



# 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. XV NO. 5**  
 Editor: Ed Stern  
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 424th AIR SVS. GP.  
 877th CHEM. CO. (AO)  
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 STATION COMPLEMENT SQ.

OCTOBER 1997

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## THOUGHTS OF THE PRESIDENT

As my term comes to a close, I want to express my thanks to the membership and to the officers who have given me input during the past two years.

Although I believe I accomplished most of my aspirations, there are still a number of things to be done. Some of these will be decided on at the business meeting in Tucson. You should know my thoughts on matters of dues, annual reunions, widows, monument at the Eighth Air Force Museum in Savannah, and life memberships. The betterment of the Association should be foremost in the minds of membership.

I would be remiss if I did not express a note of appreciation, on behalf of the members, to our Editor, Ed Stern. He always does a superb job with the Hardlife Herald and this newsletter is so important as a bond which affords a closeness in the Association.\*

I am happy to pass the gavel (in honor of Earl Cole), to a very capable Mike Gallagher. However he needs a 1st VP, a 2nd VP and a Treasurer. Nominate from the floor or write to me. I am offering my services as 1st VP, if membership so desires.

I will say it was a honor to have been your President. I thank You.

In comradeship, I am....  
 Bob Valliere

\*Editor's Note: Thanks, Mr. President!

**CHAPLAIN**  
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**HONORARY MEMBERS**  
 M/Sgt John McKay, Jr. USAF  
 LTC Raymond B. Tucker

**PAST PRESIDENTS \*DECEASED**  
 Ruel G. Weikert  
 \*Frank B. Walls  
 Vincent W. Masters  
 \*John C. Ford  
 \*James E. Emmons  
 \*Paul Schulz  
 Forrest V. Poore  
 William A. Nicholls  
 \*Earl L. Cole  
 Sam Lyke  
 Sid Colthorpe  
 Robert C. Smith

## CHAPLAIN JIM SA YS

In the September 1997 "Special Issue" of the American Legion magazine, there were a number of letters written to the Editor regarding their thoughts on the parts of America that they felt were overlooked. They were excellent and very thought provoking.

It got to me!

I am proud to be an American. An American, where I am free to vote as I want, free to work where I want and free to worship as I feel God wants. And I'm very happy that I feel God has his/her hand in it. (America). So I intend to continue to do what I can to help others do God's Bidding.

We fought for freedom and won. Now let's carry on by making sure that those who will live after experience this same freedom and realize it has been a blessing from God.

God will not call us to a task and then abandon us. So let us pray in such a way that our minds agree with our voices.

See you all in Tucson.

Blessings on You  
Jim



Dr. Williston P. Bunting	August 1997
Bill Powell	August 1997
Jim Emmons	August 1997
Paul A. Joyce	December 1996

Dear Ed,

It is with great sadness I write to tell you my husband, Paul A Joyce passed away December 29, 1996.

Paul was drafted in July 1941, before World War II and entered the Air Corps. He was stationed first I believe in San Antonio, Texas, then in various Air Corps bases in the United States picking up cadres before leaving Great Falls, Montana for Great Ashfield in 1943. He served in England until August 1945. He was home on leave when Japan surrendered, and was discharged a few weeks later.

He took great pride being a member of the 385th and read the newsletter until his illness made that impossible.

Sincerely

Helen M Joyce

**LAKEPARK** - Mr Paul A- Joyce, age 83 died December 29, 1996 at Union Regional Medical Center...

Mr. Joyce was born August 3, 1913 in Pittsburg, PA, the son of the late Martin and Mary Griffin Joyce.

He was a retired Sales representative for American Standard Company with whom he worked for 33 years.

A World War Two Veteran he served in the Air Force as a 1st SGT with the 551st Bomb Squad 385th Bomb Group, 8th Air Force.

Mr. Joyce is survived by his wife Helen Quinlan Joyce of the home; and daughter, Megan Joyce also of the home.

### WILLISTON PENFIELD BUNTING, M.D.



Williston Penfield Bunting, M.D., 81, Kansas City, MO, passed away Saturday, August 16, 1997, at home following a long illness. Memorial services will be 3 p.m. Tuesday, August 19, in the Country

Club Christian Church Sanctuary, 6101 Ward Parkway, Kansas City, MO. Visitation will follow the service at the church. Memorial contributions may be made to the Rehabilitation Institute, 3011 Baltimore, Kansas City, MO 64108, or any charity for children.

Dr. Bunting, a physician, was a lifelong resident of Kansas City. He was born August 25, 1915, in Kansas City, MO. He attended both the University of Kansas and the University of Missouri where he joined the fraternity his father and uncles founded, Sigma Alpha Epsilon. After graduation from the University of Pennsylvania Medical School, he became an intern at the old General Hospital (forerunner of Truman Medical Center).

## Bella Vista

### William 'Bill' Powell

William "Bill" Powell, 80, of Bella Vista died Tuesday, Aug. 5, 1997, at Bates Medical Center in Bentonville. He was born Jan. 9, 1917, in Philadelphia, Pa., to John and Christina Powell.

He married Yvonne Weatherill on June 16, 1951. They moved to Bella Vista from Council Bluff, Iowa, in 1978.

He was a member of the POA Board from 1982 through 1984. Powell served as chairman of the POA Board in 1983.

He was active in the Nine Hole Golf Association and was an avid bridge player.

He was an active member of the Bella Vista Community Church, a member of American Legion Post 341, and a member of Buchenwald Prisoners Club.

He graduated from high school in Waterbury, Conn., and from the University of Nebraska at Omaha, Neb.

He was a retired Air Force captain who served in World War II and was a prisoner of war in Germany.

Survivors include his wife Yvonne; one son, William L. Powell of Tulsa, Okla.; two daughters, Pamela Lawler of Mount Morris, Ill., and Sharon McKnight of Katy, Texas; and four granddaughters.

Dear Ed,

Enclosed is a clipping on the 385th flight surgeon. I didn't know him at Great Ashfield and didn't know him here except by reputation which was excellent. The only medicine I knew about at the 385th was the time in the winter of 1944 when they had MPs at the mess halls to be sure we ate our sulfa drugs. Most of us thought they would sterilize us so we spit them out when the MP was distracted. I was lucky—I had seven children! In the fall of 1944 I was on a mission where we were shut up and out of fuel and landed at an airfield at Chearelroi Belgium. The German aircraft was still on the ground so my crew thought I found the wrong airfield. I was a navigator on Bill Sanders crew. Stayed there a few days with the infantry and got some gas and flew back to the 385th. I can't remember the date. In the 1944 election there were 28 officers in our hut in the 551st but only one was old enough to vote and no one was less than a 1st LT.

I really enjoy the Herald. You are doing a fine job so keep it up. Raise the dues to keep you in ink—\$25 a year would not be too much—we're fading fast.

At the 200 mission party I recall several train loads of London Ladies who stayed at the field for several days. Didn't we have a bomb dump with poison gas bombs somewhere near the 551st? Also there were some Italian POW's planting tomatoes. In Andy Rooney's "My War" on page 85 is a picture of Andy on board at 385 BG B17.1 doubt it was the 385 but I could be in error.

Maybe we could encourage our children or grandchildren to take our places as we fade away. Thanks for some great stories.

Rodger J Walsh  
551 Sq. 385 BG  
10512 Mersington Ave.  
Kansas City, MO 64137-1626

Dr. and Mrs. E.J. Mitchell, of Scottsbluff, NE, in 1940. In 1941 he was called into service as a flight surgeon in the United States Air Corps. At age 26 he was Group Flight Surgeon of the 385th Heavy Bombardment group, one of the first groups to be sent to England. He flew 25 missions over Nazi-occupied Europe and was head of the medical team that liberated the notorious Buchenwald camp. He received the Bronze Star and Distinguished Unit Badge and six Battle Stars, retiring at the rank of Lt. Colonel. Dr. Bunting returned to Kansas City in 1946 and was appointed Clinical Associate Professor of Surgery (ear, nose and throat) at the University of Kansas. He was elected to the Pan American Academy of Otolaryngology, Head and Neck Surgery. He was on the executive staff at St. Luke's Hospital and the active staff at Research and St. Mary's Hospitals, and served as President of the Old Westport Medical Group.

Dear Ed,

It is with sadness that I am informing you of the death of my dear husband, Wes.

Thru the many past years we have so enjoyed the 385th reunions - Wes always looked forward to them and seeing friends he cherished from his World War B17 duty.

I am enclosing Wes' obituary

Cordially,

Helen B. Brashear

**WESLEY BRASHEAR**, 77, a Colorado Springs resident, died Nov. 16, 1996, at a local hospital.

Friends may call from 4 to 8 p.m. Monday at Swan-Law Funeral Directors, 501 N. Cascade Ave. The funeral will be at 1 p.m. Tuesday at First Presbyterian Church, 219 E. Bijou St.

Mr. Brashear was born Nov. 13, 1919, in Pittsburgh to James and Pearl (Speakman) Brashear, who preceded him in death.

He was married Nov. 25, 1950, in Weston, W.Va., to Helen Brooks, who lives in Colorado Springs.

He is also survived by a son, Wesley Jr. of Dallas; two daughters, Ann Fitzgerald of Tyler, Texas, and Jane McNeill of Vail; and four grandchildren.

Mr. Brashear graduated from the University of West Virginia. He served in the Army and Air Force for 34 years, attaining the rank of lieutenant colonel. He served as a pilot during World War II, the Korean War and Vietnam War.

He was a member of the Kiwanis Club, Jr. and Sr. Chamber of Commerce and Veterans of Foreign Wars in Morgantown, W.Va.

He had lived in Colorado Springs since 1972, previously living in Morgantown.

Memorial contributions may be made to the Deacons Fund at First Presbyterian Church, 219 E. Bijou St., Colorado Springs 80903.



Mr. Brashear

Dear Ed,

Thank you for your kind words about Jim. He was a special man. husband and father, the girls and I will always miss him.

We were ready to play golf and he had a cerebral hemorrhage. As you know he loved the golf and was shooting mid seventies several times a week.

Hope you have a successful reunion.  
Margo Emmons



Tacoma, Washington  
July 23, 1997

Dear Sir,

I flew in the 385th -549th SQDN. I'm in search of the missions I flew-I started in the first part of 1944 and was shot down on my 23rd mission on the out skirts of Berlin. My pilot was Robert Barney. My first mission was with another crew. My social security number is 501-18-0893 and my A.S.N. is 37321448.

I'm having a jacket painted and in order to complete it. I need my missions. We lost one crew member who is always on my mind it was the radio operator, named John Hutchons, I was only a couple of feet from him when he got hit.

I was shot down on my oldest brothers birthday in 29 April 1944 and was liberated exactly one year later on the 29th of April 1945.

My pilot Robert Barney was on Hiken field at Pearl Harbor, and got the silver star the first day of the war, when he and his friend Bilinic shot down a Jap flight with a 30 caliber machine gun they had set on top of a garbage can.

I just wanted to tell you a few things about my crew.

Sincerely,  
S/Sgt. Charles A. Grinder  
919 So. Faucett #904  
Tacoma, Washington 98402-5693

P.S. our plane was "Vapor Trails"

120 Brendon  
Basildon, Laindon  
Essex, SS15 5XN  
England

30/4/97

Dear Gerald,

I phoned last week to ask for your help in the research that I am doing on the 116 B17's and B24's from the Eighth Air Force to go to Switzerland and from the 385th BG Seven went to Switzerland during 44-45 I have listed them below:

16/3/44 1 42-38160 1LT Robert Meyer Little Chub  
16/3/44 2 42-38195 1LT Vincent McLaughlin  
13/4/44 3 42-38196 2LT Donald Jorgenson  
13/4/44 4 42-31866 2LT Harvey Downs  
28/5/44 5 42-98603 Capt. Norman Radin Gremlin Buggy!!  
13/7/44 6 42-108031 1 LT Robert Turner  
16/7/44 7 44-6112 1LT Norman Robbins

If you could put a small article in your newsletter asking for any of the crew who were on the a/c above to get in contact with me so I can ask a few questions about their story while in Switzerland and if you could also put I am willing to pay for any information and photos they have. I am very grateful to you for doing this for me and if you or the 385th BG need anything please ask and I will

do my best to help you. I hope to hear from you soon.

Your Sincerely,  
Robert Martyr

**Editor's Note: We sent him Norm Radins article from the recent Hardlife Herald.**

5 July 1997

Peter Fordham  
Fairviews, Badwell Ash  
Bury St. Edmunds  
Suffolk IP 31 3DJ

Dear Peter,

Many thanks for your interest shown in the 385th and my apologies for taking so long to get back to you. The crash at Badwell Ash occurred on Wednesday 5th January, 1944 at 0725 hours. The group were taking off for Mission 49 to Kiel and it appears that B-17 42-3544, "Stars and Stripes" of the 550th squadron iced up and was unable to get airborne. As you know, the aircraft came down on Brook Farm and 8 of the crew perished. The names I have are:

Pilot: Flight Officer William H Morris  
CP: 2/LT Dennis J Zebrath  
Nav: 2/LT Richard S Proctor  
Bomb: 2/LT Robert M Totaro  
TTG: S/Sgt Russell A Stevens  
ROG: S/Sgt Chester A Rober  
BTG: S/Sgt Walter A Stuebgen  
LWG: Sgt Stanley Lowitz

A report on the crash says that the aircraft carried 16 x M31 bombs, 2 exploded and 14 were unburied and scattered over an area of approx. 300-400 yards along with wreckage from the aircraft. Eight were killed, 1 in hospital.

A few months ago I received a letter from Arnold M Miller who was the original pilot for this crew who recalled, "we trained as a group at Moses Lake Wash, Kearney Neb. and went over on the "Queen Mary". My bunk was the top one of 5 tiers up in the swimming pool. Needless to say, trips to the bathroom were very few after bedtime. I caught a very bad cold up at the "Wash" and could not shake it. My crew had a break up, the Bombardier and Navigator were made part of the lead crew. So, as I was in the hospital, there were only 7 of our original bunch. They went first to southern France on the first mission (came to the hospital that night all hopped up). Next day someone came into the ward with the news that they had crashed up just off the runway. Only man to survive, that being called the tail gunner, Burnell T Hamilton of Miami, Florida. He was badly injured and was in a Station General Hospital near Nottingham. Arnold's crew included Zebrath, Morris, Stevens & Stuebgen-the others weren't known to him. It was stated to Arnold by the tail gunner that it was ice on the wings that caused the crash.

I hope this helps. You mentioned knowing the landowner and, if you can obtain consent, I would welcome the opportunity to do some digging on the site, perhaps you could let me know on this. Incidentally, Arnold told me their regular ship was, "Pistol Packin' Mama."

Best Wishes,

Ian

20th June 1997

Ed Stem  
P.O. Box 2187  
Fargo, ND 58108

Dear Ed,

Several items to catch up on but, firstly, my thanks to the 385th for the invitation to attend the reunion. I've already phoned Bob and left a message to confirm. Sue and I are already getting excited and, no doubt, the weeks will simply fly by. Attending the reunion will not only provide the pleasure of meeting old friends but making new ones plus, of course, the historian in me won't let the chance slip past to gather more 385th material so all those who are coming, please bring pictures and prepare to be interrogated!!

Best Wishes,

Ian

**Editor's Note:** Norm Madsen called this item from the Minneapolis newspaper to our attention. Let's do a little arithmetic—normally a mission lasted about 10 hours. At \$300 per hour, you guys were saving \$3000 each time you had a mission. If you made it through 30 missions, you saved \$90,000—that is, against what you'd have to pay by the hour now. Feel better about the whole thing? Of course, if you were shot down before you finished your 30 missions, you didn't save as much.

### Wings of history

Fans of World War II military planes can take to the sky in a B-17 Flying Fortress or a B-24 Liberator at the Planes of Fame Museum in Eden Prairie.

Both planes have been restored to 1944-'45 combat configurations. The hour-long flights provide seven "crew members" with all the sights, sounds and smells of a historic mission. Dawn and dusk flights are \$300 per person.

Those on slimmer budgets can tour the planes for \$7, \$3 for kids under 12. Proceeds will benefit the Collings Foundation, which helps put veterans in contact with one another and educates the public on aviation and history.

Dear Harry,

WELL, WELL, WELL.....what do you know! One of the VERY few people whom I actually remember from Great Ashfield, is YOU. Also, you signed my "Lucky Bastard Certificate".

And, now, I see your letter of 3/9 in Brother Stem's Hardlife Herald. So, I simply had to drop you this note.

The main observation that I might share with you at this point (before we meet in person at Tucson) is the amazing degree to which I see that our training and travel patterns were parallel. I graduated in 44F at Blytheville, AK and was sent to Columbus AAFB to learn to fly the 17. Then went to Lincoln NE for crew assembly and then on to Ardmore OK for crew training. At that point our paths became identical. Goose Bay to Meeks Field in Iceland to Valley, Wales and then on to Great Ashfield. We picked up our aircraft in Lincoln (signed for it as you did) on my birthday, October 1st.

Our crew flew a few missions and they made us a lead crew. Following that, I was (as you were) made an Asst. Grp. Opns. officer and Command Pilot. I also flew a food mission (two, I believe) and was stationed at the base in Linz for a few days while aircraft from our group came in to pick up the displaced persons for transport back to processing centers. (I got that assignment from Colonel Shankle as an interpreter in French! Actually. Was able to do it based on a truly marvelous high school French teacher! Also flew the Cook's tours—circled the Eiffel Tower at the same altitude as the tower!)

SOOOOOO, because I remember you and was impressed by the degree to which our careers were similar, I wanted to write to you. One thing different however: I never made the rank of Captain—although Col. Jumper assured me that the order had been put in but that the end of the war had caused promotions to be frozen. In this regard, I noted (from your overseas orders) that you were a First Lt. when you got those orders at Lincoln. I'll be interested on learning how that came to be. In other words, how did you get so far so fast?

Bob Silver

28 July 1997

Dear Ed,

I have enclosed an outline that my 14 year old granddaughter, Cassy Mosley, wrote using articles from my POW log book and then gave talks to the 7th & 8th grade English classes at Camillus New York Middle School.

The student interest was great!

If space permits, thanks,

Les Reichardt 549th

P.S. Unable to get to Tucson—have a great reunion.

Con't on page 7

# BULLETIN BOARD

## CHANGE OF ADDRESS

Letters to the Editor or other information for the 385th newsletter should be sent to:

Ed Stern, Editor

PO Box 9466

Fargo, ND 58106

New Box #

& } ,> Code

## Registration for Tucson Reunion

As of October 1, it looks like over 400 will be at our Tucson Reunion. Still plenty of time to get your name in—send in your registration to Sam Lyke, 4992 SE Princeton, Bartlesville, OK 74006-2832. Call 1-800-624-6280 for best airline fare. Doubletree reports 8 rooms left - the deluxe ones at \$85 or so. Our 175 original reservations are all spoken for. Better call them.

## Roster

You've received the new roster by now—if not, write your editor for your copy. From here on, we'll try to keep you up-to-date by listing changes & new members.

Here's your first update:

Theodore W. Souza

P.O. Box 229

Gasquet, CA 95543-0229

### NEW:

Eliot D. Blass

1200 Mountain View

Green Valley, AZ 85614

Irving Bregman

PO Box 209

Ocean City, NJ 08226-0209

Michael A. Campbell

1202 Limit Street

Leavenworth, KS 66048

Jack N Burch

1190 S Mound Ave

Covington, VA 24426-2125

Richard Walters

3507 Dunhaven Rd

Baltimore, MD 21222

Mrs. James O'Dillon

8420 E County Rd 8005

Plainfield, IN 46168-8646

Milt Preskin

8 Fiddler's Green Dr

Lloyd Neck, NY 11743

Vincent Bowman

79 Burdrall Ave

Ft. Mitchell, KY 41017

Terry Devine

2807 32nd St SW

Fargo, ND 58103

Robert Santoro

9 Oak View Ct

Saylorsburg, PA 18353

Richard J. Walters

3507 Dun Haven Rd

Baltimore, MD 21222

## Changes: Raymond Gould

200 Longbrook Way-102

Pleasant Hill, CA 94523-2481

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Leesburg, FL 34748

Jeff Page

655 Promise Land Rd

Charlotte, TN 37036

Herman Heckel

5D Ridgepoint Dr

Boynton Beach, FL 33435

Frank B. Mays

136 Tanglewood Dr

Madison Heights, VA 24572

John Richardson

Box 3614

Prescott, AZ 86302-3614

Harold Fiscus

43 Candlelight Ln

Lake Wales, FL 33853-2707

Clarence A Glitz

19519 Cotton Bay

N Fort Myers FL 33917

Willaim J Moebius

4536 Pleasant Lane

Racine, WI 53405-4849

Harold A Schenne

28303 Sound View Dr S

Apt 307

Des Moines, WA 98198

**Welcome New Members!! Sorry we've neglected to do this in the past. We'll try to do this in the future.**

## Due for 1998

There will probably be a change in dues for next year—at least there'll be discussion at the Tucson Reunion. Hold your payment until the new structure will be announced in a future Hardlife Herald.

## Nominating Committee

We do not have a "nominating committee" as such— if you have any interest in being involved, please write to Bob Valliere and he will add your name to any list that he has of possible candidates.

So far, Bob and Frank Sutter have expressed willingness to be considered for 1st Vice President. No one has come forward to tackle the Treasurer spot yet.

## Thanks

Thanks to Edgar Baugh, who discovered us about 10 years ago, joined as a Life Member, and just sent us another \$100 plus a nice letter.

## THANKS TO MIKE GALLAGHER FOR THIS HUMOROUS PIECE!

Lt Col. Les Reichardt, pilot of the Flying Fortress a B-17, was shot down by German fighters, Messerschmitts, over Frankfurt, Germany August 17, 1943. He was bussed and trained from Dulag to Dulag until he reached Stalag Luft III, which was to be his home for 2 years.

During 1943 through 1945 this is how the prisoners or kreigies lived. The prisoners were assigned to a compound and within the compound their barracks. They shared their living quarters with the officers of their crew and other crews. The walls were lined with bunks, three high. In the center of the barracks was a table and a set of chairs. Other makeshift furniture was there too. In Stalag Luft III there were five compounds. Two were British and three were American. Adjoining the compounds were volagers that were areas that the Germans used to control and inspect incoming and outgoing people and materials. In the Center Compound there were 12 barracks, 5 latrines, 1 wash house, and 2 cook houses. Every day the Kreigies had to walk the perimeter about ten times. The perimeter is about two miles. They could join activities like Theater. Since there was so much free reading time they could memorize the scripts easily. They could also belong to track, band, or go to school. They could also join a fraternal group like the Masons. During the summer they might play softball and in the Winter, play Bridge. Reading was "in" during all the seasons. They had no time limit on their daily showers, which were cold. Once a month they were called for a short hot shower. At nine o'clock the Nazis locked the doors and at 11 o'clock the lights were turned out. Regular breakfasts consisted of coffee, tea, and toasted black bread. For lunch soup, coffee, tea, and water was offered. Dinner was made up of spam, potatoes, bully beef, black bread, tea, coffee, and water. On holidays special meals were served which the highlight was dessert. Writing letters to family and friends was also a big part of the kreigies lives. To receive a letter was the best thing that could happen to you. Letters were a way of communicating with your loved ones at home. They brought some comfort to those back home who longed to hear from their soldiers. Although people in America could write letters as long as they wanted, prisoners could not. All prisoners of Stalag Luft III wrote letters about one page long because it was the rule. These letters going from camp were read by Briefzensors, or censors, who looked for sentences and words that were forbidden. There were 120 Briefzensors at Stalag Luft III. They read about 200 letters a day. Some of the censors believed that they read so much that they got to know the captive's families just as well as their own. The Briefzensors were required to study American slang so they could get their job done. For hours they worked to pick out phrases giving comfort to their enemies or things that would upset the enemies. Nothing political, nothing about movement of soldiers or machines, or conditions of the camp were to go through. Packages and parcels were looked through also! Vorlager personnel punched holes in canned food lids so they could not be stored and used for escape purposes. Jell-O, talcum powder, tooth powder, and bandaids were found missing from packages! Personal clothing, candy, raisins, tea, soup, gum, hankies, pencils, paper, toothbrush, safety pins, razor blades, shaving cream, comb, cards, toys, and sewing kits were given to the owner, however. You did not receive these as often as letters since people needed permits to send them. The permits were only given out every two months along with the two order blanks for cigarettes. At Stalag Luft III you used cigarettes like money by trading with the Germans for other things. Only one person died in those two years at Stalag Luft III and he died of pneumonia. If somebody got hurt a German doctor was always available. Most of the time nobody got hurt since there weren't many things to get hurt on. Hair cuts and cleaning for inspection were weekly chores! Stalag Luft III was a part of many Americans lives and a part of the history of World War II.



**Our VP Mike Gallagher wrote this review after reading**

**WAR'S END: an eyewitness Account of America's Last Atomic Mission,**

*by Major General Charles W. Sweeney, U.S.A.F. (Ret) with James A Antonucci & Marion K Antonucci  
Avon Books, 1997, \$28.00.*

On May 11, 1995, General Charles W. Sweeney testified before a United States Senate Committee in hearings which arose out of the Smithsonian Institution's revisionist history of the Enola Gay's historic atomic bombing mission to Hiroshima. General Sweeney's testimony is reported in full text in an Appendix to his book and the book itself is a straightforward account of the organization of the 509th Composite Group and its conduct of the Hiroshima and Nagasaki missions.

General Sweeney was the only pilot to fly on both atomic missions. He flew the instrument plane on the right wing of General Paul Tibbits on the Hiroshima mission and three days later, on August 9, 1945, he commanded the second atomic mission to Nagasaki. Six days after the Nagasaki mission, finally convinced that the United States had additional stores of atomic weapons, the Japanese military surrendered and the war came to a close.

With an engine out, 7 gallons of useable fuel still remaining, and 600 gallons of fuel in a reserve tank unavailable because of a solenoid failure, Sweeney made an emergency landing on Okinawa where General Jimmy Doolittle, just two weeks earlier had deployed the Eighth Air Force headquarters from England in anticipation of a bloody invasion to come. Ironically, Doolittle, who dropped the first bomb on Japan, figured, although only in this minor way, in the last bombing of Japan as well.

The first 6 chapters of the book are uninspired but thereafter the book becomes a breathtaking adventure, a pilot's eyeview, capturing on both missions the fears, snafus, courage, egos and flawed judgments that are inevitably part of war. As history or adventure, the book is must reading if one wants an accurate eyewitness account of what happened and of the compelling need for the missions. General Sweeney held his tongue and pen until revisionism and pseudohistory no longer permitted him conscientiously to do so.

In addition to his concern for historical accuracy, General Sweeney expresses concern that the leaders of Japan, unlike those of Germany, still refuse to accept responsibility for the unprovoked attack on Pearl Harbor, the inhumane treatment of the allied prisoners after the fall of Corregidor, the unbelievable cruelty of the Bataan death march, the total and merciless war against China and Manchuria leading up to World War II, and the slaughter of 300,000 unarmed men, women and children in the rape at Nanking, not to mention at all subjecting its own citizens to death from devastating B29 fire bomb attacks on the Japanese mainland as allied troops took or bypassed island after island en route to an inevitable invasion.

WAR'S END is a gripping account of one of history's most cataclysmic events. Any person harboring a sense of guilt about the United States' use of atomic weapons to terminate the war and avoid unbelievable bloodshed to both sides, will find this factual and rational book invaluable in providing peace of mind.



April 1, 1997

Dear Ian,

This is certainly a very belated response to your request for any photos or recollections that I could pass along to you concerning my tour of duty with the 385th Bomb Group at Great Ashfield.

Before I begin, however, let me say how very much Evelyn and I enjoyed our breakfast visit with you and Sue in Cambridge last fall.

Our crew arrived at Great Ashfield on July 16, 1944 just two days prior to my 23rd birthday. We flew our first combat mission to Munich July 31, 1944. This was the 385th Bomb Group's 161st mission.

My most memorable mission were as follows:

Group mission #162 -our mission #2 -August 1, 1944.

This one was memorable not from the standpoint of enemy resistance but for its uniqueness. We flew deep into France near the Swiss border to drop military supplies to the French resistance fighters (Maquis). We were airborne 10 hours climbing to 20+ thousand feet, letting down to 500 feet to drop the supplies, then climbing back to 20+ thousand feet for the trip back. It was exhilarating to see the response of the French fighting men as we delivered the supplies. This mission also gave me a very close look at the beautiful Alps mountains.

Group mission #194-our mission #18-October 6, 1944

Target-Rheinsmetall Factory-Berlin.

This was our toughest mission to that date. Extremely heavy anti-aircraft fire at the target and massive German fighter attacks took a severe toll. We lost one whole squadron of 11 B-17's that day.

Group mission #201-our mission #22-October 18, 1944

Target-Kassei-tank factory.

Another very long mission of 10 hours duration. Bad weather, with extremely strong headwinds forced many crews, including ours to make emergency landing near Brussels. We did not leave enough fuel to get back across the channel. The airfield we used had just recently been liberated from the Germans.

There were not enough fuel trucks available to refuel a whole flock of B-17's and B-24's so we had to refuel sufficiently to return to base manually using 5 gallon cans. Our flying proficiency was also severely tested, as we had to land and take off with a 40 mile per hour cross wind during landing. I did learn that you can "side-slip" a bomber to get into an airfield if necessary!

Group mission #21-our mission #27- November 9, 1944

Target-Saarbruchen-Morshalling Yards

This was a relatively easy mission for most of our group, but we lost #2 and #3 engines over our target. With the loss of the two engines, we also lost all our flight instruments. To maintain as much altitude as possible, we jettisoned everything that was or could be made loose-guns, ammunition, bomb sight, flak vests, flak helmets etc. I was able to get the aircraft and crew safely to a fighter

base in Florennes, Belgium, (near Liege I believe) When we inspected the aircraft, we could only find two shrapnel holes. One hole was in the oil cooler of #3 and the other through the propeller dome on #2. I am proud of the fact that I was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross for my efforts on that mission.

Group mission #210-our mission #28-November 25, 1944

Target-Meresburg-Leuna-Oil Refineries

We experienced intense anti-aircraft fire and suffered substantial battle damage but fortunately nothing critical. We lost a turbo cleavage and cover flap controls and had a lot of holes in wing and fuselage. Once again, we were forced to land in Brussels, but this time there were trucks for refueling.

Group mission #217-Our mission #29-November 30, 1944

Target-Meresburg-Leuna-Oil Refineries

This was our fourth, and roughest trip, to Merseburg. The bomb run was a nightmare I will never forget. The sky was black with anti-craft bursts and the B-17 group immediately ahead of us in the combat line was decimated. I saw the lead ship and his two wing men go down in flames almost simultaneously. Our group was unbelievably lucky. We sustained very heavy damage. My ground crew reported 150 shrapnel holes in our B-17 and my waist gunner was hit but, remarkably, not wounded. The Eighth Air Force lost 58 bombers and 30 fighters on this mission.

Group mission #224-Our mission #32-December 24, 1944

Target-Grass Ostheim-Airfield

This was the biggest raid ever carried out by the Eighth. (200 Bombers -100 fighters). The Eighth was targeting every type of military installation and transportation center behind the German lines to relieve pressure on the ground troops involved in the Battle of the Bulge. We returned to England at dusk, and by this time there was a little danger of German aircraft invading English airspace so we all had our navigator lights on to avoid any mid-air collisions. The returning formation were on unforgettable sight. With all their red and green lights on then looked like Christmas decorations in the sky!

Our mission was relatively uneventful except that I knew, in advance, that enlisted men were on their last mission before being returned to the states. There were many replacement personnel so combat tours were being shortened. When we landed, I had the great pleasure of telling my men "Merry Christmas, you are going home."

I remained at Great Ashfield to serve as 548th Squadron Training Officer and complete my tour of 35 missions as acting Command Pilot leading our squadron.

Group Mission #286-my mission #35-April 8, 1945

Target H of - Morshalling Yard

This mission was unique. First of all, it would be my last. Second, because very little "flak" was anticipated at the target we bombed at an altitude of only 15,000 feet instead of our usual 20,000 feet plus. Our first two squadrons hit the target very accurately and obscured it with smoke. My bombardier was unable to get a fix on the target on our first run so we circled and made a second. The

con't from page 9

second time around we experienced light, but extremely accurate anti-craft fire. We sustained heavy battle damage and my navigator was slightly wounded but we returned to base safely. Thus, thankfully ended my combat tour.

My tour of duty in England spanned 10 1/2 months. I feel extremely fortunate that not only did I survive, but I also lost no crew members and not even an aircraft though I did have to leave one in Belgium.

The foregoing was contributed from a combination of some crystal-clear memories and a diary which I kept. I had not looked at the diary in many years until I started this letter and it has been a real trip down memory lane. Thank you for triggering it!

Our return trip to England last fall brought back a lot of strong memories also. Not the least of these was the warm hospitality extended to us by our English hosts during those difficult years. That strong friendship and hospitality was manifested again on our return trip by you, the Friends of the Eighth, the residents of Great Ashfield, and in fact, by everyone we had contact with in England.

Incidentally, I did locate Over Pover, near Krutsford, Chelsine County, and the church where my great, great grandfather, and great, great grandmother were baptized. It was a special experience for me.

Should you ever visit the U.S.A, we would love to have you as our guests. We cannot offer you the excitement of a New York, Chicago, or Los Angeles, for we live in a very quiet, (but very beautiful) rural area. Perhaps that is why East Anglia has such a strong appeal for me.

Evelyn and I send warm regards to you and Sue.

Sincerely,

Lyndal (Lindy) Palin

90 Lindsay Rd.  
New Port, VT 05855



### Lost and found

Robert Valliere holds the medal he got from the Dutch government. He lost the medal while marching in this year's Branford Memorial Day parade, but someone found it and turned it in. See Page B1

Arnold Gold/Register



## Someone shows mettle

### by turning in medal

## lost at parade

By Angela Carter  
Register Staff

**BRANFORD** — If it's true that everything you do comes back to you, then Robert Valliere is now twice rewarded for a patriotic deed.

During this year's Memorial Day parade, Valliere, a World War II veteran, lost a treasured medal given to him by the Dutch government for dropping food to starving

Holland residents in 1945.

The medal became detached from a red, white and blue ribbon while Valliere, 72, was marching last month.

He asked around. He traced his steps. But to no avail.

"I didn't think I'd get it back," he said. "If I had lost it with the ribbon there would've been better odds."

But unbeknownst to Valliere, as

he searched for the round, bronze-colored medal, it was sitting in First Selectman Dominic Buonocore's office.

Trista Ctyne, Buonocore's administrative assistant, said someone turned in the medal right after the parade, but no one knew to whom it belonged until an article ran in the Register June 14.

No one knows who found the medal.

"I am deeply thankful to the person who found the medal and thought enough to turn it in," Valliere said. "I was pleasantly surprised."

Over the last several weeks, friends, neighbors and even a congresswoman inquired about the medal.

J\*

BOEING

# B-17 FLYING FORTRESS

• Long-range heavy bomber • Backbone of the U.S. Eighth Air Force

In the mid-1950s, Boeing engineers suggested a big bomber to the U.S. Army Air Corps. The best American bomb at the time was an inadequate twin-engine adaptation of the DC-3 transport. The decision to go ahead with the B-17 Flying Fortress was a courageous leap forward: it gave the United States an embryonic strategic

bomber force by the time the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor. Early B-17s did not have enough guns and were not available in sufficient numbers, but as the war progressed the Flying Fortresses took command of the skies.

B-17 crews faced many unspeakable horrors, pressing ahead into Luftwaffe fighters and flak while blinded by

smoke, slammed by turbulence plagued with mechanical mishaps, and paralyzed by the numbing cold. On the first Berlin mission, B-17 crewmen killed in the air numbered the same as Germans killed on the ground by bombs (about 400). As the bombing campaign wore on casualties aboard the B-17s remained high, but the bombing became more effective.



AMERICAN AIRCRAFT OF WORLD WAR II



Left: Hit by flak, a burning B-17 falls away from the protection of its fellows.

## SPECIFICATIONS B-17G

- Type:** Nine/10-seat long-range bomber.
- Powerplant:** Four 1,200-hp. Wright R-1820-97 Cyclone turbocharged radial piston engines.
- Maximum speed:** 290 m.p.h. at 25,000 ft.
- Ceiling:** 35,600 ft.
- Range:** 2,000 mi. with 5,000-lb. bomb load.
- Weights:** Empty 37,300 lb.; loaded 65,500 lb.
- Weapons:** 13 .50 cal. machine guns in twin turrets, plus single dorsal and fore and aft beam positions; 17,600-lb. max bomb load.
- Dimensions:**

Span	103 ft. 9 in.
Length	79 ft. 9 in.
Height	19 ft. 1 in.
Wing area	1,420 sq. ft.

## B-17F "FAST WOMAN"

"Fast Woman" was one of the first American B-17s to arrive in Britain during World War II. Attached to the 359th Bomb Squadron of the 303rd Bomb Group, it was based at Molesworth in Huntingdonshire.

The "Mighty Eighth" Air Force was the premier user of the B-17 Flying Fortress.

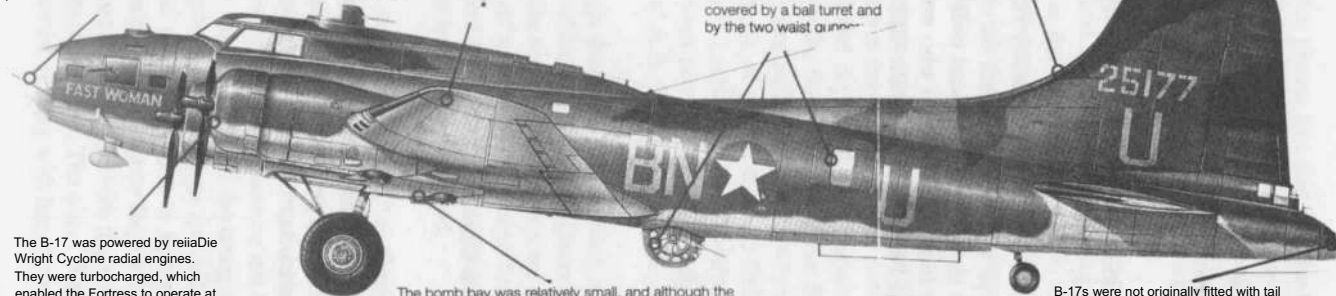


The Norden bomb sight with which the B-17 was equipped was reputed to be able to "drop a bomb into a pickle barrel" from 10,000 ft.

Boeing was among the pioneers of stressed-skin design, and the B-17 was among the earliest all-metal monoplane heavy bombers to enter service.

Fortresses were defended by as many as 13 heavy machine guns. The vulnerable undersides were covered by a ball turret and by the two waist gunners.

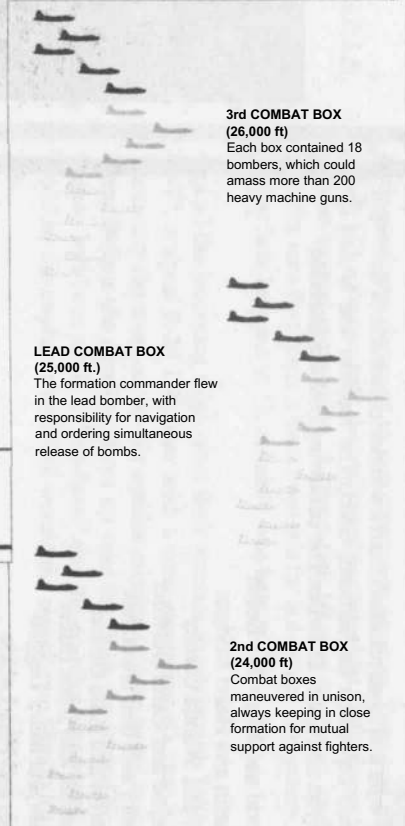
The B-17 was immensely strong. Aircraft managed to return to base with severe battle damage, and the bomber could still fly even with large sections of the huge vertical tail shot away.



The B-17 was powered by reliable Wright Cyclone radial engines. They were turbocharged, which enabled the Fortress to operate at higher altitudes than its European contemporaries.

The bomb bay was relatively small, and although the B-17 could fly with an eight-ton bomb load it generally carried a quarter of that amount on operations.

B-17s were not originally fitted with tail guns. A tail gunner's position was added to the B-17E and all subsequent models.



**3rd COMBAT BOX (26,000 ft)**  
Each box contained 18 bombers, which could amass more than 200 heavy machine guns.

**LEAD COMBAT BOX (25,000 ft.)**  
The formation commander flew in the lead bomber, with responsibility for navigation and ordering simultaneous release of bombs.

**2nd COMBAT BOX (24,000 ft)**  
Combat boxes maneuvered in unison, always keeping in close formation for mutual support against fighters.

## ACTION DATA

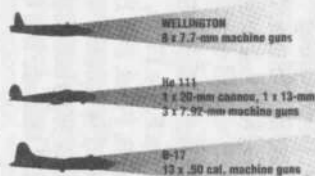
### RANGE

Designed as a force when other air forces still thought twin-engine machines were heavy bombers, the B-17 carried more bombs over much greater distances than its contemporaries.



### DEFENSES

Originally relatively lightly armed, the B-17 entered combat in armor plate and with all-around machine-gun emplacements. A box of just 18 bombers could bring hundreds of guns to bear on an attacker coming from any direction.



## Layered defenses

Every B-17 aircraft contributed to the defense of the entire formation. Each squadron of six aircraft moved in unison in formations called boxes, and squadrons were layered and staggered horizontally and vertically, to allow the simultaneous release of bombs.



Dear Ed,

My wife and I just returned from a wonderful reunion of the 548th Bomb Squadron in Fairborn, Ohio. The reunion was hosted by Wayne and Carol Detwiler. The following couples attended:

- David and Mary Sue Beam
- Martin and Hazel Bridges
- Sid and Wanda Carney
- Wayne and Carol Detwiler
- Henry and Dru Dworshak
- Martin and Edie Girson
- Charles and Irene Huber
- Dale and Mary Leggett
- Sam and Nita Luckie
- Rev. James and Geri Vance
- Herman and Doris Siederer

We visited the Air Force Museum in Dayton and located the tree planted by the 385th. There is an enormous amount to be seen at the museum.

We really missed the friends who could not be with us and hope they will be able to join us next year.

My wife and I were recently in New York City in the Battery Park area. There are several memorials to World War II dead. On one which is dedicated to "Those who sleep in the American coastal waters of the Atlantic Ocean" we found several men who were members of the 385th Bomb Group. Perhaps some of your readers will recognize these names.

- 385th Bomb Group
- Richard M. Gaither, Sgt. Texas
  - Thomas N. Cockfield, Pvt. Mass.

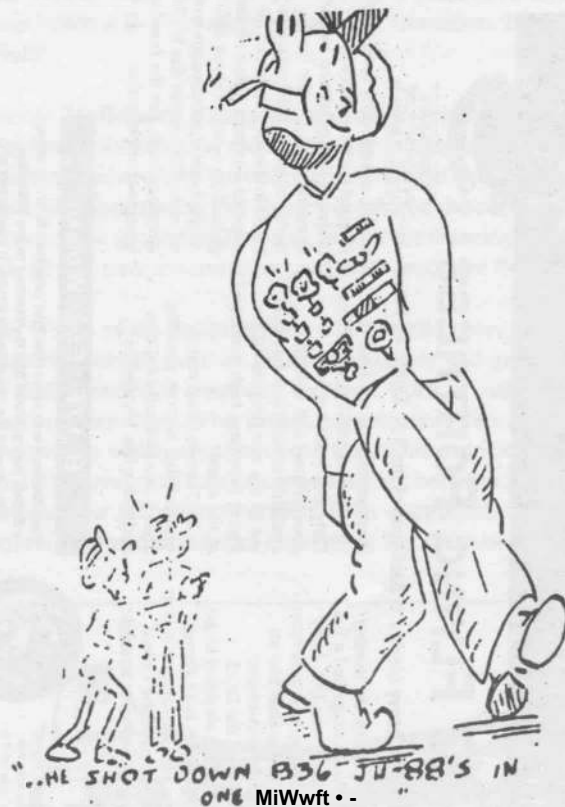
- 548th Bomb Squadron, 385th Bomb Group
- William F. De Elmo, Sgt. Cal.
  - Regis B. Fund, Pvt. PA
  - Richard W. Gilder, Wst Lt. NY
  - Delmas Morrison, Sgt. Maine
  - Fred E Morton, 2nd Lt. Mass.

- 550th Bomb Squadron, 385th Bomb Group
- Lloyd L. S. Boor, 2nd Lt. MD
  - William F. Hahn, S/Sgt. Wis.

Thank you very much for obtaining additional rooms at the Doubletree in Tucson. We were able to get a reservation thanks to your prompt action. We look forward to thanking you in person in Tucson.

Sincerely,  
 Hermay "Hy" Siederer  
 601 Benner St  
 Highland Park, NJ 08904

P.S. Enclosed are pictures of the men and women who attended our mini reunion.





**EDITOR'S NOTE:** Did any 385th planes end up here? Your Editor never heard of it!

WOODBIDGE (EMERGENCY-LANDING) AIRFIELD,  
SUFFOLK

Via W.C. Staples, Radio Operator/Control Tower Duties at USAAF Woodbridge.

(Seconded from the 357th Fighter Group, Leiston, Suffolk)

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

A USAAF-RAF EMERGENCY LANDING FIELD, ENGLAND-Here in the East Coast of Britain, where every half-way decent morning the B-17's and 24's fall in for the day's work-out over the French battlefields or Germany's war cities, is an airfield.

But it's not like any ordinary airfield, with its groups and squadrons marshalling for a new crescendo of Germany's dirge; nor even like a usual Air Repair Depot with multitudes of workshops and mechanics hammering their share towards victory with rivet guns and screwdrivers.

It is an airfield existing solely for the purpose of welcoming British and American bombers and fighters, fresh back from the skies over the Continent when they return exhausted of fuel, or crippled with dangerous flak and bullet damage, or carrying a crew suffering the effects of Nazi metal in their bodies.

Operated by both the Royal Air Force and members of the U.S. Eighth Air Force Service Command, the field is open day and night. During the waking hours business is confined chiefly to the servicing American planes; at nightfall huge black shadows called Lancasters and Halifax's and sleek blue Mosquito's are the customers.

The American detachment on the field is commanded by Captain Ray W. Miles, from Crowley, Louisiana; 1st Lt. Arthur R. Ayers, of Chicago, Illinois, is the only other U.S. Officer and supervises the engineering work of the maintenance crews.

The American soldiers they head are mainly repair and salvage men, with a sprinkling of housekeeping troops. They all work together with the sole purpose of getting battle-torn planes that come down here - one of the nearest spots in Britain to German-occupied Europe - back to their operational groups.

Some pretty freakish things happen to the Yanks at this advanced outpost of Allied air power in Britain. There was a case one recent night when a German pilot brought his JU 88 into the field. Nothing was wrong with his plane — he just decided to put it down. Before Jerry could figure out what had happened he was facing the speaking end of an Allied revolver. Whether the German flyer thought he was over Holland and his home base, or whether he deliberately brought his plane in for a quick exit from the war is matter for heated argument even now.

The dispersal bays or "loops" as they are known here, present a panorama of different types of aircraft that would make an air-

plane identification expert squeal in delight. Except for one thing though — nearly every one of these varied kinds of planes have their structures damaged in one manner or another. Take one of the B-17's —the one with the trailing edge of its right wing chewed almost beyond recognition. A direct flak hit was the cause, and how the tom Fort made it back even this far is a source of mystery. As the lads here put it: "It certainly was beat up."

Not all the incoming ships wear their wounds so obviously. Take "4-F", a squat B-24 Liberator with a crew swarming all over it. Yesterday she went out on her maiden mission with an eager new crew. Before she sent her flares up over the field, the hydraulic system had been made a "has-been" and the co-pilot was losing blood by the cupful from a flak wound the size of two fists in his leg.

It is for planes like this that the field organized. The runway is nearly three times as long as an ordinary strip and is 100 yards wide — roomy enough for any aircraft, no matter at what speed it lands. And to top that off, 1,500 yards of grass overshoots at either end of the three-mile long runway.

Getting back to the wounded co-pilot - He was another reason for this field. As soon as the wheels had stopped, doctors and aid men were in the bomb-bay and up to the pilot's compartment working on the wounded man. If the pilot took the Liberator all the way home, his co-pilot might not have lived to see the end of his first mission.

The repair crews under Captain Miles' command are as varied as the planes they rebuild. They came from VIII Air Force Service Command depots all over England -the ones from B-17 depots take on the Fortresses; from the B-24 depots, the Libs; and from the fighter depots, the P-51's, 47's and 38's. Many are here for only the length of time it takes to finish the job; others, like Master Sergeant Leslie F. Rollo of California and his Mobile Repair Unit, have been permanently detached here to fix up what Jerry's fighters and A.A. fire have wrecked.

Though the place had its slack and busy days corresponding to those of the bombers and fighters its back up, there are times when even the ample facilities here are completely swamped. The "Permanent" men here won't forget for a long time the afternoon when 21 Liberators of different groups, all sustaining battle damage, landed in a two-hour period.

"One right after another," as Captain Miles put it. "But we got all but eight of the planes back into the air by midnight."

That's the story of quick repair being enacted daily at this field. No time is wasted, lest a plane be left inoperational too long. As soon as the ship is towed off the mammoth runway, the crew surround it, inspecting the damage, and making the estimates as to the time needed to bring it back to flying status. Then comes the work. Operating out of Mobile Repair Unit Trailers, the crewmen literally perform wonders with the limited amount of equipment they have to work with. The plane that yesterday was a sieve may tomorrow be circling with her sisters over the Wermacht in Europe.

But not all of the ships make the field in a repairable condition. Some in fact don't quite make the field at all. Take the case of one B-17 that was coming in smoothly for a landing, gliding over the dense woods that surround this airfield. Suddenly, what was left of the two operating engines called it a day, and with a quick drop the plane smashed through hundreds of yards of stripling trees. None of the ten-man crew were killed, but the Fortress was hundreds of yards from the runway with too many badly battered-damaged places to be easily repaired. So the salvagemen are called in. Culling everything of use from the ship, they leave only a bare skeleton that will be melted down for use in other planes. Nothing is wasted; everything will be used again, either in present form, or repaired, or melted down into metal to be used for other war purposes.

Another crash-landing in those same woods provided a touching exhibition of courage, according to Captain Miles. The waist gunner, "A young kid who had been babied by his crewmates," was buried under a crushing weight of sheet metal. In addition, he was visibly suffering greatly from the effects of two bullet holes in his leg and a broken hip.

It was a two-hour job getting him out. As the American and British airmen worked from both top and bottom of the plane to dig him out of the debris, he shouted to Captain Miles, who was working from above: "C'mon, grab me and pull me out." The Captain protested, said it would hurt too much. The gunner said he knew it, but go to go ahead anyway. Finally, after sweat and backbreaking work they got the gunner out. As he was being carried to the waiting ambulance, he turned his still unbowed head and muttered: "IS that a----- airplane? And to think I've been under it."

What do men do with their time off? Some, like a lot of G.I.'s all over Britain, go to town; but for others there is a local recreation in sports competition with the RAF personnel who make up the bulk of the drome. Recently, Corporal Irvin D. LeBow, from Hartford, Conn., a B-24 mechanic, was runner-up in the stations' ping-pong tourney. And some of the lads wearing the blue of the Royal Air Force have been taking to the pure Yankee game of softball, competing regularly with American teams of the base. In return, the Yanks are learning the fundamentals of cricket.

#### THE 390TH WELCOMES THE 95TH

courtesy of the BULLETIN, Official Publication of the 390th Memorial Museum Foundation, Inc., 600 East Valencia Road, Tucson, Arizona, 85706, USA.

The 95th Bomb Group Memorial Room of the 390th Memorial Museum at Pima Air Museum, near Tucson, was dedicated on Friday, 1 March 1996, with more than 100 people from four generations in attendance. The 95th Bomb Group and the 390th Bomb Group were both members of the 13th Combat Bombardment Wing of the Eighth Air Force during Second World War.

"To me, this evening represents a re-bonding of the bonds which were initially developed between the 390th and 95th Bomb Groups in the war-torn skies over Europe almost 53 years ago", said Robert Cozens, President of the 95th Bomb Group Memorials Foun-

ation, the organization behind the development of the memorial room.

"Now we are joined together in a combined effort to provide future generations with the knowledge and understanding of our sacrifices and our accomplishments in World War II", he told the audience gathered in the 390th BG Memorial Museum's Robert Waltz Briefing Room.

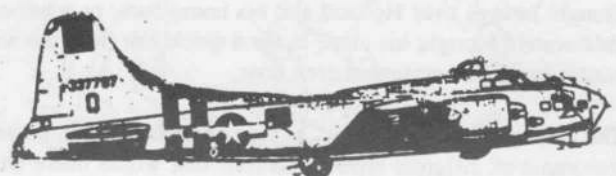
Following Robert Cozens at the podium were comments by Dave McKnight, Memorial Room committee Chairman, Dorothy Donnelley Moller, Director, 390th and 95th Foundations, Ron Webb, the designer with Design Centre Inc., Ed Harrow, Executive Director, Pima Air & Space Museum; George Brumbaugh, 95th BG Association President; George Moller, President of the 390th BG Memorial Museum Foundation; and closing remarks by Robert Cozens.

As the crews rose from their seats to move to the ribbon-cutting ceremony there was clearly not a dry eye in the assembled group. It was truly emotional and heartwarming moment, building with every speaker, and affecting everyone tremendously whether 95th, 390th or invited guests.

The 95th bomb Group Memorial Room is located at the north-east corner of the Museum's hangar to the right as one is facing the Quonset hut. Inside, visitors see a variety of photo murals and texts explaining the 95th history and role during World War II. A large scale mural of an oil painting, by English aviation artist the late John Rayson, G Av. A, shows the group on its way to the first USAAF daylight bombing mission of Berlin on 4 March, 1944. The viewer really has a sense of what it must have looked like from inside a B-17 looking towards the formation. It's very powerful!!

George Moller said during his dedication remarks, "Having the 95th makes the museum more complete. It emphasizes the broader teamwork inherent in the national defense. In another sense, it is especially appropriate that those who shared the common experiences on the ground in England, and in the freezing of high-altitude air war over the continent; and even death, are finally united."

Ron Webb, of the design centre, and Lowell Lowe, who built the memorial room's exhibits, deserve a sincere and grateful thanks for their wonderful creativity and hard work in making this presentation first class. The room's construction, like the excellent relationship which exists between the 390th and 95th, was facilitated by a memorandum of understanding between the two foundations. The interaction between both organizations is a warm, professional and wonderful experience for all involved.



**EDITOR'S NOTE:** This story is from John Demeden in Luxembourg and tells about White McDonald crash that will be memorialized next June in Perle. They're still very anxious to get pictures of the crews. Ian came up with a picture of the "Offspring," one of the planes.

**Impact of two American Bombers B17**

The 12 July 1944 at about 11:50 a formation of American bombers coming from the British isles and whose mission was to bomb the city of Munich in Germany flew over Perle in Luxembourg. It was the 150th mission for this Bomb Group and they went back again the next day, which indicates that they may not have hit their target. It were Boeing B17 Flying Fortress. They belong the 385th Bomb Group. For unknown reasons two of them collided together over Perle. Only two members of the two crews survived the impact by parachuting to safety. The rest of the crew, 18 members died in the accident. One of the two survived, the sergeant Larry Atiyeh identification tag no. 32860211 was captured by the Germans, the second (name unknown) succeeded in crossing the Belgium frontier and was rescued by members of the Belgium Maquis.

The back part of the planes fell 60 meters behind of Bertemes farm in Perle. The fuselage with three engines crashed 600m. north west from Perle in a potato field. This part of the plane caught fire and it was impossible to come near because of the ammunition which were exploding in the flames. The next day when this part was examined by the Germans they found four bodies completely burnt. Impossible to identify the bodies. In an area of 600m., 6 bodies were found, who didn't succeed in parachuting to safety. One of the engines which had been detached at the moment of the impact, fell in the pool of Geschleid in Haut-Martelange and had been collected by the Germans. The wings and the four engines of the second plane fell near Wolwelage in a field. We estimate that the most of the air men had been ejected from their plane at moment of impact, because the bodies of the unfortunates had been found scattered in the area between Perle and Wolwelage. They were transported to the old school from Perle in order to identify the bodies.

The sergeant Fitzwater wore his identification tag on his left arm. On his left hand he wear a gold alliance and a ring with a red star. The sec. Lt. Henry (25 Years) had with him a bank note of one U.S. dollar, 14 pound sterling and his personal documents, he wore his identification tag around his neck. Sergeant Comegy had 20 bank notes of 100 french francs each and two geographical maps. Flying Officer Francis Chrisman 23 years old had with him two albums of pictures of his wife and of his child, he possessed also french money and two geographical maps.

The search party for the man who escaped by jumping by parachute, was organized by custom officers situated in Holtz. The custom officers helped by police dogs were not successful. The police of Perle under the orders of first sergeant Frantz have collected all the weapons and the ammunition and put it in safe keeping. Some bombs have been defused on site by military engineers of the German army.

The two planes belongs to the 385th B.G. The plane that crashed near Wolwelage was immatriculated under the number 42-102606, his call number was the letter K (Kilo) it make part of the 550th Scdr.

Crew	Immatric	Tomb
ILt. Robert L McDonald	0-802590	Henri Chapelle
2Lt. Stephen F. Ryan	0-818757	Henri Chapelle
S/Sgt Walter R. Rerosh	13005283	USA Passadena
S/Sgt Pete Linton	14151408	USA Missouri
T/Sgt Georges E. Brown	36447786	USA Illinois
Sgt Larry Atiyeh	3286011	pris. Ger.

The plane which crashed near Perle was immatriculated under the number 42-31917, his call code was the letter "S" his nickname was "Offspring"

Crew	Immatric	Tomb
Captain Richard B. White	0-374102	Henri Chapelle B-14-31
2LT Patrick J. Flanagan	0-749897	Henri Chapelle A-11-44
2Lt Clarence E. Gittins	0-812975	Henri Chapelle E-11-16
2Lt William T. Henry	0-707189	USA Maine
F/O Francis M. Chrismann	T-001809	USA Golden Gate
S/Sgt Harry E. Fitzwater	20849275	USA Oklahoma
Sgt William R. Lord Jr.	35021798	Henri Chapelle A-10-2
Sgt Homer C. Comegys	17067450	USA Iowa
Sgt Samuel L. Canter	35629179	USA Ohio

In studying the ranks of the occupants of two planes we could oversee that the crews of the bomber which crashed in Perle was composed of 5 officers and four non-commissioned officers. Seeing that the composition of the crew we can be sure that it is a lead aircraft. The crews of this airplane were composed of an air leader one with two officers who had the rule of navigator and which were responsible for the navigator from his plane.

Seeing that it was impossible to celebrate a requiem for the soldiers who died during the Nazi occupation, a ceremony took place in the church of Perle on the 17th October, at 18.30 hrs after the liberation by the Americans. Eighteen candles and eighteen helmets, one for each soldier decorated the Church.

Constitution of the 385th Bomb Group

The 385th Bomb Group was formatted on 25 November 1942. It had been transferred to England in Great Ashfield in June 1943.



**Editor's Note:** Jerry Donnelly forwarded 3 interesting letters from Europe that we're printing. After 55 years, if anyone can add to the information they have, please write them (or us). Remarkable the interest there still is!

15 April 97

19 Windermere Rd  
Hucknall  
Nottingham  
NG15 GNF  
England

Dear Mr. Donnelly,

Just after WWII was based in Germany with the RAF and served on No 1 MRSU (Mobile Repair & Salvage Unit) -1 underlined the salvage because we were sometimes called out to investigate war-time crash sites, particularly if it was known that some aircrew had still to be recovered and indeed given a decent burial.

One such location our unit attended one at the Village of NUSSE/RITZERAU which lies to the south of LUBECK near the RATZERBERGER see MOLLN area.

The aircraft was an American B17 and had crashed following a raid on KIEL in December 1943. Two airmen were to be recovered recall the B17 had gone down into a field just outside the village. I'll not go into detail(s) of the actual recovery (freezing January 1950) but sadly, we did in fact find the two airmen located around the, or what was, radio compl: area, the rest of the crew having bailed out, the local Mayor of Bargominter described the pilot as a 'very tall man'.

**(Editor's Note: We lost the Fowles crew on that raid)**

I'm now in4ny late 60's and putting together (at last) some sort of personal record of my service. My regret is that I did not take details of this particular recovery at the time, but then I suppose we were pretty busy, and I very much younger. Now though I'm keen to find which particular B Gp. it came from and from which East Anylid were it flew from.

I have checked Roger Freeman's excellent book "MIGHTY EIGHTH WAR DIARY" and find that two B17's were lost (plus one B24) on the 13th December 1943 raid on KIEL - one from the 306th BG and the other from either the 94th or 385th BG which made up the composite squadron.

Sir - would you be so kind as to check with your records if this particular B17 was from the 385th? If so I'd be most grateful if you could let me have any detail(s) and indeed if there are any surviving crew members in you assoc.—incidentally, I still have the ideal plate from the B17's ball turret!

**(Editor's Note: We sent him Fowles name.)**

Sincerely,

Herbert Watson

Herbert Watson  
19 Windermere Rd  
England  
8 July 97

**Editor's Note:** Here's Herb's Answers to our response to the above:

Delighted to receive your letter of June 30th - must state I never once lost faith in that I would get a response from the 385th.

Ed, I'm not sure if I'm pleased (or indeed sad) but it's beginning to look as if its a 385th aircraft that I'm seeking information. The 94th and 306th B Groups have also very kindly responded to my query -or the Kiel raid 13th December 1943 the 94th did not lose any aircraft. The 306th did lose one which went down in the sea off Wilhelmshaven.

So Ed - with your help and through engines in your newsletter I hope we can glean further information and finally complete the story — who knows , surviving crew members may themselves respond! I really would like to find out as much as possible about the aircraft and crew. I must stress that this is a personal quest and no way will I publish any of it.

To close and to refer to your letter, agreed-it is interesting how we got involved with this after 50 odd years!

I do hope I'm not putting you to too much trouble - my sincere thanks and best regards to you and all your members. Have been on a number of occasion to photograph the memorial and beautiful church window at Great Ashfield.

Again,  
Best Regards  
Herbert

Enclosed is a copy of area where we found the crash site.  
Village of: Russe/Ritzerau  
Approx 15/20 miles south of Lubeck  
not too far from Molln-Ratzerberger See.

Jiri Rajlich 10.4.1997  
Lazenska 6  
118 00 Praha 1  
Czech Republic --

Dear Mister,

I'm aviation historian from Czech Republic. I worked for Czech Military Historical Institute in Prague. I'm also author and/or co-author of many articles and dozens books referring about many aspects of Czechoslovak Air Force history and Air War over Czech territory. In present time I've heavily involved with finishing my new private work on my book about participation of US Air Force units in Air War over Czech territory. This manuscript will be published in 1998. This theme is my big hobby, where I spent all



free time.

According my files I know that your unit also participated in Air War over Central Europe including Czech territory during 1944-1945. Several of our airmen were lost there over my homeland and participated in liberation of my country. It is true reason why I write to you and why I asking for your help.

In enclosure I'm sending to you my list of your unit's losses over Czech territory but will be very happy for obtain further details about this losses from America side and especially photos of this aircraft and/or of this airmen, airmen's memories to this actions and adresses of this airmen (if they lived) etc. I've still desperately hunted for this materials. All kind of your help will be very helpful for my research.

I know that my ask is probably so big for you, but you are one of last help for me.

More than 800 US Airmen were shot down and were killed or captured by Germans in my occupied homeland during 1944-1945 period. If you need any details about this airmen who were lost over Czech territory, let me know, it is no problem for me to send you all possible details about this airmen from local Czech and or German sources. I have also many materials about German opponents of your airmen who fought over my homeland. My book about Air War over Czech territory. I'll send you after its publication in 1998.

Thank you very much and I looking forward for your letter.

Your sincerely,  
Jiri

AF BG BS  
8/385/551

1/LT Robert A. Krahn	zajat POW
1/LT Oris E. Lundy	zajat
2/LT Glynn D. Hull	zajat
1/LT Russell W. Fritzing	zajat
T/Sgt Flen E. Williams	zajat
T/Sgt Paul C. Klinko	zajat
S/Sgt Doyle Green	zajat
S/Sgt Lester R. Brown	zajat
S/Sgt Roy O. Werner Jr.	zajat

**Editor's Note:** Jiri apologized for his English — we think its Good!

## #1 Frequently - Asked Questions

### What is a short-snorter?

A short-snorter was a bill (generally \$1) that an airman would pull from his wallet, sign and trade with another airman for the purchase of a drink later "on him."

### How many B-17s were built?

The total was 12,731. Of these 8,680 were G Models.

**How many bombs did the B-17 carry?** Ten to twelve 500 pound

bombs. This figure might vary depending upon the type and weight of the bombs being carried. For example, the plane could be fitted with heavier bombs under the wings, but because the weight, carried fewer of them.

### What is marshalling yard?

A marshalling yard is a railroad yard where train cars are gathered together into longer trains. For example, rail cars from throughout Germany were taken to the marshalling yard at Frankfurt. Perhaps one train would come from an industrial area carrying ammunition. Maybe another train would come from an agricultural area carrying food. Still another train might be loaded primarily with clothing from factories in yet another region. The cars from these trains would be put together into still another train that would be sent to where the products were needed. Such a train would probably have a variety of commodities on it.

Since there would have been many trains, and rail cars sitting in a marshalling yard waiting to be made into trains, sitting in a marshalling yard, the yards themselves made prime targets for the B-17 attacks.

## NAZI GERMANY TOUR.

JULY 1, thru JULY 14 - Next Year 1998

14 Days, 12 Nights-Combined Air and Ground Price \$2,650

A Circular Price Time Tour. Passports are required. Tour tour includes »

- \* Accommodations in First Class Tourist Hotels.
- \* All Bedrooms have en-suite Bathrooms.
- \* Daily Full Breakfast A Dinner Included Six Evenings.
- \* Luxury, Air Conditioned Bus with on-board Toilets, Video and Audio Systems and Drinks Bar.
- \* Professional Tour Manager on Board.
- \* English-speaking Tour Guides.

The tour will take you to Amsterdam, Breaan, Hamburg, Berlin, Potsdaa, Leipzig, Dresden, Chemnitz, Schweinfurt, Nuremburg, Regensburg, Munich, Berchtesgaden 'Eagles Nest', Salzburg /Austria, Dachau Concentration Camp, Stuttgart, Heidelberg, Frankfurt, Bonn, Cologne, Dusseldorf, Essen then through Arnhem back into Aasterdaa to coaplete the circle.

- \* Let those memories coae flying back as you return to Europe.\* \*

To receive the Full Tour Itinerary and Inforaation - PLEASE CONTACT :-

WRITE TO: MR GERALD DONNELLY,  
10770, S.W. 46 STREET,  
MIAMI,  
FL.33165-4839.

OR CALL HIM ON: (305) 221-3592.

AFTER REVIEWING THE TOUR ITINERARY AND YOU DECIDE TO GO, FILL OUT REGISTRATION FORM ENCLOSED AND MAIL TO THE APPOINTED U.S. TRAVEL AGENT LISTED, BEFORE OCTOBER 14th THIS YEAR, 1997 WITH YOUR DEPOSIT.

\* YOUR MAIN FINAL PAYMENT IS NOT REQUIRED UNTIL MARCH 30th 1998.\*

**Editor's Note:** Jerry Donnelly is the US representative for this privately sponsored tour. He will be handling reservations and get remuneration which will be used towards funding memorial in Savannah. Write or call him if you're interested.

**RELIVE 1996 REUNION AT GREAT ASHFIELD**

Nine guests from England will be with us at Tucson Reunion.

Stephen and Petrina Miles  
The Orfords from Great Ashfield  
Ian and Sue McLachlan with two children

We, who went to Great Ashfield for the '96 Reunion, have an opportunity to reciprocate their generous and gracious hospitality. Most of our group have already registered for the 385th Reunion in Tucson.

A private dining room will be reserved for OUR GROUP of 32 plus the guests from England. This will be Sunday Brunch at the Doubletree Hotel. Cost below is quoted for senior citizens.

Date: November 16, 1997  
Time: 12:15 to 1:45 PM  
Cost: \$16.50 per person, plus tax and gratuity

The schedule will accommodate our involvement in both morning and afternoon bus tours featured by the reunion planning committee.

Reservations are limited to OUR GROUP of 32 plus guests from England. Mail to Art Driscoll, 4500 Post Rd., H-75, Nashville, TN 37205-1519. Telephone (615) 352-3530.

18 August 1997  
Route #10, Box 119A  
Harrisonburg, VA 22801

Dear Ed,

It has been a while since I've written to you and to the "Hardlife Herald". A lot of things have happened from the time I started researching my brother, Stephen F. Ryan's military history and life.

I have had the honor of meeting a few of the men from the 550th squadron of the 385th BG, (Charlie McCauley from Timberville, VA. and James Grenstead from Massanutten, VA.). I have also met Truman Smith (and wife) from Ponca city, OK., who was a barrack's mate of my brother. Just recently, I had the honor of meeting Buell Martin and his wife from Unionville, Conn., who was a tail gunner on Fred Bom's crew for a time. I have been corresponding with several crew members of the 385th BG and a gentleman named Roger Feller from Luxembourg.

As a result from all of this, we contacted our local newspaper and gave them a short history of what is taking place, and so, I am enclosing a copy of the story that was written and what the people of Wolwelange and Perle are planning for the crew member's of Lt. Robert L. McDonald and Capt. Richard B. White ships who perished on July 12, 1944.

My wife, my two sisters, my nephew (a name sake of my brother, Stephen F. Ryan) and I are planning for the trip in June 1998.

I want to thank you and all members of the 385th BGMA for providing me with an avenue for getting the source of information that I have gotten and that has helped me.

Again, I thank all of you!

With Greatest Respect,

Andrew L. Ryan

## Crash Commemoration

### Local Couple Invited To Open Ceremony To Dedicate World War II Memorial

By **STEPHANIE LUDLUM**  
*News-Record Staff Writer*

More than 50 years after World War II ended in Europe, the citizens of Luxembourg are still expressing their gratitude for America's part in liberating them from the Nazis.

The townspeople of Wolwelange, Luxembourg, have invited Andrew and Coreine Ryan of Harrisonburg to open ceremonies for a World War II monument to be dedicated in June 1998. The monument will be erected in memory of 18 Americans who died in the July 12, 1944, crash of two B-17 bombers between Wolwelange and Perle, Luxembourg. The Ryans are the only known relatives of any of the crew members on those two planes.

Two years ago, the Ryans began detailed research of the July 12, 1944, crash over Luxembourg that claimed the life of Andrew's older brother, Stephen Francis Ryan. Andrew's interest began with an air show at Andrews Air Force Base and a tour of a B-17 bomber there. "That's what I guess turned on the light and said 'I

something about it,'" Ryan said. "Then I wondered, would I ever meet anybody that could have known my brother 'cause I waited such a long time."

At another air show in Frederick, Md., Ryan obtained a few contacts. "It's a chain reaction, I suppose," Ryan said. "Once you get involved in things, you get information from one person, and he refers you to somebody else. And back and forth and things like that."

Eventually Ryan joined the 385th Bomb Group Memorial Association. "Just one thing led to another," Ryan said. In the bimonthly magazine of the 385th Bomb Group Memorial Association, Ryan discovered a letter seeking more information about the same crash in which his brother died. He replied to the author and was referred to Roger Feller, who lives in Wolwelange, Luxembourg. Ryan and Feller have been corresponding ever since. Feller is organizing the June 1998 ceremonies.

Ryan also has had contact with several people who knew his brother. He corresponded with one man and met another "who was in the same barracks as my

brother, and he was on the bombing mission that my brother got killed, and he witnessed the crash."

"I never really knew much about my brother as a person, and I said I just wanted to find about what his military life was like," Ryan said.

The youngest of five children, Andrew Ryan grew up in Philadelphia. When he was 7, his older brother Stephen left home to join the religious order of the Christian Brothers. At the start of World War II, Stephen left the religious order and enlisted in the Air Force. After spending nine months at home, Stephen was called into service during the middle or latter part of 1942, according to Ryan.

Stephen was sent overseas in late November or December of 1943, and was stationed at Great Ashfield, near London, by April 1944. He flew with the 8th Air Force, 550th Squadron, 385th Bomb Group.

At the age of 23, and on what Ryan believes to have been his brother's 23rd mission, Stephen was co-piloting a B-17 on a raid to Munich, Germany. Probably

1,000 planes were flying in the same formation, Ryan said. "What they were doing — they, when they fly patterns, they fly zig-zag patterns to deceive the enemy to where they are actually going. And, in doing that — it was overcast, and they were flying close formation — one plane got caught in the propwash, they call it, of another plane flying in that same formation, and when that happened, the plane came up and hit the plane my brother was on. Then one plane broke in half, and they both went down."

The other B-17 was a part of the 551st squadron. Both planes were carrying 10 men; one man survived from each. Ryan knows of the two survivors but has been unable to contact them. A gunner from his brother's craft parachuted into the hands of the Germans. Robert McPherson, the tail gunner on the other plane, landed far enough away that he managed to escape capture. He joined the underground and was returned to England.

The crash happened between Perle and

Dear Ed,

6-26-97

The enclosed article from todays Midland Reporter Telegram is for your information. Of interest is the picture of nose art "Target for Tonight." This was from a B-17 from the 385th BG.

The American Airpower Heritage Museum of the Confederate Air Force has long range plans to build a seperate room for the showing of all pieces of original nose art but of the seven pieces currently being shown ours is the only B17.

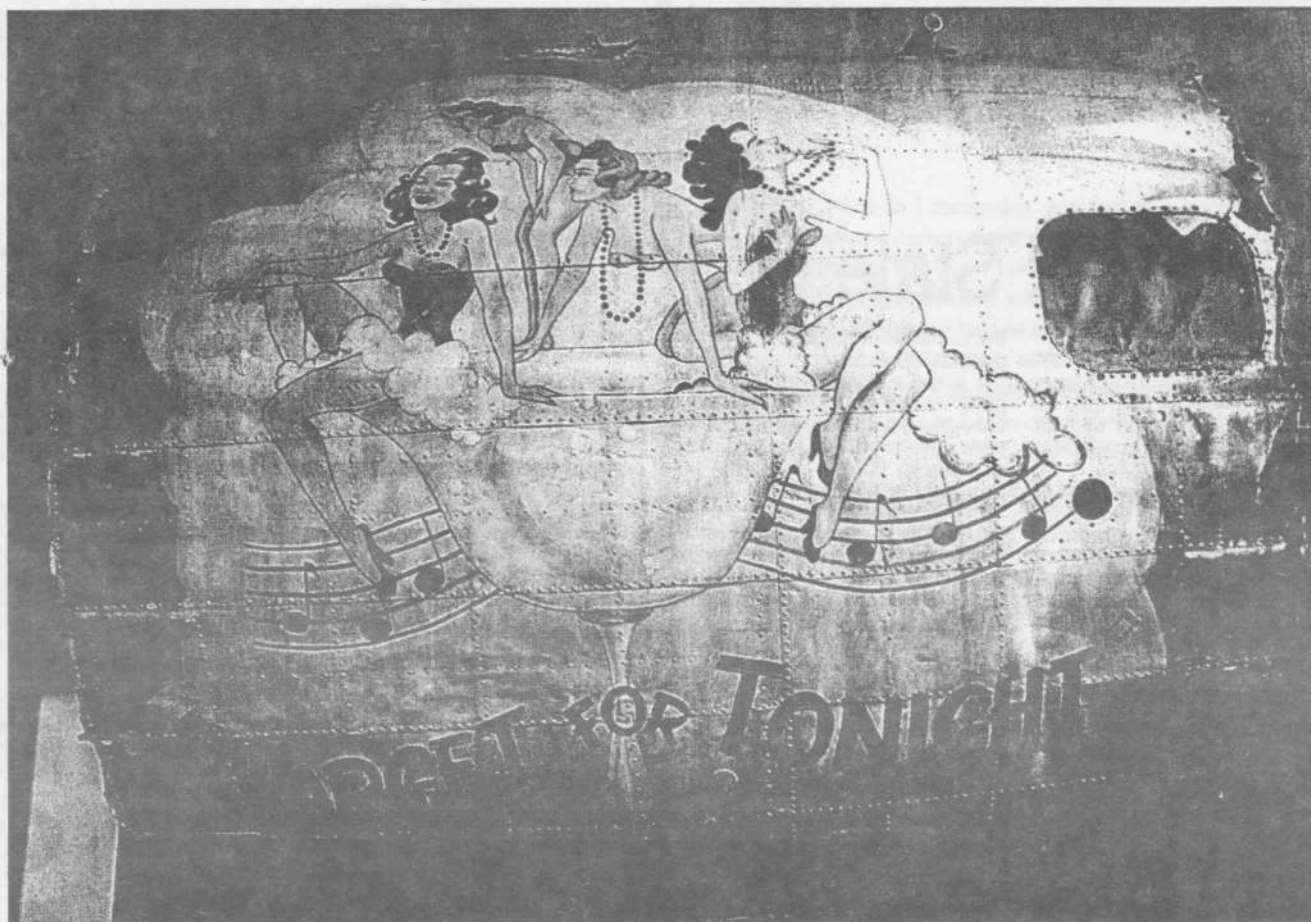
You might be interested in stopping by the CAF on your way to Tuscon. Give me a call and I'll be glad to give you a tour.

Sincerely,  
Dean P. Leyerly  
Radio Operator-Montgomery's Crew  
2510 Humble  
Midland, TX 79705



# Preserving Aviation history

**State funds are to be used to restore items of nose art. The American Airpower Heritage Museum owns the world's largest collection of authentic nose art. Seven panels of nose art are in restored condition, but using the state funding, the museum plans to exhibit 33 panels.**



## Texas Legislature allocates funds to help preserve history of WWII aviation

The American Airpower Heritage Museum, embarking on a \$3.2 million venture to enhance, expand, and preserve World War II aviation artifacts at the Confederate Air Force (CAF) headquarters, is being allocated \$878,000 by the Texas Legislature in pursuit of that objective.

"This museum is a rarity ... that really participates in American history," Rep. Tom Craddick (R-Midland) said in announcing the funding for the 1998-99 budget year at the CAF headquarters at Midland International Airport.

By design, the museum, which at 42,000 square feet, almost takes in an acre, goes "beyond textbooks" by exhibiting wartime artifacts and documents and by incorporating visitor-operated film footage and video exhibits that help to tell the World War II story from 1939 through 1945.

"They (museum staffers) have done a great job" in preserving "history" and making "it alive for people who come to this museum," which Craddick said is "fantastic."

The museum's artifacts "need to be preserved" for



*"They (American Airpower Heritage Museum staffers) have done a great job in preserving history and making it alive for people who come to this museum."*

—Rep. Tom Craddick

today's generation and for posterity not just for Midland and Texas but "for the whole country."

The \$878,000 funding, which was facilitated through Midland College for an educational endeavor, and matching funds and grants will go toward a five-point objective that includes a 6,000-square foot gallery adjoining the museum's north side and featuring World War II aircraft "Nose Art."

Please see MUSEUM/4A

Story by Ed Todd

Photos by Curt Wilcott

# MUSEUM: State Legislature allocates funds

(From 1A)

Those "precious pieces of American folk art" will be provided an "environmentally stable" area in the gallery, noted Museum Director Tami O'Bannion.

Currently, the museum has 33 of the folk art pieces, including World War II "girlie" art on aluminum canvases, which were cut out of aircraft, mostly bombers, when many warplanes were "scrapped" following war's end. The museum has on exhibit seven of the 33 pieces. The art is "among the most popular" artifacts in the museum, Ms. O'Bannion said.

Many of the art works, which were painted by aircrew and ground-crew members more than 50 years ago, were inspired by

Peruvian-born Esquire magazine artist Alberto Vargas. Images of the artist's scantily-clad "Varga girls" captured the imagination of the American airmen, who called their nose-art darlings such terms as "Sack Time," "Target for Tonight," "Sleepy-Time Gal," "Hit Parader."

Ms. O'Bannion termed the nose-art project her "Save-the-Girls" project, although Nose Art did include Walt Disney cartoon characters.

While the Nose Art will be restored by an art conservator, so, too, will the museum's thousands of rare and endangered artifacts be restored in a similar spirit in which the CAF volunteers restore the rare World War II-era warbirds for flight.

Ms. O'Bannion noted that an endowment would be set up to operate the Gallery. And in realizing the \$3.2-million budgeted funds, "We are developing that strategy." (The Mabee Foundation had contributed about \$1 million to help establish the museum in 1991.)

The museum's enterprises in entering the 21st century include:

- Preserving the Nose Art Exhibit. "The museum owns the world's largest collection of authentic World War II aviation Nose Art," said Ms. O'Bannion. The art works are "a significant collection of American folk art."

- Automated Resource Center. The center will be set up to organize the museum's "outstanding collection of original documents,

photographs, and other personal archives."

- Multi-Media Exhibit Enhancements. Exhibits will be "further enhanced with ... innovative technology" for visitors to interact with the exhibits.

- Oral History Program. "First-person accounts are more valuable than anything," Ms. O'Bannion said of tape-recording oral recollections of World War II aviators and other combatants, home-front warriors and civilians during the war.

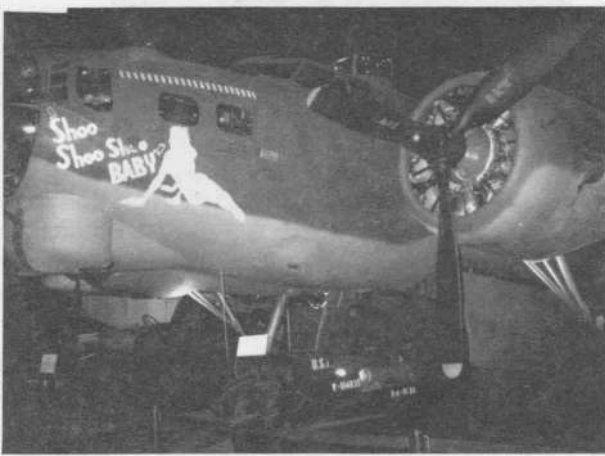
- Airport Multi-Media Exhibit. The exhibit would "add to the aesthetic and educational dimension" of the expanded Midland International Airport.



WRIGHT PATTERSON AIR MUSEUM

UNIT TO CATION AIRCRAFT

a#< BO OBAHON mtwmm e-i?	
BBBB'S'M* GREAT AGHHELD	B-17
BBIBG'M' fiOXTED	B-21
347 BG W CMIFFINO 6N81R	B-26
GBBBG'H' 1NETTISHAU	8-17
iiiiiv BETHEM' BETHEL	B-74
910 BO 'M' IFRAWMNIIDAMAN	8-17
Mil ' * G'H' WENDELING*	8-84
its 8 'H' NDTHIMPSTtitl	8-17
01 BG'H' DIENETHOR4E	8-17
41 18 'H' TIBEN.HAM	8-14
448BBW'SUNGAY	8-14
4 47 88 'H' SATTLESCm	8-17
448 88 <M' CCCTHtNQ	8-14
4S2 ~'BG.H*	utORHAM OBWF
4 8 3 8 8 'M'	OLD BUCKIHHA**
4 87 8 5	OLATTOH
48 8 8 8 H'	WORSHAM 47. rilTWB
46 5' 85 >	ATTLE8RIDGC



BOEING B-17G 'FLYING FORTRESS'

The Flying Fortress is one of the most famous airplanes ever built. The B-17 prototype first flew on July 1, 1935. Few B-17s were in service as of December 7, 1941, but production quickly accelerated in every WW II combat theater for daylight strategic bombardments. Production ended in 1945.

In March 1944 this B-17G of the 385th Bomb Group and based at Great Ashfield, Ohio, was named Shoo Shoo Baby. It flew 23 combat missions before being damaged by flak during its first mission (Posen, Poland) on March 24, 1944, and last mission on May 29, 1944 when engine problems forced a landing in neutral Sweden where the airplane and crew were interned. In 1968, Shoo Shoo Baby was found abandoned in France; the French government presented the airplane to the USAF. In July 1978 the 512th Military Airlift Wing moved it to Dover AFB, Delaware, for restoration by the volunteers of the 512th Antique Restoration Group. The massive year-long job of restoration to flying condition was completed in 1988 and the aircraft was flown to the museum on October 1988.

**SPCCIFIC ATIONS**

Span.....	104 ft. to in.
Length .....	74 ft. 4 in.
Height.....	30 ft. 0 in.
Weight.....	35,000 lbs.
Armament.....	13 machine guns
Top speed.....	375 mph
Range.....	4,000 miles
Crew.....	10
Max. alt.....	43,700 ft.

Dear Mr. Stern,

I am searching for information about my grandfather SSG Ned H. Mertz who was K.I.A. on October 16, 1944. He was not flying with his original crew that day. His original crew was W.M. Dahlberg, Lewis W. Hick, Saul Bechek, Wallace H. Chalstrom, James R. Mature and James P. Davis. He also flew with Harold B. Ackerman, Arthur J. Calace and I.H. Oppenhiemer.

If anyone has any information on my grandfather I would be grateful if you'd write me at 655 Promiseland Rd., Charlotte TN 37036.

I am especially interested in personal information but I also interested in information about the conditions and lifestyle that soldiers led at Great Ashfield. Pictures would also be appreciated.

I really enjoy the Hard Life Herald and I feel your great accomplishment in WW 11 are being forgotten in younger generations and the Hardlife Herald helps keep these memories alive.

Please note I have recently moved and have not received the August edition of the Hardlife Herald.

Thank You,

Sincerely

SGT. Jeffrey S. Page  
655 Promiseland Rd.  
Charlotte, TN 37036

Dear Editor. Ed:

While I've lucky in writing reading, I ran into trouble reading writing in the August '97 HARDLIFE HERALD, where Theodore V. Carlson took me to task...After stating how much he enjoyed my book *"The Wrong Stuff"* he wrote: "One mission report, however jolted me into disbelief—",

Well, what a jolt this gave me. Did he mean that I had been dishonest in my report? I re-read his comments several times wondering what he couldn't believe. Unable to find anything from what he'd written I called and asked, "What's not to believe?"

It turned out that he couldn't believe that I had not included his misadventure of having aborted the mission when he had received "credit" for aborting. So I decided that it wasn't a case of "disbelief" that had jolted him, but his disappointment that he hadn't received recognition for his "decision to abort early enough to give the spare (evidently Truman Smith) an easier time to get into position."

How ungrateful of me in not showing appreciation for his consideration in letting me fly the mission in his place. However, I can't really believe he was any more concerned about making it easier for someone else at the time than a couple contemplating the well being of an offspring at the moment of conception.

Since Ted couldn't remember other details as to what crew he was flying with, and recalling that he was flying "close to Tail End Charlie" (which he wasn't assigned), I called Jerry Ramaker for

the details.

Jerry had obtained over 200 pages of official Mission Report, from which he had detailed some of that mission in the Feb. and April '92 HARDLIFE HERALD, from which I borrowed for my book, for which I thank Jerry. He's promised to send me some copies of specific information, which I shall send to Ted so he will know who he was flying with and in which slot he was assigned until he aborted, as did McDonald.

So it is that the "disbelief" is on me that someone would want credit for NOT flying a mission that was a piece of cake, about which the lead navigator noted, "What a wonderful way to spend a Sunday", down at 700' touring the French countryside.

Truman Smith



Here's looking at you

Dear Ed,

First the article by Dick Feagle on page 8 of the Aug '97 edition I had copied and mailed it to my U.S. Congressman, James Talent, he is on the House Armed Services Subcommittee for Manpower. He is a good man and should reap some humor from it but like me he should also draw the hidden message contained therein.

Second, allow me to refresh your memory, I had the ten year search to see who hit who reference the Keeley and Yannello crews. This finally led to the daughter, Donna, of SSGT John Adams. She confirmed that her father was the sole survivor of the Paul Yannello crew and Keeley had hit them from the rear. She wanted to give away his memorabilia and I directed her towards Mary Beth Barnard at the Mighty 8th Air Force Heritage Museum. She sent me some remaining photographs that the Museum did not want and I passed them along to you for possible use in the Newsletter. So here is my suggestion, send those photographs to the American Air Museum in Duxford. I think they'll use them and appreciate it. Hopefully the Adams family will also feel good about this.

Third, I purchased from the USAF Museum Lt. Col. Smith book, "The Wrong Stuff," and found it very hard to put down, only took me a few days to finish it, to me to was the kind of book to allow a teenager to read to give him some insight as to what it may be like in a war.

Thanks for all,

Sincerely,

Allen P. Holtman, MSgt, USAF Ret.  
Asse Mbr, 385th BGMA

### Letters from Ian:

Richard Malzhan  
HC 6 Box 6291  
Hawley, PA 18428-9010 USA  
Dear Richard,

Many thanks for yours of August 18th. Despite your remembering nothing, I'm still very grateful for the copy of the diary and it is of value to my research - every snippet contributes something and it may be that the odd item of information you noted will be a key piece of a puzzle for someone else. You may not know why they gave you the DFC, Air Medal and Oak Leaf Clusters but your diary gives this researcher several clues. Take Bohlen on September 12th, 1944, as an example, "Had to drop bombs before reaching target because one engine was shot out. Number 3 was feathered and No. 4 threatening to quit. Waist and ball gunners passed out to lack of oxygen..." The infamous October 6th mission has been well recorded in Hardlife Herald but you came home on 3 engines after being hit over target in #2. "Lost 12 B-17's from this group die to fighters. We were lucky" You surely were. November 2, 1944. Merseburg. "Flak was awful. Piece went between my legs." Thank goodness for you and yours that it wasn't higher! And you still have that piece of flak. It has history and provenance. To the future. On the space station, your wings will fly higher than ever did but, in my opinion, the honour they earned was fifty plus years ago when worn by a young radio operator on Robert Kearn's crew.

See you in Tucson. Please bring a crew picture so I can copy it to go with your letter and the diary.

Best Wishes,

### Fortress/Plane called 'greatest; that ever flew'

#### From NEWS1

E.G. Hollingsworth and Jak<sup>^</sup> Rush, who both live in Colorado Springs, served with different bomb groups but were held in the same German prison. They never met in that camp of 10,000 men. On Friday, they stood together to celebrate what Rush called "the greatest airplane that ever flew."

The B-17 is the most famous of the heavy World War II bombers. The first Fortress was completed in July 1935 and went through a number of incarnations. In all, more than 12,000 Fortresses were built. The 8th Air Force alone lost approximately 4,754. The planes are best known for their daylight precision bombing campaigns over Germany from 1943 to O\* 1945. But they turn up all over\* the history of World War II.

Five of 12 B-17Ds were destroyed at Pearl Harbor. In March of 1942, it was a B-17 2 2 that evacuated Gen. Douglas MacArthur from the Philippines to Australia.

From the outside, the Fortress is immediately familiar to viewers of war films and newsreels: the four propellers, the thick hull, the Plexiglass nose. But the men who flew it remember the B-17 from the inside.

"It was noisy. It was cold," recalled Dale Brown, director of the 398th Bomb Group Memorial Association. The B-17s didn't have any heating. Temperatures could drop to 70-below Fahrenheit. The crew wore heated suits.

And the B-17 was crowded. Nine to ten men manned each plane. "It was real tight quarters. The B-17 wasn't designed as a luxury craft," said Thomas. The ball turret operator, stationed on the belly of the craft, sat, crunched with his knees almost to his ears. The top turret operator would fly standing up, sometimes for eight hours at a time.

The B-17 didn't always feel like a fortress. In the early 1940s, B-17s didn't have fighter escorts. Joseph Waddell, of the 381st Bomb Group, said, "The theory, and believe me it was, theory, (was that) B-17s could fly without fighter escorts."

After taking enormous losses, fighter escorts were assigned to head off predatory aircraft. ~

But for most men, the memories of the discomfort and fear seem distant, hard to imagine. What remains real and vital are the friendships they formed and the friends they lost.

In that cold and cramped plane, the men found camaraderie that is unlike any they had before or since. Most bomb groups still hold reunions each year.

"I came closer to crew J J; members than to my own family," said Thomas.

And the family of aviators is aging. "We're all past 70. A tab of us have passed away, close to 40 percent," Brown said. "Wanted to do this and we tyant ed to do it now."

Albert Tumey flew with Brown in the 398th. Looking at the bronze B-17 made him thin back to 1944.

"Fifty-three years ago we never thought we'd be here. When you realize future generations will see this and some you might even say, 'Hey, they did good thing,' that's what this means."

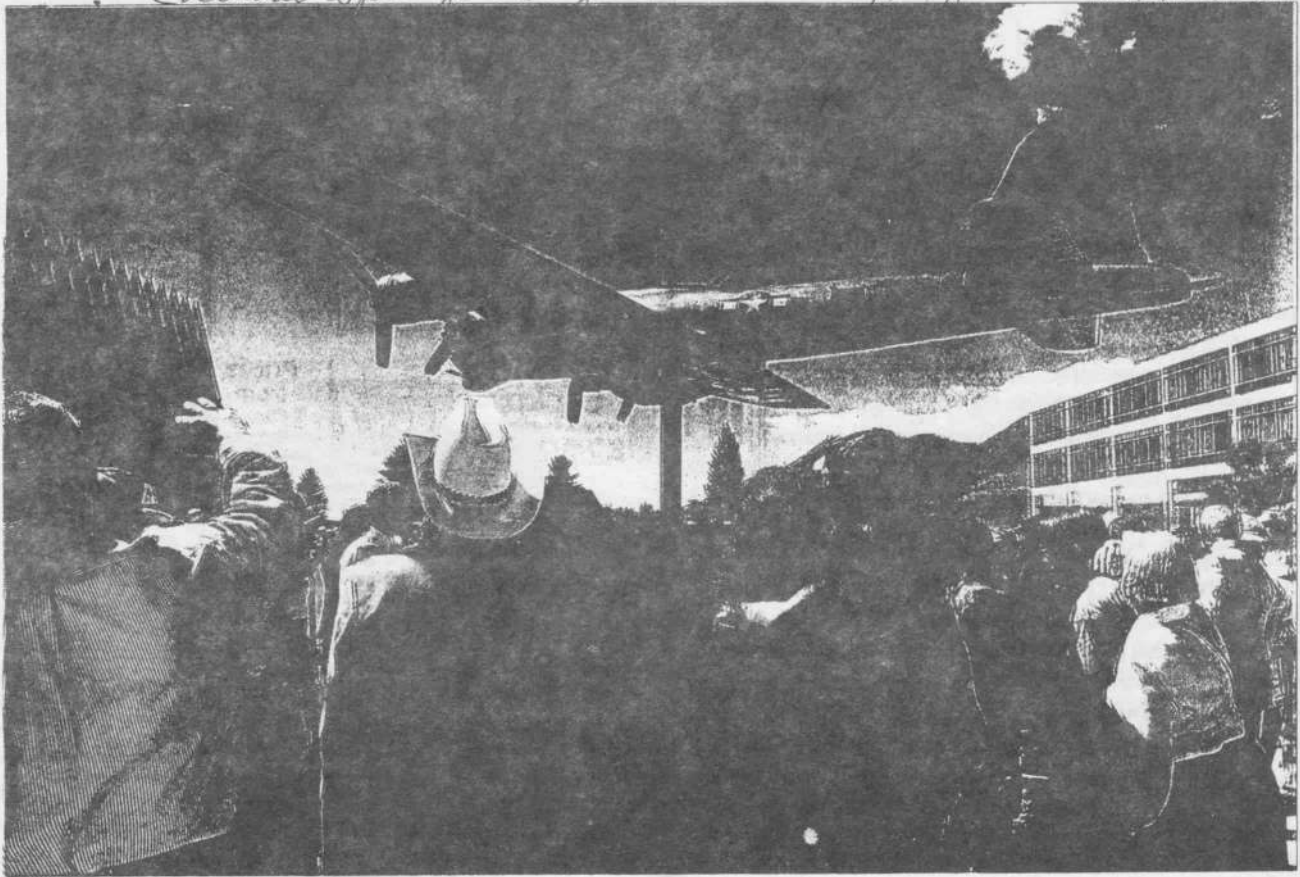
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A bronze sculpture of a B-17 bomber, above, soars over spectators at the Air Force Academy Friday. Below, John and Sharon deRussy pray during ceremonies unveiling the one-ton scale model and dedicating it to World War II veterans. John deRussy was the first commander of the 305th Bomb Group, which flew during the war. The bomb group was among the sponsors of the memorial.

# Academy dedicates B-17 replica

## Flying Fortress hovers in Honor Court as memorial to veterans of World War II

**By Susan Warmbrunn**  
The Gazette  
The three-ton bronze B-17 Flying Fortress unveiled Friday at the U.S. Air Force Academy has never left the ground. The white star beneath the wing has never been scarred. The nose, pointed due south, has never faced anti-aircraft fire.  
For the men who did, who flew B-17s during World War II, this replica represents a scaled-down version

of the plane that held their lives in its hull.  
"To us that flew it, it was part of our life. Every time we went up, we never knew if we'd come back," said retired Col. Maurice Thomas, a pilot with the 305th Bomb Group.  
Retired Col. Robert K. Morgan piloted the Memphis Belle, the first B-17 to complete 25 missions over Europe. His 91st Bomb Group took huge losses in the first three months. "I'm here

only because of that airplane. We were very lucky."  
More than 400 veterans, their families, cadets and others gathered at the academy Honor Court for the dedication of the B-17. Thomas' 305th Bomb Group sponsored the memorial, with the help of other bomb groups and individual veterans. The B-17 now flies frozen among four bronze fighters on the Air Force Academy's Honor Court. All are the work of Robert Henderson, a Canon City sculptor. The sculptures are here to ensure that, as Henderson put it, "these guys' story will be told over and over."  
See FORTRESS/NEWS8

