, but I lost sight of him as I floated down-furrow into a farmer's field in occupied Holland. Cutting the cords and hiding my chute, I raced for a brown dirt road after leaping a muddy ditch. I passed two bicycle riders who tipped their hats, said, "Good Morning," surprisingly in English, and inquired where I wanted to go. Their eloquent shrugs let me know that my answer, "England," was not in the realm of the possible. As I swung away from them, I saw women on a green distant hill waving their aprons, but whether in greeting or warning, I was never to know.

Thinking I'd have to swim a nearby canal, I had taken

off one of my flying boots. As I slipped it back on to run toward the women, who might be connected with the Underground, out of the corner of my eye I spotted Dutch policeman about ten yards away. He came on a few steps, gun drawn. As I rasied my hands in surrender, he fired into the air, and continued to do so, until I dropped the knife I unwittingly had kept in my upraised hand. Apologetically, he escorted me to the station house, meanwhile signaling me that our navigator-this tail-had landed in a chimney, having to be rescued by ladder. Children in the drab, worn clothing of war-time followed us, curious, delighted when someone offered a light for the last Philip Morris. I drew out of my knee-pocket. One officer at the station exchanged pictures of wives with me, each exclaiming over the other's, each telling the other how many children he had.

Seeing Stuck was a relief. Companionship was a sustaining element in what turned out to be a long odyssey filled with uncertainty. German Kriegsmarines drove up, herded us into a truck, and took us from Dutch village near Gronongen to a two-man cell in Wilhelmshaven, where twelve of us stood shoulder to shoulder for a day and night. Then for two days to a dank below-canal-level prison cell in Amsterdam, where eight surviving crew members were together for the last time. We had lost two young enlisted men from the crew. Many years later I was to talk to a farmer who had pulled one of them, wounded, from canal and covered and comforted him his last months. The next leg of our journey was a bitterly cold one to the Frankfurt interrogation center for ten days of solitary confinement. Fortunately, I'd stuck my warm gauntlets and cap inside me flight suit before bailing out, so Pappy and I could share them on the bitterly cold trip to Frankfurt. As we arrived in the Frankfurt railroad station at afternoon commuting time, a man struck my shoulder furiously with a long narrow object, no doubt enraged by the RAF's successful bombing attack of the night before. Clutching my bruised shoulder, I turned around to look at the weapon and found out I had been hit with an incendiary thermite bomb. The guards closed in around us after that, and we made the rest of the journey without incident.

At the interrogation center, we were questioned separately, offered cigarettes, threatened, and promised vague leniencies as inducements to give some information. My questioner finally said scornfully, "Oh, well, what can a mere second lieutenant tell me that I don't already know?" After repeatedly divulging nothing but name, rank, and serial number, we were sent on our way to the permanent camp, Stalag Luft I, near Barth, Germany. On that trip I made the first of many small attempts to inconvenience the enemy: I spat down the rifle barrel of an inattentive gaurd, hoping it would freeze there. And cause some trouble.

Bitterly cold, the freight cars took us to Barth, and from there we walked to the bleak group of barracks that made up the gray-brown desolation of Stalag I. There, ranged along the inner fence, were downed airmen, looking for buddies, and chanting, "You'll be sorry!" Much as you hated to find them there, it was great to see familiar faces.

Life soon settled down to a round of cooking the meager food rations, endless bartering with other krieges and sometimes with the gaurds. For American cigarets, one gaurd got us a radio, and for more smoke and the threat of exposure (and the dread Eastern Front), hooked it up to the gaurd-tower, so

we'd have twenty-four-hour news from the British Broadcasting Company, the music-loving Germans piped in wonderful classic music, engendering in me a lasting love of Wagner and Sibelius. There was also a fair supply of books, so that I read through Shakespeare and Dickens and became a devotee of John Donne.

I had never heard of Maslow's theories at the time, but I soon found that talk of women and sex gave way to ardent discussions of food when that commodity was scarce. There were even some madmen who toured the barracks asking for recommendations of good restaurants in other people's hometowns.

We were issued such delicacies as barley, rutabagas, turnips, horse meat (occasionally), and rough black peasant bread. Sawdust was incorporated in the dough of that bread, to give it body, and it certainly did. I traded barley, which I had never been able to choke down, for potatoes or some of that substantial brat. Sometimes we received Red Cross packages or boxes from home, when our captors didn't confiscate them. When that happened- when we did get them- we could cook with margarine and liver pate and prunes and above all, KLIM. Our milk-spelled backward staple was the prime ingredient in our choicest recipes, such as pumpkin pie.

I was always too intent on eating to hand over my pittance of dried fruit to be made into wine. Once, some guys distilled liquor from potato peelings, drank it without cutting it, and became temporarily blind, screaming through the barracks, "Oh, my God! I can't see!"

Our families sent the five-pound boxes of food when the Red Cross issued them labels every sixty days. I was on parcel detail one day, taking them around to the lucky men, when a friend cursed and sent his carton crashing across the room from his third-story bunk. "I'll kill her! I'll kill her! She sent me a five-pound cookbook!"

The same International Red Cross that authorized the food parcels, also sent inspectors to the camp periodically to see that the Krauts were complying with the Geneva Convention, whose terms they had agreed to. We always knew when a visit was imminent when each of us was issued a warm blanket smelling of moth-balls. We knew when the visit was over, too, when the blankets were collected again.

A good deal of our time was occupied by dreams, plans, and attempts to escape. I think the Germans let us dig our tunnels to keep us busy, for after a while, they would come in with a fire hose and nonchalantly collapse our hard work. This, after the brain-racking efforts to dispose of the soil, and attempts to cover the digging noise by practicing gymnastics on the ground above the tunnel. Not all of "Hogan's Heros" is fictitious.

My friend, Marion Wiles, and I felt we had to take another stab at escape, this time through the fence, and so spent weeks getting permission from the escape committee and being coached on what to do when we made it out of the fence. We were to go to a brothel, where prostitutes would hide us till we could contact the underground. When the night finally came, it was misty as we crept out of the barracks, heading first for the warning wire cutters made of the blades of ice-skates sent by the YMCA. (We could only have skated on the cesspool.) One of the fierce, strictly-trained German shepherds came bounding

over to me, as I froze. He sniffed my ears and my face, licked the moisture off my hair, and loped off. We started forward again, cut through the warning wire, and made it into the "death zone," when a battery of lights pin-pointed us, and a guard let out a few rounds from his "burp gun." I shouted, "Marion, the son of a bitch is shooting at us!"

He hollered back, "Don't tell me- he hit me!" One of the blasts had skimmed across his abdomen, giving him one of the longest navels in the world, Insult following injury - the guard dog took out the seat of his trousers and part of his buttocks as we were being taken to the commandant's office.

To his plaintive, "Nick, why me?" I could only reply, "Well, you got a Purple Heart and a cluster all in one night."

The igniminy of getting caught was softened by the compliment of Major Von Muller's knowing our names: "Ah! Wiles and Nicholls. Nicholls and Wiles. Again. Solitary for ten days."

It was our duty, wasn't it to harass the enemy? We were working at it. Some others were, too, so that solitary was crowded, and we were in a cell together. There, too, we first heard of the long-awaited invasion of the Continent. Convivial solitude. Happy punishment.

The only threat of transfer to a fortress prison managed to deter us from further escape attempts. Delivered by a tough German commandant, this promise hit home. That, and the poster detailing the fate of those whose story would later be told in the film, "The Great Escape," served sufficient warning. The poster, a classic of understatement, informed us, "Escape is No Longer a Sport." Yeah.

There followed almost a year more of prison life, during which time there were fewer Red Cross parcels, fewer sub-flooring boards to wrench up and use for fuel, and more barley, more cold.

After a threat on Hitler's life, the dread Nazi elite guard, the SS, supplanted the Luftwaffe as our keepers, so regulations were stricter, restrictions more severe. Linder Luftwaffe, we were treated as respected, if enemy fellow-officers, opposite numbers of their own revered air force.

Toward the Spring of 1945, BBC reports began to justify the optimism that had never deserted me, and finally the day came when the Russians were in Stettin, moving west. Soon after, victimized in part by their own propaganda, the Germans fled the camp, in terrible fear of the oncoming Russians. We were suddenly free to fish, to investigate the world outside the barbed-wire fence, to stay up late, and to leave the lights on after ten, delighted as schoolboys on vacation. However, we were free, too, to walk unthinking into a mined field nearby, and free to find a family strewn along a road, dead. An old man, fearing capture, had apparently shot his wife, daughter and grandchild, then himself.

The Russians came at last, embodying our mental picture of wild cossacks. A friend and I were fishing in an old, borrowed rowboat when two Russians signaled us they'd like to join us. The big problem was that their idea of fishing was to pull the pin on a large hand gemade, called a panzer-faust, wait till it was a few seconds from exploding, then throw it in the bay to blast the fish into the boat. A few tries at this novel method had us rowing for shore, leaving the cossacks to their fun. Another prisoner told me later he could hear my voice across the

water, calling, "Hubba, hubba!"

These wild allies did bring us a USO-like show, and the women danced with their sub-machine guns still slung across their shoulders.

At long last, transports arrived to take us to Camp Lucky Strike in France, a camp designed to feed prisoners a soft diet to build them up, not allowing them to gorge themselves to the point of sickness. The place was staffed by mess sergeants with phenomenal memories for the faces of those who got in the chow line a second time. It was also peopled with corporals whose chief talent was shouting at the German prisoners digging ditches, "Nix arbite-en, nix essen." Gifted with loud voices and a certain language facility, these soliders got across to their charges the strong messgae, "No work, no food."

After a couple of days at the rest camp, the waiting and pent-up excitement were more than we could stand. In our mongrelized non-uniforms, with no identification, no insignia, and no official leave papers, in fact AWOL, three friends and I headed for Paris. We got as far as Fecamp on the first lap of our journey, hoping to buy a few bottles of Benedictine at the monastery where that famous liquer is made. No ID's? Ah, they could let us buy only ponies of the good stuff-but as many as we could carry. Strength rallied to meet the need. Sixty bottles each were no problem.

The next stop on our way that morning was a small village cafe, where grateful, just-liberated owner unhappily had to refuse our request for cognac. Ah, but he could oblige us with the local cidre. Cider? Oh, well, it'd have to do. Cider? It was white lightening. It'd do. When monsieur wished to toast our new-won freedom, he offered his cidre, and we laced it with Benedictine. Discovering that Wiles was wounded, and that my other friend, Thumper, had been injured, too, salut followed a votre sante. All I could offer was a thumb I'd sliced at nine years old with my grandfather's saw, but it, too, rated a toast. This happy state held till from behind a beaded curtain emerged madame, enraged at these dissolute, not to say profitless goings on. Gratitude should not be allowed to interfere with business. We departed swiftly, fortunately running into the offer of a hop to Paris by an obligingly uninquisitive major in the Provost-Marshall's Office.

With no identification, we couldn't apply for rooms at the Red Cross Officer's Club, so we slept on couches in the lounge and washed in lavatories. We were using those latter luxurious accommodations when we heard that an inspecting general had arrived. Out the fenetre and onto la rue to escape les complications. Well, we'd seen the Eiffel Tower, Notre Dame, and pretty French girls bicycling on the Champs Elysees, skirts billowing above their knees. We guessed we were about ready to catch a train back to the tedium and bland diet of Camp Lucky Strike.

When we arrived, the old "hurry up and wait" of service was suddenly abandoned, and one day we were hurried into the kind of uniform that had helped sell a lot of us on the Army Air Corps in the first place.

Overjoyed, we were soon aboard a Coast Guard ship bound for Boston. There was quite a stir among the movie buffs when somebody discovered the movie star, Victor Mature, was aboard. He was a rather unassuming sailor doing his duty like the rest of us.

All I recall of the voyage was the disembarcation in the good old U.S. of A. Patriotism had taken on a new dimension for us all, and love of country was a blinding, choking emotion. The only thing that could top it was the final reunion with the family I hadn't seen for almost two years.

They were waiting for me at a bus terminal in Philadelphia. All but my new little daughter. She, dressed up and fresh from a nap, had been coached for weeks to kiss me and say, "Hello, Daddy," when we picked her up at her great-grandmother's. She foiled her careful teachers and gave me my ultimate welcome home, when she hugged me on schedule, drew back for a good look at this new parent, and said, "Hi, Bill."

Kreigsgefangefenenlager Nr. 1 Barth, den 5.6 1944

Per Kommandant

Beatrafung

Ich bestrafe

2nd Lt. Wiles, Marion E., Kgf. Nr 0-674 712 and

2nd Lt. Nicholls, William A., Kgf. Nr. 0-675 805

mit 8 Tagen gescharftem Stubenarrest, mit rauchverbot, weil sie in haben und ein verbotenes Schneidewerkzeug im Besitz verlaussen hatten der nacht vom 2/3.6. zum zweck einer Flucht ihre Unterkunft verlassen.

Punishment

I punish

2nd Lt. Wiles, Marion E., Ident. Disc. Nr 0-674 712

abd 2nd Lt. Nicholls, William A., Ident. Disc. Nr. 0-675 805 with 8 days severe "Stubenarrest", smoking prohibited, because on the night preceding the 3.6. 1944, they left their blocks for the purpose of escape, and they had in their possession a cutting-tool which is forbidden.

Oberst u. Kommandant

Marion E. Wiles



Dear Ed: Subject-Mission to London

Bob Silver, our mutal friend and pilot par excellence, who was our crew leader stateside and during our first few missions with the 385th, urged me to set forth these reminiscences.

One day during the spring of '45 when the weather grounded bombong missions, I was doing nothing in our luxurious quonset hut quarters, when called up front and asked if I would go to the Office of War Information headquarters in London to make a propaganda broadcast to the German people. How did this come about? It appeared that the military bureaucracy at Wing was requested to come up with anyone with European background to assist OWI with its broadcasts mission, and I was pegged because in my youth I had lived in Austria, Switzerland and visited Germany. And what was I doing over there attending exclusive private schooling in the 30's? Simple; the Great Depression had not yet caught up with my family, and this was well before I eventually had to get a minimum paying part-time job back in the States so I could finish high school.

So, going to London to cut propaganda records sounded like fun, but I hesitated at first thinking about the razzing I would get from my buddy aerial gunners with the 548th for shrinking combat mission responsibilities. But when told a decision had been made by someone of high authority at Wing that I should participate, I readily picked up my train tickets, orders and gear and headed for the big city.

When I reported to OWI, I was interviewed by a couple of writer-broadcast specialists who showed interest in my youth in Europe and quizzed me on my fluency in German. When satisfied, the three of us discussed and planned the preparation of a suitable script. But, time was an element, so OWI had to seek having my orders for my stay in London extended.

And what do you suppose this red-blooded 8th Air Force Staff Sergeant did with his time on his hands in this magnificent city? Ha! I had fun. During the daylight hours there was a wonderful opportunity to visit historic sites I had not seen before, and in the evening I would carry out to the best of my abilities my other responsibilities, i.e. the entertainment of English beauties in order to keep up their morale. But don't think there wasn't a lot of danger to being in London during spring of '45. One evening while in a pub we were shaken by the nearby explosion of a V-2. After regaining our composure the barmaid announced that the next round of drinks would be on the house.

A couple days later back at OWI we rehearsed the script and cut the record. It ran as an interview with my responding to questions about my earlier life in Europe and concluded with expressions of former friendships of many German and Austrian people I had known, and finished with an appeal for the enemy to lay down their arms so we could get on with our normal lives again.

Did the recording and broadcasts do any good to end the war? Who knows? Not too long ago, I could not restrain myself from telling this story to my poker club. After a few drinks one evening at our nickel and dime poker session the group was entertained by me, but only after a few embellishments were added for good measure. I went so far as too point out that after repeated broadcasts of my recording, the Germans

surrendered within two weeks!

My story was met by members of my poker club with dead silence. Finally one turned to me and said, "Jim, the Germans didn't surrender because of your appeal to them. They gave up because they couldn't stand to hear your recordings any longer!" Poker players can be cruel; especially when they're losing.

I have but one regret from this London recording experience. Although I got my train tickets, I was never reimbursed by the 385th for my hotel, food and drinking expenses.

Jim Dacey

7-19-96

Wilmington, IL

Hi Ed,

Could you please put a note in the next Herald asking if there are any crews still around that flew the first "Pin up Girl" with the picture on the nose. We used three 17s to get our missions in. The first one with the picture went down with a crew that was using it when we got the passs to go to the rest home. Second one went down another pass. We finished up with No. 3.

Paul

Editor's note: Does anyone have a picture of "Pin up Girl"?

Please write to: Paul Ryan

Box 615

Wilmington, IL 60481-0615

Mr. & Mrs. Harold A. Schenne

28303 Sound View Dr. S 307

Redondo, Washington 98003

03-06-96

Dear Ed.

Ran across this article on Glenn Miller in the AMC magazine.

I had never heard of any official explanation of Glenn Miller's disappearance until I saw this. If you think it is worthwhile would you print it in the Hardlife Heard. I'm sure a lot of guys would be interested.

Thank You

Harold A. Schenne

ex 551st B.S.

Two years later, while headed for an engagement in Paris, Miller's plane vanished in stormy weather over the English Channel. The mysterious disappearance wasn't solved until 1985, when British pilots came forward. Their squadron had been ordered to ditch their bombs over the channel because the weather prevented them from proceeding to their targets. Tragically, Miller's plane was flying under the squadron as it jettisoned its deadly cargo. Everyone on board perished.

Editor's Note: Here's a letter that Truman Smith sent to his local newspaper that makes some good points.

Tuesday July 16, 1996

Editor, The News.

An open letter to Terrorist Bombers!

As a World War Two bomber pilot, I would like to pass on some hard earned knowledge to any would-be terrorist who might be considering bombing as an answer to whatever grievances they feel they have.

The bombs used in Dhadhan, Saudi Arabia, and Oklahoma City, USA, were reported to be the same relative size 5,000 pounds. While this amount of "bang" might impress an amateur bomber, it is hardly a pimple on the butt of professional bombers.

My average bomb load was 6,000 pounds of high explosives. But I was flying only one of 2,000 bombers on a mission. That comes to 12,000,000 pounds; or 6,000 tons of high explosives dropped on Germany everyday - and that was repeated at night by the British - and repeated every day and every night for over a year. So that came to over 4 megatons of bombs, or a million and a half times more explosive than a truck bomb, as used in the last two terrorist attacks.

Then they got serious and developed the atomic bomb, equivalent to 17,000 tons of TNT. They dropped a couple on Japan, but they didn't kill as many people as were killed in Europe by conventional bombs. But that was a half century ago and improvements were made.

These atomic bombs became no more than a trigger for the later 60 megaton bombs of the 1950s. Now approaching the millennium, that too is ancient history.

So the question to consider is since all nations have such monstrous power in their arsenals, WHY DON'T THEY USE THEIR BOMBS?

Because, BOMBING DOES NOT SOLVE THE PROBLEM(S). In fact, bombing only makes worse the problem. Consider the consequences of Germany's bombing attacks on its neighbors and Japan's terrorist bombing attack on the U.S. No, bombings only set the resolve of the enemy and invites self destruction. That is why intelligent people do not bomb their enemies.

Has terrorist bombing helped the Irish?

Of course not. Terrorist bombings are the most self destructive, because no warning is given. Such cowardly attacks only work against the desire of the terrorist.

So what is the ambition of the gutless terrorists? How does anyone get someone else to do what they want done?

The first rule of persuasion is to not make the person (s) you want to persuade angry, because hostility only calls forth resistance.

While terrorists are spineless, there should be no excuse for their stupidity and mindlessness in their attempts to convince others of their beliefs.

Therefore would-be-terrorists don't waste your time defeating yourselves, but consider my wisdom and wishes for your good fortune is gaining cooperation in reaching your goal. Otherwise, as sure as Allah and Jehovah are ONE, it is your destiny to shoot yourself in the foot.

Truman J. Smith Lt. Colonel, US. Airforce, Retired

Dear Mr. Hruska,

May 7, 1996

I hope this letter is not an intrusion, please excuse me if it is. I am writing to you in the hope that you might be able to assist me with a personal research project. I'm a historian and fledgling Museum curator as well as a collector of Air Force memorabilia. Last summer I obtained an A-2 flight jacket which apparently belonged to a member of the 385th BG during WWI1. Unfortunately I have no personal information about the previous owner, the vendor I purchased it from told me he bought the jacket from a man's widow and all she new was that her husband had been a member of the 385th. However the back of the Jacket is painted with a distinctive design which I feel depicts the "nose art" of a particular aircraft. I realize that it is a long shot but would you or any member of your association have any recollection of a B-17 named 'Miss Fortune'? This particular airman completed 35 missions which would indicate that he flew between May 1944 - May 1945.

If you can shed any light on this I would be most grateful.

Yours faithfully

Scott Marchand
764 Coach Bluff Circle SW
Calagry, ABT 3H1A8
Canada

TIME TO START TUCSON REUNION PLANNING

November 15, 1997- and the next 4 days - mark your calendar and start planning. You'll hear a lot more about the Reunion in coming issues. But here's an extra thought — You who haven't been to Tucson or a long time, or maybe never - -if your're foot-loose, have some extra time (and money) - - it's a fascinating part of the country that is a "must see". If you can drive, fine. If you fly, plan on renting a car. Here are a few of the unique attractions that will be worth a visit - - as much time as you can spare.

Grand Canyon	Tubac
Biosphere	Sierra Vista-Ft Huachua
Colossal Cave	Chircahua Nat' Monument
Titan Missie Museum	Sedona- -Oak Creek
Kitt Peak Observatory	Mt. Lemmon
Mission San Xavier	Old Tucson
Tombstone	Tucson Greyhound Park
Bisbee	Historic Downtown Tucson
Nogales (Mexico)	University of Arizona Museums

8 great golf courses

Those are all wonderful attractions that won't fit into our 4 day Reunion schedule. Write to Tucson Convention & Visitors Bureau, 130 S Scott Ave, Tucson AZ 85701 (800-638-8350) for brochures, details planning assistance.

Make this Reunion your year's vacation!

Editor's note: This story of Lowry's Crew, sent to us by Ira O'Kennon, was left out of the new Group History by the publisher. Maybe you'll want to put it with your copy as another memorable experience.

Lowry Crew

Front:

Pilot - Paul Lowry

Co-Pilot - Max Curtis

Nav. - Dick Eshleman

Bomb. - Roger Hendrick

Rear:

WG - John Mathews

BG - Henry Niemcyk

Radio - Ira O'Kennon

WG - Hershaw Webb

TG - Bill Gegogaine

Eng. - John DiGiovanni



Paul M. Lowry's crew was the image of America's melting pot: descendants from the English (2), Germans (2), Irish (1), Italian (1), French (1), Polish (1), Scots (1) and Welsh (1) and they came from nine different states. They arrived at Great Ashfield in the fall of 1944.

Their combat tour ranged from pussy cats like Hamm and Bingen, to bears like Merseberg and Berlin. Twice they were forced to land in France. A half-time rest in Blackpool was a welcome respite after which they proceeded to complete their tour. Thirty-four missions later, full of anxiety, they were mentally packed to return to the U.S. with only one more to go. Nervously they accepted congratulations at their last briefing. The target was Leipzig with hundreds of guns - not encouraging sign.

Hours later, approaching the target, their spirits were boosted when Leipzig, with 10/1 Oth cloud coverage, was scratched in favor of the secondary target, Jena, with nine guns. They were elated but still held their breaths.

The bomb run was uneventful with a few black puffs as the bombs were dropped. Just as they relaxed they received a direct hit in the No. 3 engine creating a fire which spread to the bomb bay. They fought fire for about two hours before bailing out at 10,000 feet near Frankfurt au Main. Seconds later the plane exploded, but not all the chutes were accounted for. Within a few hours five crewmen met in the local jail at Freidburg, a small town about ten kilometers north of Frankfurt. Within a week the full crew met at Dulag Luft in Wetzlar.

Interrogation was thorough but civil. In due time, like many others, they were assembled in a group of about 150 POWs and 14 guards, and headed east. In Geissen they were herded into open boxcars for a scenic tour of Germany, but quickly a group of P-47's strafed the train, unaware that POWs were aboard, setting it afire. With an early warning from fellow POW fighter pilots, the POWs split in a dead run. Although their mode of transportation was lost, the only casualty was a Volkstrum guard with a leg wound. Their greatest loss was their individual Red Cross parcels, the remainder of which had to be shared by eight POWs (per parcel). Afterward they were forced to carry water to extinguish the fire.

This incident, and strong protests from POW fighter pilots who knew that strafing anything that moved was current US strategy, finally convinced the guards to move them by night and hide them by day. For the next seventeen days they traveled backroads in erratic directions, first northeast towards Eisenach, south to Nurenberg, southwest to Augsburg, east to Munich and north to Moosberg. They walked at night, rested by day. Occasionally, farmers supplied barley soup and bread.

During a stop outside Nurenberg to wash their feet, the Eighth Air Force paid them a visit. They sat and watched those beautiful Flying Forts and many of their buddies obliterate Nurenberg, including the now famous stadium where Hitler frequently raved. Though untouched during the raid, over their strongest protests to avoid confrontations with the citizens, they were marched through smoldering rubble. Needless to say, they were stoned, spat on, generally berated by the townsfolk.

The journey continued through Augsburg - skirting Munich they passed through Dachau, little knowing of the concentration camp nearby. About forty kilometers later they arrived at their destination, Moosburg, which was becoming overloaded by POWs from throughout Germany.

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By now there were no amenities at Moosburg. Barracks were full and the few temporary tents offered little protection from the elements. Three men shared their individual blankets, one on the ground and two over their bodies, depending to a large extent on body warmth of all. Red Cross parcels were fewer and generally shared by one to three men each week. Nightly forays, passed the guards, to potato kilns nearby provided some relief and promoted bartering.

Lowry's crew were liberated in early May, 1945. Only Lowry, DiGiovanni, Eshleman, Mathews and O'Kennon are alive or otherwise accounted for, today.

Editors Note: Thanks to the 94th newsletter for this. Lots of you should remember one of these schools.

That's the Way It Was
by Preston P. Clark

USAF Gunnery Schools in WWII

(Note: Facts and statistics on US gunnery schools in this column were taken from *The Men Behind the Guns: The History of Enlisted Aerial Gunnery 1917-1991*, published in 1994 by the Air Force Gunnery Association; Turner Publishing Co.)

“Las Vegas Army Gunnery School, 25 Sept 43, Dear Folks: We're over half way through aerial gunnery training with about four more weeks to go. This is desert country, hot and dry, so we spend a couple of hours a day in one of the two base swimming pools when our classes are done late in the afternoon.

“I've enjoyed the skeet shooting and scored pretty well, thanks to those dove and quail hunts back home. We finished a crash course on 50-caliber machine guns today and had to take one of the guns apart blindfolded, then put it back together ready to fire.

“Next we will study and practice operating gun turrets. Then the last two weeks here we go to Indian Springs out in the desert for 50-caliber firing practice, ground-to-ground and air-to-air. We are supposed to leave here about October 27 for another base to join the bomber crew...”

Those are lines from an old letter I wrote to the folks back home as an 18-year-old aerial gunner trainee at Las Vegas AGS in 1943.

The Las Vegas AGS (now Nellis AFB) was established in 1941 as the first US flexible gunnery school. By the time the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor the base had graduated 100 instructors and was ready for a flood of students. On 9 Dec 41 the Army Air Corps ordered an accelerated start-up of aerial gunner training.

Las Vegas AGS was soon enlarged to provide for entering classes of 320 students each week for 6-week courses. 10,562 students were enrolled in 1942 and 85% were graduated and combat-ready.

Harlingen (TX) Army Gunnery School, second to open, graduated its first class in January 1942. By April 1943 Harlingen AGS had 1,900 student gunners enrolled for training period of six weeks per class. Harlingen graduated 4,953 gunners in 1942, 15,682 in 1943, and 4,009 during the first

two months of 1944 when the demand for replacement gunners began to slow down.

The next US gunnery school was established at Tyndall Field, near Panama City FL. Its first cadre of 2,000 trainees was transferred from Eglin AAF in December 1941. An auxiliary base was activated at nearby Apalachicola on 10 July 42. Tyndall AGS graduated 8,091 gunners in 1942 and 39,452 by 1944.

With the big demand for gunners came a need for more instructors. The first flexible gunnery school for training instructors was established at Buckingham Army Air Field near Fort Myers FL on 5 July 42. By the end of that year, 3,000 gunnery instructors were graduated.

Kingman AGS in Arizona was activated on 4 Aug 42, started classes in January 43 and graduated 10,861 gunners that year.

Laredo (TX) AGS was activated shortly after Kingman and graduated its first class in the first week of January 43. Laredo Army Air Field would become the location for advanced flexible gunnery training and the final location of the Central Gunnery Instructors School.

High combat losses necessitated still another gunnery school. It was established at Yuma (AZ) Army Air Field on 1 Nov 43 with 1,655 gunners in training by the end of that year.

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The US AFip July 1943 aimed to graduate 18,000 aerial gunners yearly by March 1944, and it exceeded that goal. Six months later 214,826 gunners had been trained, with the seven gunnery schools averaging 3,500 graduates per week.

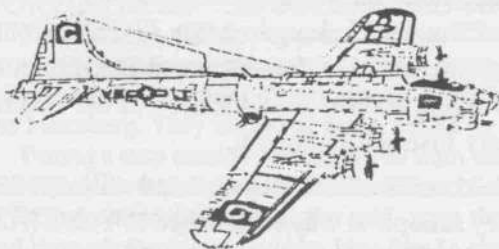
After gunnery school, the next stop for most of the gunners was combat crew training on the team of men they would go to war with. My crew trained at Dalhart (TX) Army Air Base and flew a B-17 to Prestwick, Scotland, then traveled by train to an Air Force staging base in England. There the officers and enlisted men split. The gunners were transported to The Wash on the northern coast of East Anglia for graduate school with combat-tested 8th AF vets for instructors.

Bud Hutton, a staff writer for *Stars & Stripes*, described The Wash as a "Finishing School for Gunners." He wrote:

"As we see it, this place is the air gunner's last chance," explains Lt/Col Harold W Orr of Meadville PA, commandant of the (Wash gunnery) school... If we fail to teach them properly here, or if they fail to learn... they won't have a chance when they get up against the Luftwaffe.

"In bull sessions around Nissen hut stoves, we try to scare hell out of them and make them aware of the deadly job ahead. We try to tell these kids what the score is.."

In the WWII U S Army gunnery schools. **That's Where it Was, and That's the Way it Was.**



Editor's Note: Don Mabie sent this story, which was from our Base to the home newspapers of the crew chiefs involved. Don was a crew chief and later line chief in the 549th



An 8th Air Force Bomber Command Station, England. The Engineering Section of one of the Flying Fortress squadrons on this Eighth Air Force bomber base claims the record for the highest per cent bomber strength sent over a Nazi target on one mission.

At the time of the mission 1 /Lt. Norman W. Gaul, 24, Severence, Kansas, engineering officer of the squadron, had his full quota of Fortresses. He and his mechanics had all of them ready for action when the mission was called. Every bomber reached the target, dropped its bombs, and returned safely to the base.

The squadron, with more than 150 sorties to its credit, has an exceptionally good record for consecutive sorties without "turn backs" short of the target because of mechanical failures. The credit for the performance of these bombers belongs to the line, flight, and crew chiefs, and to the mechanics of each crew.

M/Sgt. Joseph E. Pfeifer, 39, 3130 Main St., Kansas City, Mo., is in charge of the line. He and his assistant line chief, M/Sgt. James L Pry, 1620 Laundale Ave., McKeesport, PA., have the final word as to the status of every ship in the squadron.

The two flight chiefs of the unit are M/Sgt. Robert O. Christie, Auburn, N.H., and M/Sgt. Maurice A. Ritter, 23 Monroe City, Mo., Each is in charge of fifty percent of the squadron planes. They have sent ships out on more than 70 sorties a piece.

Each ship has a crew chief and five or six assistant mechanics. Some of the crew chiefs who sent bombers on this particular mission are M/Sgt. Robert H. Wilson, Jr., 122 W. Burnett St., Louisville, Kentucky; M/Sgt Wallace O. Tucker, Price, Utah; M/Sgt. Howard M. Press, 236 Westley St., Salen N.J.; M/Sgt Donald R. Goble, Pequot Lakes, Minn; M/Sgt. Charles h. Ralph, Haven, Kansas; M/Sgt. Anthony B. Oeffler, Quincy, Calif.; M/Sgt. Joseph E. Gill, Shelburn, Ind.; T/Sgt Ernest R. Martin, Jr., 539 Ave B. Redondo Beach, Calif.; M/ Sgt. Melvin Kurth, Sidney, Nebraska; and T/Sgt. Ezra B. Towne, Delta, La.

Editor's Note: Ken Leffoon sent us this, which is how our Group is remembered in the official history.

385th Bombardment Group (H)
"Van's Valiants"

Assigned Eighth AF: Jun. 43.

Wing & Command Assignments

VIII BC, 4 BW, 401 PCBW: Jun 43.

VIII BC, 3 B.D., 4 CBW: 13 Sep 43.

3 BD, 4 CBW: 8 Jan. 44.

3 AD, 4 CBW: 1 Jan 45.

3 AD, 93 CBW: 17 Feb. 45

(4 CBW incorporated with 92 CBW in 4 BW(P) from c. 18 Nov. 44 to 16 Feb. 45).

Component Squadrons

548th, 549th, 550th and 551st Bombardment Squadron (H).

Combat Aircraft

B-17F (from blocks 85-BO.45-DL, 30-VE); B-17G.

Station

GREAT ASHFIELD 26 Jun. 43-4 Aug. 45 (Gnd. ech. in 2 and 8/9 Jul. 43).

Group COs

Col Elliott Vandevanter: 3 Feb. 43-23 Aug. 44.

Col George V. Jumper: 24 Aug 44-28 May 45.

Col William H. Hanson: 2 Jun. 45-Jul. 45.

(Lt Col H. T. Witherspoon acting CO May/June 45).

First Mission: 17 Jul. 43. Last Mission: 20 Apr. 45. Total

Missions: 296.

Total Credit Sorties: 8,264. Total Bomb Tonnage: 18,494.0 tons

(184.9 tons supplies, etc.).

A/c MIA: 129. Other Op. Losses: 40. E/a Claims: 287-80-95.

Major Awards

Two Distinguished Unit Citations: 17 Aug. 43 Regensburg (all 4 BW groups).
12 May 44: Zwickau.

Claims to Fame

Led famous attack on Marienburg factory—9 Oct. 43.

Last group to be shot at—May 45: Holland.

Early History

Activated 1 Dec. 42 at Davis-Monthan Fd. Ariz. Not formed until Feb. 43 at Geiger Fd. Wash. Trained at this base for two months and then moved Great Falls AAD, Mont. 11 Apr. 43. Completed training end May 43 with air echelon moving to Kearney Fd, Neb. prior to overseas movement by northern ferry route. Two a/c lost en route. Ground echelon left Great Falls. 8 Jun. 43. 548BS sailed on *Queen Mary* 23 Jun. 43 and other sqdns. on *Queen Elizabeth* 1 Jul. 43.

Subsequent History

Redeployed USA in Jun. and Aug. 45. Air echelon left between 19 Jun. 45 and 29 Jun. 45. Ground echelon left 4/5 Aug 45 and sailed on *Queen Elizabeth* from Greenock 5 Aug. 45. Arrived New York 11 Aug. 45. Personnel 30 days R & R. Group established at Sioux Falls, AAFd, SD. and inactivated 28 Aug. 45.

Brief existence as headquarters for missile and tanker squadrons at Offutt AFB but inactivated 1966.

(6 food missions May 45. 458.2 tons. One mission combat effort, as a/c fired on).

Editor's Note: Anybody remember this ditty (Taken from the 487th Newsletter)?

BOMBER PILOTS' LAMENT SUNG TO THE TUNE OF "BELL BOTTOM TROUSERS"

Early in the morning before the break of day
Along comes the sergeant and pulls us from the hay
"Briefing in an hour in Briefing Room A
Now don't get excited, 'tis an easy one they say."

CHORUS: That's sure tough boys
Nothing I can do.
Show me your card
And I'll punch a hole for you.

We go (o the mess hall to see what we can beg
And what do you think boys - dear old powered egg.
We go to the briefing room to answer roll call
Will it be Berlin or is it a No-Ball.

We wander to the dressing room to gather all our stuff
They never have our sizes, I'll tell you boys it's rough.
Finally we're ready, but then we have to wait
Half an hour or more for the men who navigate.

We go out to the ships to see if things are fit
We have three turrets out, and all the engines spit
But that doesn't phase us, we want to do our bit
We'd rather have to ditch than to quit on taxi-strip.

We wheel out for the take-off, with all the Forts in line
The first ship goes down the way exactly on time.
We make a prop wash take-off, our turbos run away
Our RPM's fluctuate, we hear the tower say.

Then we assemble over Splasher 7
Boy, what a rat-race, you're darn near up to heaven.
Then we get off on course and everything is fine
'Til we reach Beachy Head, half an hour behind.

We run into the other coast, we run into some flak
There should be a hole there, but there's no turning back
We get to the I. P., we never know we're there
Because the Squadron Leader forgot to fire a flare.

We run into the target, the sky is really black
We think it's a thunder cloud but find it's only flak
We swing from the target and start our journey home
We hear the Jerries singing o'er the interphone.

The Tail-gunner calls us and says there's something wrong
Both his guns are jammed and the oxygen is gone
The Bombardier is fast asleep, the glass is all afrost
The Radio-man has passed out - the Navigator's lost.

We get back to the base, the sky is really dense
They briefed us for CAVU, but now it's 10/10.
We come in for a landing, they toss up a red flare
But nobody goes around because he doesn't care.

The moral of this story as you can plainly see
Is never bring our bombs back from dear old Germany
S-2 doesn't like, neither does the staff
If we don't hit the target, they'll have to send the RAF.

Editor's Note: Here's an excerpt from Charles McCauley's story of the mid-air collision with a B-24 on March 24, 1944. It was printed in our February 1996 issue. Read it again - then read Bob Lammer's letter which follows. Amazing- - after 52 years!

This March 12th our Link trainer instructor, Sgt. Jim Ezell asked to go along. His Link trainer was "Ezell Deezil" and was a famous sport for group pilots to hang out and get in some "Link" time between operational missions. He wanted to fly the tail position so that he could see "where we had been". We had not been in the air very long, and about 50 miles from base, when along our side came a B-24.

The March 12th accident between my plane and the B-24 was a close call for all the crew, and unfortunately, caused the death of Sgt. Jim Ezell. The pilot of the B-24 called to me on the radio saying he was always hearing about how good we flew formation in the B-17, and he was going to show us "real" formation flying with his B-24. All of a sudden he brought his plane close so his wing was within mine. We often do this over the bomb run in the B-17; however, his wing is built differently, and he got caught in my propwash. Almost instantly the B-24 was sucked into, and through, the tail of our plane.

I am not certain of the fate of the B-24. I know our controls were frozen one would not move. We could not see the destruction of the tail (vertical stabilizer was almost knocked off, the rudder was jammed into the stabilizer, the left elevator was almost cut in-half, and the right elevator was frozen in place. We could not get back into the tail to help Sgt. Ezell.) and we were [^]asin^litude

Editor's Note: Here's Bob's Letter

Dear Ed,

I was a radio gunner 25 Nov. 9, 1942 to June 11, 1943 and sent to 385th June 1943 to run radio school. They sent me to Horham the 95 B.G. from the 385th. A new wing was sent over 95BG-100BG-1 forgot the number but they were stationed at Framlingham 390 BG. It was March 1944.

On March 12, I was visiting some English friends and the weather was clear and sunny. One of those rare ones! I think the boys were on a mission. I noticed a lone B17 flying 5-6000 feet and a B24 seemed to come from nowhere and tried to fly in formation with the B17.

Oh No! This is a mistake! I thought, the B17 held straight and level. The B24 seemed to lurch to the right into the B17. I could make out the square on the tail but not the G. The B17 flew straight on, the B24 went to a spin and one chute came out of it. Then it (B24) went into a dive and another chute came out. I could not believe what I was seeing, it would be almost impossible to have made it out.

The B24 crashed about 1/2 mile from where I was, and exploded sending up a huge fire and 2nd chute drifted right through the fire and collapsed dropping the man into the fire. I was stunned!

In the picture you had a picture of Dr. Huff -1 remember him very well his room was next to mine.

Bob Lammers

August 30, 1996
252 Maple Ave.
Timberville, VA 22853

Mr. Ed Stern
P.O. Box 2187
Fargo, ND 58108

Dear Ed:

You can't imagine how grateful I was to receive the letter you sent...that of Robert Lammers' account of the air accident involving my B-17 and the B-24!

This was like Paul Harvey telling me "...the rest of the story" after 52 years.

We had never known the final status of the B-24 as everyone in my plane was doing their own thing..Swartz and Henderson trying to attend to Sgt. Ezell in the tail section, while we up front were trying to keep the B-17 in the air.

My thanks, again, to the Hardlife Herald and to you Ed, for being there and for the work you do.

Best regards,
C.W. "Mac" McCauley

21 August 1996

Dear Ed;

In the New History of the 385th B.G. on page #40- Mission #249 is not listed, This was my 23rd Mission, and here is a rundown on #249:

The target was Rheine, with Maj. Shankle Leading. # of A/C was 37- briefing was 5:30 A.M. take off 1035-landing 1540. Bomb load was (6) six 1000# - bomb away 1358 Alt. 23,200 ft.— our A/C was 338 736 - "Maiden America" Pace 117 & 121 in the book.

As Ever

Bill Effinger Jr.
Lt. Col USAF (RET)
1794 Delores St
Atwater, CA 95301-3204

P.S.

If you need more info about this mission contact

C.W. Harper
20508 Harvest Ave
Lakewood, CA 90715

This was his 25th Mission & I know he has more to say!

Ed Stem
P.O. Box 2187
Fargo, ND 58107

Dear Ed,

I noticed by the last newsletter that Ed Kreuppers, Director of Information, 8th AF historical Society has contacted you in regards to a letter he received from Germany regarding the crash of our plane, (Picadilly Queen) on 29 January 1944 over German soil.

I have talked to Ed and also received a letter from a Mr. Uwe Benkei in Germany who has evidently found the remains of our crashed B-17, Serial No. 42-30251 around the city of Kaiserslautern, Germany. He also sent me pictures of the 250 pounders as well as three Grave Site photos of three of my crew members.

He is planning to publish an article about the crash and requested any details about the last flight of the Picadilly Queen. He also contacted the German military archives in Freiburg where he got copies of the German Fighter Unit JG 3/UDET which had shot down 12 aircrafts on the 29th.

I've corresponded with Mr. Benkei on 1 August 1996 and gave him a blow by blow description of the last flight of the Picadilly Queen. I have not received anything back from him as of this date. I do know the 250 pounders were not from our aircraft as we had already dropped our load over the target and were on our way back when we were hit by a squadron of ME 101's and JU 88's. I'll keep in touch with you if anything develops.

Sincerely
Earl R. Follensbee
Lt. Col. USAF (RET)
2430 Deloraine Trail
Maitland, FL 32751

August 18, 1996
424 Carlo St
San Marcos, CA 92069

Dear Ed,

I would like to commend you for the masterful way in which you are running the "Hardlife Herald" it is interesting and informative and a pleasure to read.

As I recall, I think Tucson is to be the site of the 1997 Reunion. Wherever it is to be, I plan to be there.

I would hope that Fred Boms, Ed Lowe, Bill Shelly, Marion Jindra and the rest of our crew will also attend.

Look forward to seeing you in 1997.

Sincerely
Maurice O. Nysether
Bombardier
"Sleepytime Gal"
550th Squadron

August 25, 1996

Mr. Stem,

I obtained your name and address from Jerry Donnelly of the 385th BG Association. As of this date, I have forwarded a check in the amount of \$ 10.00 to the association in order to become an auxiliary member.

I am currently conducting historical research on some of the aircraft assigned to the 385th BG. I am especially interested in obtaining information on a particular B-17 they flew with the 385th. That is a B-17G-40 BO, No: 42-97079, named "Dozy Doats." This was an all aluminum (unpainted) aircraft assigned to the 548th BS and carried the squadron letter "B." Dozy Doats was heavily damaged by enemy action on 6 Oct 44 and may not have flown again. I would very much like to locate a photograph of the name painted on the aircraft. Any help with this matter would be greatly appreciated.

Do you, as the editor of the association newsletter, maintain a holding of organizational photographs? I am also interested in wartime photos of the aircraft assigned to the group.

Thank you in advance for your quick response to this request and keep up the good work.

Michael A. Campbell
8458-2F Greystone Lane
Columbia, MD 21045
(410) 977-1680

Editor's Note: The answer to paragraph 3 is negative-sorry.

Dear Ed,

I read with interest Buell Martin's letter in the August issue of the Hardlife Herald. As background, at that time, Buell was tailgunner on the "Sleepytime Gal"; Fred Boms, pilot; Ed Lowe, co-pilot. Bill Skelly, navigator & myself, bombardier.

Buell's gripping account of the collision of Capt. White's and Lt. McDonald's planes over Luxemborg was as I recalled it happening. We were flying in the slot and as Bombardier, within perhaps fifty feet, I had a very close view of the tragic event. I recall the rear fuselage of the lead plane being sliced off at the waist leaving the waist gunner standing at their stations totally exposed. The last view I had of the stricken airplane was of the landing gear becoming extended presumably, because of the hydraulic lines being severed.

In the aftermath, as Buell stated, we flew through the debris. A piece penetrated the plexiglass nose leaving a large hole with a 150 MPH -50 degree wind rushing through. Enough to give you frostbite or worse.

con't on next page

Iddendy I believe the letter from Leslie P. Paulson **on the next** pager refers to the same event. It may well be that the "Sgt. Larry Ateyeh" referred to in Paulson's letter is the same person referred to as "Tieyh" by Buell. Buell may be able to help Paulson in his quest for more information.

After receiveing the "Hardlife Herald" this afternoon I called Fred Boms we re-lived the event. After the collision he was so busy flying us out of the debris that he didn't have much time to observe the aftermath but he does recall the fuselage being sliced off at the waist.

This series of 10 hour missions to Munich had a further significance to me, personally. As I recall, the collision occured on July 12, 1944. On the mission of the 13th to Munich I was hit by flak, in the leg, while over the target. While not serious, I spent the next three weeks in the 65th General (I believe) near Norwich.

Such events make for long missions.

Sincerely,

Maurice Nysether
424 Carlo St
San Marcos, CA 92069

Feller Roger
22 Rue de L'Ermitage
L-8833 Wolwelange
Luxembourg
Member of
Groupe de Recherche
et d'Etudes sur la
Guerre 1940/1945

Wolwelange September 2th 1996

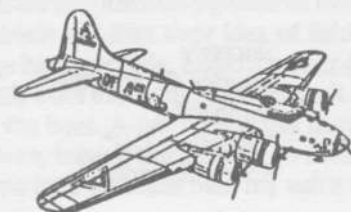
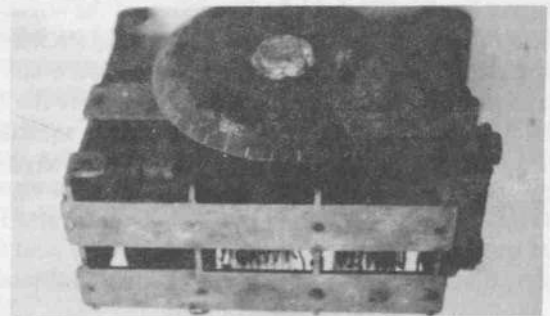
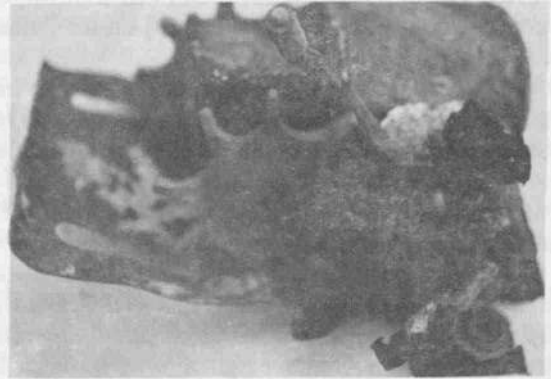
Dear Mister Pettenger.

I'm a friend of John Demeden an he is helping me with information about the impact of the two B17 No 42-102606 and No. 42-31917. This armorial will be erected in my small hometown Perle near Bastpgne it will be the first memorial for the 8th Air Force in Luxembourg, it will be innovated on 21 th of June 1988. There will be a plaque with the names of the 18 members of the crews and an original propeller blade will be fixed on a wall near the church in Perle. I still found parts from this two planes in this area and there will be an exhibition at the same time. I send you pictures from those parts perhaps you can find out what it was used for. I also send you pictures from the graves of this men. if you are interested I can send you the pictures of all the members from the Henri Chapelle cimetry there are six. I was writing several times to the Air Force Museum at Minneapolis but 1 got no answer. I sent them a copy from the original document what the german police did after the accident but I got no anwer. I would like to have some pictures of a B17 and from the badge of the 8th Air Force for the exhbition I will pay for all, in the same time please tell me what I can do to be a member of our Reunion Group to get our newsletter. By the next stay in Luxembourg I invite you in my house and I show you exactly the places where the two planes came down. I'm working on a small brochudure from that accident when it will be ready 1 will send it to you.

Nices greeting from a friend of the 385th B.G. and

sorry for my homemade english.

P.S. The second survivor was S.G.T. Robert P. McPherson if he is still alive we would like to invite him to come to Luxembourg to take part on the memorial for his friends and if there is a probleme we would pay for the tickets for him and Larry Atiyah.



John C Chatel
3 Rue C. Duguesclin
14450 GRANDCAMP-MAISY
Tel. 31 51 87 71

8th AF Asso#30104

Dear Sir,

In order to complete my sadly files on US downed airplanes during the war in my area (Roueu), I need the two following informations.

1. Tail number of the A/C? 231762 Crashwagon III
2. If crew survived the crash?

Here what I have in hand.

8th AF. 385th BG. 561 BS. Date June 12th 1944.
Target Montdidier time 0906. Position 49degree 21'N-01 '30'E. Belly landed in Rouen area at about 8 kms East from Les Andelys.

Ale was last seen with engines smoking, most probably hit by flak. Plane was a BI 7G with the following crew:

Pilot Jozen N. Jackson	Co-pilot Rose W. Blake
Nav. Gerald W. Chaffer	Bom Joseph H. Haught
Ag Armando Arsili	Ag Ervin A. Pickerel
Ag Felipe E. Aubquis	Ag Theodore G. Dubsnic
Ag Sam A Pennel	Ag Fredrick Martini

Wishing that you could help me with those two questions.

Thanking you in advance.

Your Sincerely

John C Chatel

AFTER FIFTY PLUS YEARS-- MEMORIES RETURN

Most of the time a person goes thru life not looking back for they are too busy planning ahead, putting out fires, wondering where you will get enough money to meet financial demands or just having a good time enjoying life. Then all of a sudden you read something in the Hardlife Herald that suddenly gets your attention and like a flash of lightening you reflect backward on major events that shaped your life and future. You then slow down and realize that something larger than life guides and cares for each of us. This happened to me after I had finished reading August 1996, 385th BGMA Newsletter. Ther was a copy of a letter sent to Ian McLachlan by Jerry H. Ramaker. This letter describes a mission which was my first combat mission to Zwichau, Germany on 12 May 1944. The letter describes the flight of the Worster crew and a German ME-109 that rammed this B-17 in which the Worster crew was flying. The lone survivor was Sgt. Robert W. Pellmon. It so happened that the Co-Pilot was our co-pilot, Charles H. Manuel. He was selected to fly as Co-Pilot on the Worster crew because it was policy of the Group or the Squadron to assign new crew members to experienced combat crews to give them combat experience on their first mission. I flew with another crew as Co-Pilot but don't remember the Pilots name, however, I will never forget the mission itself, for I have never seen so many German fighter planes at one time or forgotten the thick flak that we encountered. Our crew had only been told that they thought the Worster crew had shot down a German figher and it had rammed their aircraft because it was out of control. This letter

to Ian is the first time I had any details about the Worster crew and aircraft and I thank Jerry Ramaker for the information. I know Jerry personally and see and talk with him at the Bomb Group reunions.

At the present time I am celebrating my 75th birthday and my 53rd anniversary and am in the middle of plans to go to England with the 385th Group in September which will include a visit to Great Ashfield and the adjoining area.

After recalling these memories I suddenly thought of what a close call I had tht day of 12 May 1944. It could have been me that was selected to fly with the Worster crew rather than Charles Manuel, our Co-pilot. It makes you realize that there is a larger overall plan by a "GREATER BEING" that has made plans for each of us and looks out for all of us, each and every day. We have all been blessed so much throughout all of these times. Not only this event have I survived but also was fortunate enough to survive a mid-air collision while flying a B-47 Bomber at 39,000 feet when an F-86 Fighter collided with me in the rear of our aircraft in February 1958 near Savannah, Georgia where we landed safely at Hunter Air Force Base, Ga. Life is so precious and we should savor every moment and never forget the ones that paid the ultimate price.

Howard Richardson

Pilot-The Mississippi Miss

548th Sqdn. 385th B. Gp.

Dear Ed,

I have been asked to see if I can help find information about a Ball Turret Gunner by the name of Francis Wiemerslage of the 549th BS, 385th Bomb Group stationed at Great Ashfield, England.

He was on his 14th Mission on March 2, 1945 when the plane he was in was attacked by the Germans and later blew up on a mission near Dresden, Germany, his youngest brother is seeking information:

ROLAND WIEMERSLAGE

8459 CENTER AVE.

RIVER GROVE, ILL

60171

708-456-6356

Sincerely,

Donald J. Kabitzke

2464 North Sherman Blvd.

Milwaukee, WI 53210

414-442-8890



WHAT!

An officer was addressing his squadron before a bombing raid on occupied Europe. "Men," he said, "tomorrow's stint is ONE of the toughest we've ever tackled. The enemy has received reinforcements. We are using our oldest planes. There's a hell of a storm brewing over the Channel and we'll be lucky if one out of four of us gets back alive. We take off at 0700 sharp. And if any one of you is 30 seconds late, dammit, he don't get to go!

borrowed from Missouri Chapter Rally Point

COL. JAMES G. McDONALD
950 Mandalay Beach Road
Oxnard, Ca. 93035
805-985-2980

Dear Ed,

8/29

Sure glad you published your letter to your wife! It brought back so many memories of Great Ashfield. Like when those"... seven bombs dropped" Archie Benner ran out of the briefing bldg and jumped into the bunker. You guessed it-it was full of water.

Or the time Hymie Gomberg took off from my little office (at the briefing bldg)-charged low toward the door and completely wiped out Will Bunting whose white faced had appeared for just a moment.

At the same time I was informed that a fully loaded aircraft might blow up if not moved. I told Warren Cerrone to get out there and taxi out of danger. I can still see Warren's blue eyes as he contemplated the order. Then he went out and bravely moved it.

Then the awful feeling of helplessness when standing on the tower and watching the B-24's landing nearby. I watched the intruder, yelled for someone to notify their tower, but no one could get thru St the German just joined their landing pattern-all in view of we in the tower. Oi Vey!!

Your letter also reminded me of the 100 letters I sent my mother (she gave them to me before she passed on.)

Of course they are censored and pertained mostly to working conditions and personnel. I had forgotten my working conditions. Seemed like 1 never slept. Seems like stress was getting to me. I saw a movie & when I came out couldn't remember a thing about it!

Reason for all the letters. Just to let her know I was still alive as the writing date. Was tough on families in the States when the headlines would blare 16 B-17's go down on mission to ? Then a few days later 20 B-17's go down, etc.

Thanks for all your efforts;
Jim McDonald

P.S.

Got a phone call from England. Sqdn Leader Ron Bow-ers calls once a year.

Loves getting Hardlife Herald. Turned over field from RAF to US almost 90 still into baloney. Can't drive anymore, good thing too. 1 visited him a few years ago and came closer to dying in his car than many aircraft.

Jim.

Dear Ed,

08 Sept. 1996

I was reviewing past issues of the Hardlife Herald, and noticed my letter to you, in the June Issue, regarding my asking for stories and/or information about my Father Harlan K. Inglis, who was in the 548th Squardon, and pilot of the "Throughbred". I thank you very much for that. However, I noticed that you had the wrong name and address at the end of my letter.

I am still looking for information and/or stories about my Father, for the war years biography project I am writing. I would welcome any correspondence from your readers about him or his crew or the "Throughbred". I appreciate your help in this matter, and hope to see you all at the '97 reunion.

Thank you very much,
Stephen R. Inglis
10230 Pleasant Lake Blvd. #E3
Parma, OH 44130

Editor's note: Sorry, Steve. Here's the correct address.

Dear Ed,

In reference to Mrs. H.O. Hamiltons article in the Herald, I will add more information on the 549th B-17 Fickle Finger. Enclosed is a photo of the original crew of the Fickle Finger. We had Herb Hamilton as our Pilot for about 11 or 12 missions. He was promoted to 549th Squardon Operations. The second pilot of the Fickle Finger was M. Persechini with whom I completed my 25th mission on February 29, 1944.

CREW MEMBERS

BACK ROW LEFT TO RIGHT: B. Gochnauer (Eng), C. Miller (TG), R. White (WG), S. Bucceri (BT), C. Irvin (RO), K. Femlund (WG)

FRONT ROW LEFT TO RIGHT: E. Grabowski (Nav), H. Hamilton (Pilot), J. McKee (Co-Pilot), I. Klothe (Pilot Observer).



Sincerely,

Ken Femlund
1880 E. Nevada
St. Paul, MN 55119

Dear Ed,

28 August, 1996

Recently I ran across an article in the June 1993 issue of the *Hardlife*, entitled "A Kick In The Ass" it was a story about the work done to install a 20mm cannon in the nose of Round Trip Jack. I finally found someone who gave Technical Sergeant Elmer Blank credit for his part in the whole enterprise. He was a friend of mine and deserved more credit than he was given.

The original work to develop the gun mount was on the nose section from the Fortress "Tough Shit" which had locked wings with a ME 109 over Kent, England, and the pilot of the Fort brought both planes to the ground safely. Our 88th Service Squadron had the job of salvaging it and bringing it back to Great Ashfield. The nose was mounted outside of the machine shop so they could have a model to measure on. The story about it was sent back to the States as "Technical Sergeant TS".

Sergeant Blank was a darn good machinist. At one time there was a shortage of pins used on the cowlings of the bombers and it got critical. Blank told our Engineering Officer if they could get the correct gauge wire, he could make all they needed until supplies from the states arrived. A man was sent to London where he obtained the correct shape and be cut. When the wire arrived, they went to work and a good supply was soon made, Blank knew his business.

The story did not tell how engineers from Boeing were flown to the base where they photographed and made drawings of the work Blank and Thompson had done. Blank had help design and build portable equipment for the mobile shops our squadron brought over from the states. The lack of firepower in the front of the Fortress was inexcusable. Its designers through negligence to foresee this weakness contributed to many unnecessary deaths.

Don Kabitzke

30 September 1996

Dear Ed,

Perhaps you can assist me in locating information regarding the number of 385th wounded in action from July '43 through the last mission flown in April '45. The official records include KIA, MIA and POW, but no WIA. Also, if you know where I can locate figures on the number of aircraft/crew members lost in training or operations other than combat from Feb. '43 through deactivation of the group in '45, your assistance would be appreciated.

Sometimes when I'm speaking to young people about what was at stake when your generation flew off to war in June '43, their eyes sort of glaze over - they don't have a clue. But when I start talking numbers, they begin to listen and understand. When you say to a high school senior: "You have a life expectancy of 11 missions or about two months. It's July of 1943,

and by football season you will probably be dead, wounded or prisoner. If you're lucky enough to make it to the Christmas holidays, most of your friends won't." They don't completely understand, but they begin to get the picture. Freedom always has a price and credit is not accepted.

I've been back to Great Ashfield about five times since 1977 when I first met you wonderful folks at the LAs Vegas reunion. By the way, in May of '951 realized a life-long dream by logging an hour of leftseat time in a beautifully restored B-17G. Now I can better understand why you guys have such affection for this great airplane.

God Bless You,
Raymond B. Tucker
4362 Smoke Rise Lane
Marietta, GA 30062-7308

23 August 1996
Route 10, Box 119A
Harrisonburg, VA

Dear Ed,

In this last issue of the "Hardlife Herald", there was a letter to John Pettenger (page 17) from a group or a person from Luxembourg, about a mid-air crash over the town of Perle and Wolwenance on July 12, 1944. That was the same crew and B17 that my brother, Steve Ryan, was on.

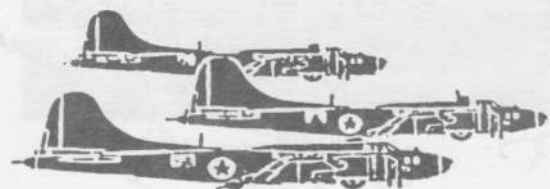
If it is possible, I would like to have a mailing address of the group that wrote the letter. I would like to swap information with them.

Ed, it has been less than one year since I joined the 385th BGMA. It is a great feeling. My wife and I have met and visited some wonderful people (Jim Grenstead, Charlie McCauley, both from Virginia, and Truman Smith from Oklahoma). They were very informative and was sometime emotional. It has been a pleasure and a great honor to be associated with the 385th.

Thank You!!

Sincerely, with
Greatest Respect.
Andy Ryan

Editor's Note: We sent him the address (which was left out by mistake with the letter.)





8/9/96

13 DIXTON CLOSE

MONMOUTH

NP5 3HE

Tel: 01600 715944

Rear Ed and Jane,

We were saddened yesterday to have a card fro? Bob Valliere to say that our old friend Earl Cole had passed away.

We would like to add our voices to the many who will mourn Earl, for he was one of our oldest friends in the 585th BGMA, from his first visit to Fox Farm in 1978, to his great hospitality to us during otrr vist to America in 1979

Earl and Ruth, in addition to the hospitality of their home*spared no trouble in showing us the many beauties of their afea of Kentucky. I even had pistol practice in his garden one Sunday afternoon, an activity which would-^have dire consequences in this country.

We join in sympathy to Ruth, Sam Cole and other members of his family whom we met.

Yours sincerely,

John and Lucy Edles
Kindest regards to your bere
John - Lucy

*P.S. The Monnow Bridge
the ancient gateway 800 yd old
to Monmouth*

Editor's Note: Another Accolade for the Savannah Museum.

By Marcus Holland • Savannah New-Press

There's a line in the movie "Field of Dreams" that says if you build it, they will come.

Fifty-four years after the 8th Air Force was formed in Savannah in January 1942, a museum to preserve and honor the force was built.

And as emotional 8th veterans came-flocked is perhaps a better word-to a "sneak preview" of the \$ 12 million mighty 8th Air Force Heritage Museum in Pooler.

Streams of 8th veterans and their families walked down the newly paved Bourne Avenue to the museum.

A few limped, some were in wheelchairs and some were on walkers and crutches. But they came to see a monument built for them and their buddies who didn't make it back from World War II, Korea and Vietnam. They stood outside, tears in their eyes, cameras and video recorders in their hands.

And tour bus after tour bus kept rolling down Bourne Avenue. It was an impressive sight.

"It's their day," said retired Gen. E.G. "Buck" Shuler, who was the driving force behind building the museum. "I feel good for them. It's been wonderful challenge, and the reward is right here. It's more than I ever thought it would be."

After being talked about for more then 50 years, the first steps toward the museum becoming a reality ocured when Chatham County commissioners donated land and pledged financing. Many veterans said they never thought the museum would be built.

But that was before Shuler and retired Gen. Lew Lyle, a B-17 pilot from Hot Springs, Ark. got involved.

"You could Say I'm numb...absolutely in awe of the building and its long-term potential," the 78-year-old Lyle said, surveying the 90,000-square-foot building that houses artifacts, a library, combat equipment and a real life mission briefing room and flight experience. "This keeps me young."

"This is a fantastic home for the 8th. Its a great day for the 8th veterans and the veterans of this country. This place will be a major research center and one of the best high-tech museums in the world," he added.

Roger Freeman of Colchester, England, who coined the Mighty 8th Air Force name, was in Savannah to attend the opening. Freeman, just a kid during World War II, has written 40 books, mostly on the 8th Air Force.

"Magnificent," he said of the museum. T've been promoting this hard overseas. This is a great tribute to the Americans...the largest air striking force in history. On any day, the Americans could put 3,000 bombers and fighters in the air, over 20,000 American boys.

The museum, although not completely finished, was more than the 8th veterans expected to see. Its attractions include planes, a German Messerschmidt Me-163B-1a Komet rocket plane, a rebuilt Jeep, cutaway engines for the P-51 and B-17 and photographs from England.

Dear Ed,

22 September 1996

I am writing to you in regards to the ditching of my father's (Harlan K. Inglis, 548th Sq.) B-17, the Throughbred on February 28, 1944. When my brother, sister and I were growing up, Dad told us that the Throughbred had been hit by flak on a mission over Europe, and that they tried to make it back to England on two engines. The strain had been to great on the two remaining engines, and they had to ditch the Throughbred in the channel. All crew members were safe and were rescued by air-sea rescue within 10 minutes. Newspaper clippings dated back to 1944 support the story that it was the Throughbred (serial No. 42-31677) that went down in the English Channel.

Recently, I found a reprint of a Battle Damage report from the Zwichau mission, dated 12 May 1944 in the HLH, that would seem to contradict what we had believed about the

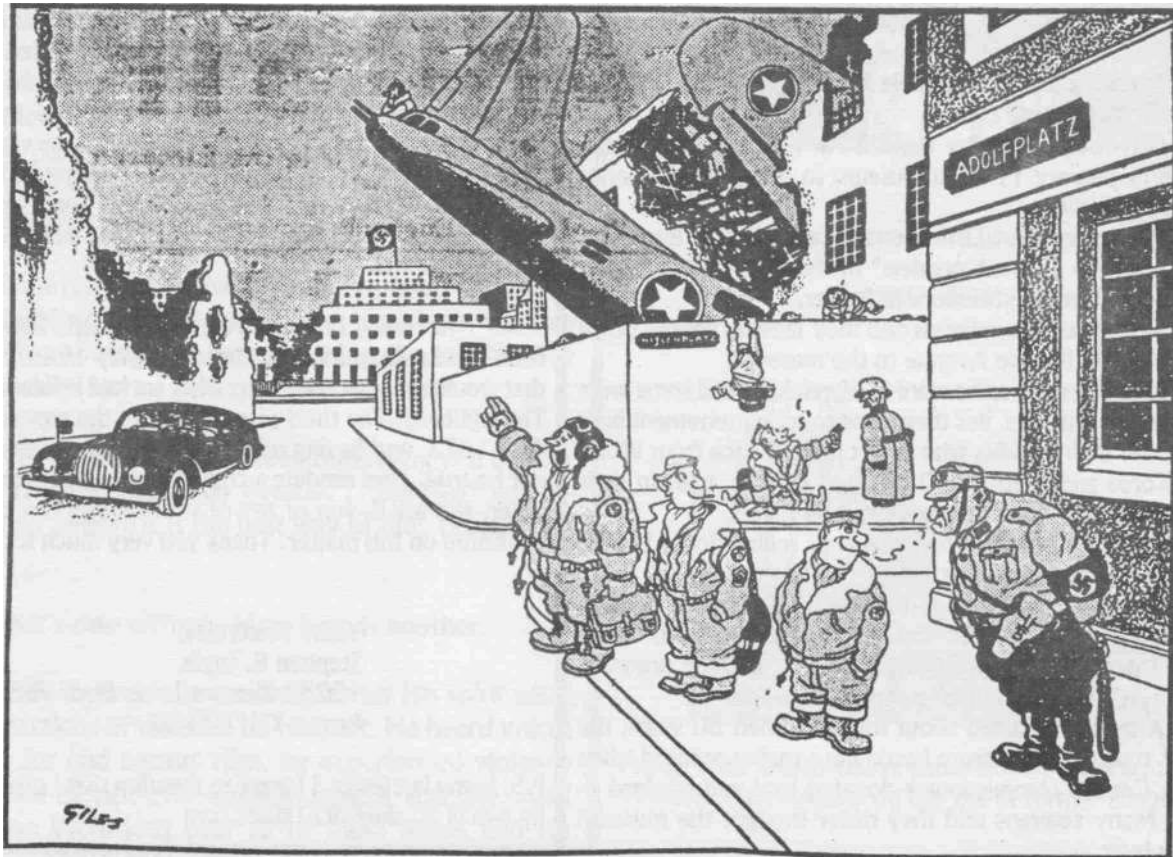
Throughbred. The third plane down on the report is listed as 42-31677, and having minor damage. Obviously, both cannot be true. I am sending a copy of the report along with this letter, and ask if you or any of your readers can clear up my confusion on this matter. Thank you very much for your help.

Yours Sincereley,
Stephen R. Inglis
10230 Pleasant Lakes Blvd. #E3
Parma, OH 44130

P.S. In my last letter, I forgot to mention that I can be reached by e-mail at: singlis921@aol.com



THE STARS AND STRIPES



“TAXI !”

Courtesy of The Sunday Express

385thTHBGMA

ED STERN. EDITOR
P.O. Box 2187
 Fargo, ND 58108

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