

# ENDLESHAM MEMORIES

## 34TH BOMB GROUP H



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|   |               |
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## OBSERVATIONS

Spring is coming — Spring is coming!!! At least we hope so! Bear in mind that this is being written in early February for delivery to the printers by mid-month. Our winter in the Chicago area has been, for the most part, not too bad to date. But it is still winter and we can hardly wait for those signs of spring to show. Next year, Lord willing, Rose and I will spend our winter in Florida. Then our only winter worries will be for our children and grandchildren up north.

We've recently had correspondence from ground crew personnel complaining that our newsletter puts too much stress on flying personnel and not enough on the ground-pounders. I want you all to know that I print anything of interest that is received, regardless of the writer's past specialties. Please note, in this issue, the poem, "The Forgotten Man" and some of the "Memories" or "Notes From Our Friends." It is true, however, that most of the mail we get is from flying personnel, so we use what we have access to. Come on, you ground-pounders; if you want to be heard from, you'll have to write.

On to other matters. Please forgive us for errors in the newsletter. In the last issue, captions under pictures of Grady Deatherage and of Roy Tavasti with Vince Doran were crossed up. We try to proofread all of the copy and think we do a reasonable job. However, the proof copies of the issue do not have the pictures with their captions included. Each picture, with its caption taped on the back, is the responsibility of the printer, and sometimes, as we all do, they goof. Oh well, I think everybody knew what was intended.

Also please note that this issue is sadly lacking in photographic art. Unfortunately, we have just about run out of pictures. Come on, guys, we need photos. Keep in mind that, to be usable, they must be relatively clearly defined. I prefer to print, also, only pictures with identifications, if possible. You will note that, in this issue, we have had to use some with no indication of who we're looking at. In addition, I'm asking the

spouses to dig up pictures for our "Then And Now" section. I've had good comment on this section, but we need input to keep it going. I'm trying but, without your help, it is very difficult.

We should all start thinking about our reunion at Virginia Beach, VA. in September. In our next issue, you will find a reservation card from the Holiday Inn of Virginia Beach On The Ocean. You will note that they ask for a credit card number. If you use a credit card, in lieu of cash or a check, please be attentive to the following: DO NOT USE THE CARD AS A POSTCARD WITH YOUR NAME AND CREDIT CARD NO. CLEARLY DISPLAYED FOR EVERYONE TO SEE!!! If you use a credit card for your reservation, insert it into an envelope addressed to the hotel shown. This way your card is protected from prying eyes. Also, you will notice that you have a choice of room types, subject to availability. The sooner your reservation is sent, the more sure you are of getting the accommodations you ask for. So get moving on this. Keep in mind that should your plans change, you can still cancel up to 72 hours prior to arrival time. I will repeat this paragraph in the June issue.

Also please note that we are going to have an auction at the reunion to raise funds for a worthy cause. If you are planning to attend, bring something with you which is either representative of your home territory, is hand made, or is an item which would be of interest to a group of people such as ours. George Ritchie, our vice-president, has accepted the responsibility of being our auctioneer and those of you who were at Nashville will remember what a good job he does. Those not attending can send their donations for the auction to: George Ritchie, 107 Rock Creek CC Point, Swansboro, NC 28584. All donations will be appreciated.

Rose and I wish to take this opportunity to wish you all a Happy Easter season and, as usual, we're looking forward to meeting with old friends and making new friends at Virginia Beach.

Respectfully,  
Eli Baldea, Editor

# PRESIDENTS MESSAGE

To all members and friends:

Here we are in the New Year. Hope it is a good healthy year for all. I'd especially like to give my very best wishes for good health and happiness to two wonderful couples; Mr. and Mrs. Bill Creer, married 50 years, which is wonderful; and Mr. and Mrs. Carroll Forister, married 40 years and just retired, another great achievement.

Please recall what I said in the last issue. Think about your sons and daughters as associate members. My children have joined and have been to a few reunions. They enjoyed meeting the good people of the unit. These young people can keep the 34th B.G. Assn. going on.

Plans for Virginia Beach are great. I've heard from Gerry Pine and Harold Rutka about the progress. They deserve many thanks for their time and efforts. "Thanks, Guys!" I hope it will be a good turnout.

Must also extend thanks to Eli and Rose Baldea for their work in putting out our newsletter. This takes a lot of time and effort. Also, I can't forget to thank Ray and Hannah Summa for their devotion to the 34th all these years. It was very hard on them at times.

I've received a few letters and have answered them. Please, if you come up with anything that will make a good, strong, well-run 34th, write to either the president or anyone on the board. All suggestions will be considered.

Let's all attend our reunion at Virginia Beach. An anonymous donor has given us some added incentive. Somebody's going to win their room cost, dinner, and a tour, if any, for two people at our reunion in 1989. Let's show our appreciation to this donor by making this our largest reunion yet! Start planning now!

"Take care of yourself. Good health is everyone's major source of wealth. Without it, happiness is almost impossible. Resolve to be cheerful and helpful. People will repay in kind." This is a quote I've recently read.

ED LAWLER, President



Ken Lockwood of Cordell, OK. with memorial he donated for all members of the armed forces buried in the local cemetery.

## THE FORGOTTEN MAN

(author unknown)

Courtesy of: 96th Bomb Group (H) Memorial Assn.

Through the history of world aviation  
Many names have come to the fore  
Great deeds of the past in our memory will last  
As they're joined by more and more.

When man first started his labor  
In his quest to conquer the sky  
He was designer, mechanic, and pilot,  
And he built a machine that would fly.

The pilot was everyone's hero.  
He was brave, he was bold, he was grand,  
As he stood by his battered old bi-plane  
With his goggles and helmet in hand.

To be sure, these pilots all earned it,  
To fly then you had to have guts.  
And they blazed their names in the Hall of Fame  
On wings with bailing wire struts.

But for each of our flying heroes  
There were thousands of little renown.  
And these were the men who worked on the planes  
But kept their feet on the ground.

We all know the name of Lindbergh,  
And we've read of his flight into fame.  
But think, if you can, of his maintenance man,  
Can you remember his name?

And think of our wartime heroes,  
Gabreski, Jabara and Scott.  
Can you tell me the names of their crew chiefs?  
A thousand to one you cannot.

Now, pilots are highly trained people  
And wings are not easily won.  
But without the work of the maintenance man  
Our pilots would march with a gun.

So when you see the mighty jet aircraft  
As they mark their path through the air,  
The grease stained man with the wrench in his hand  
Is the man who put them there.

### Don't Forget To Send Your Dues

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



VIRGINIA BEACH  
Sept. 22nd-25th, 1988

## From the Hangar of Ray L. Summa

Dear members of the 34th B.G.

First we want to thank all of you who've sent Christmas greetings which we've gone thru several times before putting them away. Secondly, thanks to those who've sent in their '88 dues. Also those who sent stamped self-addressed envelopes. Hannah was saved from "writer's cramp" by them. Still there are many of you who have not sent in your dues yet. Our newsletter and postage take a big bite out of our finances. At present time we have 77 life members.

We hope you have not suffered from the bad weather in parts of the U.S. We have had mild weather so far in central Indiana. But who knows what tomorrow may bring.

Sylvia and Carroll Forrister were here in January. When Carroll returned from service they lived not too far from us, but we didn't know it then. Small world, isn't it? Anyway, Carroll and I hashed over our service days with the 34th in England. Sylvia is an English girl and those who know her know how much fun she is. Carroll is interested in woodworking, so out to my shop in the garage we went. Of course, Hannah says all I do is make a lot of sawdust. It was good to see them both and we hope they will be back soon.

I have received many interesting letters from our members, some of which you'll find in this issue. Keep them coming, guys. Your letters keep our newsletter interesting. One I received from David Hicks, son of Stanley Hicks. Stan was a pilot in the 7th Sqdn. who passed away a few years ago. David would like for anyone who knew his dad to write him. His address is: David Hicks, 6130 So. Louisville, Tulsa, OK. 74136.

Via the grapevine we hear that Fr. Douglas Culver, who organized and played the piano with the "Jive Bombers" at Mendlesham, on and off base, has cut a new album. The other "Jive Bombers" I've found are: Lou Cohen, W. Hartford, CT.; Lou DeSantis, Syracuse, NY.; Hyman Frankenstein, Flushing, L.I.; and Paul Teare of Milford, DE. Can anyone tell me who the rest of them were? Wouldn't it be great for them to get together at one of our reunions? Work on this, some of you who knew them real well.

James Harkless, crew chief in the 18th, was a vocalist with the band that played at the Red Cross Club for Saturday dances. Not long after we returned from the reunion, my asst. crew chief, Robert Burgner, called me and said that Jim had passed away in August. Jim lived not too far away in Decatur, Ind. and we corresponded over a period of years.

But, I'm getting ahead of myself, as usual. This fall we took a trip out west. We stayed a few days in Las Vegas. Gambled a little but never came out on top. We did enjoy being with Bill and Viv Creer on their 50th Wedding Anniversary. Viv must have been a child bride as she never shows her age. But, as I say, "Age is just a number." We had all kinds of weather while we



This man, name unknown, shot down the first and only Buzz-Bomb ever downed by a heavy bomber. He was in the 7th Sqdn. on Lt. Swenson's crew. Can you identify him?

were there, including two earthquakes. Hannah had white knuckles flying back home as we hit bad weather over Kansas.

In January, we asked Joe and Verna Edwards to take our place in Ft. Worth, TX. at a meeting regarding the 50th Anniversary Celebration of the B-24 which will take place in May, 1989. All you B-24 men should mark this on your calendar and try to be there. We will keep you informed. We plan to be there along with several others who've said they are going. I sure appreciate Joe and Verna helping out.

Other than a few short jaunts, we have been home since Thanksgiving. But watch out when spring appears. We plan to be in No. Carolina around June. Maybe we will see some of you on that trip.

In the last issue I had forgotten to thank Ian and Mary Hawkins for their help in setting up the Mendlesham trip last May. A special thanks to Mary for driving her car and leading the bus to various places so they could keep on schedule and not get lost. We appreciate all you two do for the 34th B.G. And a big "Thank you" to you, also, Ron Blake.

The reunion at Virginia Beach is coming up soon. Let's make this another big one. Come early and play golf, sight see, walk in the surf, etc. Langley Field is nearby, where the 34th B.G. was formed and activated as the first B-17 bomb group in the U.S. Williamsburg, VA., the restored city, is not too far away, and just north of the city is the Williamsburg Pottery and import place, which you gals will enjoy. There is also the Navy Base at Norfolk even though we're not Navy. If you plan to drive a motor home and camp, there are camping places nearby. Call the Chamber of Commerce or your travel club. Come on, folks, be there! Gerry Pine tells me we move across the Mississippi next year.

The 8th A.F. is having their reunion next October at Des Moines, IA. We will also have a mini-reunion of the 34th. Several had said they are going.

We have had several of our members under the weather lately. Henry Jurgens had a hip replacement in December, and he'll be ready for a Polka at Virginia Beach. Pete Gray has also been ill and in the hospital. Had a letter from Wally Jackson who spent a month in the hospital. He is now out and at a new address which is listed in this issue.

Maybe when spring comes along and the plants start popping thru the ground, we will all feel better. Until that time "THINK SPRING." as of now, the best to you all.

Hannah & Ray Summa



# REUNION 1988

(A Reunion Reminder)

In the past, the spring issue of Mendlesham Memories has contained the reservation forms for the annual reunion. This year, all reservation and registration forms will be included in the June issue of the newsletter.

The committee felt that with a June delivery of the forms, the chance of misplacement or loss would be reduced. We're not saying that the only mail you'll receive in June will be these forms. What we're referring to is, you will not get them confused with Uncle Sam's tax reports so that we'd end up with the I.R.S. as 34th members. Bob Wright will welcome the mid-summer rush of your requests from June 'till early September.

It has been rumored that Pete Gray has made arrangements for several hundred yards of Red Carpet. I guess he's protecting we non-residents from sand in our shoes from the beach. Pete is always very thoughtful of his 34th members.

Every room in the hotel overlooks the ocean. For those of us that are land-locked, it will be a definite and interesting change of scenery. Good menus have been planned. We have ample space for dining — meeting — and general reunion activities.

We, of the Reunion Committee, have prepared a good time for the membership and urge all that can to attend the 34th Bomb Group Reunion from 22 Sept. to 25 Sept., 1988 at the Holiday Inn on Oceanfront and 39th Street in Virginia Beach, VA.

Your Reunion Committee,  
Gerald Pine, Ch.  
Bob Wright  
Harold Rutka



A group on pass in London. Do you know them?

## AUCTION U.S.A. Virginia Beach September, 1988

I want to renew my plea to all the membership to help us out with our auction at Virginia Beach in September. To make it successful, all members are asked to select a gift to be auctioned off that night. This gift should represent the giver in some special way. It may be a craft, a collectible item, an antique or WWII memorabilia or possibly a product grown or produced by you or your neighbors. (Example: wine from California or New York, maple syrup from New England, auto accessories from Detroit, a small tool or appliance from the industrial south, a smoked salmon from the northwest, etc.)

Those attending the reunion are asked to bring their donations and keep them in their own possession until an hour or so before the auction. If possible, there should be a 3" x 5" index card with the gift telling us something about the gift and the donor. Those not attending can mail or UPS the gifts to: George Ritchie, 107 Rock Creek, CC Point, Swansboro, NC. 28584. Remember, if you have a family member or close personal friend that could donate a prize, don't hesitate to ask them. Any donor gets a receipt if desired.

George Ritchie

## REFLECTIONS OF A WAC IN A RUINED CHURCHYARD

"Somewhere in England"

When you went away, my heart went with you...

And when, months later, the words "missing in action" blurred and jumbled and grouped again before my eyes, I felt I would never see your face again, never hear your voice, never feel the touch of your hand....and the long, lonely aisle of years stretching out ahead of me seemed more than I could bear.

Yet I know that what you were fighting for...the things you were willing to give your life for...were worth your sacrifice and mine. To keep on living I had to become a part of something bigger than myself. I had to know that I was carrying on your fight...fighting in my way for everything that means so much to you...

And so I enlisted, too.

Now, here in the hush of this sacred place...seeing how bomb-shattered arches still bravely pattern the English sky and ruined spires lift Heavenward, a still undaunted cry of hope and faith....I know that someday I'll find you. Somehow, sometime, some place, I'll meet you again face to face.

Some day, when peace at last has come, we'll all go home together with what we're fighting for securely won. Home to the America we've always known...where there is liberty for all...and for all of us the opportunity to make our lives what we want them to be...where we are free to build an even better land, where our children and their children can live in endless peace and security.

That's why we went to war...that's what we believe is worth fighting for. I pray they'll keep it that way until we come back.





**SAM BAGLIO** - Exeter, PA.

I'm sure you could tell by my conduct at King of Prussia that I enjoyed every minute of our reunion. I can't think of anything I didn't like. I even got along with everyone on the B.O.D. Not an argument! I would tell anybody, that fantastic group we refer to as the "THE 34TH" is the greatest. I'm looking forward to "REUNION '88".

\* \* \*

**CLAYTON B. GABEL** - Canton, OH.

My wife and I greatly enjoyed the reunion. It was the first I had seen Parenteau and Westman since 1944. You may not know it but our crew was the first of the 34th to arrive in Mendlesham. We had Major Boyd (later Lt. Col.) on board. He was the C.O. of the 18th Sqdn. and he was determined to beat the Group Commander, Col. Wackowicz. We arrived two days ahead of the Col.

\* \* \*

**RUTH (HENRY) JURGENS** - Smyrna, DE.

The reunion was fun. We are looking forward to the next one. Henry enjoyed dancing on one leg and should do better on two. He is having the second hip replaced December 16th.

\* \* \*

**RALPH APPELGATE** - South Bend, IN.

1987 was a bad year for me. On Sept. 28th I had a second triple by-pass operation. My first one was in Dec. 1975. I believe I went longer than Ray did after his first one. In April I had a prostate, and in July I had a hernia operation. I could tell at the reunion that I didn't feel good and Mary had to do the driving.

I sure miss seeing any of my medics at these reunions. A lot of them live in the southeast USA and I really expected several to be at King of Prussia. I'd sure like to know what they've been doing since England.

\* \* \*

**ELSIE LYKINS** - Lexington, IN.

My husband, Harry Lykins, passed away Oct. 22, 1987. He was 75 years old. He had a light heart attack and a stroke. I would still like to receive the newsletter. We did enjoy it so much.

\* \* \*

**LES THOMPSON** - Granite City, IL.

In one of the 34th newsletters there was an article on Cleo J. Baughman. Among the planes he ferried was the "Homesick Angel." Before we were assigned to "Tempest Turner" we flew a ship named "Homesick Angel." What a beauty! When we came back from a three day pass there was a B-17 scattered all over the field. It was the "Homesick Angel" that had gone in from a near miss with another plane. I would like to know more about this.

\* \* \*

**JOHN FOWLER** - Brooklyn, NY.

I am astounded by the turn of events that a chance remark may possibly rekindle friendships with those I served proudly with — The 18th Bomb Sqdn., 34th Bomb Group, 8th A.F. Often I wondered if such an outfit as the 34th Bomb Group Assn. existed. I never saw any mention of it until the chance meeting with Ed Lawler at the Knights of Columbus Club in Brooklyn, NY.

I definitely will attend the next reunion in Sept. of '88 and look forward in anticipation of meeting some of the people with whom I flew in combat. Looking down the roster, I do not recognize any name of the crewmen I went over with. There must be many more still not accounted for.

\* \* \*

**MAX R. ELLIS** - Centerville, IA.

Sorry I couldn't attend the '87 reunion. I have the '88 marked down on my calendar and hope I can make it. Know you all had a great time. I was stationed at Langley Field for a time, so I would enjoy a trip to Virginia.

\* \* \*

**BILL BROWN** - Stone Mountain, GA.

Nita and I sure enjoyed the 34th B.G. reunion in King of Prussia. It was great seeing old friends like Al Steiner, Sam Turnipseed, Paul Anderson, Harold Williams, Bob Gradin and others. Hope to see some more of the fellows at Virginia Beach who were not at the '87 reunion.

\* \* \*

**JACK WHITING** - Charleston, WV.

I am sorry that I missed the PA. meeting, but I had a slight health problem. Now all I have to do is lose about 150 lbs. which I am now trying to do. By the way, how do you like boiled grass with an air highball as a chaser? I now watch the birds feed with envy. But, come hell or high water, I am going to attend the Virginia Beach meeting next year. After looking at the last issue of the newsletter, I am convinced that all of our group must have been drafted late in life, for ole Father Time has sure worked on a batch of you folks. Of course, I am the exception.

\* \* \*

**JEAN FESSLER** - Beverly Hills, FL.

Thank you for the copy of "Mendlesham Memories." It is one I always enjoy reading. I would like to thank the membership of the 34th B.G. Assn. for including my late husband's, Elmer Fessler, name on your taps list. He really was so happy knowing and talking to all the men from the group. Aviation was his great love and he enjoyed talking about it and helping fellows get in touch with their own units.

\* \* \*

**MARGE (JOHN) BLOCZYNSKI** - Marshfield, WI.

We had such a great time in King of Prussia and were so glad we could be there. It's so wonderful just seeing all the people again. We feel we've known you all our lives and have become such an important part of it.

\* \* \*

**SAM TURNIPSEED** - Aliceville, AL.

We especially appreciate what all you active workers are doing for the group. I can certainly vouch for it being a lot of work as well as pleasure — like political rallies or other seminars. I feel everything went well at King of Prussia and am looking forward to next year at Virginia Beach. I can drive there and visit some of the family along the way.

\* \* \*

**BOB DEES** - Torrance, CA.

You fellows sure did a great job in putting on the reunion. It was a real pleasure to be there. Hope that we can make the next one!

Continued on page 6

# Notes From Our Friends

Continued from page 5

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**LLOYD ELLIOTT** - Oklahoma City, OK.

We are sorry to have missed the last two reunions, but we've had a conflict in that our antique car "Glidden Tour" is at the same time each year. We'll be at Virginia Beach in 1988 though. Also count us in for the Fort Worth, Texas get-together in May.

\* \* \*

**MRS. CHARLES DAVIS (Stanley Hicks' sister)**

Stanley was my brother. He died of a heart attack on Feb. 17, 1983 in Denton, Texas. He was 59 years old. Stanley's wife's address, at present, is: Mary Ann Hicks, 1908 Southridge, Denton, TX. 76201.

\* \* \*

**LESTER BROOKSHIRE** - Calhoun, GA.

This old Georgia boy has been snowed and iced in a week! First time I can remember! Around 8 to 10 inches of snow with about an inch of ice on top and bottom. The snow wrecked a lot of tin-roof buildings on farms around GA. Some had thousands of chickens in the cold. The road grader came by my house for the first time in my life. Our neighbors brought in a few supplies that we ran out of.

\* \* \*

**BILL CHEEK** - Lakeland, FL.

Betty and I had planned to be with you fellows at King of Prussia. As time drew closer, we began to lean towards a trip to New England instead. In October we went to Maine and Vermont for 3 weeks. The foliage was unbelievable.

We will be giving some thought to the meeting at Virginia Beach in September. If some of my crew would show up, we might go. I got tired of trying to jack them up, but who knows. I might try again.

\* \* \*

**RUBY (WALT) McALLISTER** - Orlando, FL.

Had a great trip and lots of fun attending the reunion at King of Prussia, a quaint and lovely place to visit. Went on a good tour of Philadelphia and saw all the great historical spots. The bus ride was fun as well. We thoroughly enjoyed being with good old friends and meeting new ones.

Don't know what I've done to deserve the "honor," but I was chosen for Federal Grand Jury for 18 months. I just wish it were Mac instead of me! Have to serve two to three days per month, maybe more. Sure will change my life style — no more freedom to go as we want and when.

Work on the upcoming 34th B.G. history book has taken up much of Mac's time this year, with a lot of researching, soliciting photos and written material from around the country, sorting and organizing same, writing, "editing," and rewriting, cussing the stupid typewriter, retyping, etc., etc.

\* \* \*

**LYLE GRADEN** - Sunnyside, WA.

Sorry we haven't been able to attend some of the functions but Betty had a heart attack in Sept. '86 which left her with brain damage. She is about 75% recovered, but still has motivation problems in that she still cannot write or drive and a few other things, but I thank God I still have her.

As an idea for the future, how about planning a 34th reunion in the Northwest at either Pendleton, OR. or Spokane, WA. where the 34th was for a while. Spokane would be ideal as there is an Air Force base, Fairchild AFB (formerly Geiger) and I am sure some of our people, such as Gen. LeBailey, could arrange some kind of tours of whatever. - Just a thought!

**MARY (HANK) LAMBERT** - Spotsylvania, VA.

Hank is still struggling with the after-effects of the stroke he had two years ago. However, we are both grateful for the progress he has made and are optimistic about the future. He walks a limited distance with a walker and, with the aid of a wheelchair, is able to travel, go shopping and attend social functions.

Since Hank has managed to stay out of the hospital this year (another thing to be grateful for), I have had to forego my favorite pastime of knocking out walls and other decorating mischief that I might practice when the cat's away.

\* \* \*

**DON MARBLE** - Port Aransas, TX.

I read the newsletter as soon as it is received each time and recognize the work you fellows put into it for the group. Well done!!

Heard from Wayne Weeks (pilot in 18th Sqdn.) that he had to have surgery on his bladder on Nov. 5th due to cancer. We had made plans to meet at his winter home on Pine Island, FL. while I was there in November. He called later to say that he seems to be doing O.K.

\* \* \*

**BOB SUMMERS** - Browns Mills, NJ.

Just wanted to tell you what a great time we had at the reunion. We were made to feel right at home, just like friends of old, not strangers. Just can't tell you how it made us feel. Then, to find Frank McCullough after all these years, well that really made the whole reunion. Forty-two years flashed by - just like old times. Then, to top it off, he lives in Allentown, PA., just about two hours away.

\* \* \*

**DEBORAH WATSON (Jim Kelly's daughter)**

Daddy (Jim) left the week before he died to go fishing in Port Lovaca, TX. He took the trip for fun. The doctor called me on a Sunday and I took the first plane out. I got there at 3:00 P.M. Monday and he died by 3:00 P.M. Tuesday, June 30, 1987. He had a staff infection which went into liver failure. It was the saddest thing I have ever been through in my entire 33 years. Daddy and I were very close. They say it gets easier with time, but I can't say that yet. I sure do miss him!

\* \* \*

**KERMIT HANSON** - Crosby, ND.

I didn't get anything together for the new 34th BG history book. I guess I didn't know what to put in there. I'm going to try to get to a reunion. It looks like a fun time. I'm still ranching "Cattle & Groin" so the reunions have been at the busy time of the year, but maybe I'll retire in a year or so.

Gosh, it's so nice of you folks in the "Know How" to put out a newsletter like this. It's just great!

\* \* \*

**ROBERT SAXEN** - Holstein, IA.

We are looking forward to the reunion in Virginia Beach. I sure hope we will see some of my crew. We are planning on making the circle. We have relatives in Wabash, IN., Lexington, KY., Virginia and Florida. Maybe we will stop and get reacquainted on the way.

\* \* \*

**TERRY (CECIL) COHEN** - Margaretville, NY.

Cecil's coronary by-pass surgery held over until October 9th — some complication with a tumor (benign) on the thymus gland, a collapsed lung, and paralysed vocal cords which had him mute for five weeks (believe that?). His voice is 2/3 restored and he's recuperating well.

We're "shaking down" in the new house. We love it but Cecil is frustrated with his inability to do what needs to be done. Perhaps by spring. It's been a wild year!

# Notes From Our Friends

Continued from page 6

\* \* \*

## KARL WALLACE - Placida, FL.

We had a wonderful time at the reunion, thanks to all the effort put forth by Gerry, Harold, Bob and all the rest of you working guys. Many thanks to everyone for what you do for us. Judy and I look forward to seeing everyone in Virginia Beach in September. I wish we could get some more of the old gang out to the reunions. I see Ralph Brune's and Dick Whiteman's names on the roster, but it would be even better to see them in person. Maybe this coming fall!

\* \* \*

## WARREN THRUN - Westfield Center, OH.

Philadelphia was our first reunion and we hope to continue to make more. We will be spending our winter in Tucson, Ariz., leaving the day after Christmas.

\* \* \*

## HELEN (BEN) DeHAAN - Grand Forks, ND.

Ben enjoys the newsletter. It is a shame we can't make the reunions as we enjoyed the one in Nashville so much. He has not had a seizure in a long time, so maybe in the future we will be able to attend a reunion.

\* \* \*

## ED LONERGAN - Ft. Lauderdale, FL.

Received a call from "B.B." Latz that her father, William F. Latz, passed away Jan. 3rd, 1988. He was a pilot in the 391st Sqdn. Vince Doran and Ralph Casey were on his crew, along with others I can't remember now.

It took us a long time to locate Bill. Vince finally found him through the Fordham University Alumni Assn. I don't believe he had a chance to reply to the 34th literature he was sent. In April or May of 1987 he advised me that he had cancer. On our way to Florida in December, I was lucky enough to contact him in Atlanta and saw him for a few hours. He was in good spirits, but obviously seriously hampered in motor skills because of the sickness. It was a great visit and I'm really glad I called. His daughter later told me it was the best spirits he'd had since surgery in April. He asked that I give his best regards to everyone he knew.

## BILL DEMPSEY - Boise, ID.

I may be old, senile, and forgetful, but, being a NAVIGATOR, I'm still not lost!!!



Can you identify this group?

## MARVIN SYVERSON - Wanamingo, MN.

I enjoy the Mendlesham Memories. I was a ground pounder and I hear very little of them. Also, the reunions are made up mostly of flying personnel. I wish there could be more emphasis placed on ground personnel to attend the reunions.

\* \* \*

## GEORGE WEDDELL - Sacramento, CA.

Sure appreciate all the work and effort you fellows have expended over the years in getting the group organized and communicating. It enabled me to run down Robert Davis, another former pilot of the 7th Sqdn. who lived almost within walking distance of my home. Our crew has been having reunions about every 3 to 5 years since 1966.

\* \* \*

## FRED SIMMONS - Ashville, NC.

We're hoping to be able to make the reunion at Virginia Beach next September if health stays good and nothing unforeseen happens before that. From reading the newsletter we gather the group really had a great time at King of Prussia. Sure wish I could have made it!

\* \* \*

## RALPH MURPHY - Port Richey, FL.

Just a note to say that we were very sorry to have missed the '87 reunion and seeing you all. Receiving the December newsletter helped a lot. All those pictures were a treat. It gives us great pleasure to know how well, alive, and moving our organization is. I am forever thankful to all those who have made things click!

We're loving it here in Florida, even if it was 34 degrees this morning. Before the day is over it'll be 70. We are starting to dream of Virginia Beach in September and would like to be on hand in Ft. Worth in '89.

\* \* \*

## BILL FULTON - Chelmsford, MA.

We spent part of last winter near Phoenix, AZ. and took a trip to Blythe for a look-see. It sure has changed for the better. Not much left of the buildings that we could remember. I had a good chat with a U.S. Customs officer who was also ex-8th A.F. Louise had worked at the Blythe hospital during our stay there and had planned to meet with some nurse friends who had driven over from the Palm Springs area, so we all had a good visit.

\* \* \*

## DUDLEY CASLER - Mesa, AZ.

Didn't make the 34th reunion, but did make the 8th A.F. reunion at Pittsburgh. We stayed with Bev. Johnson and had a good time. I'm keeping busy and am now the V.P. for Arizona Federation, N.A.R.F.E.

\* \* \*

## LOU WEST - San Diego, CA.

I was saddened to learn that I am the last of my crew to survive. My health has been bad for 4 years now due to a coronary by-pass that went sour. I had to retire before I intended.

I hadn't known there was a 34th B.G. Assn. until I heard from you. I'm grateful for the information and I'm pleased to join.

\* \* \*

## EUGENE HINTZ - Sealy, TX.

It was with great joy and emotion that I received the phone call from Gordon Churchia. To be sure, there will be many happy hours spent writing and talking from here on in. We've decided to work together locating the other crew members.

\* \* \*

Continued on page 8



# Notes From Our Friends

Continued from page 7

**CARL STEMEN** - Bremen, OH.

I was happy to learn that Rex Carothers, my ball-turret gunner, has been located. I had not been able to find him. Lee Tandy, our navigator, wrote me that Rex had been to visit him.

\* \* \*

**STEVE KOPACZ** - Blairstown, NJ.

What a surprise to see my former crew member, Rex Carothers, listed in the newly-found column, after believing he was deceased these last few years. Can you recall when Charles Davis was presumed dead and we found out that it was his father. Did the same thing happen in Rex's case?

\* \* \*

**MRS. W.S. BARCLAY** (Joe Safety's sister)

Our local postmaster referred your inquiry about Joe Safety to me. Joe was my brother and he passed away in 1977. He had a heart attack while playing golf and I still miss him a lot. He was most productive and successful after the war, and I'm certain he would be proud to be a member of your Group, if that were possible.

\* \* \*

**CLARENCE SQUIRES** - Cainsville, MO.

Have been having eye problems the last three months and have had laser surgery on my right eye 3 times, but still not seeing right. I've fallen several times this summer but haven't hurt myself very seriously. I'm not reading very much these days. About all I'm good for is eating and sleeping.

\* \* \*

**GUILFORD (POP) SPENCE** - Zephyrhills, FL.

We're sorry we just can't make the reunions. This is the first year in the last five that Mom has not been hospitalized although she has to go to her doctor regularly. I'm still going to the V.A. hospital in Tampa (outpatient) every 3 months.

\* \* \*

**HARRY McMILLION** - Norfolk, VA.

Carrie's surgery kept us from the reunion last September. With the reunion for '88 being in Virginia Beach, we should make it if we enjoy good health.

\* \* \*

**JOHN HOPPER** - Bend, OR.

Hadn't heard a thing from anybody since the war and "Whamo," Ray called and, two days later, Earl Zesch did too. What a surprise, and did it ever bring back the memories. Right now I can't make any promises about the '88 reunion. Cattle have a way of tying you down. I've been threatening to sell the whole works for the past ten years, but haven't made it yet. Sure have been thinking about it, though.

\* \* \*

**WARREN KILEY** - San Diego, CA.

We didn't make the '87 reunion but intend to remain in touch and might make the next one.

\* \* \*

**WILLARD STELLING** - Ottawa, IL.

We appreciate all the effort and hard work you guys are putting into the Association to keep it alive and active. Best wishes for the new year to everybody.

\* \* \*

**JOSEPH E. HUGHES** - Carmichaels, PA.

I was pleasantly surprised to receive the literature on the 34th B.G. Assn. which I did not know existed. I shall certainly contact all the crew members whose addresses and phone numbers you've furnished. I'm not sure what I'll say, but I'm sure I'll think of something.



Giles Avriett crew at Blythe with old Lincoln they bought which had belonged to Harold Lloyd. They would ride around the base with white scarves streaming from their necks. Top: Fred Scherr; Standing L. to R.: Jim Freidel, Ken Lewis, John Soler & Gene Holmes. Kneeling L. to R.: Ray Kaiser & Giles Avriett.

**FRED MUENTE** - Wauwatosa, WI.

If I may, I would like to clarify the statement in the report regarding our crew....7th Squadron; Capt. J.C. Smith was the pilot and Dex Jordan was the crew chief. Our entire crew was not at the reunion, but I did want to emphasize that our original 10-member crew are all members of the assn. and, of course, living all over the beautiful United States. Hopefully we can all get together this year at Virginia Beach.

\* \* \*

**WALLY FELKER** - Orlando, FL.

On our last trip with the 34th back to England in 1985, we were seated among the Mendlesham ladies of the British Legion during the dinner at Ipswich where we honored those ladies for their care and attention over the years to our 34th B.G. Memorial. We were fortunate to meet Mrs. Vera Peters, one of those fine ladies who have continued to remember the 34th over the ensuing 45 years. We have kept up a "Christmas Card" correspondence with her since.

In her Christmas missive of 1987, Mrs. Peters said, "The memorial looks very nice now, especially in good weather. The rose bushes bloomed and looked lovely. The lawn and laurel bushes are established and, of course, we still do our monthly flower arrangements."

Just thought our members might be interested in an updated status report on the care of our 34th B.G. Memorial at Mendlesham. Those thoughtful ladies of the British Legion are certainly the "GREATEST!"

\* \* \*

**HENRY TOBIASON** - Remer, MN.

We look forward to getting our Mendlesham Memories. It's read from cover to cover as soon as it arrives in the mail. I hope the rest of the Group enjoy it as much as we do.

I'm sorry I can't help you with any stories for the paper. I was not there for very long. Flew the first mission when we went operational in May and the last one in August. Our crew was one of the first sent home. We were only at Mendlesham a little over four months. I have only been to four reunions. The main reason is not many of our crew come. Maybe that will change.

Continued on page 9

# Notes From Our Friends

Continued from page 8

**CHARLES METZ** — New Port Richey, FL.

While in Long Island for Christmas, the phone rang and it turned out to be a chap named Geo. Rohrbaugh who had received the December issue and noted that my "new" address was nearby. Apparently he just wanted to "fly around the hangar" for awhile, and we did just that for the next 40 minutes or so. So you see how you are bringing people together all around the country.

\* \* \*

**FRED BERGLUND** - Englewood, FL.

Made the trip to Mendlesham with the main difficulty getting passports. Got ours the day the reunion was to start as they were held up in Englewood, FL. post office 11 days. I left that evening and arrived a day late. Took the lite rail-tube thru London, thence lite rail to Ipswich. Really enjoyed the nice group of 34th "fellow travelers." Remember in WWII, a "fellow traveler" was a Communist, or a suspected one at least.

The memorial service at Maddingly was the most impressive I've ever seen. The church service in Mendlesham was also very memorable. They gave us a guided tour of the upstairs armory with all the battle axes, etc. (No pun). Really enjoyed the Air Force Museum at Hendon. The Sunderland Flying Boat was so big it looked like the Spruce Goose fuselage. Don't see how it could get airborne.

\* \* \*

**LINDSEY LIPSCOMB** - Marbella, Spain

Received the latest 34th B.G. "Letter" and enjoyed it as usual. It was forwarded to me from Houston. Expect to return to Houston in April. Hope to meet you and others and see some old friends at Virginia Beach in September.

\* \* \*

**AL KONTE** - Willowick, OH.

I thoroughly enjoy reading "Mendlesham Memories" from beginning to end! It evokes a lot of memories for me as I'm sure it does for all our comrades-in-arms who were in the Great 34th. Please keep up the good job. I look forward to the next issue of "MM."

\* \* \*

**GEORGE H. KLINE** - Burnt Hills, NY.

This year's reunion at Virginia Beach will provide those who attend with excitement and memories. Once again we will be in the cradle of history, both the revolutionary and civil wars. A visit to nearby Williamsburg, Jamestown, and Yorktown is a must. Much of our country's history was developed in this area. Then there is the harbor cruise in Norfolk. The Humpton roads is a major naval and shipping area. Langley Field, where I started my Air Force stint, is a major research area as well as quarters for our secret service.

A trip over the Chesapeake Bay bridge-tunnel complex is exciting. If you do cross the bridge-tunnel, go further and visit Chintoque and Asscoteaque to see the islands and the 40 miles of wild national seashore beach. Also the wild life area where you can see the wild ponies of Chincoteaque, as well as the water fowl and deer. Then you can cross the Chesapeake bridge and visit the Naval Academy. The bridge is breathtaking and the Naval Academy is well worth the visit. From there, roads will take you to Washington or Richmond.

\* \* \*

**IMOGENE (CARL) FRYINGER** - Cable, OH.

Thanks, Ray, for all the trouble you've gone to for Carl. It has brought him a whole new world of pleasure and something to look forward to. We will surely go to the reunion at Virginia Beach after we have more information.

\* \* \*



## ROSE'S CORNER

When we Americans say that it's "raining cats and dogs" our British friends call it "beastly weather." How true this is for a few weeks here on the southern tip of Lake Michigan. We can't complain too much because we get the changes of the four seasons in all their beauty, and I heartily recommend living here in Indiana.

Now that winter is here, baking is one of my favorite things to do. I hope that you all will try to duplicate the recipes in our issues. Several of the 34'ers "better halves" have sent in recipes and notes for which I thank you all. Keep them coming! Here's one from Florence Kiley of San Diego, Calif. who says, "Remember during World War II when baking became a challenge because of rationing?" She goes on to say, "I'm enclosing a recipe for a chocolate cake we often made during those times. It's still a family favorite and the best recipe for chocolate cake I've ever tried."

So here's a treat for your chocoholics. I'm one and I loved this one! So easy to put together.

### WWII HUNDRED DOLLAR CAKE

- 2 C. Cake flour (All purpose is okay)
  - 1 C. Granulated sugar
  - 2 tsp. Baking soda
  - 1 tsp. Salt
  - ½ C. Cocoa (Hershey's unsweetened)
- Sift and stir the above in a bowl. Then add:
- 1 C. Mayonnaise (NOT Miracle Whip)
  - 1 C. Cold water

Blend well. Pour batter into 2 greased 8" layer cake pans or one 9" square pan. Bake in 350 deg. preheated oven for about 30 min. for the 8" pans or 35 min. for the 9" square. (Watch for the slight pulling away from the sides of the pan, then it's done.) Then cool and frost with your favorite icing.

NOTE: 1½ times this recipe fills a 9x13 pan. Adjust baking time. (No eggs, honestly!)

Thank you, Florence! I'd like to print as many recipes as possible, even though space is limited. Please send as many as you like and perhaps we shall have enough to create a 34'ers Cookbook! Let's hear from you!!

Love,  
Rose



34th B.G. B17 7th Sqd. on a mission over enemy territory.

# NEWS FROM HERE AND THERE

From the **NATIONAL AIR-RACING GROUP** periodical for April, 1987 we have culled the following:

Marvin Lee (Lefty) Gardner, 65 years young, is still flying. But now, instead of the B-24's, which he hated, or the B-17's, he is flying the relatively rare Lockheed Lightning P-38 in air races. His aircraft, "White Lighnin" is an L model last used by the Air Force Training Command. There are only four other flyable P-38's in the U.S. Another one is being assembled from parts by the Confederate Air Force in San Marcos, TX.

He says he hated the B-24 so much that he refused to fly it until he was threatened with being busted to Buck Private on permanent KP duty. He then flew 20 missions in it before the 34th changed over to B-17's, which he was more comfortable with.

All in all, over the years, Lefty has flown in about 50 different types of planes. Nowadays, using four 650 HP Stearmans, his company, Gardner Flyers, Inc., make their living spraying brush. In the "off" season" he flies Borate Bombers for the U.S. Forest Service.

We have only one question to ask. "Hey, Lefty, what do you do with your spare time?"

\* \* \*

A friend if Ian Hawkins has asked that we try to help him out if possible. He is collecting USAAF memorabilia and photos in a large album. He is looking for representative aircraft of the Group with unit identification (tail identification) alongside. If anybody wishes to send him pictures, the address is:

Herbert Watson  
19 Windermere Road  
Hucknall, Nottinghamshire  
NG15 GNF  
England

\* \* \*

Harold Rutka has had some requests at the last reunion for information on the blue vests and name tags. The vests are Royal Blue and are available in small, medium, large and extra large sizes. The price is \$18.00 each. The permanent name tags are \$3.75 each. Delivery can be made either at the next reunion or mailed to your homes. If interested, write:

Harold Rutka  
11 E. Artavia Street  
Duluth, Minnesota 55811

\* \* \*

From Darrell Bulis we learn that on Nov. 21, 1987, in Oneonta, NY. Dr. Byron E. Sheesley was feted with a surprise reception and dinner party in honor of his retirement, attended by over 300 of his friends, co-workers, family and three of his 34th BG crew members.

After the introductions and speeches, the M.C. asked him if he could remember what "The Giant Is On The Beach" meant. Or, how about "Stiff Starch?" He replied that he did not. While this was taking place, his three crew members, Frank Forde with his wife, Josephine; Edwin King with his wife, Mary; and Darrell Bulis walked up behind him. He had no idea that they were there. You should have seen the whooping, hollering, and shoulder blade pounding that went on. We had not seen each other in 43 years. Until last September we all thought Bryon had passed away.

\* \* \*

Again we are printing a reminder to all of the planned "REUNION '89" in Fort Worth, Texas, honoring the 50th anniversary of the B-24 Liberator. "A GATHERING OF THE LIBERATORS" will be held May 17th to 21st, 1989. All B-24

veterans, their families, groups/units, and those who built this aircraft have been invited to attend. Reunion registrations are expected to be sent out in June, 1988. Keep an eye on this column in future issues for more information as we receive it.

\* \* \*

I'm very pleased to provide you with information about a project I believe all of the 34th BG members are going to be interested in, a total restoration of a B-24J Liberator. When completed in time for the May 1989 festivities, this will be the only totally restored, regularly flying B-24 in the world!

**WE NEED YOUR HELP!** - Without it, this B-24J WILL NOT FLY AGAIN! If every B-24 crewman would just send \$10.00, we could get it done. For larger contributions, we need WWII oxygen bottles at \$40.00, radios at \$50.00, ammo boxes at \$100.00, overhaul of an instrument at \$100.00, overhaul of a propeller at \$1,500.00, Dedicated Crew Positions at \$5,000.00 where your position will be named after you, or an engine overhaul at \$15,000.00, plus lots more.

**PLEASE** — If you really want to see a B-24J flying again, call or send you tax-deductible contribution to:

The Collings Foundation  
River Hill Farm  
Stow, Mass. 01775  
(617) 568-8924

\* \* \*

We hear by the grapevine that Irwin Pochter has just retired as Chairman, Executive Committee, of the Frank B. Hall & Co. and will continue in his business and management consulting practice. Good Luck, Irwin.

\* \* \*

From Lynn Beedle, an associate member of our group, we hear that at last year's dedication of the Memphis Belle Memorial he produced a film on the event. It includes flyovers by seven B-17s in formation, the symbolic bombing of the Memorial grounds with rose petals led in by weaving P-51s. The tapes, whether VHS or BETA, last an hour and were professionally produced in a television studio complete with narration and Glenn Miller's music. Although he has been selling the tapes nationwide for \$39.95, he is offering "B-17s Over Memphis" to members of the 34th at a cost of \$29.95, with all mailing costs included. If you're interested, write to: Lynn S. Beedle, P.O. Box 3343, Bethlehem, PA. 18017.

\* \* \*

We hear from Vince Doran that Bill Creer was very pleased with our award presentation at the last reunion. His thoughts on the subject, passed on to you here, are, "We should strive to recognize activities that may have humor, but, above all, made a positive contribution to the Group's well-being during our stay in England. One performance that should have been recognized and was not, comes to mind. In the spring of 1945 we frequently conducted operations under conditions of poor visibility. As you may recall, to assist pilots in lining up for the runway approach, we would send Jeeps some 1,500 ft. out from the end of the runway firing flares. One day we wrecked a B-17 equipped with a radar bombing system. Someone, I believe from the 4th Sqdn., salvaged essential parts from the plane, turned the fuselage bottom side up, provided power, then used the HS radar and communications system to guide planes to the runway for landing. This was the beginning of the GCA system to the best of my knowledge. I regret I do not have names and more specifics. This was a significant contribution using the resources at hand. Admittedly, there are not too many incidents of this magnitude, but we certainly had innovations of food, service, maintenance, and the gunnery areas."

We are asking for letters from all who remember the above incident, or who can recall other worthy activities. If we work fast, there would still be time to prepare an award for the reunion at Virginia Beach.



# A FUNNY THING HAPPENED ON



## THE WAY TO THE WAR



**FROM WILLIAM "PETE" GRAY — Virginia Beach, VA.**

The time was late January of 1945. The place was the 34th B.G. Airbase at Mendlesham, Suffolk, England, about 70 miles northeast of London. It was about 2:00 A.M. and I was up on a stand with my head inside the No. 2 engine when I heard someone call my name. "Over here," I answered, knowing he couldn't see me in the darkness. "They told me I'd find you around here someplace," came a rich New England voice from out of the gloom. "What's the matter? Is something wrong?" "No," I answered, "just some trash in the fuel line, but it's O.K. now."

I couldn't see his face in the black-out, but he sure did talk funny. From his accent I could tell he was one of those Yankees from up around Connecticut or, maybe, Massachusetts. "I'm supposed to fly this plane this morning," he went on, "so thought I'd come down and see if it was ready." Now, we'd been alerted for a mission several hours before, but takeoff wasn't until about 8:00 A.M., so what was he doing down here at 2:00 A.M.?

Just then a thought began to stir around in my mind. "Are you the pilot?" I asked. "Yes," he replied. "How many missions you got so far, Lieutenant?" "Well," he hesitated for a moment, "this will be my first one." (Just as I had figured.) "Lieutenant," I asked, "where you from?" "I'm from By-ston," he answered. "Oh, you mean Boston," I said, "that little town up in Massachusetts." Knew that had got to him as there was no answer for a moment. "Well, Lieutenant," I went on, "I'll tell you one thing — you ain't flying this here airplane this morning." "But Colonel Creer said —" "I don't care what Colonel Creer said," I snapped back, "he ain't got nuthin to do with whether this plane flies or not — that's my job!" (Down on the flight line we found it was always best to let them know — right from the start — who was in charge. Things always worked better once that was settled.) "Well, how come I can't fly it?" he wanted to know. "Because, Lieutenant," I told him, "I just don't let nobody fly this airplane who comes from north of Delaware."

For almost a minute he didn't say a word so I figured he was beginning to catch on to what I was doing. "Sergeant," he finally came out with, "where are you from?" "I'm from Virginia," I told him proudly. "I thought so," he responded, disgustedly. "Tell you what, Lieutenant," I said as I fastened the cowlings back in place, "you help me run up this engine so I can check it out and I just might reconsider." He seemed agreeable so I moved the stand out of the way of the propellers and we climbed inside the cockpit. I took the copilot's seat as the engine instruments were on that side. When I turned the lights on I got my first real look at this Yankee from By-ston. He was a tall one — about 6 feet 4 or 5 inches — and as skinny as a bean pole.

"Good Gawd, Lietutenant," I told him, "you look like you haven't eaten a square meal in a month of Sundays. You been eating too much codfish and beans — you can't put on any weight eating that stuff!" "Well," he snapped back, "it sure as hell beats ham hocks and collard greens." That did it — right then and there the Civil War started up again!

And that's how I first met Lt. Randall Martin who went on to fly over 30 combat missions in Ol' Buddy. And I think he knew all the time what I was doing!

\* \* \* \* \*

### A CRITIQUE ON COMPREHENSIVE COMMUNICATIONS

(or What Happens When You Don't Listen)

**FROM ART WILLIAMS — Willsboro, NY.**

The Colonel issued the following directive to his Executive Officers:

#### OPERATION HALLEY'S COMET

"Tomorrow evening at approximately 2000 hours, Halley's Comet will be visible in this area, an event which occurs only once every 75 years. Have the men fall out in the battalion area in fatigues. I will explain this rare phenomenon to them. In case of rain, we will not be able to see anything, so assemble the men in the theater and I will show them films of it."

#### Executive Officer to Company Commander:

By order of the Colonel, tomorrow at 2000 hours, Halley's Comet will appear above the battalion area. If it rains, fall the men out in fatigues, then march to the theater where this rare phenomenon will take place. This is something which occurs only once every 75 years."

#### Company Commander to Lieutenant:

"By order of the Colonel in fatigues, at 2000 hours tomorrow evening the phenomenal Halley's Comet will appear in the theater. In case of rain, assemble in the battalion area, where the Colonel will give another order — something which occurs once every 75 years."

#### Lieutenant to Sergeant:

Tomorrow at 2000 hours, the Colonel will appear in the theater with Halley's Comet, something which happens every 75 years. If it rains, the Colonel will order the comet into the battalion area."

#### Sergeant to Squad:

"When it rains tomorrow at 2000 hours, the phenomenal 75-year-old General Halley, accompanied by the Colonel, will drive his comet through the battalion area in fatigues."



"Jive Bombers" - Photo taken V.E. Day, 1945

# 50TH ANNIVERSARY B-24 LIBERATOR REUNION

Fort Worth, TX May 1989

MAJOR EVENTS



|  |  |   |
|--|--|---|
| <b>WED 17 May</b><br><b>REGISTRATION DAY</b><br><b>0930</b><br><b>UNIT REUNION PLANNERS' "WELCOMING IN-BRIEF"</b><br>(Conv/Ctr - Small Thtr)<br><b>1300 ALL REGISTRATIONS OPEN.</b><br>(Ft Worth Conv/Ctr - LOBBY)<br>+ SHUTTLE BUSING BEGINS (*)<br>+ B-24 'BIRTHDAY' SHOWCASE DAY<br>(Conv/Ctr - Main ARENA Hall)<br>+ LIBERATOR LEGEND HALL/PX/PUB<br><b>2100 REGISTRATIONS CLOSED TODAY.</b>   | <b>THUR 18 May</b><br><b>REGISTRATIONS &amp; "FREE TIME" DAY LIB GP EVENTS</b><br><b>0900 REGISTRATIONS OPEN.</b><br><b>until 11 (Ft Worth Conv/Ctr - LOBBY)</b><br><b>2200</b><br>+ SHUTTLE BUSING (*)<br>+ B-24 'BIRTHDAY' SHOWCASE OF MUSEUM-CLASS DISPLAYS (C/Ctr)<br>+ GROUP HOSPITALITY ROOMS OPEN<br>(Declared Reunion Gps Hotels)<br>+ SIGHTSEEING TOURS SERVICES<br>(Avail Tour Desks/Hotel/C/Ctr)<br>+ REUNION GP "FREE" TIME PLANS<br><b>1800 'SUNDANCE SQUARE' B-24 ATTENDEES STREET FESTIVAL WELCOME!</b> (Food/Fun & Music!) | <b>FRI 19 May</b><br><b>REGISTRATIONS &amp; INDIVIDUAL LIB GP EVENTS</b><br><b>0900 REGISTRATIONS OPEN.</b><br><b>until 11 (Ft Worth Conv/Ctr - LOBBY)</b><br><b>2100</b><br>+ SHUTTLE BUSING (*)<br>+ B-24 SHOWCASE DISPLAYS AND SPECIAL ATTRACTIONS (C/Ctr)<br>+ "FREE" TIME ACTIVITIES<br><b>1330 SPECIAL 'WELCOMING' SHOW.</b><br>(Conv/Ctr in B-24 Theater)<br>+ WELCOMING 'MIXER' HOUR<br>(Meet 'n GREET-Reunion HtIs).<br><b>1930 SYMPOSIUM: 'THE B-24 AT WAR'.</b><br>(Large Thtr - Conv/Ctr - ADV & On-Site Ticket sales). |
| <b>SAT 20 May</b><br><b>B-24 LIBERATOR VETERANS "SPECIAL DAY"</b><br><b>1100 DEDICATED BUSING LOADINGS*</b><br><b>until AND DEPARTURES</b><br><b>1200 (All Hotels to Air Base)</b><br>(CARSWELL)<br>+ 'OPEN HOUSE'- SPECIAL GROUND AND AIR SHOW WITH WWII B-24 STATIC DISPLAYS.<br>+ Food & Beverage cash stands on-site.<br><b>1545 LAST BUSES DEPART BASE.</b><br>+ Conv/Ctr SHOWCASE OPEN/9-4pm.<br>+ INDIVIDUAL GROUP RDZ DINNERS (per Gp Plans) | <b>SUN 21 May</b><br><b>MEMORIAL COMMEMORATION &amp; GALA ANNIVERSARY EVE</b><br>(*) (DEDICATED BUSING - BOTH EVENTS)<br><b>1030 MEMORIAL &amp; GROUP HONORS CEREMONY &amp; FLY-OVER.</b><br>(Conv/Ctr area-Terraced Park)<br><b>1130 ANNIVERSARY GOLF TOURNAMENT.</b><br>(Z. Boaz GC - See Flyer info)<br><b>1900 GALA ANNIVERSARY RECOGNITIONS BANQUET &amp; GLENN MILLER ERA TRIBUTE SHOW EVE...begins</b><br>(Conv/Ctr - MAIN BANQUET HALL)<br><b>2245 BUSES BEGIN DEPARTURES FOR HOTELS.</b>  | <b>MON 22 May</b><br><b>"FREE TIME" &amp; INDIVIDUAL LIB GROUP ACTIVITIES</b><br><b>1200 PLANNED REUNION HOTELS' CHECK-OUT TIME</b> (unless prior arrangements differ).<br>* * * * *<br>A<br>VERY HAPPY 50TH ANNIVERSARY BIRTHDAY WISH TO ALL!<br>...AND A VERY SAFE, PLEASANT JOURNEY HOME.  |

## 50th Anniversary, B-24 Liberator Reunion . . .

Joe and Verna Edwards filled in for Ray and Hannah Summa at the meeting held regarding the '89 celebration of the 50th anniversary of the B-24 to be held in Fort Worth, TX. May 17th to 22nd, 1989. Here is a short note from them: Mission Accomplished!

We had beautiful weather going and coming — temps. in the 50-60's with 25-30K winds. The Worthington Hotel is luxurious and our accomodations were beautiful. Bob Vickers came up to us as soon as we arrived and greeted us both warmly by name. We gave him Ray's regards and regrets. What a dynamic guy he is, and the reunion he is planning is even more dynamic. It is going to be the most comprehensive and thrilling reunion since WWII; truly a once in a lifetime event!

Joe and Verna filled in with six pages of the goings on at the meeting which have been passed on to Ray for his records. Joe concludes that he was highly impressed and that our Board of Directors should give it serious consideration for our '89 reunion.



Sidney Brown - 1944

# ADDRESS CHANGES

(Changes Underlined)

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 MORTON, ROBERT, 418 E. Prospect St., Girard, OH. 44420-2636  
 MURPHY, RALPH, 7421 Mayfield Road, Port Richey, FL. 34668  
 NORTON, MRS. GUY (GRACE), 4241 Amy Drive, Mesquite, TX. 75150  
 O'HARA, CHARLES, 1333C Shady Pine Way, Tarpon Springs, FL. 34689  
 PARENTEAU, EARL, 18 Grove Street, Worcester, MA. 01501  
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 WACKER, CHARLES P., 5800 Forest Hills Blvd., #C112, Columbus, OH. 43229-2957

## TAPS



(Since last issue)

FRANKLIN, FLOYD  
Princeton, ID.

KLEINERTZ, WAYNE F.  
LaCrosse, WI.

HAMMER, HYMAN  
New York, NY.

LATZ, WILLIAM F.  
Atlanta, Ga.

HARKLESS, JAMES  
Decatur, IN.

LYKINS, HARRY R.  
Lexington, IN.

HICKS, STANLEY R.  
Denton, TX.

NAREHOOD, CHARLES  
Snow Shoe, Pa.

KELLEY, JIM  
Colorado City, TX.

SAFETY, JOE

## 34th B.G. History Book Progress Report

The publisher reports that much of the materials gathered have been assembled and typed up to reflect proposed final form, awaiting the upcoming committee review. Layout is progressing as in-house writers and editors complete the various sections.

A few more orders for books have been received.

I have just received 91 typed pages of the early history section of the Group (not the Association) for review and corrections and comment on the handling of that portion. Some chronological rework is necessary, and a few additions or expansions are in order for more clarity for the readers not familiar with terminology, abbreviations, procedures, etc. in use at that time. All such revisions and committee review are necessary before typesetting can be done.

The sections with feature stories, maps, action and crew photos, biographies, etc. should be rather large.

Layout for committee review is anticipated for late February.

W.L. McAllister

P.S. For those of you who have not yet ordered your copy and have lost the order blank, just write to:

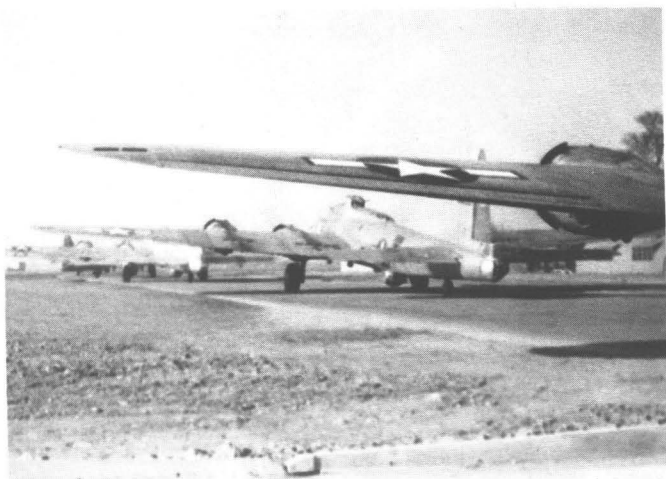
TURNER PUBLISHING COMPANY  
 34th Bomb Group  
 P.O. Box 3101  
 Paducah, KY. 42002-3101



# LIFE MEMBERS TO DATE

(Total 77)

| LAST NAME | FIRST NAME     |            |             |
|-----------|----------------|------------|-------------|
| Ames      | Vernon C.      | Jordan     | Dexter      |
| Anderson  | Keith          | Kiley      | Warren J.   |
| Attridge  | Charles A.     | King       | Edwin L.    |
| Baglio    | Samuel         | Kinney     | Jack A.     |
| Baldea    | Eli            | Kintzel    | Guy         |
| Baughman  | Cleo J.        | Klumsmeier | Emmet       |
| Blair     | James C.       | Lawler     | Edward J.   |
| Blair     | John           | Lipscomb   | Lindsey L.  |
| Boreen    | Lloyd W.       | Livsey     | Ralph       |
| Brown     | Homer          | Lockwood   | Ken         |
| Bush      | Ralph          | Martin     | James F.    |
| Buss      | Paul           | Martin     | Randall     |
| Camp      | John R.        | McAllister | Walter      |
| Coles     | Ira Jr.        | Nendell    | Robert A.   |
| Cutting   | Richard        | Perez      | Juan        |
| Deloye    | Robert B.      | Pettinato  | Gabriel E.  |
| Dunkel    | Richard        | Poulos     | Arthur      |
| Edwards   | Joseph         | Priddy     | Robert T.   |
| Felker    | Walter J.      | Province   | Harold E.   |
| Forister  | Carroll        | Romero     | Cleveland   |
| Gardner   | Marvin (Lefty) | Rose       | Everett M.  |
| Garrison  | Marvin         | Rosequist  | John G.     |
| Gavryck   | Chester        | Russell    | Merle I.    |
| Gay       | Robert S.      | Schrupp    | Dana        |
| Gerlach   | George         | Shee       | Donald      |
| Gradin    | Robert         | Sheesley   | Bryon E.    |
| Gray      | William "Pete" | Steiner    | Robert      |
| Gregorski | Charles C.     | Stevens    | William     |
| Hanson    | Kermit E.      | Strona     | John P.     |
| Hintz     | Eugene         | Summa      | Ray L.      |
| Hood      | Jack           | Tavasti    | Roy         |
| Hosack    | Vincent        | Trutanich  | Anthony     |
| Howarter  | Wayne          | Turnipseed | Samuel      |
| Humphrey  | Clyde          | Ulam       | Ken         |
| Hylar     | Robert D.      | Underwood  | Douglass L. |
| Issacs    | Seymour W.     | Vick       | Herbert     |
| Jalving   | Marvin W.      | Wallace    | Karl        |
| James     | Eugene         | Williams   | Arthur D.   |
|           |                | Willis     | Clyde       |



Aircraft lining-up for take-off on a mission?

## THE RAVING

By: William S. Robins...(With apologies to Edgar Allan Poe)

Once upon a mission dreary....When of combat I'd grown weary,

I had flown a thousand hours....And was sure to fly some more.

When suddenly there came a knocking....Sounded like some ack-ack popping.

Popping like the very devil....Just beneath my bomb bay door.

It is some Jerry, quickly thought I....Wishing to improve his score.

I will use evasive tactics....Even if he does get sore.

Turning then I saw before me....Blacker now than e're before,  
Ack-ack bursting close and heavy....Guess I'd better turn some more.

Opening wide I swung the bomb door....And to my surprise and horror,

Flashing fast and bright beneath me....Were some ninety guns or more.

And above the shrapnel shrieking....I remembered then the briefing,

When they told us with much speaking....That there were only three or four.

Leveling then I made a bomb run....Which was not a very long one.

For the varsity was on duty....And I'd seen their work before.

Then an engine coughed and clattered....And the glass around me splattered.

And I knew they had my number....Just my number, nothing more.

Then at last the bombs were toggled....And alone, away I hobbled.

With some fifty-seven inches....And a feathered number four.

While outside like ducks migrating....Was a drove of M.E.'s waiting.

Waiting all with itching fingers....Just to even up the score.

I had lost my upper turrett....And alone, defenseless, worried.

I was indeed the saddest creature....Mortal woman ever bore.

And each bright and beaming tracer....Coming nearer, ever nearer.

Made my spirit sink within me....Just my spirit, nothing more.

Then at last, to my elation....I caught up with my formation.  
And the M.E.'s turned and left me....By the tens and by the score.

But my wings were torn and tattered....And my nerves completely shattered.

And as far as I'm concerned....The war is o'er, forevermore.

Now I've found the joy of living....And my secret I am giving,  
To the rest of those among you....Who might care to live some more.

For my sinus starts to seeping....Every time they mention briefing.

No more flying, no more combat....No more missions....NEVERMORE!!!

**BALDEA, DAVID E.**  
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San Francisco, CA. 94111

## DARK JOURNEY

(Continued from last issue)

By **WALTER L. McALLISTER**

We taxied out for take-off at Natal somewhere around midnight in order to arrive in Dakar, Africa during daylight hours, but had to shut down the engines and hold in the run-up spot by the runway for more than an hour to wait for a very large and very intense tropical storm to pass. Finally the tower called us to start up again. After the checkout we were cleared for takeoff without landing lights on the "browned-out" field. As we reached about 110 mph with the nose wheel coming off the ground, a tiny hole opened in the solid overcast and allowed a thin shaft of moonlight onto the runway ahead of us. HOUSE OF HORRORS again!!!

Another bomber was just entering the runway a very short distance in front of us, crossing on a taxiway from the filled parking area on our right to the vacant area on the left. Straight ahead and we would cut him in half! I kicked hard left rudder, slammed on left brake, yanked left throttles all the way back, yelled for "landing lights on" — all at the same time — and prayed. With take-off power still on the right engines, the right wing tip lifted a little, helping that B-24 make what was probably the most drastic change of direction in history without ending in a total disaster. As it did so I pulled mixture controls to full-off and called for "ignition switches off." I was sure that, at the very least, part of the right wing would be torn off; but as our now lifeless bird scrunched down into the deep mud of that rain-drenched field and went plowing its way toward the con-

trol tower, I realized that we hadn't hit anything!! Seemingly impossible — but true, only God knows how — maybe that right wing tip had lifted just enough to go over the nose of the other plane; but we had not hit a thing, yet! "The Control Tower!" We came to a slithering halt before we got there, for which we were very thankful. All the guys up in the tower were thankful for that to, but the brigadier general up there wasn't happy about the whole mess. He came storming down and ordered the MP's to "go get that S-O-B taxiing that other airplane and bring him to me!!!" We later heard from a following crew that the culprit was shipped back to the states the next day to meet his fate. His excuse for taxiing across the runway without tower clearance was that he didn't think anybody could have gotten out for take-off that quickly after the storm went by, and he wanted to get away from all those parked airplanes while he gave his engines a test run-up.

Now back to the base of the tower. The crew got out, people congregated about; everybody looked at the airplane, and the base maintenance crew brought hoses and buckets and washed the mud off. After a big inspection with all the available vehicle headlights, portable lights and flashlights, it was declared that no damage to the airplane could be found. We had obviously completed the skidding 35 to 40 degree left turn right at the intersection and all on the paved surface, or we most certainly would have wrecked or damaged the landing gear against

(Continued on Page 16)

# DARK JOURNEY

(Continued from Page 15)

the edge of the taxiway when we crossed it. Plunging immediately into the mud probably saved us from a complete ground loop. Nowadays the plane would undergo a far more extensive inspection and a local flight test, and the crew would probably be hauled off to the hospital for physical exams before proceeding. It was war-time and things were very different then. The airplane was judged to be OK, we declared ourselves to be OK, and the "wheels" asked us what we wanted to do. The consensus was "Let's go!" Somebody reminded us that now it would be getting close to darkness when we landed. It was still "Let's go." We had the tanks topped off to replace the fuel already used in two run-ups and the aborted take-off and went out again.

Some thirteen hours later, as near to the point of total darkness as you could get and still make out the runway outlines, we touched down in Dakar, and were greeted with a terrifying continuous clatter and vibration, the likes of which none of us had ever experienced. I thought "She's finally falling apart." They had neglected to brief us in Natal that we would be landing on a "PSP" strip; pierced steel planking — long sheets of corrugated steel with a lot of holes punched out to reduce the weight and anchored together to form a makeshift runway. After the events of the past few days, I think we all almost suffered group heart failure. We got through the mandatory enroute debriefing, grabbed something to eat, went to our mosquito-net canopied cots and collapsed.

We stayed a couple of nights in Dakar waiting our turn to move on in the stream of bombers headed for England. Weather was delaying some along the line stations ahead. Early on the third night, I believe, we were alerted to prepare for departure to Marrakech, Morocco; again a middle of the night take-off to allow a daylight landing. Things were well blacked out except for blue lights or subdued lighting absolutely necessary to night activities on the ramp area, such as preflight inspection, aircrew loading, etc. Out there one of the 7 or 8 foot tall Senegalese security guards could walk up on you in his size 20 bare feet and tap you on the shoulder before you had a clue that he was even in the area.

Dick and I went in to get our route and destination briefing,

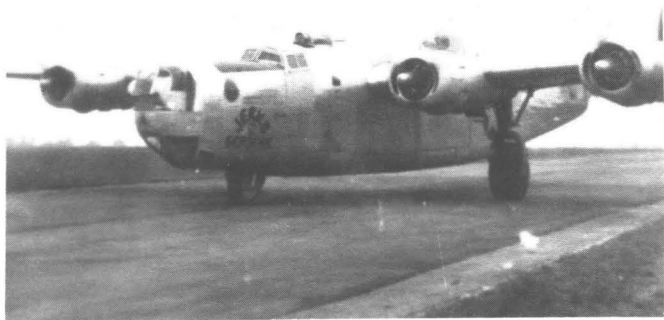
check the weather and make our flight plan; Eli went to navigator's briefing; Bob Smith, our aerial engineer whose title denoted that, when airborne, he was the flight crew chief, went with Ray Englehart, ground crew chief, to perform the preflight inspection of the entire airplane and the engine run-up.

Just as the rest of us were about ready to go out to the airplane, one of the operations officers came to me and said there would be a delay, and that we were to wait inside for further instructions. When I pressed him for more information, all he would say was "It's a problem with the airplane and I've got to get some more people out to help, and we don't want a bunch of crew people milling around in the way." After an hour of this, I caught this same ops officer and demanded to know what was wrong with our plane. He again evaded the point of the question and would only say that "things were progressing and we should soon get further word." We were getting anxious to be on the way before our available daylight would be lost on the other end.

Time dragged on. Finally he showed up again. This time he took me into a separate office and explained why we had been kept in the dark: "You can thank your lucky stars that your two crew chiefs are so thorough in their preflight inspections. They found a piece of wire way up in the corner of a wheel well and knew it didn't belong there. And we can all be thankful that they had sense enough not to try to get it out; otherwise we would have one awful mess out there! Instead they called for our maintenance chief and our own security people who looked it over and they got the bomb disposal specialist out. After a couple of inspection plates were removed, they could see a hand grenade taped up in there!! The wire your guys spotted was anchored so as to pull the grenade pin when you retracted the landing gear!!! We have had four crashes just after take-off recently, and until now we hadn't been able to figure out why. Going down in all those big trees tears them up so badly that it's just about impossible to find anything useful. And we didn't want to come in here and scare the hell out of everybody in the place when we still didn't know what we had here. Now, you can elect NOT to go tonight, or we'll get our people in along with yours and go over everything we've done, and then you can decide. You were just about first in line tonight, so you'll still have a couple of hours of daylight when you get there if you decide to go."

Their people gave us a detailed run-down on how they had removed every inspection plate in the whole airplane and examined it with a fine toothed comb, had unloaded everything in it so as to minutely examine the load items themselves and to look into every nook and cranny where anything bigger than a toothpick could be stuffed. They were real sure that the saboteur could not have removed pieces or panels that would require re-riveting because the noise would have attracted attention. Security of course did not at the time know if someone had managed to sneak through their U.S. and native guards, or had been successful in bribing a guard, or if one of the guards might be an infiltrated enemy agent. All the maintenance men were U.S. military. They assured us that they would "damn-well find out" the answers. They must have for we heard of no more such incidents from following crews or other sources.

Bob and Ray said that they had followed every step of the way and agreed that they couldn't think of anything else that could possibly be done. We decided that maybe the best way to prevent another try at us was to get out of there immediately. Talk about one tense bunch of guys on take-off!! When it came time for gear up, Dick looked at me as if to say, "Are you sure?" Finally I nodded, mostly because we couldn't afford to burn up the extra fuel flying with the gear down. I don't think anybody breathed from the start of the roll until several minutes after



B24 "Jerks Beserks" taxiing out for takeoff.



# PROFILE OF A SENIOR CITIZEN

by: R.D. "Crash" Williams

From LAUREN COTTON - Palm Bay, FL.

A senior citizen is one who was here before the pill and the population explosion. We were here before television, penicillin, polio shots, antibiotics and frisbees. Before frozen food, nylon, dacron, Xerox, radar, fluorescent lights, credit cards, and ball point pens. For us, time sharing meant togetherness, not computers; a chip meant a piece of wood, hardware meant hard ware, software wasn't a word. Coeds never wore slacks. We were before pantyhose and drip dry clothes, before ice-makers and dishwashers, clothes dryers, freezers, and electric blankets. Before men wore long hair and earrings and women wore tuxedos.

We were before Carter, Reagan, Rev. Bakker, Ann Landers, plastic, the 40 hour week, and the minimum wage. We got married first and then lived together. How quaint can we be?

Closets were for clothes, not coming out of, bunnies were small rabbits, and rabbits were not Volkswagens. We were before cup-sizing for bras. Girls wore high collars and thought cleavage was something butchers did. We were before Bataan, Rudolph the Red-nosed Reindeer, and Snoopy...before DDT, vitamin pills, disposable diapers, jeeps, pizza, Cheerios, instant coffee, decaffeinated anything and MacDonalds who?

We thought fast food was what you ate during Lent...we were before Boy George, Elvis, Anne Murray, Dr. Ruth, and Chiquita Banana; before FM radios, tape recorders, electric typewriters, word processors, Muzak, electronic music and disco dancing.

In our day cigarette smoking was fashionable and cigars were a sign of success. Grass was for mowing; Coke was a refreshing drink, and pot was something you cooked in. If we had to explain the NBA, WHL, & NFL, we'd have said: "Alphabet Soup."

We are now part of today's SENIOR CITIZENS...a hardy bunch when you think of how our world has changed...and of the adjustments we have had to make. So, hang in there gang and we will overcome....MAYBE!

---

## DARK JOURNEY

Continued from page 16

we announced "Gear up and locked!" Then the blue drained away and people started looking alive again. If we'd had a gallon of scotch handy, I think we might have killed it right there.

There was not much talking for a long time, but I'm sure that a lot of thankful prayers were being offered. I don't suppose we ever thanked Ray and Bob enough for being so damned good at their jobs. The contemplation of our fate if they hadn't been was so mind-numbing and morbid that I don't think any of us talked about it much again.

Sometime after all this I learned that several of the crew, including Joe Domino, Otto Graff, and Bob and Ray had gone to the plane to try to get some sleep there because their barracks had been insufferably hot, dirty, and filled with mosquitoes. One or more had been awakened by noises under or around the plane, and all had gotten out to investigate. By the time they hit the ground nobody was to be seen, and, at that point, nothing seemed amiss. After Ray and Bob spotted the strange wire and the grenade had been found, they realized that they may actually have been awakened by the saboteur finishing his work.

TO BE CONTINUED

\* \* \* \* \*



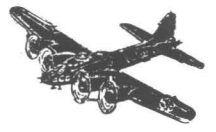
Standing L. to R.: L. Layton, G. Simpson, P. Shull, S. Brown, ?????. Kneeling L. to R.: J. Burton, ? Babcock?



Paul Shull - 1944



# *Then and Now*



## **Bill Kaufman**

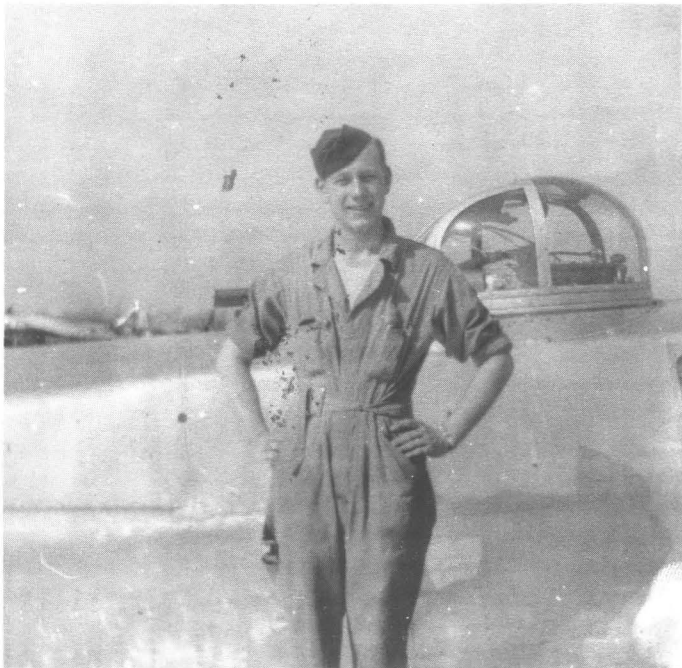


**1944**



**1987**

## **Karl Wallace**



**1944**



**1987**



34th B.G. B17 and ground mechanic taken at Mendlesham, England. Do you know him?

## BLYTH, CALIFORNIA

By: Anonymous

Out on the wind-swept desert  
Blythe is the name of the spot  
Fighting the terrible dust storms  
In the land that God forgot.  
Out in the sand with the airplanes,  
Breathing the hot, dry dust,  
Doing the work of slavemen  
With our motto, "Do it or bust."

Out with the cactus and greasewood,  
Out where the boys get blue,  
Out in the wind-swept desert,  
A thousand miles from you.  
We are the boys of the Air Corps,  
Earning our meager pay,  
Guarding the folks with millions  
For a dollar sixty a day.

No one cares if we're living.  
No one gives a damn.  
Back home we're soon forgotten,  
For we're loaned to Uncle Sam.  
All night the wind keeps howling.  
It's all that we can stand.  
Hell, Folks, we're not convicts.  
We're the defenders of our land.

For the duration we must stand it.  
Much of our lives we will miss.  
So, don't let the draft board get you,  
And be damned sure you don't enlist.  
For we're the boys of the Air Corps,  
And we have plenty of gas,  
For some day we'll catch old Hitler.  
And shove "Blythe" right up his A--.

## THE STRAGGLER

(Author - Unknown)

I saw a Fort knocked out of its group,  
Afire and in despair,  
With Nazi fighters surrounding her,  
As it flew alone back there.

The Messerschmitts came barreling through,  
Throwing a hail of lead  
At the crippled Fort that wouldn't quit,  
Though two of its engines were dead.

But a couple of props kept straining away  
And her guns were blazing, too,  
As she stayed in the air in that hell back there  
And fought, like the Fortresses do.

Four times a fighter belched fire and smoke.  
Four times a fighter went down,  
As the Fortress kept on winging home  
And the nerve of the crew stayed sound.

But time after time the fighters came  
And attacked the lagging plane.  
I knew she couldn't last for long  
And my heart was touched with pain.

Her gunners fought a bitter fight,  
But now the guns were still,  
And a fighter, seeing the time was ripe,  
Came in to make the kill.

A stream of lead ripped into a tank  
And the Fort exploded in two,  
And somewhere the angels prepared a place  
For a weary Fortress crew.



Group at Blythe. Recognize anyone?



From the collection of:

Al Israelsen

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



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## Memories

From LES THOMPSON - Granite City, IL.

We flew the mission to Lenz, Austria. I recall several things about this mission. There were some German aircraft on the field. We were in the cockpit of one of these planes, checking controls, instruments, etc. when a sgt. came by in a Jeep. He told us that they had not yet checked these planes out for booby-traps. Needless to say, we left them in a big hurry.

As we checked those poor souls, the French slave laborers, onto our plane, you could see the distrust on their faces. One little man was clutching a loaf of brown bread to his chest. He kept looking around as if he expected someone to steal it from him. They were all very quiet and we got the impression that they weren't sure they were really free. They spoke only French and we spoke only English, so we couldn't make them understand we were flying them home. As we approached Paris, we could see the Eiffel Tower and felt we should give them a thrill. After urging them to look out of the windows, we flew around the tower. As they saw this there was an instant shout of Viva-La-France heard all over the plane. They knew then that they were home. Until we landed there was constant chatter among them. After landing and checking them off the plane, they were all smiles and each one had to shake hands with everyone on the crew. This was a great thrill!!!

From DARREL W. BULIS - Early, TX.

One of the problems in wartime England was traveling on the trains; slow and crowded, and it took 6 hours to go from London to Ipswich. The only way you could expect to get a seat was to get there early and, when the train came, grab a seat and hold onto it or stand up all the way.

Six of us had arrived at Victoria Station about 2 hours early and boarded the train when it came in. It filled to standing-room only and none of that to spare. As the train pulled out an English Army Major (3 pips on his shoulder boards) came into our compartment and told one of the men to get up as he wanted to sit there. As ranking man, I took up the quarrel and asked the major by what right he could take the seat. He said that he was tired and wanted to avoid standing all the way to Ipswich. I asked if he would do such a thing if we were British. He replied that, if we had been, he wouldn't have to ask. I told him that if he was one of our officers he wouldn't try such a thing, and we would not allow it.

He became very angry and left the compartment, but stayed by the door until the conductor came by. He then slammed the door open and entered with the conductor. The conductor was told to throw us out of the compartment. I told the conductor that he would need a lot more help to do that. The conductor told the major that he could nothing and left.

A short time later, the conductor returned with an American Captain, one of ours, who asked us what happened. When we told him he gave us his name and outfit and took our names, then left. When we arrived at Ipswich and had boarded the truck for the ride to Mendlesham the major showed up with two U.S. MP's. They ordered us off the truck. The same U.S. captain was on the same truck and he told us to stay put and he would handle it. He told the MP's that he was our officer and that he knew all about the matter. He said that he would deal with the major and, if they wanted us, it would have to go through channels. We never heard anymore about it!

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From VINCE DORAN - Anchorage, AK.

I longed to take a tub bath in a nice, clean, warm bathroom; something I hadn't had an opportunity to do in several months. The family I had become acquainted with in London had such a bathroom, and I wrangled an invitation to use it. It was everything I had dreamed of, except the water was only lukewarm, and the room was ice cold. I was grateful anyway, and I realized they had gone out of their way to be accommodating and hospitable.

It wasn't until later that I learned that the fuel ration for such homes was limited to 200 pounds of coke a quarter. This was for everything: cooking, heating, laundry and wash water. Can you imagine trying to exist on such little fuel? Under normal conditions this amount should have lasted only a week in winter. The good people had been too polite to explain wartime shortages. Also I found out the fuel supply was so critical in the U.K. that winter, that often there wasn't any coke at all to buy. They didn't dare use all they had because there might not be any available at the start of the next quarter.

A couple of days after I got back to Mendlesham, I received a small package in the mail. It was my bar of Ivory soap that I had forgotten and left in their bathroom. With it was a note that said, "If this soap means as much to you as it would to us, then you have been without soap since you left us." They were short of that, too. I was so embarrassed that I could hardly face them again. I tried to make up for it by periodically taking them some food that I was able to obtain one way or another.

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