

VOLUME VIII

NUMBER 3

SEPTEMBER 1986

MENDLESHAM MEMORIES

34TH BOMB GROUP H



OBSERVATIONS

By the time you read this, you should have made all the arrangements for your trip to Colorado Springs in September. If not, get on the SCHTICK! We want to meet and get to know all of you. You know, even though I have been editing this newsletter for more than a year, it's remarkable how few of you I've met and got to know.

From all indications, we look to have a good turnout. As you'll see in this issue, quite a few reservations have been received and, of course, we expect more in the near future. Don't hesitate too long or the prime hotel rooms will all be taken. Come on out and find out how enjoyable it is to meet up with folks like yourselves and swap all the stories of the old days as well as getting up-dated on what's happened in the interim. Being that we come from all parts of the country and from all walks of life, the conversation never bores. And the scenery around Colorado Springs just has to be seen at least once.

This issue includes the 34th B.G. roster with the most up-dated addresses we have. This brings to mind the fact that with each issue, we get back far too many of our mailings because people have moved. This is costly because we have to pay for the return and then the re-sending must go out first class mail. Please, if you are moving, send us your new address as soon as you know it. It will help keep down our mailing costs and you will receive your issue sooner.

Also in this issue, we have begun a new column called "Memories." Some of the letters and articles I receive are so descriptive and, in some cases, funny, that it would be a crime not to share them with all of you. Please don't hesitate to send me your remembrances. I'll use them as space allows.

Eli Baldea
Editor

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Reunion 1986. Forty-one years since we returned from England and went our separate ways. Our reunion committee has spent the last year making preparations for a few days of fun, fellowship and the revival of old memories. The program is planned so that we do not have to hurry up and wait but can plan a relaxed and enjoyable visit.

After the long hot summer, the cool and relaxation will be great. Bring along old pictures and new ideas and prepare for a really fine time.

Jim Martin



Dear Fellow Members of the 34th B.G. Ass'n.:

Are you anxiously awaiting the Reunion of the 34th in Colorado Springs as we are? From all reports, this will be a real good one. Many have written and said they would be there, so don't disappoint us.

Hannah and I took a trip thru Virginia and N.C. in June, the first time we had been very far from home since I returned from the hospital in Feb. On the way we stopped to see "Hank" and Mary Lambert. Hank is recovering and is looking real good. He can have company and I am sure he would like to hear from all his old war-time buddies out there. He says that if he is able, he will join us for the reunion.

In Richmond we met several of our men at Junius Cobb's Meadowbrook Restaurant for a mini-reunion. "Pete" Gray had laid the ground work and met us at our motel just a little ways out of Richmond. Pete showed his pictures of Mendlesham and they brought back a lot of memories of our days there during the war.

On the way to Atlantic Beach, N.C., where we were to meet another couple, we stopped at Goldsboro for the night. We called Kivett Ivy, who lives near Goldsboro, and he came to the motel, picked us up and showed us around Goldsboro and the Seymour Johnson Air Base. We then visited Kivett and Lucille at their home. The next day we went on to the apartment which we had rented at Atlantic Beach. The week at the beach, just laying around, fishing, swimming, and walking the beach was just what the doctor had ordered.

On the way back thru Charlotte, we stopped to see Beulah and Dex Jordan. We spent the afternoon with them and had a delicious dinner and talked and talked and talked. If he had known the exact day we were coming, Dex would have set up a mini-reunion as he did several years ago. Next time we will make a date and have a real get-together in N.C. How about it, you men from N.C.? Will you come?

Needless to say, when we returned home, we had a sack full of mail. I am still burning the midnight oil answering your letters. Thanks to all of you who have sent in your dues. I have credited your account also for those who have sent in your 1987 dues. If you are in doubt as to the year you are paid, look on your membership card or on the mailing label of your copy of "Mendlesham Memories."

Everything seems to be under control by the Reunion Committee. The main event will be the dedication of the 34th B.G. Memorial at the AF Academy on Friday A.M. We owe Dana

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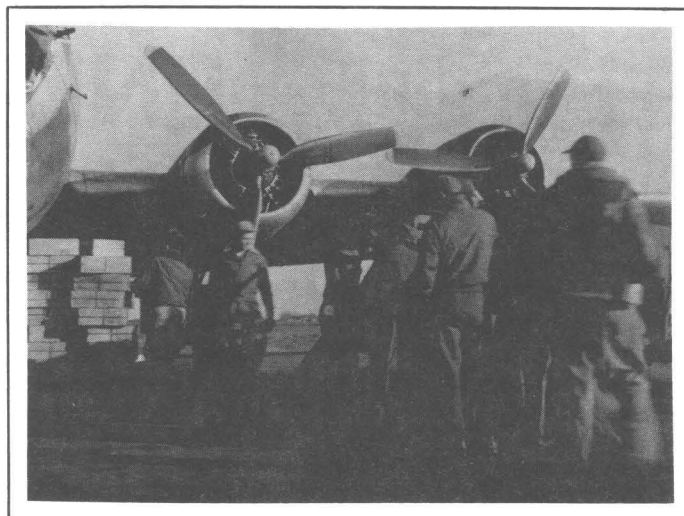
(Continued from page 1)

Schrupp a round of applause for doing the leg work. He followed it thru and now is in charge of the dedication. We also owe him and Grady Deatherage a vote of thanks for selling the 34th B.G. jackets which helped us pay for the memorial.

The new Roster is included in this issue. You will note signs designating the new men found this last year. Also, you will find signs denoting address changes since our last issue. Many of you have old papers or move orders stowed away in trunks or boxes, in your attics and basements. Go through them to see if you can find old addresses of 34th B.G. personnel and let us know. It might help us locate them. Also, if you have any old pictures, send them to me to copy. I will return the originals to you and we will print them in the newsletter when we have space. This includes ground crew men also, for you were a most important part of the 34th B.G.

Hannah and I hope to see a lot of you at Colorado Springs. If you don't make that reunion we'll see you at the 8th AF Reunion at Hollywood, FL. in October.

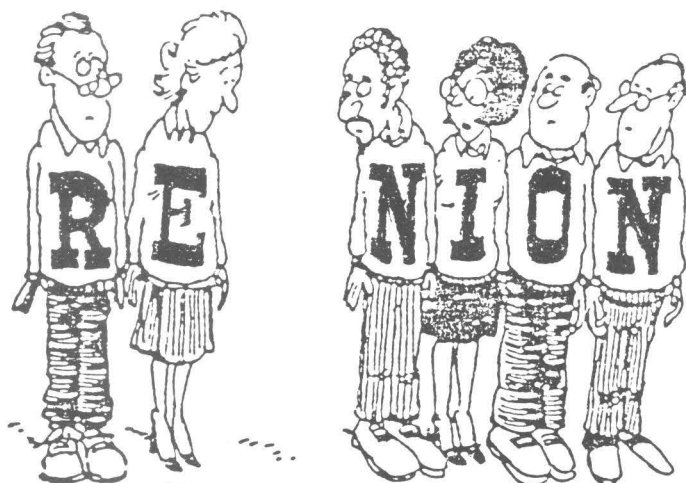
Ray Summa



Loading food for "Operation Chowhound" drop in Holland



Standing, L to R: George Norton, Billie Ezell, Albert Migliorelli, Phillip Sheridan. Kneeling, L to R: 2, Guatemozen Garcia, Eugene Toth, Richard McCauley, Warren Thrun.



IT WON'T BE THE SAME WITHOUT U!

Let's all get to the 34th B.G. Reunion
at Colorado Springs, Sept. 11th - 14th
SEE YOU THERE!

NEWS FROM HERE AND THERE

We hear that William Hershnow had a heart attack last November. Glad to see that he's well enough to attend our reunion at Colorado Springs.

...

We also hear that Paul Buss also suffered a heart attack. He's much better now and up and around. Good Show, Paul!

...

From the TROA magazine we learn that if you are a former POW, you are entitled to free hospital care regardless of your present income.

...

We get many letters from people asking help in finding a long lost military friend. The best way to find an old war time buddy is to:

On one envelope write the name and grade of your friend in the address block. In the upper left corner include your return address. Place a stamp in the upper right corner and enclose your message. Insert this envelope in another stamped envelope addressed to:

Hq AFMPC/MPCD003
Northeast Office Place
9504 IH 35 North
San Antonio, TX. 78233-6636

Because there are literally hundreds with identical names, be sure to include first, middle (if possible) and last names. It is also a good idea to send a data sheet listing as much as you know about your friend's service background.

...

Interesting to note that Frank Yates recently took a "Space A" trip to Sicily; Morocco; Naples, Italy; and Mildenhall RAF

(Continued to page 3)

(Continued from page 2)

Base in England. You know, "Space A" is available to all AF retirees subject to available space. It sounds like an exciting way to travel if you can spare the time for all of the delays you'll encounter.

...

The Rev. Fred Brooks recently had some potentially serious problems that seem to have been overcome. He had an aneurism of the carotid artery which required an operation. At last word he's doing O.K. and still planning to meet with us in Colorado Springs.

...

Bert Oliver has recently joined a group called "The New England Escadrille." They restore WWII warbirds. Presently working on a B-24, AT-6 and a Stearman. They're expecting a B-17G in September.



JACKOVICH, FRANCIS V., Port Jervis, N.Y.

Have been in the hospital almost all of 1985 and have spent the last six months recovering. Should be O.K. by 1987.

The only thing I have to say is about the night the German fighters attacked the 34th B.G. just as it was starting to land. According to the "Combat Library" which I read often, the official report of the attack was written in detail. No one who has written in to our 34th paper has been right about the raid - even Freeman.

SQUIRES, Clarence W., Cainsville, MO.

Just received the 34th B.G. paper. Glad to read that Ray's come through his second by-pass operation. I had a second stroke (light) on my left side this time on March 27th of this year. I seem to get my left hand in the way of everything that comes along, but can still get around and take care of myself O.K.

DE HAAN, MRS. BEN (HELEN), Baudette, MN.

Ben had a massive stroke on May 16, 1985. He is slowly coming back but it will take a long time. He can talk, walk with the aid of a brace and a 4-pronged cane. He cannot use his left arm and hand.

He would love to go to Colorado Springs but the trip would be too hard on him. We are in hopes we will be able to make your next reunion. With the Good Lord's help, we will.

BROOKSHIRE, LESTER, Calhoun, GA.

Sorry to hear of Ray's operation but glad to hear that he's doing well. Yes, I believe in miracles as they seem to be in my life. Now, I have had a small operation for prostate cancer. It is in my left hip and caused a lot of pain for a long while when I rode in a car or operated my riding lawn mower. I am happy to report I have gained back my weight and strength and, at present, am in no pain at all.

It amazes me how many of us WWII vets are still going strong in spite of the problems we have had. I had about given up on getting to see any of my group again. Now I think I could make a trip without pain or problems.

RISMILLER, MRS. RICHARD (MARY), Dayton, OH.

I have received literature from you sent to my husband, Richard. To save you time and money, I wanted to let you know that Richard passed away last November of a ruptured aneurism. It was so sudden I still can't believe he's gone. Just wanted you to know.

PETERMAN, MRS. PETE (ARDYCE), Myrtle Beach, SC.

I just got through reading the Mendlesham Memories bulletin and was pleased to see Ray has recovered from his bypass surgery. On May 7, it was a year since I lost Pete. With the wonderful support of friends and neighbors here in Myrtle Beach, I have managed to survive the trauma.

After reading that beautiful brochure, etc. about Colorado Springs, I am tempted to make the trip. Gene Atwater from Cottonwood, Arizona called me recently to see if I was going. He was on the crew of the "Bambi" with Pete and was in Nashville when we were there. I want to ask if there are any widows going that you know of. I'd appreciate it if you'd let me know.

ELLIS, MAX E., Centerville, IA.

I was one of the original ten officers sent to England from Langley Field as a nucleus for the 8th Air Force Radar Program. I was selected as the dispersing officer and was responsible for setting up radar squadrons in each group. Then I went back on operations with the last group - the 34th B.G. I have many memories of all kinds of that year and a half in England, and many of them are good memories.

I have been very active with masonic work for many years. I am a 33° mason and a past Group Commander of Knights Templar of Iowa as well as many others. I have committed the 12th and 13th of Sept. 1986 to the conferring of two degrees for the brethren in Ottumwa, Iowa as they have had two deaths that have caused vacancies in two of the Templar Orders, so it will be impossible for me to attend the reunion this year.

SALVESON, LEON E., Winston, OR.

The better half and I have sold the home and will become full-time RV-ers in August. Our first major stop will be Colorado Springs for the reunion

KUAFMAN, BILL, New Wilmington, PA.

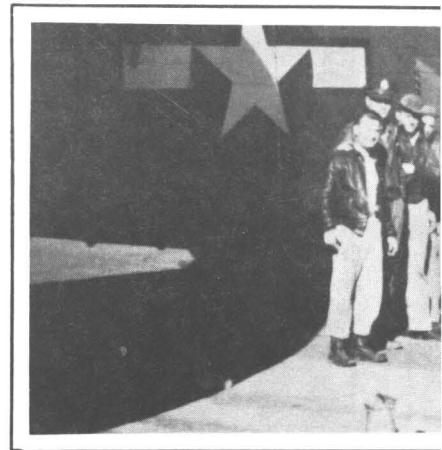
Do you remember Jeff Bowen, Ed Breitschwerdt, Thurman Culbreth and myself loading 500 lb. bombs by hand? After about 2 months the Group Armament Officer, Donald Durham heard about it and came and caught us. None of us will ever have to have a hemorrhoid operation after the chewing out we received over that. After that we had to add a fifth guy to our crew to stand look-out when we loaded planes.

BLOOMER, MRS. HENRY P. (ROSELYN), Waco, TX.

In the newsletter just received was a picture from the Sub-
(Continued to page 6)



Standing, L to R: Mullen, Schwartz, Lynn, Runyun, Mankin. Kneeling L to R: Lucas, Byers, Peacock, Block, Scott.



Left to Right: George Johnson, Daniel Stringham, William Tolbert, Joseph Hardison, Rabun Price, Charles Metz



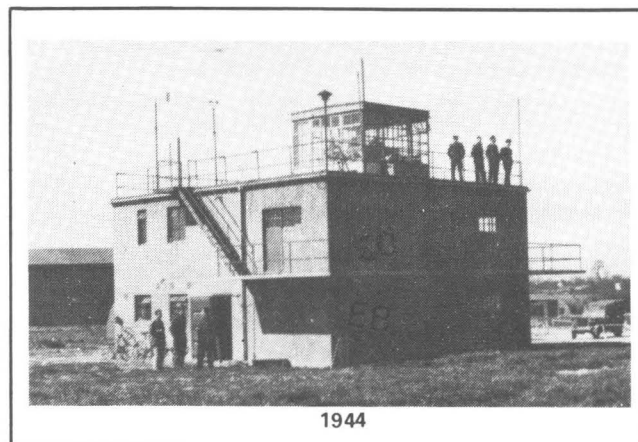
Standing, L to R: Jim Kenny, George Muellerschoen, Bill Gombos, Conley Ferguson. Kneeling L to R: Jim Beugler, Ray Snow, Roy Smith, Walton Johnson, Ernie Waite.



Standing, L to R: Ed Rathjon, Alphonso Foose, Davis. Kneeling, L to R: Wayne Weeks, Anthony



In front of 18th Armament Shack: Left to Right: Truman Culbreth, Ed Breithschwendt, Bill Kaufman, Jeff Bowen.



1944



is, Byers, Peacock, Block,



Left to Right: George Johnson, Daniel Stringham, William Blackman, Leonard Lapinsky, Richard Hayes, John Tolbert, Joseph Hardison, Rabun Price, Charles Metz.



Standing, L to R: Nelson, James Ma



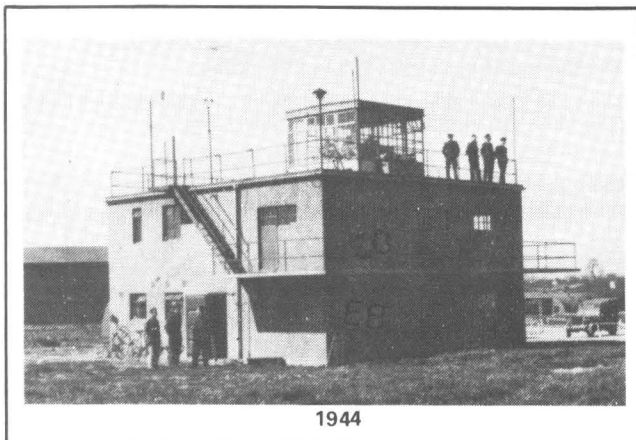
I Gombos, Conley Ferguson. Kneeling
nson, Ernie Waite.



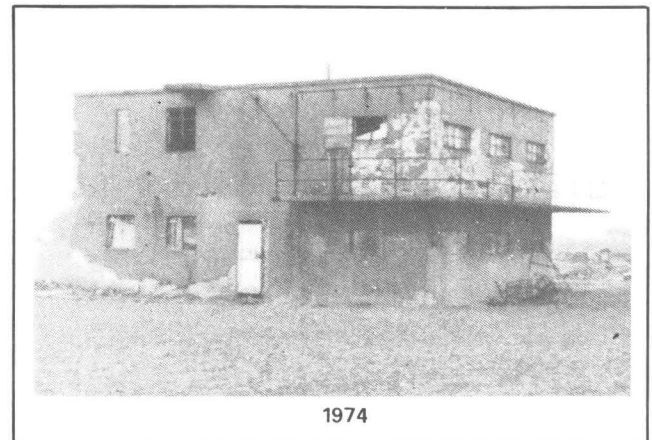
Standing, L to R: Ed Rathjon, Alphonso Foooso, Ed Cispak, Alfred Konte, Hubert Smith, Walter Davis. Kneeling, L to R: Wayne Weeks, Anthony Caito, Henry Richardson.



Standing, L to R: Wentz, John
R: Vinge, Jambor, Grzeskowi



1944



1974

The 39th B.G. Memorial at Framlingham where the 34th B.G. has many items displayed. This shows what it looked like in 1944, in 1974, and in 1984 after much time and effort to bring it back to shape.



Blackman, Leonard Lapinsky, Richard Hayes, John



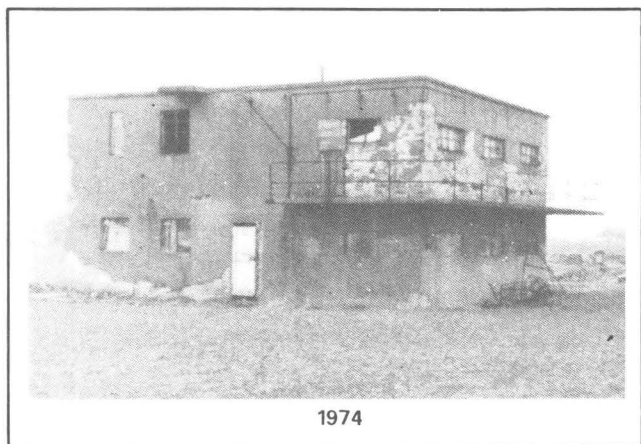
Standing, L to R: Robert Fox, William Black, Harold Schell, Frank Gulli, Robert Kolvick. Kneeling, L to R: M. Nelson, James Martin, Jack Thomson, Louis Gupta.



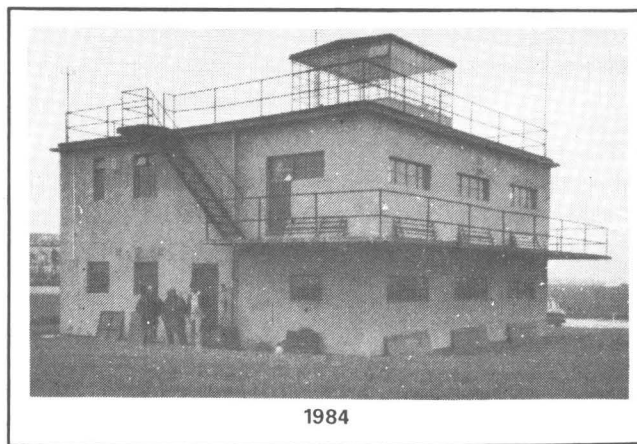
Cispak, Alfred Konte, Hubert Smith, Walter Caito, Henry Richardson.



Standing, L to R: Wentz, John Hohnstreiter, Ray, Dodson, Robert Stallmach. Kneeling, L to R: Vinge, Jambor, Grzeskowiak, Johnson.



1974



1984

The 39th B.G. Memorial at Framlingham where the 34th B.G. has many items displayed. This shows what it looked like in 1944, in 1974, and in 1984 after much time and effort to bring it back to shape.

(Continued from page 3)

Depot with two unidentified persons. One of them is my husband, Henry P. (Hank) Bloomer, Jr.

It is with a very sad heart that I notify you of his death on January 20, 1986. He always had such fond memories of all the people he was associated with during those years in England. We visited the site of the base at Mendlesham on a visit to England in May, 1980. Not much left there.

OSCHACK, ANDY, Locust Grove, GA.

Today I was thrilled, excited and pleased (mild words to express my feelings). My wife came back from the mail box and was yelling to me about the packet I received from the 34th Bomb Group. Of course this was the first - ingroup - information I have ever received about the 34th B.G. Yes, I was a tail gunner on Stan Martin's crew.

Now I thank you for your efforts in tracking me down. My curiosity is getting the best of me. How did you locate me? The organization must be doing a good job on this phase alone.

BOYLE, JACK, Cincinnati, OH.

Nice to receive the 34th B.G. letter. I really don't know any of the fellows who went over except Bristow. I left Walla Walla, Wash. to Great Bend, Kansas; joined a B-29 outfit and we were ready to go but the atom bomb was dropped. So we just stayed there and were never sent over. I left there to be discharged at Santa Ana, CA. The letter you send is very interesting and does give some idea of what the 34th was engaged in during WWII. It is a great outfit. I was with it 4 years until I was discharged.

PEGRAM, MRS. ODELL THOMAS (JACQUELINE), Kernersville, NC.

I am writing to inform you of the death of my husband, Odell Thomas Pegram, on Jan. 31, 1986. We were married nearly 40 years and he was a good, faithful husband.

McDANNOLD, BILL, Cameron, MO.

I suppose we should expect more of us old daubers to be battling some kind of health problem - the years. They're a lot like a cheap pair of under-drawers. They creep up on you, don't they.

My fingers are crossed 'cause I'm hoping this Sept. will see me through the fifth year since I had cancer surgery. So far, so good. No signs of any recurrence. Getting along well enough to have passed the FAA medical exam and am back into a little flying again. Cessnas, Pipers, etc. A whole lot different from the old B-24 and B-17.

Was sorry to see the football game at Falcon Stadium on our reunion date had been rescheduled. We've been there a number of times when our No. 2 son was cadet there. The cadet corps on parade is an impressive sight — especially when Army or Navy is the visitor.

KLINE, GEORGE, Burnt Hills, NY.

We are looking forward to seeing you all again. We have booked air fare with United and sent in our hotel reservations. We are also going for the full entertainment package other than golf. I am a golfer, going with some "old guys" for 9 holes every Tuesday and my 9 hole scores are very close to 18 hole par. Best wishes to all.

LYKINS, HARRY, Lexington, IN.

Yes I was in England drinking beer when someone came in and said "It's too bad about the 34th being blown out of the water." I was there with my buddies. I also saw the famous Haystack burn. Elsie and I do enjoy the paper we get. Sure does bring back memories of my Army days. I also remember the

potato beer.

BLACKHAM, JACK, El Paso, TX.

In late July or early August, 1944, returning from a mission, we passed over Holland just as the Germans launched a V-1 Buzz Bomb. It flew close to our 4th Sqdn. formation and a left waist gunner from one of the planes shot it down. I would like to find out who that gunner was. I remember the plane because it had a buzz bomb painted on the side near the bomb scores under the pilot's window. If anyone remembers who it was please let me know.

ADVANCED REGISTRANTS FOR COLORADO SPRINGS '86 REUNION

(As of July 28, 1986)

Albert Eugene	1	Kenny, James T.	2
Ames, Vern	2	Kiley, Warren	2
Anderson, Keith & Guest	2	King, Ed	2
Anderson, Paul	2	Kline, George	2
Ashburn, Jack	2	Lawler, Ed & Guest	2
Attridge, Charles	2	Logan, Bill	2
Atwater, Gene	2	Loneragan Ed	2
Babcock, Bud	2	Lopez, Miguel	2
Baglio, Sam	2	Maciel, Earl	2
Baldea, Eli	2	Martin, James	2
Baughman, Freddie	2	Martin, Randall	1
Bess, Leonard	2	Mason, Irv.	2
Billman, Charles	2	McAllister, Walt	2
Brauks, Wallace	2	McDermott, Myron	2
Braveman, Milton	2	Morgan, Charles	2
Brown, Raymond	2	w/ Guests Kosilla, Ronald	2
Burnell, William	2	Muente, Fred	2
Bush, Ralph	2	Parrish, Harold	2
Butler, Henry	2	Paulmann, Art	2
Cannock, Tom	2	Perez, Juan	2
Casey, Ralph	2	Pine, Gerald	2
Creer, William	2	Prillaman, Arnold	2
Desjardins, Bob	2	Reed, Donald	1
DesLauriers, Robert	2	Robinson, Leroy	2
Edwards, Joe	2	Romero, Cleveland	2
Fager, Bud	2	Rose, Everett	2
Gavryck, Chet	1	Rutka, Harold	2
Gay, Bob	2	Salveson, Leon	2
Gibbs, Claude	2	Sauermilch, Fred	2
Gibbs, Donald	2	w/Guests Fred & Iris	2
Gradin, Bob	2	Schmidt, Francis	2
Gray, Pete	1	Schoch, Fred	2
Griffis, Willis	1	Schommer, Paul	2
Grimes, Bryan	2	Schrupp, Dana	2
Habiger, Tony	2	Schwartz Robert	2
Hanson, Ambers	2	Share, Jack	2
Hanson, Milton	2	Sivret, Frank	2
Hartwick, Robert	2	Smith, Charles	2
Hershnow, William & Guest	2	Sothorn, Bruce	2
Holcomb, Verbal	2	Springer, Bob	2
Howarter, Wayne	2	Summa, Ray	2
Jalving, Marvin	2	Thrun, Warren	2
Jennings, William	2	Walker, Oral	2
Jordan, Dexter	2	Werster, George	2
Jurgens, Henry	2	Wright, Robert	2
		TOTAL TO DATE	174



ROSE'S CORNER

Greetings from Indiana again. We hope that your summer has been a season of plenty and, if you're anything like me, you don't know what to do with all that "plenty." Eli's garden has kept us busy canning and freezing and even our neighbors are finally saying "No more, thanks!"

No column can be bad if it is short enough, so this one will be brief. I received this touching poem from Marge Bush and want to share it with you. thanks, Marge!

NINETEEN FORTY

by Alice Lee

That last year of innocence before
Pearl Harbor's day of infamy
We heard the songs of summer paraphrased
In melodies from Chopin, Tchaikovsky and Rachmaninoff.
We were children standing in the door
Waiting for the war to happen
As though it were another episode
In the adventures of Tarzan or Terry
Or Jack Armstrong, the All-American Boy.
In darkened theaters and on the radio
These episodes gave way
To newsreels and battle bulletins
And the songs of summer were replaced
By the shriek of bombs, the drone of planes,
and the rattle of bullets biting bone.
That last year of innocence was packed away
In the piano bench of my childhood home
Along with those yellowed sheets of music
Crumbling quietly in the dark.
But sometimes we hear the sounds
Of innocence escape through the throat
Of a trumpet or a saxophone, and I see
"Deep Purple," feel "The Breeze and I,"
Hear "This Melody" again.

Let's keep this network going, gals. It's easy to lose track of friends, so let's keep renewing our friendships at our annual reunions. I'm looking forward to saying "Hello" to each of you at Colorado Springs in September.

Don't Forget
To Send
Your Dues

Mail \$7.50 to:
Ray Summa
2910 Bittersweet Lane
Anderson, IN. 46011

A FUNNY THING HAPPENED ON THE WAY TO THE WAR



(OR ON THE WAY BACK)



From: JOSEPH EDWARDS

Paul Bresh, two of my gunners and I returned to the states on the same ship, S.S. Aquitania, the same one I came to America on in 1919. I pulled Officer of the Day on her which I thought was quite a coincidence.

As we sailed into New York harbor, Paul looked up at the Statue of Liberty and said, "Lady, if you're ever going to see me again, you're going to have to turn around."

From: VINCENT DORAN

A few days after finishing our missions, we were sent by railway to an American non-flying base somewhere in England to await orders assigning us to a ship that would take us back to New York. One noon at chow, one of the dishes was baked beans. I was eating away on them when I detected some little objects that looked like they didn't belong in a mess of beans. They were white, slender, and about a quarter-inch long. My suspicious mind immediately identified them as worms. Now ham and beans is one of my favorite foods. And maybe worms and beans is an English favorite. But they shouldn't spring it on me without warning. If you go at it right, I can be conned into liking anything, even worms and beans. I lost my appetite. I looked around the table at my fellow diners without saying anything. They were happily snorkeling down worms and beans. I figured I must have missed out on the briefing telling us how good they were.

After the meal, I hunted up the mess sergeant in his office. I closed the door and said, "There is something in the beans that look like worms." He came up out of his chair steaming, "You didn't find any worms in my beans!" Apparently it wasn't an English dish after all. After a few strained words, it became clear we weren't going to convince each other by talking. We went out into the kitchen and inspected the big bean pot on the stove. The little white rascals were there all right. He fished some out with a big spoon, examined them minutely, but was still unconvinced. He took me out to the warehouse where the sacks of dried beans were stored. He opened a couple of sacks at random. We both dug deeply and brought out hands full. The little white rascals were there all right. But they weren't worms, they were bean sprouts. The beans had been stored so long they had started growing. I apologized and was glad I hadn't said anything to anyone else. My stomach settled right down.



TAPS

BLOOMER, Henry P.
Waco, TX

MILLER, Jordan
Chattanooga, TN.

COLE, Delbert E.
Albion, NE.

PEGRAM, Odell Thomas
Kernersville, NC.

LINDSTROM, Russell T.
Sarasota, FL.

RISMILLER, Richard
Dayton, OH.



34th Bomb. Group

(219) 988-4607

Crown Point, Indiana 46307
1595 Sunnyslope Drive

c/o Eli Baldea

34th Bomb Group Assn.

From the collection of:

Al Israelsen

Pilot, First Crew No. 1, 4th Sq. Feb - Nov 1944

Non-Profit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
Crown Point, IN
Permit No. 417

MEMORIES . . .

By Vincent J. Doran, Anchorage, AK.

Our base at Mendlesham was built by the British. They did not use it first. It was handed over to the 34th brand, spanking new. I figured they made it so unhandy, cold, and generally miserable in retaliation for losing the colonies in the Revolutionary War. It was their first opportunity for revenge. I know how they designed it. They put up a drawing of the farm field on a wall in the King's Head Inn pub in Mendlesham. Then they played an English version of the game "Pin the Tail on the Donkey." The players got drunk, were blindfolded, and then threw darts. Wherever a dart landed was the location of the next building on the list; Briefing Building here, Hospital there, Squadron HQ in that corner, and so on over the five square miles of the field. With straight faces they explained the buildings were dispersed so German pilots could not get a row of them in their sights. With that as a "legitimate" excuse they had license to give their vengefulness full rein. I spent more time walking to the mess hall than I did flying to Germany.

The latrine near our barracks provided much merriment for the users that winter, the coldest in half a century. It took a cunning mind to design perpetually wet brick walls that provided a continuous puddle of water all over the latrine floor. To toughen us up, the heating system was thoughtfully omitted. With a little practice, you learned to do your business in two minutes flat. Honey buckets in lieu of toilets was good training for the remote places I lived in later in Alaska. The one-candle-power light bulb gave all the illumination needed for those who could shave with their eyes closed. The water heating system brought cries of admiration from everyone. It was a cast iron hog-scalding vat set up outside in back. The first few people in line had unlimited amounts of the hottest water if the assigned airman remembered to fill the vat and had started the fire under it two hours earlier. Only sometimes there wasn't any coke, and it would take half a truck load of bomb rings to heat all that cast iron plus the water. And sometimes the airman forgot to come around for a day or two.

We carried hot water in a bucket to pans in a shallow trough in the latrine. The vapor completely saturated the building; this was great practice for finding your way around in London fogs. And those polished steel mirrors that attracted moisture from

two blocks away provided good hand-eye coordination exercise while shaving. One time I shaved right after coming back from a mission. When I went back to the barracks, still bleeding, every one thought I had been wounded and were going to put me up for a Purple Heart. I should have let them.

With their usual efficiency and economy, the British built the central bath house. They used the same designer who was responsible for the squadron latrines. The same wet walls, puddles on the floor, romantic dim lighting, foggy interior, no room heat. I can't remember any shower; only tubs. Either is an effective way to get clean, but the advantage of a shower was that you could stay warm. The only way to get warm taking a bath in a cold room is to get the water deep enough to submerge your whole body. Unfortunately, a Group policy decision was made to conserve water (and coke) by not providing stoppers for the tubs. But you can't discount Yankee ingenuity. We carried wads of newspaper and toilet paper to stuff in the hole. But, by the time the water got deep enough to cover your flanks, the paper began dissolving, and the water went out as fast as it came in. Have you tried washing yourself in a tub, using your heel as a stopper, while you were rapidly turning blue?



Standing, L to R: Lawton Dooley, Joseph Clark, Wyatt Jones, John Bloczynski.
Kneeling, L to R: Harold Pendergraft, Garland Neal, Fay Boozman, Harold Carothers, Rush Chaffee, Donald Allen.