HARDLIFE HERALD

Newsletter of the 385th Bombardment Group



1942 - 1945 Great Ashfield - Suffolk, England Station 155 - The Mighty Eighth

Volume 30 - Number 3

OCTOBER 2013



385th BGA REUNION - MINNEAPOLIS, MN - October 2013

HARDLIFE HERALD

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

At our October Reunion, the Board and other attendees will be initiating a formal effort to determine the future direction of our Association. This is a significantly important topic and I want to afford each and every one of our members the opportunity to provide their input to this discussion. Let me provide a rough framework of how I view this topic. This framework is MY OPINION only. It is intended as a starting point for discussion. The eventual outcome is far from determined.

Time is taking its inevitable toll on our 385th Veterans. I know there has been much effort and discussion at the National 8thAFHS as well as in the 385th BGA about the "Nextgen" effort. In my view, a Nextgen 385th BGA will look and act very differently than our current organization. First, it's member base would likely be much smaller even than our current membership. Limited membership also would provide limited funds for continued activities such as publication and mailing of the Hardlife Herald.

An Association without actual 385th BG Veterans will have lost it's primary reason for Reunions, i.e., providing an opportunity for Veterans to get together, socialize and exchange stories and experiences with one another and with the Nextgens who typically sit on the edge of their seats to hear the Veterans' stories. Somehow, I just can't imagine a 385th BGA reunion without 385th BG Veterans.

It is possible that a Nextgen 385th BGA could have a different mission and charter, i.e., to preserve the legacy of the 385th BG by maintaining an online, Internet-based archive of all the 385TH BG information that has been collected over the years. The current web site we are implementing could serve as the basis for this (in fact that is one of the design objectives I had set for the web site). By the way, if you haven't seen the web site yet, I urge you to take a look at http://www.385thbga.com The site is just getting started and needs a lot more work but you can get a good idea of its potential from what we have done so far. Expanding, improving and maintaining the web site into the future will require time, effort and at least some financial resources. Such an effort could also entail moving publication of the Hardlife Herald electronically on the web site thus saving the significant costs incurred currently to print and mail each issue.

An alternative approach to the future may depend on the success and direction of the national 8thAFHS organization's Nextgen effort. It may well be that with a sufficient number of Nextgen Groups participating, a critical mass can be achieved and an appropriate framework developed for ongoing cooperation and participation.

Of course, there is always the option of "Last man out, turn off the lights and lock the door." I certainly do not advocate this alternative. I believe it would sacrifice the efforts of so many who have come before me to build the organization and preserve the 385th's legacy.

Well, that should provide enough background for you to start your thought process. Again, not only do I welcome your input, I am sincerely requesting that you give this some serious thought and get back to me. My contact information is listed elsewhere in this issue. I will gladly take your input via e-mail, snail-mail or telephone. I thank you in advance for, and look forward to receiving your thoughts on this very important matter.

THE KINDNESS SHOWN BY A DANISH SABOTEUR TO AN AMERICAN POW BY PATRICIA MARTIN

A strike against German aircraft production at Marienburg, Germany on Saturday, October 9, 1943 was Lt. Arnold Martin's third mission. When two engines failed on their way to the target, the bombs were ditched and the 9 crew members and a photographic observer "hit the silk." The pilot stayed with the plane and landed it near Varde, Denmark and escaped.

The navigator of the B-17 had insisted they were in neutral Sweden, but Lt. Martin, the co-pilot, was certain they were in Nazi-held Denmark. Basing their actions on the premise that they were in neutral territory, Lt. Martin and the navigator were sitting near a clump of trees. When German soldiers approached, they hid and Lt. Martin won his argument.

The two airmen slipped away to a farmhouse, obtained civilian clothing, and were on their way to a place of hiding. Martin is sure the frightened Danish farmer turned them in because the police and German soldiers surrounded them after they left the farmhouse.

During interrogation and processing at Dulag Luft in Frankfurt, a Danish man, Thorvald Sondergaard Pedersen, had been assigned to confiscate all the airmen's valuables. When it was Lt. Martin's turn to give up his rings and watch, Mr. Pedersen slipped the items in his pocket and asked Lt. Martin for his home address, promising to return the items after the war. This he did at great risk to himself. On October 19, 1943 Martin entered Stalag Luft III in Sagan (Zagan) in German-held Poland, where he was held until the end of January, 1945. At that time, the Russians were closing in and Stalag Luft III was evacuated. A 50-mile forced march to Spremburg, Germany and a hellacious boxcar trip to Stalag VIIA at Moosburg rounded out Martin's POW experience.

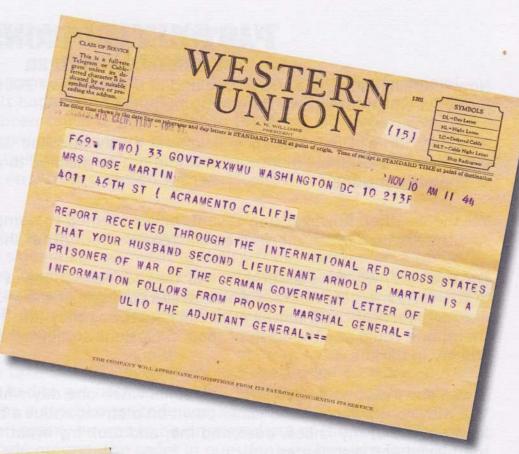
Fortunately, Lt. Martin survived the POW camps and returned home to Sacramento in June 1945. Since he hadn't heard from Mr. Pedersen, he concluded that he'd never receive his valuables. Soon after Lt. Martin and his wife moved.

Unbeknowst to Lt. Martin, Mr. Pedersen had sent several letters to the original address, none of which was forwarded to Lt. Martin nor returned to Mr. Pedersen. Finally, a letter dated March 1, 1947 and another dated May 23, 1947 found their way to Lt. Martin. Mr. Pedersen had been trying to find Lt. Martin for almost 2 years. Lt..

Martin responded and soon after received his valuables. As it turned out, Mr. Pedersen had been a member of a group of saboteurs against the German occupation of Denmark and later was arrested and imprisoned by the Gestapo and sentenced to death. Luckily, Mr. Pedersen was still alive when the war ended.

Because Lt. Martin passed away in 1955, his children weren't able to learn anything about his experience, except through their mother. Because she kept many documents, medals, POW postcards, etc. his daughter, Patricia, has spent the past five years researching her father's WWII experience. She wondered if Mr. Pedersen had any children. She Googled Thorvald Sondergaard Pedersen and to her amazement found an entry in a genealogical database, which showed Mr. Pedersen had passed on, but had two children before moving to Canada in 1956. Patricia emailed the son listed as the owner of the entry, Chris Pedersen of Toronto. Patricia sent copies of Mr. Pedersen's letters to Chris. He was quite emotional that she had found him. During his childhood in Denmark, his father had told him about Lt. Martin.

Apparently, Lt. Martin was the only airmen for whom Mr. Pedersen had shown the kindness to safeguard his belongings. Patricia had asked Chris why his father had safeguarded Lt. Martin's belongings, but he didn't know. Then Chris "paid it forward." He sent Patricia the original thank-you letter her father had written to Mr. Pedersen in 1947. After 70 years, there was something in the universe that Chris had kept such a personal and precious belonging that has no dollar value, but has worth beyond compare to Patricia.



Dear. Mr. Martin!

I wrote you a couple of letters about your belongins. Rings and watch but I havent heard from watch but I havent heard from your yet.

I am afraid of sending your things before I know your night adness.

Leant send your things on eash on delivery but if you can send send me something etse in stead send me something etse in stead be very glad here we nead several things - as. Ladies. Lith stokings - Nogh. things - as. Ladies. Lith stokings - Nogh. things - as. Ladies. Lith stokings - Nogh. The children and so on I sead then the children and so on I sead then the children and so on I sead then Insured make through the American Insured make through the American econsul in absentingen I hope I can would neceive make it adhight styou will receive your things in good order before your landed that time—

- It saine was a terible time for us after yoù left here the eniet of police his assistent and I together with. 7. others - got arested of the german. Sestapo. - for recieving - from the air - Suns - Synamite - a. S.o. from the "English Army" for the underground Besistance hone to whom we belonger we were to be condemed to death, bût. we. got. saved- "(they forgot us. when we by a mistake- came to a german., Koheentration camp' we were all-together in prison in 17 months and foun of our grap died there - we - ane not yet - quite well - aften. that time -- Prough - oun - concetions - your pilot . came - safe away - if that - fellow who brought you and the Lientenant to the 1011000 - who Police station here had brought you to one of is it would have been the same way but we did not dane because there among the police staff were - some we did not real on - anyway I am glad that you are saje. back and hope you are getting along in they best solupe hope to hear from your Very truly yours. Th. Jondengaand Pedensen Torvegade 18-17. VAROE - Denmanh. - Europe

PAST REFLECTIONS

BY CHARLES W. IIALPER

Now that I'm planning a trip to England in the Spring of 2006,1 find myself reflecting on incidents which took place during my first visit in 1944.

As a bomber Pilot flying out of a field near Elmswell called Great Ashfield, I soon discovered that in the winter months one would not be inclined to describe England as the land of endless sunshine.

Yet the weather, however unpleasant, never seemed to dampen the spirit of the people. And they had so much more to be concerned about other than the weather.

For example, while we assembled our bomber formations at altitude over East Anglia in the early morning hours, I watched the contrails of the V-2 Rockets which seemed like long vertical chalk marks on a blackboard, as they left their launch pad. By timing them, one could see the flash of their explosions somewhere in London while the city still lay in darkness.

These observations became very personal when one day while on leave in London: A V-2 with no advance sound came down on a street about a block away. The concussion knocked me to my knees, deafened me, and took my breath away. The experience left me fearful and disoriented.

So, besides the afore mentioned weather, the English had to live with those V-2's, Buzz-Bombs, {V-I's} Firestorms, Bomb Shelters, Rationing, Blackouts, etc. plus endless worry about their loved ones.

And if this were not bad enough, they also had to put up with the invasion of us Americans. To absorb all of these traumatic events and still keep their emotional balance and sense of humor was truly incredible. But then the English are a truly incredible people. I have been reminded of this fact each and every day for the past 60 years since I married one of them.

Charles W. Halper-Major, USAF Ret.



THE DRUMMING OUT

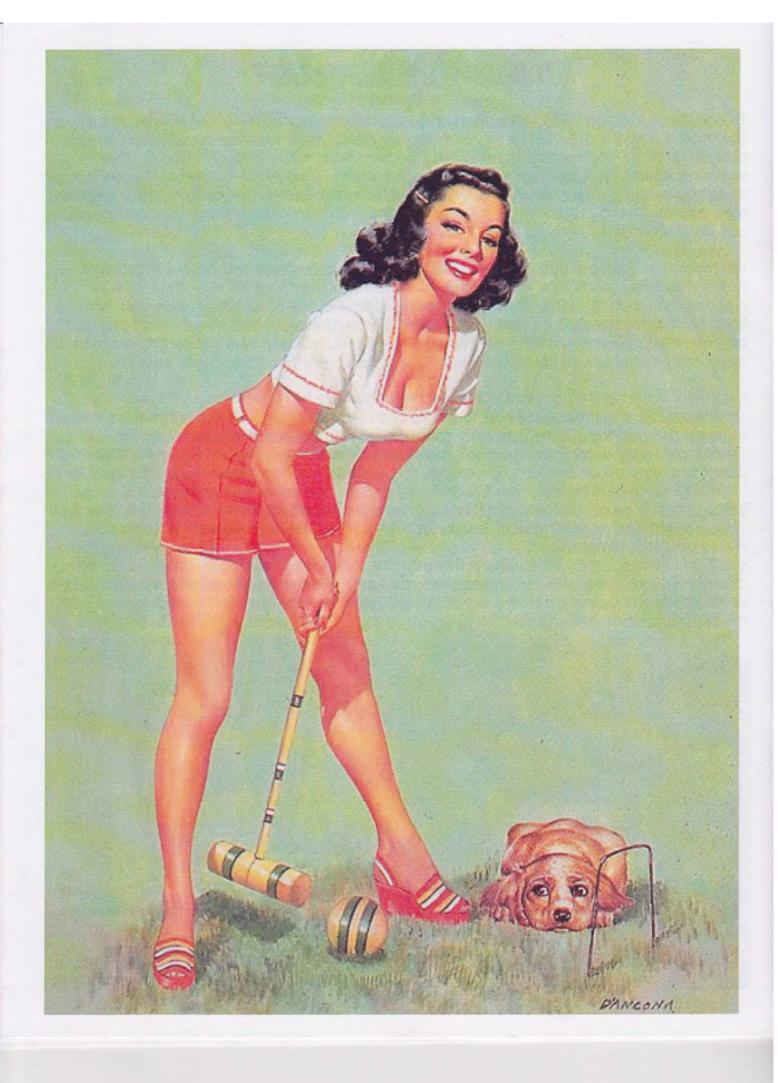
BY BAY MCCOOL

To a thirteen year old kid the summer of 1943, during the midst of WW II, was one of the most exciting in his life. It had been about eight months since I had last seen my older brother Ralph. He had been called to active duty in the Army Air Corps. Five years my senior, he was my hero, and we were close. That August mom and I had an opportunity to travel by train to Maxwell Field near Montgomery, Alabama. What a mind-blowing, heady time to travel on a train crowded with servicemen reporting to their various destinations!

We arrived at the post guest house right across the street from the cadet barracks. Hearing cadets marching and singing as they went to their various assignments was a new experience for a kid not used to being awakened at 5:00 AM. My brother later told me that morning PT was a part of their daily routine. Anyone ever hear of physical training on the "Burma Road"? It existed at Maxwell Field and was one of the exercise regimens for a phase of cadet training.

One night Ralph got a pass to take us into Montgomery to have a meal off base. But there was one stipulation: He had to get back to Maxwell Field early to witness a "drumming out" ceremony. There was a strict honor code among the cadets. If anyone was caught cheating, such as on an exam, he was to be drummed out of the corps. The cadets were lined up on the parade ground, the cadet in question was brought forward to have any patches removed from his uniform, and he was escorted to the post entrance gate, put on a bus, and reassigned to another army base. All of this was to take place very late in the evening. Wow! This was a heavy blow hammered home to a cadet, but it was meant to emphasize the seriousness of the code for those in training for life and death situations. Upon researching this practice I've determined that it goes back to the earliest days of our Republic. Although the practice has been discontinued or drastically curtailed, to me it drove home a lesson about honesty and integrity that has stayed with me for the past seventy years.





October

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
On a rice	semmer day in	1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	Columbus Day	22	23	24	25	26
Litola Vies	e should be		20		20	would like
27	28	29	30	31	awea a	Mile through the problem
someone: V		rant location the distribution		Halloween		

November

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Georgia en 11 e Georgia en 11 e GKINNY (SEOGL			AAden b	GENERA GRAN SPACE AL EUR 100 Les 12019	1	2
3 Daylight Savings Time	4	5 Election Day	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	Veterans Day	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27 Hannukkah Begins	28 Thanksgiving	29	30

"There I was..." The cartoons of Bob Stevens

In response to the overwhelming demand (some guy said "Hey, whatever happened to...?") we herewith g ive you another series of those zany gems found in the Confederate Air Force official glossary of aviation terms.



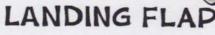
ENGINE FAILURE

A CONDITION WHICH OCCURS WHEN ALL FUEL TANKS BECOME FILLED WITH AIR.



A RITUAL PERFORMED BY PILOTS AFTER EMERG-ING FROM A CLOUD BANK.



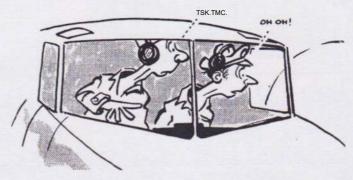


A 6,000-FT LANDING ROLL ON A 5,000-FT RUNWAY.



"CLEAR r

WARNING SHOUTED TWO SECONDS AFTER YOU MIT THE STARTER BUTTON.



BOMBS AWAY OR NOT!!!

BY HUGH S. ANDREW

On a nice summer day in 1944 while returning to England from a bombing mission, we reached the English Channel and had gotten to an altitude where it was safe to remove your oxygen masks when our bombardier went back to the bomb bay area to be sure everything was OK. Well, it wasn't. He came back to the cockpit and told us that one bomb had failed to release over the target and was still hanging on the bomb rack. I was the copilot and I told Wes Brashear I would go back and take a look at the situation.

We had been carrying about 4000 pounds of bombs. At one hundred pounds per bomb this works out to 40 bombs. Thirty nine of them had been dropped. The remaining bomb, fortunately, was at the very top of the bomb rack. If it had been lower down, with bombs above it who knows what might have happened! This bomb was fully armed and ready to explode and once these bombs were armed there was no way to disarm it. When we got it loose we had to be extremely careful not to let it hit any part of the bomb bay because it could very easily explode right there in the plane.

I told Wes we should tell our Group Leader our predicament and tell him we would like to drop out of formation and try to shake it loose. We got the OK to pull out and see what we could do. We told the rest of our 10 man crew to strap themselves in as we were going to try to shake that baby loose. We opened the bomb bay and put the plane through some wild gyrations, but that bomb just stayed right there. This created a big problem. We don't want to fly back over part of England and have this bomb drop out and fall on someone. We also don't want to carry it back to the base and attempt to land with it still in our plane and drop to the ground when we touch down. For if it let loose then, it most certainly would explode right under our plane, which would be bad news for us.

I went back to the bomb bay and tried to figure out a way for two of us to position, ourselves at each end of the bomb, lift it off the holding device, open the bomb bay doors, and drop it in the English Channel. There was enough space at each end of our baby for two skinny people to get in there, straddle the open bomb bay 12000 feet above the Channel and do this job. The part of this which was really tricky was that there was not room for either of us to wear our parachutes while doing this. I was pretty skinny so I volunteered. Our radio operator, who was also slender, volunteered [rather reluctantly], to assist.

I told the Sergeant that we would lift the bomb up to get it loose after we are in position, straddling the bomb bay and have the Bombardier open the bomb bay doors at which time I told the Sergeant to carefully let go of it at the count of three. But I said that the noise in there when the doors were opened would cause us not to hear the count so I would nod my head three times and to let her go on the third nod.

So we got in position, I had the Bombardier open the doors and there we were straddling the open bomb bay looking down at the English Channel. The noise was terrific and the wind was really making it extremely difficult to maintain your balance using no hands. I nodded my head three times and we dropped that bomb in the Channel. I had told our Bombardier to shut that door as soon as the bomb cleared it. We both got out of there as fast as possible, and headed for home.

JUST ANOTHER ROUTINE DAY AT THE OFFICE

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This will be quite a long thing to tell, but it is just an interesting incident that happened and we learn to take it all in stride:

"A NIGHT FLIGHT WITH LIJNDSBEIIG"

BV 1ST LT. CHARLES W. LVNDSBERC

SETTING: B-17G

PLACE: Langley Field, Va.

TIME: April 26-1944

This flight started out to be just an ordinary routine flight with crew 392 as combat crew, and 3 other men along as Radar men. We were scheduled for a cross country flight from Langley to Richmond to Martinsburg- Lancaster-Philadelphia, Chincoteague Is. and return to Langley. The flight was estimated to take about 4.5 hours. All was well as the graceful B-17 left the runways at Langley just as the beautiful sun was setting in the West. Our weather forcaster had predicted that there was a heavy overcast with a warm front moving in along the line someplace. An overcast doesn't bother us too much and the warm front meant rough weather with rain and whatever else the elements wished to throw in.

As we climbed to our flight altitude the pilot (no doubt Chas, himself) started to warm up the automatic pilot as it flys the ship much better than he can. When we reached our altitude we leveled off and started out for our first point. It so happened that the overcast was thicker than anticipated and as a result we were flying in the middle of it. So what! As we cruise merrily along and everything sounding sweet as far as the plane is concerned the pilot notices that the artificial horizon has all of a sudden decided that it didn't want to work. In case you didn't know what this gadget is why it is just what the name implies, and indicates whether the ship is level in all directions. It is the only reference the pilot has when he can't see the ground. Since the automatic pilot was flying it didn't make too much difference as that would hold the plane in a level position.

As we approached Phila. the pilot noticed that the plane began to act funny and didn't handle in the proper manner. Upon investigation of the symptoms it comes to our attention that our wings have a beautiful layer of nice ice on them. In short order the pilot has the de-icer boots working and another menace is safely gotten rid of. Since we discover that we are in a freezing layer we have to keep constant watch at all times for wing icing and also engine icing. Once again things return to normal and we go merrily on our way. We can just make out the riding lights on our own wing tips. Pretty heavy- that overcast. In about 10 min. the ship begins to bounce and rock like it had been hit by anti-aircraft gun fire. Looking outside we find that we can no longer see the wings or even the engines right along side of us. The cause: We are in the middle of a blizzard and it is really snowing outside. The elements had chosen to throw snow and ice at us on our first leg of the trip. The automatic pilot is a wonderful thing and it guides the ship thru the storm better than any human hand could do. As we leave Phila. we come out of the overcast and above us the moon and the stars are shining very beautifully. Our troubles are over—we think.

The navigators inform us that we are only about 45 min. from home and this of course makes everyone happy as it is now about 11:30 at night. In about three min. we find that the warm front we passed thru going up has swung to the East and is now between us and home sweet home. In short order we are again in the middle of an overcast and the ground is lost to view. Close watch is kept for our friends, the ice and snow, but the nature

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of the storm has changed and all we get is turbulence and plenty of rain. We breathe a sigh of relief as the rain holds no special danger and does not have ice in it.

The co-pilot decided he would like to see what the rest of the crew is doing so he gets up and leaves and the engineer takes his place in the seat along-side of the pilot. The co-pilot has been gone only about 10 min. when the plane starts banking sharply to the left. The pilot, thinking the co-pilot is down in the nose fooling around, commences at once to tell him to cut out horseing around with the remote controls of the plane. (There are remote controls in the bombardiers compartment so he can direct the plane when it is on automatic pilot and we are on a bomb run) There is no answer and the plane is now building up some speed and the pilot begins to think that something has really gone wrong. After what seemed like hours the radio man informs the pilot of the fact that the co-pilot is NOT in the nose but back with him in the radio room. The pilot then realizes that something has really gone wrong and begins to remedy it. His first conclusion is that the automatic pilot has gone out on him and immediately it is cut off giving the pilot again full control of the plane. As he glances at the instrument panel his eyes first go to the artificial horizon so he can determine the position of the plane in the air. It doesn't take him long to remember that his horizon is out-and he must resort to basic instruments to tell him what his plane is doing and how to correct it. All the training he has had in cadets then comes back to him and he starts to bring the heavy ship back to normal flight. Needle-ball and air-speed are all he has - plus his training - to save that ship and also the occupants.

In a split second he has looked at all these things and at once determines that the plane is in a tight spiral to the right. The neddle is way over to the right, the ball is up on the left due to centrifugal force, and the airspeed reads about 250. (A 17 should not be flown above 200 in any violent maneuvers) The vertical speed indicator also gets looked at and shows that we are going DOWN at a rate of about 4500 ft a minute. Thanks to the training he has received the pilot brings the plane out of its spin having lost only about 4000 ft. or so. He then informs the crew that everything is under control and they continue on the trip.

The radio man informs the pilot that he is taking off his chute which he has put on as the plane started down. In about 30 min. the ship settles back on the runway after a routine

flight.



1-186

LEFT: Charles Lundsberg during B-17 training. ABOVE: B-17 42-5351 during training maneuvers

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LETTERS

Hello Charles and Chuck,

Just wanted to let you know Ron and I are leaving Friday for our pilgrimage to Ashfield! I can't believe the time is finally at hand. Ian is so nice to agree to meet with us and show us around. I have also enjoyed "speaking" to Di Barker via email. Can't wait to meet them both. I know there will be very little of the airfield left, but will still be exciting to just be in that area where the airfield once stood. I am attaching 2 pictures of my Dad at G.A. One is with "Flaps", whom he describes as an English spaniel that everyone loved. Have ya'll ever heard anyone mention a dog whilst there? (practicing my "Brit speak")

Chuck, you know my cousin Tommy whom you sent the HH's to? I had told him about Bill Varnedoe and he went down to visit him today. Tommy lives in Nashville so was able to make it a day trip. He was in heaven, they spent several hours and he was enthralled with Bill's briefing room. Tommy has a vast knowledge of war planes and was always keenly interested in my Dad's service stories. He has sent me maps and all kinds of articles he deems necessary before I set forth on my own little mission. I plan to go with him to meet Bill again later in the fall when I get back to Nashville, (our hometown).

I called Herb Grieder today, I had called once before and he remembered our conversation completely when I called back. He and my Dad had stayed in touch via Christmas cards till my Dad's dementia got to the point a year or two ago that he stopped, (he could, however, still recall events that happened on specific dates... i.e. ditching on such and such date, going to bombardier school on specific dates,etc.). Anyway, on our last phone call I had mentioned to Herb I might come visit him at some point, he remembered this and asked me if I was still coming. Tommy was wanting to know if the Wells Cargo incident they were involved in when the brakes failed put the plane out of commission permanently but Herb wasn't sure. However Bill V. was able to advise him the plane was able to make more missions.

I will sign off for now. Chuck, I will make pictures of the 3 trees. Thank you both so much for the information and help you have given me. I wish I could meet ya'll at this year's reunion but we have 2 other reunions scheduled for October. We do plan on coming to Nashville for next year's reunion!

If you think of anything else you need for me to do while there let me know. Otherwise I'll let you know how it went when I get back.

As my Daddy was always sayin g...let's hope for CAVU days!!!

Take care.

Diane Castleman (9/11/13)

RIGHT: Roy Buck and Flaps Great Ashfield, August 1944

FAR RIGHT: Roy Buck at Great Ashfield, August 1944





FEATURED PIN-UP ARTIST

Although Edward D'Ancona was a prolific pinup artist who produced hundreds of enjoyable images, relatively little is known about his background

He sometimes signed his paintings with the name "D'Amarie", but his real name appears on numerous calendar prints published from the mid 1930s through the mid 1950s, and perhaps as late as 1960.

The first company to publish D'Ancona pinups, about 1935 to 1937, was Louis F. Dow in St Paul. D'Ancona worked in oil on canvas and his originals from that time usually measured about 30 x 22 inches. His early work is comparable in quality to that of the young Gil Elvgren, who had begun to work for Dow in 1937. Because D'Ancona produced so much work for Dow, one might assume that he was born in Minnesota and lived and worked in the St Paul, Minneapolis area. It is known that he supplied illustrations to the Goes Company in Cincinnati and to several soft-drink firms, which capitalized on his works similarity to the Sundblom/Elvgren style, which was so identified with Coca-Cola.

During the 1940s and 1950s, D'Ancona superb use of primary colours, masterful brushstrokes, and painterly style elevated him to the ranks of the very best artist in pinup and pinup art. His subject matter at this time resembled Elvgren's. Both enjoyed painting nudes and both employed situation poses a great deal. D'Ancona also painted a fair amount of evening-gown scenes, as did Elvgren, Art Frahm and Erbit.

By 1960, D'Ancona had moved into the calendar art field. Instead of doing pinups and glamour images, however, he specialized in pictures on the theme of safety in which wholesome policemen helped children across the street in suburban settings that came straight out of Norman Rockwell.

Edward D'Ancona biography borrowed from The Great American Pinup by Charles G. Martignette & Louis K. Meisel.



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OCT 2013

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The Three Trees of Great Ashfield - 09/17/13 - Photo by Diane Castleman