



# MENDLESHAM MEMORIES

## 34TH BOMB GROUP H



## OBSERVATIONS

Hello again!

Here we are with our second issue. I have received many kind words of praise on my first effort as editor for which I am thankful. They boost my courage to "have another go at it."

Although this issue will not be completed until after our Mendlesham Reunion, this column is being written before we leave. There are a few points I'd like to bring to your attention.

First, all dues and communications of importance to you as to membership, records, etc. of the 34th Bomb Gp. are to be mailed to Ray Summa at 2910 Bittersweet Lane, Anderson, IN 46011. Only material for the newsletter is to be sent to my address.

Secondly, in this issue I am beginning a new column titled "A Funny Thing Happened On The Way To The War." As we all know, even though "War Is Hell," we have all had some humorous incident happen in our wartime experiences. These are the items I want you to jog your memories for. Maybe we can all get a good laugh out of it.

As you will see in this issue, your letters must be kept as brief as possible. Make sure to cover the subject but don't "gild the lily" too much. We have received many lengthy letters and, in the interest of economy and reader interest, only excerpts have been printed. Hopefully, this won't irk the authors, but we're trying to get as much into the newsletter as we can.

So, here we go again. I hope you find this issue interesting and informative. I'd like to hear from you, not for the praise, but to tell me what you think might be done to improve the effort. I'm open to all suggestions.

Respectfully,  
Eli Baldea  
Editor

### GREETINGS:

We have returned from our England Reunion and are all recuperating at the present time. The majority of us met at Kennedy Airport and we started reminiscing from there on. We departed Kennedy 1½ hours late and were greeted at Heathrow by Carol Clark and Dick D'Amato from Tamarac Tours. We loaded the bus and departed to Ipswich Post House and waited for the arrival of the tail end Charlies 3 hours later. The 34th Bomb Group crew chiefs sure could have shown these modern-day mechanics how to get aircraft ready for the

mission, as all planes arrived late.

Friday evening we had our tour meeting and met FOTE members Stu Evans, Ron Plake and Ian Hawkins. Our English friends turned out in force on Saturday at the memorial and at the dinner. The fly-over was superb. The ladies of the Legion and their husbands were our guests at the dinner on Saturday evening. The women were presented with a 34 BG flag, (a flag that had flown over the capitol), 34th scarves, and pins. The scarves were designed and produced by Randy Martin and Pete Gray.

The wreath at the memorial was placed by Baldea, Kiley, McAllister and Brauks representing the P.O.W.'s. The ladies of the Legion and the Men of the British Legion each placed a wreath to the left and right of ours. Mrs. Matilda Webb, the president of the Women's Section of the British Legion, accepted the flag at the dinner.

Sunday, most of us attended church services in Mendlesham, and in the afternoon placed a wreath at Maddingly National Cemetery in honor of the 34th Bomb Group. The visit to Maddingly always makes us stop and think about how fortunate we are, and of how our friends that are interred there have made the supreme sacrifice for us.

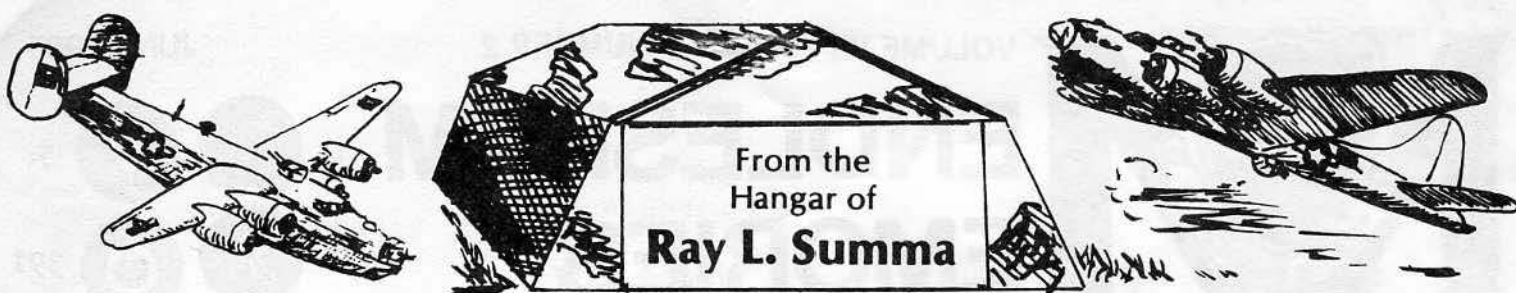
The days that followed had visits to the 390th and 95th control tower, Cambridge, Stowmarket (where we pushed the bus to get it started) and finally to London town. We had two superb bus drivers, Roy Jackson and Maurice Nichols, who made our travels easier. The English have claimed that the green countryside is due to the rains that race in from the west, but we husbands know that what keeps England green are the greenbacks rolling from the west by our shopping ladies. London was a round of touring, museum visiting and shopping. Time moved so swiftly and it was time for us to depart and go our separate ways, when it seemed we had just arrived.

We received a certificate of recognition for the Support of the Bomber Command Museum at Hendon Royal Air Force station. Tamarac Travel made the donation in our name.

Now is the time to start thinking about the Wichita reunion. The 34th will be holding forth in the Wichita Royale, where we will be quartered and will have our Friday night banquet. We will have our own hospitality and meeting room. The package will follow the program we had at Nashville. You will pick the package plan to your liking. Rooms will be \$48.00 double occupancy or \$43.00 single. Reservations will be on a first come - first served basis.

I still have some stamps from the Nashville reunion. I talked to the owner and he was supposed to get back to me. Drop a line and describe same and they will be out in the next mail.

Regards,  
Harold C. Rutka  
President,  
34th B.G. Assn.



### Fellow Members of the 34th B.G.

I will make this one shorter than usual, as there will be plenty to tell about the trip back to England I do not want to take up the space with a lot of things, when you would rather hear about the trip and other things.

First let me say, I think Eli did a marvelous job with the last newsletter and I am sure he will continue to, but he will need the help of all of you, so send him stories and anything interesting for the newsletter.

We did find the co-pilot of the plane mentioned in the last issue. He is Bill Hart of Topeka, KS. He and Merrill Blevins were the only survivors of the two planes., He has sent me the story and Eli will print it in the newsletter soon. I also have the story from the records.

Hannah and I will be gone for 26 days in England sight-seeing and visiting relatives.

I have been in touch with a man from Scotland who represented the land owners, where several of our bases stood. He is G.F. Keech, known as "Mac" by those who knew him. He lives in Edinburgh. He is 91 years old and remembers a lot of the men from the 34th. He has asked me to call him when we are in Edinburgh. He has sent a couple of stories to use for the newsletter.

Pete Gray is feeling better and will be on the trip back to England.

The B17 shown flying in the last newsletter was flown by "Ike" Isaacs crew, it was called "Sugah". Eddie Jones of "Ike's" crew called me and told me about the picture. I also received a letter from "Ike."

As most of you know the Boeing Company will celebrate the 50th Anniversary of the B17 at Seattle in July. They are putting together a book on all groups who flew B17's. I sent several pictures of B17's to them. It was impossible for me to send much information to them about the 34th on such short notice, but we will be represented in the book.

I did send out 839 delinquent notices and have a pretty good response. I know some of you who had paid, received

notices by mistake. My apology to you. This was less than 1% of the total. We are to stop sending newsletters to those who are delinquent for two years and if you owe for 1985, when the newsletter comes out in September with the roster of those we have found, you may not be receiving a new roster.

The Indiana Chapter of the 8th AFHS will meet in Indianapolis the third Sunday of September. It would be a good chance for those men from Indiana to get together for a Sunday dinner and meet some of the men from other groups.

Those of you who would like to see a B17 being restored; Shoo Shoo Shoo Baby is being restored at the Dover AF Base, Dover, Del. Open house is held each third Saturday thru May and August from 10-2. Why not drop down to Dover and see the restoration. Call Henry Jurgens at Smyrna Del and if his farm work is caught up he will probably meet you at the hangar. Smyrna is just 15 miles.

We have had a couple of visitors this spring. Ronnie Simpson 391st Sqd. and his wife Martha came by one Sunday afternoon. It was real nice to see you after all these years.

Also Harry Lambert and his wife Mary from Michigan dropped by another Sunday for a visit. Harry was also from the 391st. It was nice seeing both of you again.

I will not mention much about the Wichita reunion as Eli will print something about it. God willing Hannah and I will be there. Make plans now, do not put it off!!!!

Hal Province and Gen. LeBailly were chosen by the Dutch Government to represent the 34th on the anniversary of the Food Drop. They will have something to report on this soon. Hal went to Mendlesham after the celebration. I had one letter from Ben and he said they had a wonderful time and were treated royally by the people of Holland.

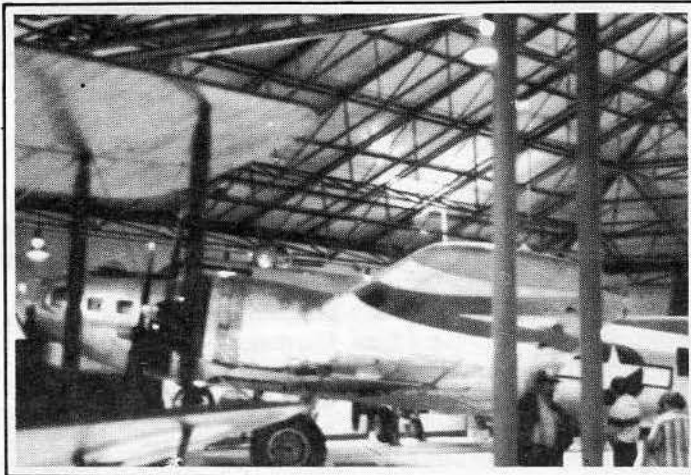
I think I have said enough for this time. So we will be seeing you at Wichita and at Mendlesham.

**Ray L. Summa**  
34th Bomb Group  
Unit Contact

Mendlesham Memories is published four times a year by the 34th Bomb Group Association, Inc. March, June, September and December.

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Crown Point, IN 46307

Editorials and stories are welcome and should be sent to the address above with new addresses, changes, and deletions.



B17 displayed at R.A.F. Museum at Hendon





#### **"Doc" Wright**

Sorry I didn't see more of you at the Nashville reunion but know you were real busy and I was not getting around very well because the feet were acting up again. They are the reason we are regretfully not going to make the London trip this year. We did enjoy the Nashville reunion and were lucky enough to see many old timers I had known in Mendlesham. We want to thank you and the board members for a job well done.

Am enclosing my dues for '85 and '86 so I will be current for another twenty months. Keep me on your mailing list for I do want to follow the happenings in the 34th. Cheers and warm regards.

#### **Henry W. Shanley**

Better late than never with my dues. I won't be able to make it to England this year due to family commitments, but am keeping the October reunion open.

Many of the names mentioned in the "Mendlesham Memories" are not familiar to me. I do remember Roy Tavasti, Bill Creer, and Gene LeBailley because they worked out of Group HQ. and one name that I'm sure everyone remembers who was there at Mendlesham during his reign as Group Operations Officer - Lt. Col. Joe Eaton. He was quite a guy. I believe he was lost on a "milk run." So much for memories. Hope to see many of you at Wichita. Cheers.

#### **George & Lillian Rohrbaugh**

I'm sorry Ray that I messed up on the dues bit. So I'm enclosing my 1984 and 1985 dues. I spent April in the Northport V.A. Hospital. Seems my heart rate dropped from 44 beats a minute to 35 beats a minute in one week. So in 8 days they had me all straightened out. I feel fine now. It was a matter of finding the right medication. So, you folks take care, because we care.

#### **Donald Reed**

Enclosed are my 1985 dues together with a small contribution to the Memorial Fund. Just recently discovered my old mission diary. I'm sending you a copy for the 34th's file of memorabilia. I kept this diary faithfully through my 23rd mission on 25 Feb. '45 and then suddenly stopped. I think this was the period we flew five missions in six days. I remember they had the flight crews on bennys (Benzedrine) to keep us awake. The teenager shows through in this diary, a lot of Hollywood

cliches and general immaturity. The facts, though, are generally correct. What I'm appalled at, however, is my total lack of concern at that time for the death of others. I mention ships being blown up, incidents that I observed, not second-hand tales, and their crews killed, with less emotion than I now exhibit when my home team gets a two-base hit in a tight ball game. Sorry I won't be able to join you for the reunion this year. I'll look forward to your report in the next issue of Mendlesham Memories. Regards.

#### **Warren Kiley**

I received the information about the Oct. 7, 1944 raid on Mersberg and I want you to know how much I appreciate your efforts. The documents are priceless to me. I will duplicate them and send copies to each of my surviving crew members. Again thank you! We are so lucky to have a fellow as generous as you pulling us together.

My wife and I are booked on the Mendlesham tour and we hope to meet you. It should be a great occasion. Best Regards.

#### **Bob Hassett**

I sure didn't realize my dues were that far behind. I sure want to keep them up and get my "Mendlesham Memories." I also keep up in the 8th A.F. Historical Society.

I still find myself drifting back to those old combat days. We were lucky to get back. We were a "Mickey" plan for our last 15 missions. On our next to last mission we were shot down but made it to Luxembourg and landed at an R.C.A.F. field. Right waist gunner, John Frey, was killed.

I enjoy hearing from you when you have time. A fellow asked me what the B-17 bomb load was the other day. I sure forgot. I would appreciate the info. Thanks.

#### **Hank Bloomer**

I'm not surprised that I forgot the 34th BG. I also forgot to pay my Masonic Lodge dues, and the Heart of Texas Retired Officers Chapter dues. All of y'all had to dun me.

On the other hand, I'm glad you are able to dun me! If I had to pick a year to live over, the year 1984 would certainly not be it. Starting when we got back from Florida last Feb., I had a congestive heart attack in March, another in May another in Dayton, Ohio in early Sept. Then my brother who lived here in Waco had a stroke putting him in the hospital for 12 days. We brought him to our house to recuperate but he had another stroke and passed away on 30 Oct. We took him to Dayton for interment. He never married, was 79 years of age, left a considerable estate of which I am executor.

On Dec. 4th, while participating in the annual opening of the Grand Lodge of Texas, I got sick again, but this time it was pneumonia; back to the hospital 'til Dec. 19th when they gave me leave to go home for Christmas. Then back to the hospital on Jan. 1 for another 12 days; went from 180 lbs. to 145 lbs. (Looked like a survivor of Auschwitz or Buchenwald).

Then, you guessed it, another session with pulmonary edema in late February. Total hospital, doctors and medical bills - \$27,000.00 since last March. Fortunately I'm on Medicare and carry my other with R.O.A.

Now, kid, you wanna hear another tale of woe? My accountant failed to declare all of my earnings in 1982 and a month ago the IRS hit me for another 550 bucks including penalties. So here's your \$7.50. Take it hog, I'll starve. Seriously, must commend you for the ultra-sophisticated bulletin you are producing. Best regards.

( CONTINUED ON PAGE 4. )

# NOTES FROM OUR FRIENDS...

( CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3. )

## Burt Vrooman

Sorry about being late with my dues. Received March newsletter yesterday and it hit me! I hadn't paid my dues yet.

I enjoy the "MM". It sure brings back some memories of those days. I was "ground crew" so not much excitement except for a raid and the buzz bombs. I did get down to Austria after the hostilities ceased and saw the havoc and destruction and human suffering brought on by war. We were at an air base near Linz and were evacuating displaced persons and prisoners of war back to their homelands.

## FLIGHT LINE REPORT

### A TRUE REPORT

#### Keith Anderson

After fighting the elements (Virginia Beach traffic) I parked the motor home in Va. Beach R.V. park. I soon found out I was parked at Navy active runway. Navy was burning a lot of kerosene. I believe they were buzzing motor home and was glad when they quit operations about midnight.

I called Pete Gray and suggested we meet in the morning. His answer was "I'll see you in 45 minutes." Knowing that Pete was recuperating from heart surgery, I expected him to come in with two feathered props and a blown jug. How wrong I was! Pete came in on full power with fuel to spare. This was his first night mission since surgery. If he hadn't had hemstitching showing, one would not know that Pete had been through such an ordeal.

No doubt his paint thinner, Virginia ham, and grits have kept him fit for combat. Pete made the statement that he would have his tanks topped off and ready to return with the 34th to fight the Battle of Mendlesham one more time.

#### Thomas W. Rogers 6599 Red Horse Pike Newburgh, IN 47630

Sorry to inform you that my dad, Theron P. Rogers, a member of the 34th Bomb Group Assn., died of cancer on January 31, 1985. Dad was a T/Sgt. when he got out of the service. He had served as flight engineer and top gunner during 35 missions on the B-24's and B-17's. He was in the 4th Bomb Squadron. We still have his "Libs-Forts" leather jacket with the spider emblem. Dad was extremely proud of his service record and in his last couple of years has really enjoyed getting your newsletters. In fact, he and my mom had planned on going to Nashville last September but his illness made that impossible. I have enclosed a picture of his crew from the "Weary Willie". Would you please put it in a future newsletter? I would really appreciate hearing from anyone who may have known my dad. Thanks a lot.

#### Robert Stoneham

Enclosed please find my check for my 1985 dues. I had a little interruption in my life last summer and threw my entire schedule off, and I am finally getting things back on target again.

Last summer, I had all good intentions to attend the reunion at Nashville after I had completed a sailing cruise off the coast of Maine. Unfortunately I became ill two days before the end of the trip. I thought I had a bad case of the flu, but when I returned to Ohio four days later and saw my doctor, he informed me that I had experienced a heart attack. The cardiologist shook his head and told me that the area which was involved usually has only a percent survival rate, and, after all I continued to do in crewing the vessel, he could not understand

how I survived. Fortunately, I did and I must say that I feel better now than I have for the past several years.

I had hoped to attend the reunion this summer at Mendlesham, but I find that I will have to return to the states on May 25th. I am going to make the trip back to the base this time for sure. It seems that each time we are in England visiting relatives, I never have a chance to go back to Mendlesham. Thank you for all of your assistance and keep up the good work.

#### Lt. Col. C. David

I am trying to locate anyone who "evaded capture, escaped, or was aided and then captured" during WW II. We have the names of 3,089 but only 300 addresses. Please send information: to Air Forces Escape & Evasion Society, % Lt. Col. C. David, 215 Dennis Lane, St. Clairsville, OH

#### Bill Dempsey

Was about as surprised hearing from you as I was in receiving a phone call from Dana Schrupp (my old co-pilot) about 2 months ago. Hadn't heard from him since we landed at Bradley Field, Conn. in June of '45. Am enclosing my membership dues and am happy to join the "Force."

Didn't circle the squadron on the form because, truthfully, I've been in so many that they run together. Think it was the 391st - the one with the bullseye in the middle of the patch and the beak, but, whatever Dana says we were in is O.K. with me. Put me there and let me know who I belong to!

If and when you see Bob Stoneham again, will you tell him he still "owes me" for the time I crossed an open bomb bay on a bomb run and patched him up. That was one I'll never forget.

#### Ralph Hartman

Sorry we had to cancel Nashville. Had a tough sickness to contend with. Result was to lose the left leg. Also the small intestine. Still in the process of recovery. Doubt I could make the reunion in England, although I am back to work. Also sorry for delay in dues.

#### Jim Kelley

I was very pleasantly surprised when I saw in the last newsletter a picture of a crew I lived with one time. C.B. Neth was one of my pub-crawling buddies and it brought back pleasant memories. Perhaps someday I will be able to attend one of the reunions. Cheers.

#### Chet Malacz

##### Unit Contact - 339th FG.

Just finished reading another enjoyable issue of your Mendlesham Memories. The personal touches you, and now your new editor, put into it make it most meaningful to your buddies. I had nothing to do with the 34th BG except to escort you on occasion, but reading your newsletter makes me feel like I was part of the group. Your planned trip to England sounds like a winner. Have an arf and arf for me.

#### S.F. "Mac" Keech

I was very pleased to hear from you again. You have got together quite a large number for the pilgrimage to the Mendlesham Memorial. Your honoring of the ladies who have placed flowers on it over the years is a very nice thought and the banquet will be quite an occasion. The flag, too, will prove a lasting tribute to all the brave men of the 34th B.G. who made the supreme sacrifice.

You asked me to give you a story connected with my stay at Mendlesham with you lads. One I recall is:

( CONTINUED ON PAGE 5. )



## NOTES FROM OUR FRIENDS...

( CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4. )

When my RAF team was preparing the station for you to operate from, I was sitting in the Officer's ante-room when I heard American accents coming from the passage. The sound came from 4 or 5 officers of the "advance party." I said to them "Why not come inside and make yourselves at home?" Their reply was "We can hardly come in the room when there is a 4-star General there!!" The 4-star General happened to be a Czechoslovakian major whose badge of rank happened to be four stars!!"

Well, Hannah and Ray, here's wishing you Good Health. God Bless.

### Malcolm Corum

Attached hereto - a pair of photos taken on 26th May, Memorial Sunday, at the A.F. Academy Cemetery. The 49th F. Sqdn. was having a dedication ceremony for their plaque (next to the 34th) and since I had assisted them in getting things going - they had me attend as their guest. Next thought was why not have a wreath for the 34th placed at the same time. You have the results.

Good luck in all your endeavors. Our best wishes extended to all.



Small wreath is for the 34th B.G. placed May 26, 1985 at the Air Force Academy by Malcolm Corum

## A FUNNY THING HAPPENED ON THE WAY TO THE WAR



By George Ritchie



When Walt McAllister and Eli Baldea asked me to write an article for this issue of Mendlesham Memories on "A Funny Thing Happened On The Way To The War" I was stumped. I reminded them that not only has time taken its toll on my memory cells but the blood just doesn't flow thru the brain matter as efficiently. My wife, June, will testify to that. However, here goes.

October 17, 1944 - Cologne, Germany - We were flying deputy lead on a Mickey Mission with Walt McAllister as airplane commander, and the crew of the "Lili Marlene". As the cliché goes, "there we were at 20,000 feet". . . we really met the war.

Instantly we transformed from well fed, well kept, well housed, well dressed, scared but happy air crew members into unfed, unkempt, really scared, grubby, unwashed, cold guests of the Third Reich. Gone were the showers, shaves, clean clothes, heated barracks, good food, toothbrushes, card games, parties at the club, passes to London that were a part of

the war as we had come to know it. Now we were in Hitler's territory and actually his property. Many hair-raising as well as humorous experiences were to follow. Some were so unusual as to be unbelievable and would never have made it on the silver screen.

In the winter of 1944/45, our whole complement at Sagan, Germany, known as Stalag Luft III, was moved because of the advancing Russian Army. I was in the west compound of the camp and we were moved to an old Italian P.O.W. compound at Langwasser outside of Nuremberg, Germany. As the war favorably progressed for the Allies, the German high command ordered us moved again in March of '45 toward Munich. Another forced march! Hot Dog!!

This time the weather was more favorable and prospects for an escape presented themselves. Very unglamorously I effected an escape with another bombardier from Texas, named Herky. We swam canals at night, hid in barns and sheds, laid in yards, walked the woods, stole to eat and drink. We were scared. Twice we were recaptured. Once placed in a village jail - escaped. Once in a column of U.S. Infantry P.O.W.'s - escaped. All in all we had about 36 days on the loose.

Once while hiding out in a wooded depression, a barking dog brought out some curious townspeople. The jig was up again. We were taken into the village more as a curiosity than as prisoners. In town was the typical Gestapo agent, dressed in this full length black leather coat, a young blonde at his side in a sporty 2-door black sedan. Actually, they ignored Herky and me. He only gave us a glance, a shrug, and left us to the townspeople.

As soon as the Gestapo agent left, the townspeople herded us into a local farmhouse and proceeded to treat us to food and drink. We were a mess - same clothes that we wore at take-off 6 months before - no bath-shave-toothbrushing for 4 months and here we were the center of attention. Both Herky and I would have been glad to share our fleas and lice, but had no takers. So we just sat there and enjoyed their food, drink and chatter.

About 15 minutes into the "party" the door flew open and there stood what looked like the Chief of Staff of the whole German army. A flashy uniform that wouldn't quit - gold braid dripped from his shoulder boards and blouse cuffs. Four rows of fruit salad across his chest topped with the German Iron Cross. (He must have won them all in WWI). The black patent leather holster that hung at his side was empty but his right hand held the largest "frog leg" I had ever seen and it was leveled right at us.

Man, did we move. Up on our feet - into a brace - hands touching the ceiling. As we stood there quickly forcing down our last mouthful of food, our benefactors almost dis-armed the local burgomeister. They made him put up his gun and greet us formally. After the introductions and some bowing, we resumed eating amidst the shrieking, yelling and screaming Germans. When the dust had settled, Herky and I were marched out of town at the point of a gun.

Just as soon as we were out of sight of the townspeople, our "captor" holstered his weapon and his personality changed. He walked us to the first crossroads and faced us in the direction of the Fatherland. Instead of walking forward, we walked backwards towards the front lines, all the while waving and smiling at our captor. We continued walking backwards smiling and waving, even though he had pulled his gun and leveled it at us. As the distance between us grew, our captor threw up his hands in disgust, holstered his weapon and walked back toward the village.

Sure we were both laughing, but I do believe it was only to cover our fear. Ten days later we had infiltrated the lines and were home free. Herky and I are still laughing. God Bless!

# Memories of M



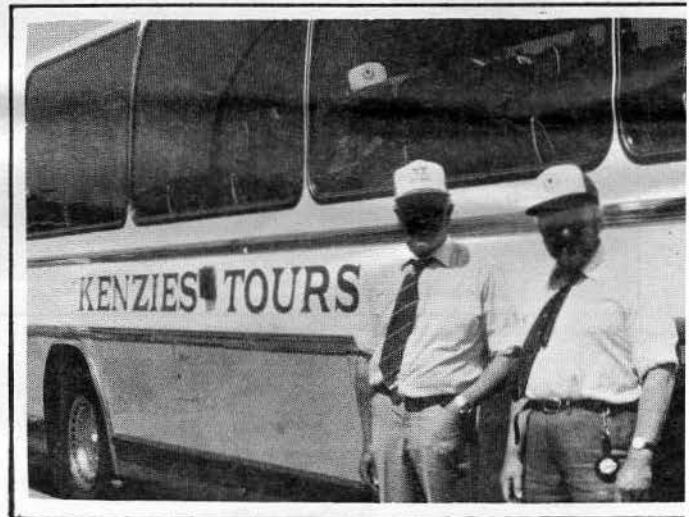
Typical interior view of one of our two tour buses



34th B.G. spect  
Madingly Amer



Welcome sign at the Framlingham control tower, 8th A.F. Museum



The tour bus drivers, Maurice Nichols and Roy Jackson



Roger Freeman, featured speaker at banquet in Ipswich,  
June 1, 1985



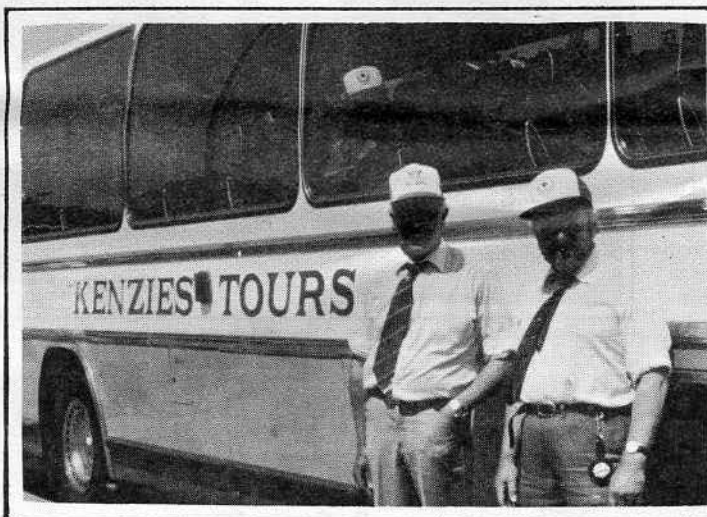
Harold Rutka presenting American Flag to Mrs. Webb of the  
British Legion



# Memories of Mendlesham Reunion



34th B.G. spectators at Memorial ceremony at Madingly American Cemetery, June 2, 1985



The tour bus drivers, Maurice Nichols and Roy Jackson



Joe Novicki next to roadsign at Mendlesham Memorial



Harold Rutka presenting American Flag to Mrs. Webb of the British Legion



Pete Gray and Gerry Pines passing out gifts at the banquet June 1, 1985

# Mendlesham Reunion



at Memorial ceremony at Cemetery, June 2, 1985



Ray Summa, Vivian and Bill Creer, Joan Steadman, and Gerald and Charlotte Steadman at Mendlesham Memorial site.



Wally Brauks, Walter McAllister, Eli Baldea and Warren Kiley after placing wreath at Mendlesham Memorial



Joe Novicki next to roadsign at Mendlesham Memorial



Pete Gray and Gerry Pines passing out gifts at the banquet June 1, 1985



Group ready to board buses at Cambridge for trip to London



# NEWS FROM HERE AND THERE

Do any of you remember the man from Scotland who was the one that represented the landowners on whose land we were based in England. S.F. Keech, known as "Mac" by some of the men from the 34th BG? He was part-time on the base and other times elsewhere. Ray has been in contact with "Mac" for a few years and has written him about the 34th coming to Mendlesham in May and has invited him to come join us. Excerpts of a letter from "Mac" will be found in the "Notes From Our Friends" column.

\* \* \* \* \*

Does anyone know the whereabouts of Allen Brunk of the 7th Sqdn.? The last we heard he was in Texas and later we heard he was the Ass't. Mgr. of an airport near Denver, but upon writing to the Stapleton Airport, we find that there is no one by that name employed by the airport. Let us know if you have any information on his whereabouts.

\* \* \* \* \*

## World War II Airplane nose art information sought

For a book length study of American airplane "nose art" during World War II, I would like to hear from individuals who either executed such art or used it on their aircraft. I am interested in how and why subjects/motifs were chosen and any memories or stories about individual examples. I would like to hear from individuals with photographs of this art work. All materials will be promptly returned after copying. Please contact: Randall Bond, Art Librarian, 205 Bird Library, Syracuse University, Syracuse, NY 13210.

\* \* \* \* \*

Dana Schrupp still has on hand: 2 golf shirts with B24 on back and 34th on pocket; 2 golf shirts with B17 on back and 34th on pocket; 1 med. size jacket with B17 - 18th Sqdn. on it; Plenty of caps which will be brought to Wichita, if not sold out by then.

\* \* \* \* \*

We have received a nice letter from Rosemary Fryer with some articles about Gen. LeBailey and marine William Deane Hawkins, who was a Congressional Medal of Honor recipient. Her sister writes for the newspaper at Oak Harbor, WA and wrote an interesting article about Ben LeBailey regarding the Food Drop in Holland in the spring of 1945. I'm sure many of you were around at that time and remember the incident well. Thanks, Rosemary.

\* \* \* \* \*

John Bloczynski had an unexpected reunion on our trip back to Mendlesham. It seems that somehow, back during the war years, he had lost his dog tags. He was a navigator in the 34th B.G. In any case, last year the dog tag was dug up in the back garden of Mr. and Mrs. Palfrey of Mendlesham. The Palfreys were pleased to be able to return it to him after the 40-plus year separation. How about that?



Theron Rogers and crew of "Weary Willie"

## DISASTER IN SLOW MOTION

(A follow-up)

AC#42-51190

Pilot, John Little; Co-Pilot, William Hart; Bombadier, Charles Conklin; Navigator, Nathaniel Zenelman; Observer, Martin Blevins; Engineer, Harold Bushey; Radio, Gerald Younker; Waist, Edward Clements; Nose, Paul Kahman; Ball, Herbert Dolley; Tail, John Stark.

AC#42-94893

Pilot, Donald DeMatio; Co-Pilot, Leonard Ray; Bombadier, Walter Vachon; Navigator, Garfield Morehouse; Engineer, Cecil Tankersly; Radio, Carlo Asti; Waist, Harold Williams; Nose, Harvey Moerhead; Ball, Jesse Schulman; Tail, John McCarthy.

Comments from Bill Hart:

I was assigned as co-pilot to Lt. Little's crew as he was being made pilot. His pilot had been injured and was grounded. Lt. Little was flying the ship and we were a few minutes from the target. Either the nose gunner or the bombadier came in on the intercom that a plane had been hit and was coming up into us. I don't know who turned to the left, maybe both of us did, but it was too late. All hell broke loose. The cockpit filled with flames and we went into a spin. Lt. Little had his head out his window. I don't know if he was alive or not. I got the plane out of the spin and that was when she blew. That's all I remember until I came to at about 2000 feet and pulled my ripcord. I landed in a bunch of French POWs cutting timber with 3 or 4 Volksturm guards.

I did not see Lt. Blevins until we reached the jail in Saarbrücken. He was in pretty bad shape. The fact that he was in the cockpit standing behind me when she blew probably saved his life. When the plane exploded, the right wing pulled away. It took the right side of the cockpit with it and left Lt. Blevins and me in a free fall.

# NEW MEMBERS

Allen, Donald  
5914 E. Kincaid  
Wichita, KS 67218

Dempsey, William  
9021 Woodhaven  
Boise, Idaho 83704

Doran, Vincent J.  
3811 Knick Ave.  
Anchorage, Alaska 99501

Dunn, Harold  
3774 - 42nd Ave. So.  
St. Petersburg, FL 33711

Gotowka, Richard S.  
53 W. 3rd Street  
Dunkirk, NY 14048

Gross, Robert H.  
34 Ironwood Road  
W. Hartford, CT 06117

Hansen, Duane  
5419 Middleton Rd.  
Madison, WI 53705

Henry, Glenn  
417 Yosemite Trail  
Madison, WI 53705

Jones, Wyatt S.  
77 Pico Rd., Box 58  
El Centro, CA 92243

Haddix, Eugene I.  
20101 SE Fairway Dr.  
Boring, Oregon 97009

Lind, Albin M.  
8831 - 184 N.W.  
Stanwood, WA 98292

Maachalz, Ray  
4729 N. New England Ave.  
Harwood Heights, IL 60656

Moore, Rudy  
P.O. Box 284  
Atwater, CA 95301

Ostrom, Thomas  
10523 Spaulding Ave.  
Chicago, IL 60655

Perrin, Robert  
369 W. Kingston  
Portland, Oregon 97201

Ross, Morris  
223-40 56th Road  
Bayside, NY 11364

Slovenske, Sigmund  
5046 E. Forge  
Mesa, AZ 85206

Wheeler, Wilfred R.  
P.O. Box 118  
Enfield, NH 03748

Woolford, William J.  
10615 S.E. Oatfield  
Milwaukie, OR 97222

# MENDLESHAM REUNION ATTENDANCE

Charles Alling  
New York, N.Y.

Vern & Millie Ames  
Tonowanda, N.Y.

Keith Anderson  
Ravenna, OH

Paul & Beryl Anderson  
Everett, WA

Bob & Rose Marie Baer  
with son Bill  
Terre Haute, IN

Sam Baglio  
Exeter, PA

Eli & Rose Baldea  
Crown Point, IN

William & Maria Barry  
Standordville, N.Y.

Cleo & Freddie Baughman  
Stockton, KS

Jack Lackham  
El Paso, TX

John & Maria Bloczynski  
Marshfield, WI

Wally Brauks & sister Doris  
Affton, MO

Milt & Elaine Braveman  
Harrisburg, PA

Glen Carlson  
Eau Claire, WI

Bill & Vivian Creer  
Las Vegas, Nv

Al Dinneno  
King of Prussia, PA

Joseph & Eileen Drahnak  
Denver, CO

Wally & Jane Ann Felker  
Orlando, FL

James & Mary Kenny  
Shoreham, NY

Warren & Florence Kiley  
San Diego, CA

Charles & Eleanor Kinzie with  
Charles III & Janis  
Crafton, MD

Emet & Loretta Klusmeyer  
Manitowoc, WI

Ed and Mark Lawler with  
friend Kaye Timoney  
Brooklyn, NY

Earl & Helen Maciel  
Warwick, RI

Ambrose & Rose Marie Majchrzak  
Coraopolis, PA

Randall Martin  
Hingham, MA

Walter & Ruby McAllister  
Orlando, FL

Joseph Novicki  
Palos Park, IL

Harold & Norma Parrish  
Carbondale, IL

Gerry & Wanda Pine  
Waunakee, WI

Lyle & Catherine Rhein  
Maplewood, MN

Everett & Margaret Rose  
Tacoma, WA

Harold & Genevieve Rutka  
Duluth, MN

Fred & \_\_\_\_\_ Schoch  
Spokane, WA

Alex & Estelle Seelhurst  
Houston, TX

Paul & Pauline Shull  
Raytown, MO

Robert & Ginny Gradin  
Superior, WI

William "Pete" Gray  
Virginia Beach, VA

Milt & Kay Hansen  
Madison, WI

Ken & Rene Humphreys  
Fort Worth, TX

Alf Johanson  
Marietta, GA

William Kenney  
Rockaway Beach, NY

Paul & Frances Sims  
Belpre, OH

John Smith  
Tinton Falls, NJ

Carl & Peg Stemen  
Bremen, OH

Ray & Hannah Summa with  
Gwyneth Van Huss  
Anderson, IN

Roy & Kate Tavasti with  
sister Helen  
Pismo Beach, CA

Grant & Charlotte Thuemmel  
Lake Oswego, OR



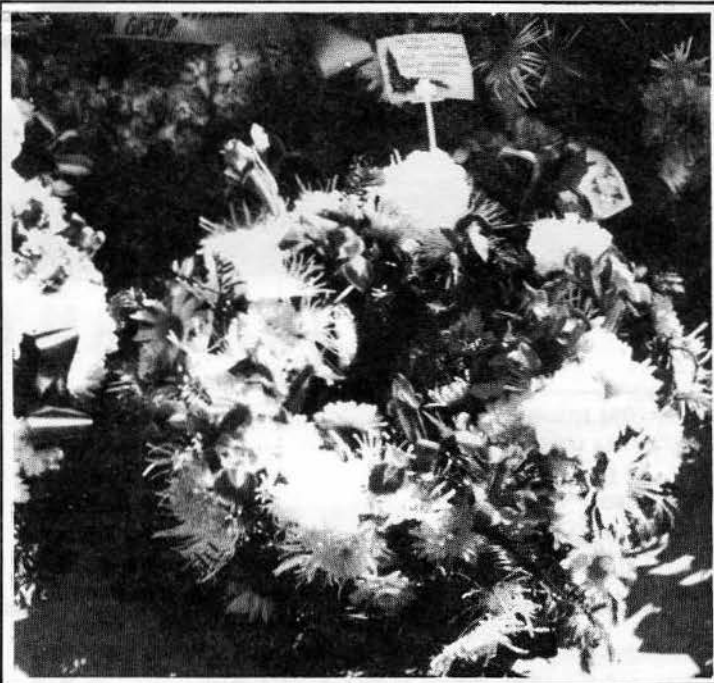
★★

(Changes Underlined)

[illegible]

# TAPS

AVRIETT, Giles	COLLETA, Leonard L.
WILCOX, William	BOWEN, Louis C. (Killed in B29 crash in the '50s in Azores)
FORD, John (Lefty Gardner's crew)	PETERMAN, Clarence "Pete"
HAMMEL, Clem (391st Crew Chief)	STEADMAN, George T. (England) See tribute in this issue
HICKEY, John	
ZIMMERMAN, Robert E.	
ROGERS, Theron	



34th B.G. Wreath placed at American Cemetery June 2, 1985 by Harold Rutka

## A TRIBUTE

By Bill Creer\*

The 34th Bombardment Group (H) has lost a dear English friend and compatriot. George T. Steadman passed away on March 6, 1985.

The Steadman family have owned and farmed their land in Suffolk County, East Anglia, England for some 600 years. When the United States entered WW II and committed our armed forces to assist the British Empire in the defeat of Nazi Germany, one of the early problems was to provide base sites for our Air Force. The Steadman family came forward and provided the major portion of the land that became Station 156, the WW II operating base for the 34th Bomb Group.

The Steadman family was most understanding and supportive from the arrival of the 34th Bomb Group. On my arrival, George Steadman made it a special point to come forward and offer understanding of our task and full cooperation and support. As time went on, during the trying days of 1944-45, it became crystal clear that these overtures came from the bottom of George and Joan Steadman's hearts. At the command level, George provided many services. He was always ready, day or night, to assist in the resolution of any community problem that might develop from the intrusion of some 5,000 young Americans into the quiet East Anglia country side.

The Steadman home was always open, Joan Steadman standing at the kitchen door with a smile of welcome. I recall one occasion when returning from Ipswich we had passed the "Grange", the door was open, so we turned around and went back to pay our respects. Joan met us at the door, and invited us in for tea - which was prepared almost immediately - and served piping hot from a China tea pot covered with a plaid woolen cozy complete with the sweetest cookies.

During the conversation, Joan suggested Col. Ben LeBailly and I come over for something to eat that evening and play a little poker. As a general rule, both of us did not leave the base at the same time. In this case the weather forecast was so bad we

had a 90% chance of being "stood down" so I said we would be delighted.

With that decision, we were immediately asked to assist in the catching of one of the chickens in the back yard. After appropriate evaluation a selection was made. Then came the chase. Success came when we cornered the chicken against the wire fence. In no time at all the head was off, the chicken dunked in a bucket of boiling water, the feathers removed and that bird was ready for the oven.

George loved to have a little brandy and play poker after dinner. As I recall he usually lost, which bothered him not at all.

Wars end brought tremendous change. Our national priorities and our personal priorities were adjusted immediately. Five thousand young men with their enormous energy were raring to close shop and head for home and family.

The war in the Pacific remained. In the back of our minds some of us knew we would be called upon to participate, but that task seemed a long way off.

Even in this happier immediate post war commotion, the survivors of the 34th Bomb Group realized they could not depart England without leaving some Memorial in remembrance of those who had given their lives to defeat the treachery of Nazi Germany.

George Steadman participated in the review of this need and promptly offered a suitable site near the Ipswich-Norwich road at the end of our 230 runway.

This Memorial materialized and stands today, not only in recognition of our lost 34th Airmen, but to the generosity and understanding of our great compatriot, George T. Steadman. George and Joan, you will be in our hearts as long as we live.

\* William E. Creer MGEN USAF (Ret) Commander of the 34th Bomb Group (H) from September 8, 1944 to May 31, 1945.



From the collection of:  
**Joseph K Marks**  
 Pilot, 4th Squadron, Crew #12, April - Aug 1944

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## REUNION IN MENDLESHAM

Mendlesham has been a memory for most of us for 40 years. For some of us, this trip made it a reality.

The largest contingent met at New York's Kennedy Airport and flew over via TWA. A smaller contingent met at Chicago's O'Hare Airport, also to fly over via TWA, albeit another plane. A few individuals flew over to England on their own and met the group there.

The New York group was one and a half hours late on their original flight plan only to be surpassed by the Chicago contingent who were three hours late. Needless to say, TWA lost a few of their boosters that day.

However, when all had reached Ipswich, the jet-lag problem set in. For the Chicago group, it had been over 30 hours since they last slept, so that first evening, it was common to see some walking zombies.

After a few hours sleep, we were raring to go the next morning (Ha-Ha). Following an enormous breakfast at the Post House Hotel where we were staying, we boarded our buses and were transported to the old Mendlesham airfield and to the memorial site where, at 10:30 a.m. a memorial service was held, and wreaths were laid, first by a group of ex-P.O.W.s, consisting of Wally Braucks, Walter McAllister, Eli Baldea, and Warren Kiley, then by the Ladies of the British Legion followed by the men of the British Legion. There was a fly-over by an L-4 who also entertained us with some loops and near stalls.

After the services we adjourned by bus to nearby Mendlesham and the two pubs, The Fleece and The Kings Head, for lunch. The rest of the afternoon was spent touring the old air base, etc.

That evening, we had our banquet at which the ladies of the Legion and their husbands had been invited along with other British guests, F.O.T.E., etc. The ladies were presented gifts, scarves, etc. and a flag which had flown over our capitol was presented to and accepted by Mrs. Matilda Webb. Roger Freeman then made a speech which was very touching to all in attendance.

The following day, June 2nd, was Sunday and those who wished attended church services. We had lunch at the Swan Hotel in Lavenham after which we headed for Cambridge and the American Cemetery at Maddingly. This is a beautiful setting for the final resting place of American servicemen of World War II. There are over 5000 white crosses set in a circular arc pattern on an immaculately neat grassy area. The promenade from the main flagpole to the memorial building is amid thousands of rose bushes which were just beginning to bud. In July the area will be a blaze of color. Along one side of this promenade is a stone wall carved with the names of more than 5000 Americans considered dead, but their bodies have never been recovered. These names were from all the services, Army, Navy, Marines, Air Force, etc. It really is a most inspiring sight and the belated Memorial Day services were most impressive. Harold Rutka laid a wreath in honor of the 34th Bomb Group.

Monday, June 3rd, found us ready to move on. First some shopping in Ipswich, visits to Framlingham town and the castle, lunch at the Crown Hotel in Framlingham and departure for Cambridge. At Cambridge, we stayed at the University Arms Hotel, a delightful place bordering on a park where, if you were lucky enough to be housed on that side, you might see several cricket games going on at the same time.

Two nights at the Cumberland Hotel in London with time for touring, shopping, sightseeing, etc. proved exciting. Some of us went to Buckingham Palace to witness the changing of the guard, a spectacle of regality and color. A walk through Hyde Park, shopping at Selfridges or other shops, visiting the Tower of London, Westminster Abbey, Big Ben, a trip down the Thames to Greenwich; these and many other side trips occupied our free time in London.

Finally, Friday, June 7th, arrived and the large majority had to leave for home. Some of us remained in London for a few more days; some went on to the continent for an extended vacation; some traveled around the British Isles; but for all, the reunion was over.