



ENDLESHAM MEMORIES

34TH BOMB GROUP H

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OBSERVATIONS

BACK HOME AGAIN, IN INDIANA. We've had a wonderful four plus months in Florida. The weather was exceptional, even for Florida. We've made many new friends and enjoyed many new or almost forgotten pastimes.

Walt and Ruby McAllister were our guides to life in Florida. They live only a short distance from our condo in Orlando so we saw quite a bit of each other. After more than 20 years away from it, both Rose and I got back into bowling. With the McAllisters we joined a senior bowling league which met every Thursday and totally enjoyed it although I'm unable to approach my average of 20 plus years ago. Thank you, Mac and Ruby.

In February, George Ritchie's son, Tom, and his crew flew the B-1 Bomber into McDill AFB at Tampa and we four were invited to the base by Maj. Gen. Hugh Cox, an old friend of Mac's, to see it. Hugh and his wife, Pat, were most gracious hosts. It was a most impressive experience enjoyed by all. We had the opportunity of inspecting the B-1 up close including a visit to the cockpit. It was most exciting for Mac and me to get familiar with this aircraft. (See photos).



The B-1 Bomber flown by George Ritchie's son, Capt. Tom Ritchie.

The four of us had dinner with Tom at the Officer's Club. Rose and I had met him as a small boy many years ago when we visited the Richies at their home in Fayetteville, NY. It was nice seeing him again.



Walter McAllister and Eli Baldea with Keith Anderson a few weeks before he passed away.

Then, in March, Keith Anderson and Elly Veon came down to Florida and spent several days in the Orlando area. (See photo). This was only about two weeks before he died and we were very fortunate to have been able to visit with him. It seemed he knew he wasn't long for this world and decided to make the best of what time he had left. We'll all miss you, Keith!

This issue is being mailed to all names on our roster, whether paid-up members or not. This is in accordance with the ruling of

Continued on page 2



L. to R.: Eli Baldea, Capt. Tom Ritchie, Ruby McAllister, Maj. Gen. Hugh Cox, Hugh Cox III, Rose Baldea, Walter McAllister, Pat Cox and Julie Harmon.

OBSERVATIONS

Continued from page 1

the membership at Virginia Beach. To those of you who have not yet paid your membership dues, we want you to know that you will be welcomed with open arms. I'm sure you will enjoy the camaraderie of people you knew some 45 years ago. The dues are not a great amount; just \$7.50 per year, for which you will receive four (4) quarterly issues of Mendlesham Memories, an annual roster with addresses, plus the renewal of old friendships and memories. Should yours be a hardship case, let us know. I'm sure something can be worked out.

On other pages in this issue are the notices of upcoming reunions. The B-24 Liberator 50th Anniversary Reunion is from May 17th to the 22nd at Fort Worth, TX. Then the 34th B.G. Reunion from Sept. 14th to the 17th at Shreveport, LA promises to be one of the best yet. I urge you all to try to attend. You'll have a BALL!!

From what we hear, the Seattle reunion in 1990 promises to be a great one. As news arrives I will pass it on to you in future issues. Start making plans for that one.

Again, in this issue, we have included the Scholarship Application forms. If any member has relatives who would like to receive this scholarship, have them fill out the form and send it to Cleveland Romero. The address is on the form.

Also, in this issue, we have included the reservation cards for the Sheraton Pierremont Hotel in Shreveport and the reunion registration forms. Don't wait. Fill them out and send them in. We're all looking forward to seeing you in Shreveport.

Don't forget, I'm still looking for your letters and pictures. "Then and Now" is not included in this issue because nobody took the time to send me any pictures for it. I can only make this newsletter interesting with your help. Without your help there's not much I can do. SEND IN THOSE LETTERS AND PICTURES!!

Enough for now. May you all have a wonderful summer. Rose and I intend to.

Eli Baldea
Editor

PRESIDENTS MESSAGE

As the clock ticks down, Shreveport looms on the horizon. Your committeemen are working. LONNIE and DORABEL CROOK are mainly responsible for preparing and scheduling activities for you. BOB and ESTHER WRIGHT have met with them in the Sheraton Hotel to finalize everything. They say, "Shreveport will be fantastic!!". PLEASE plan to attend....It will be a Reunion of Remembrance...COME ON DOWN!!

In my last message I asked for suggestions on worthy ways to use some of our money. Unfortunately, only one suggestion came forth; for the preservation of the 18th Sqdn. Wall Art. A ballot was sent to the Board of Directors and it was decided to send \$200.00. RANDY MARTIN suggested we solicit you-all for personal donations to assist this worthy work of preserving our memories. You may send your donation directly to: E.W.A.C.S., 35 Briardale, Stevenage Herts, SG11TR, England. Or, make your check out to the 34th B.G., marked for the 18th Sqdn. wall. RAY SUMMA will see it gets to England. Be generous...it's only a piece of paper.

Remember to submit scholarship applications to CLEVELAND ROMERO. He and his committee will make the award in Shreveport. May I ask those concerned with higher education to consider donations to increase our fund. Send NO

money now...See CLEVELAND in Shreveport...talk over the idea...Thank you!

Our Board of Directors will meet Thursday, Sept. 14th, at 8:00 A.M. in the hospitality area. Any member wishing to bring business before the board or nominate a member must submit that in writing 5 days prior to the meeting, according to our constitution. Please mail any communication to me at my home before September 5th.

RAY SUMMA and BOB WRIGHT are meeting to compile our new executive organizational chart, job descriptions and parameters, along with a new and UNIFIED financial system. Our physical and financial growth requires streamlined and flexible changes. Their proposals will be reviewed by the Board of Directors and, if approved, put into practice immediately. ELI BALDEA and RANDY MARTIN will serve as consultants.

A copy of our new 34th Bombardment Group History may be obtained from RAY SUMMA...price \$50.00, postage incl...

Vern Ames reports good progress on our memorial monument. Under his direction the contract and estimates meet our budget and time frame. His committee will have a dedication ceremony that will make you PROUD!!

Gerry Pine will finalize his plans for disbursement of the reunion fund. It is my plan to set the management of all funds to follow the direction of the finance committee, whose procedures will be voted on in Shreveport.

Plans for a return trip to England are in the wind for next year...Keep your ear to the ground...We'll keep you posted.

This issue of Mendlesham Memories is being sent to EVERYBODY ever located thru the efforts of our committee and RAY and HANNAH SUMMA. We invite every former 34th-er to consider joining us in Shreveport. Your chance, possibly, to see a B1 up close, tour the 8th A.F. Museum, lay a wreath or bouquet of flowers on our new memorial, see the POW medal presentation, enjoy food at the NCO club, view a fly-over, bid at the Super-Auction, enjoy our banquet, good fellowship and dancing. Make us HAPPY...Come join us!

Sincerely,
George Ritchie

P.S. To receive every future issue of Mendlesham Memories...send in your dues...only \$7.50 per year.

(Editor's Note: As we go to press we hear that George Ritchie has had a little set-back in the health department. We're sure that, by the time you read this, any wishes for a speedy recovery can be sent to his home address. GET WELL, GEORGE!!)



Bob & Esther Wright and George & June Ritchie when they met in Florida this spring.



Dear fellow members of the 34th B.G.:

Spring has finally arrived and I am glad. We have been home all winter except for a few short jaunts. (I think we are getting cabin fever.) One special trip was to meet for lunch with Dale and Marjorie Finley in Indianapolis at Murphy's Restaurant on St. Patrick's Day. We had a real Irish celebration, with the usual green beer as well as Irish food and plenty of entertainment. The highlights were the singers, accordion players and the bagpipe band. Mark your calendars for next St. Patrick's Day, Dale and Marge, to meet us at Murphy's.

We have lost some of our good friends this season, and it is heartbreaking. As you know, we lost a faithful 7th Sqdn. man, Keith Anderson. Keith had attended all of the 34th B.G. reunions since we found him and enjoyed every one. His last one was Virginia Beach. He passed away a few weeks ago and will be missed by all. Today I received another notice. Daniel Emberton of Westland, MI passed away on April 4th, 1989. We're all getting older so how many good years can we count on? We should all give a thought to attending a 34th B.G. reunion to renew old friendships and make new ones.

We will be attending the 50th Anniversary Celebration of the B24 at Ft. Worth in May. I have talked to the chairman, Bob Vickers, who says 3500 are registered as of April 1st, so you see it will be a "BIGGEE." As Joe Warth (44th B.G.) says, if you miss this one, the 100th celebration is planned for 2039. We have 40 registered from the 34th for this reunion.

As you can see later in this issue, the painting of the 18th Sqdn. emblem on the wall of their Day Room has been saved. It will be restored and preserved by the EWACS Group of East Anglia, England. They did this with no thought of remuneration. I do think we owe them something for their efforts in saving the painting. How about a donation from you all to help in the restoration and preservation? I appeal to all the members of the 34th B.G., especially those of the 18th Sqdn., to help me on this project. Send your donation to me, mark it for the painting, and I will send it to the EWAC Group for their use in this matter.

The Shreveport reunion is shaping up real well and it will be another place to share our war stories with old friends. I find each year that old friendships are strengthened and new ones acquired. Let us plan to attend this one before it is too late!

Let's all bring along a "First-Timer" to share our experience. We hope to see you all in Shreveport in September.

Hannah & Ray Summa

Don't Forget To Send Your Dues

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



L. to R.: Gene James, Jack Ashburn, Fred Schoch, William Burnell, Arnold Prillman, Tom Wright.

OLD AGE IS HELL

The body gets stiff; you get cramps in your legs,
And corns on your feet as big as hen's eggs;
Gas on your stomach; elimination is poor.
Take Ex-Lax at night and then you're not sure.

You soak in the tub or your body will smell.
It's like I said, folks, "Old Age is Hell!"
Your teeth start decaying; your eyesight is poor.
Hair falling out all over the floor.

Sex life is short; it's a thing of the past.
Don't kid yourself, friend, even that doesn't last.
Can't go to parties; don't dance anymore.
Just to put things mildly, you're hell of a bore.

Liquor is out; you can't take a chance.
Your bladder is weak; might pee in your pants.
Nothing to plan for; nothing to expect;
Just the mailman coming with your Security check.

Now be sure your affairs are in order.
And your will is made out right,
Or on the way to the graveyard
There will be a hell of a fight!

You feel pretty good. You look fairly well.
Thank God you're alive; "OLD AGE IS HELL."

Mendlesham Memories

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Editor Eli Baldea
2576 Brookwood Drive
Crown Point, IN 46307

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

REUNION — 1989

TO ALL 34TH BOMB GROUP MEMBERS:

The reunion committee has made arrangements for the 34th Bomb Group to meet at the Sheraton Pierremont in Shreveport, LA. Shreveport is adjacent to Barksdale Air Force Base which is the home of the 8th Air Force. The 8th Air Force is constructing a museum and an avenue of vintage aircraft. The 34th will be installing and dedicating a memorial to all 34th personnel at the museum site.

The committee has been very fortunate to have a native son, Lonnie Crook. Lonnie has coordinated activities between the 34th and Barksdale A.F.B. He has put in a lot of time working on this and the committee thanks him. We urge all members that live nearby to attend. You can act as guides for those of us that are not acquainted with the city and its points of interest.

There will be two registration forms for you to complete and send. The form for the hotel is to be sent to the hotel with at least one night's room rate (\$55.00). The other form is for the meals and activities. This form is to be sent to Robert H. Wright, 411 Parkovash Ave., South Bend, IN 46617. Enclose the money for meals and activities you wish to participate in.

For those of you that wish to play golf — you'll find instructions in this issue. See George Ritchie; he has this outing under control.

When you arrive at the hotel, register with the hotel first, then come to the 34th's registration desk and sign in with Bob Wright and his crew of ladies. They will issue to you the credentials you have singed up for.

We'll see you there.

Thanking you,
Your Reunion Committee
Gerald Pine
Harold Rutka
Robert Wright

P.S. RV's may park in the hotel parking lot.

● — SUPER AUCTION — ●

This will be a special kind of auction. We will have "silent bidding", selected door prizes, raffles, and the "auction block." This variety will move your gifts faster and more smoothly to the new owners.

We ask everyone to bring something of exceptional value and local interest. A few suggestions to spark your imagination: Antiques, works of art, small appliances, cameras, 100 shares of a low-priced stock, your hobby creations, jewelry, sports equipment, airplane rides, amusement park passes, hotel, motel, resort weeks or weekends, condo, vacation home or time-share periods, golf packages or a free foursome at your private club obtained from your Pro, even agricultural products. Managers and public relations people are only too happy to grant a hide-away weekend or a mini vacation for advertising purposes.

Please be generous as in past years and bring your gift selection to the Auction. Money raised will help defer reunion expenses and the Board of Directors will direct where the surplus balance goes.

Thank you!

Your Super Auction Committee

GOLF..TENNIS..JOGGING..ETC. INFORMATION

Golf and tennis are available Wednesday and Thursday. We will meet in the lobby at 8:30 A.M. each day. You will be responsible for your own equipment. Transportation will be by private autos or shared cabs. (Rates are reasonable — course is 3 miles away)

GOLFERS - Pay \$8.00 green fees and \$6.50 each cart fee to the Pro Shop on arrival. There will be a \$2.00 "prize money" assessment. Bring your handicap if you have one...otherwise, we will assign one.

TENNIS PLAYERS - Lonnie Crook has available local courts at a reasonable rate. Details at the hotel. Bring your racquets and sneakers.

JOGGERS - Plenty of space. We promise good weather but in case of rain, no jogging in the lobby or halls. Jogging "in place" permitted in the bar and hospitality room. Jog anytime, you are on your own.

LADIES - Bring your dancing shoes. ENJOY!!

Your Committee On Athletics

8TH A.F. MUSEUM AND MEMORIAL WALKWAY BARKSDALE A.F.B.

All members of the 34th Bomb Group are welcome to visit the museum while in Shreveport. Because of the generosity of former members of the 8th Air Force this museum with its Memorial Walkway has become a reality.

We wish to remind our members that they are encouraged to donate any pieces of memorabilia they may have. Please bring them to the reunion and contact Mr. "Buck" Riggs, who is the curator. Buck and his wife are volunteers and have found this has become a full-time position. Remember, all at no pay. The least we can do is contribute something. Yes, they do accept checks. Please see your way clear to assist them in their work. They deserve our help in making their work appreciated.

"Thank you for responding to my call for help."

Your President
George Ritchie

From Wally Brauks we have the following:

All Ex-POW's, widows, and next-of-kin of Ex-POW's are requested to bring their POW Medals to the reunion at Shreveport, Sept. 14-17, 1989, for formal presentation.

If you do not have your POW Medal you must apply for it. They are not sent automatically. A national 24-hour, toll-free telephone number (1-800-821-8139) offers specialized assistance for former prisoners of war. Calls received in Washington, D.C. after normal office hours are recorded for response the next business day. If you choose not to call the toll-free number, you may contact any of the National Service Organizations, i.e., DAV, VFW, American Legion, etc. It takes approximately 50 days from the time you apply for you to receive the POW Medal.

REMEMBER, BRING YOUR P.O.W. MEDAL TO SHREVEPORT.

Shreveport, LA. September 14 - 17, 1989

RV PARKS



For those traveling by RV and not staying at the hotel, Lonnie Crook has sent us the following information on RV parks:

1. Campers RV Center, 7700 West 70th St., Shreveport, LA 71129, (318) 938-5441. Located 13 mi. west of hotel on same street.
2. Shreveport-Bossier KOA, 6510 West 70th St., Shreveport, LA 71129, (318) 687-1010. Located 10 mi. west of hotel on same street.
(Both of the above have usual hook-ups and services. Reservations probably not needed).
3. West Gate Park, 875 West Gate Lane, Bossier City, LA 71110, (318) 742-1371. About 9 mi. east of hotel and just outside main gate to Barksdale.
4. Davidson's Mobile Home Park, Hwy. 71 South, Bossier City, LA 71112, (318) 747-1456. About 7 mi. east of hotel and 2 to 3 mi. south of Barksdale.
(No. 3 and No. 4 are mobile home parks with 3 or 4 overnight spaces and no services except water, electricity, maybe sewer. Rates are cheaper than #1 and #2, and reservations are advisable).



FLASH-SUPER BONUS

As we go to press we've received this last minute bit of SUPER NEWS! Barring unforeseen circumstances, S.A.C. will have a B1-B Bomber at Barksdale A.F.B. during our stay at Shreveport. The aircraft commander is expected to be a 34th B.G. member's offspring. Expected arrival at Barksdale, with a fly-by, will be at 4:00 P.M. Thursday, Sept. 14th.

The plane will be open for inspection, especially for the 34th B.G., for two (2) full days. Any ladies who wish to visit and enter the aircraft are requested to wear slacks and flat or low shoes.

A vote of thanks is due from the 34th to Ralph Bush for coordinating this event. Thanks, Ralph!



Crew of "Duke the Spook". Standing L. to R.: Kramschuster, May, Tew and Mierendorf. Kneeling L. to R.: McLean, Nelson, Neal, Bawker, Blake and Clarkson.

TO ALL INACTIVE MEMBERS

This "BUDS" For You!!

For the past 12 years many members of YOUR bomb group have been actively working to develop an association to make us PROUD!

The 1989 Shreveport reunion wants YOU to come judge for yourself. Under the leadership and direction of Lonnie and Dorabel Crook, your local reunion contacts, and Gerry and Wanda Pine's reunion committee, we have built a program deserving of your inspection and consideration.

YOU will experience the camaraderie of your former team members. YOU will enjoy fine accommodations, food, drink and conversation. YOU will swell with PRIDE, knowing you are part of this fine organization. Please participate. All Ex-POW's will be presented their medals.

YOU must allow your wife and/or family to enjoy the wonderful feeling of admiration and respect that permeates us all!

Please...No excuses this year...WE WANT YOU!!

Sincerely,
Your President
George Ritchie

Simplify! Become a Life Member



JOAN STEDMAN - Stowmarket, England

Thank you so much for the beautiful book — I find it most interesting reading — it takes me back to those war years when you and all those others helped to make the serious times so much more enjoyable. Most nostalgic.

This winter has been one of the mildest on record, thank heaven. I was eighty the other day, but must say I don't feel it except for rheumatism in my ankles which makes walking rather difficult. However, that is something most people have to put up with (rheumatism, I hear), so I am lucky. Gerald and Loraine and family are well. Loraine gave me a lovely birthday party, bless her.

Thank you again for the book. Do hope you are all well.

★★★★★

BILL CREER - Las Vegas, NV. (Response to Mrs. Stedman)

We are pleased you enjoyed receiving the 34th BG book. Walt McAllister and the committee put a great effort into the compilation. It has been well received by the members of the group. It is appropriate, in my view, to recognize the Stedman family contribution to our well-being during that critical period in the "PREFACE."

Our congratulations on being "80" years young. Must admit at "76" I don't feel far behind. Viv joins me in sending our best wishes. Give Gerald, Loraine, etc. our regards and appreciation for the help in looking after the 34th Memorial.

★★★★★

FRED SCHOCH - Spokane, WA.

Thanks for sending us the pictures of the reunion at Virginia Beach. You folks did a super job and we all want to give our thanks again. We are making plans for Shreveport in Sept. We think the "Auction, USA" is a must.

Had Christmas greetings from Jean and Vince Doran and they are planning on the reunion in Shreveport. We sure look for his articles in MM. I think he puts into words what we all remember 45 years ago. He should be our feature writer and encouraged. We all need help in past memories.

We sure would like to know the name of our ground crew mechanic. Our hardstand was #16 off the taxi-way from runway 16. I recall we were close to the backyard of a local farm house.

★★★★★

JOHN J. FLOOD - Valrico, FL.

Many thanks for the newsletter. It was good to hear from you! Many memories were stirred up, some pleasant, some painful. I will do my best to be at Shreveport. Also, if all goes well, I hope to go to Mendlesham in 1990.

JEAN P. BOULIANE - Houston, TX.

Ray Brown and his wife, Harriet, are coming over from San Antonio for a visit in early March. We are going to look over an assortment of memorabilia that I have hoarded for years from our days at Mendlesham. We'll try to identify certain photos before bundling the entire business together to send to you for disposition as you may choose.

Unfortunately, neither Ray nor I could make the Virginia Beach reunion, but the newsletter provided an absorbing account of activities and a fulsome picture display.

Recently I returned from a trip to Mexico where I visited with Walter Shore who lives at Jocotepec near Guadalajara, where I will be moving in about a month. Walter looked over some of the items mentioned above and identified a few subjects. Perhaps if you print some of the pictures in future MM's, your readers will recognize themselves or long lost friends from another time.

★★★★★

FRED F. SAMPSON - New Hartford, NY.

There I was, sitting in my favorite chair in the living room on Christmas Eve, watching the television station which showed logs burning in a fireplace with background Christmas carols, etc. Dozing, just half awake, my wife taps me on the shoulder and said, "There's someone on the phone who hasn't seen or spoke to you in the last 44 years." I got up and said "Hello", and I heard, "Is that you, Sammy?." It was my waist gunner, Bill Moore, who I called "Tex." What a Christmas Eve surprise!

We talked and he began recapping some of the good times we had, like "Sammy, remember the time we were coming back over the channel kind of low and you intercommmed up from the ball turret to tell me to look at all those sea gulls. Next thing I knew, there were feathers all over the channel and I can still feel the vibration of the ball turret when you let go."

We talked on the phone for about a half hour, going over this and that. Sure was great to hear from him. He is still in San Angelo, Texas. Now I know where 3 crew members are and will still try to find out where the rest of them are.

After we hung up I again settled down in my chair, half dozing again, but with a great big smile on my kisser!

★★★★★

ROGER A. FREEMAN - Essex, England

I was surprised and delighted to receive the beautiful book on the history of the 34th. As yet I haven't had time to read it but on turning the pages I can see that it has been well produced and is most attractive. I am sure it will be very popular with the members of your association and, of course, it is a vast improvement on the picture book produced at the end of hostilities. Congratulations and many thanks for your kindness in sending me a copy.

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Remainder of the crew of "Dinah Mite" after the splashdown of April 5, 1945.

Notes From Our Friends

Continued from page 6

BOB ST. LAWRENCE - Hillsboro, NH.

I retired from my job last June after working 38 years for one company. Figured that was long enough. Now I am working part time during the summer at a golf course. Don't make much money, but don't have any stress and strain, either. My wife works at a doctor's office so I have assumed some of the duties of a housewife. She hasn't fired me yet so I guess I'm doing a passable job. She's five years younger than I so she'll be working a while longer.

We are looking forward to spring as we like to go hiking in the White Mountains a hundred miles north of here. There are many marked trails to walk and the peace and quiet are really something. A couple of years ago we went Heli-hiking in the Canadian Rockies of British Columbia. This year we hope to hike in Colorado. We are spending our children's inheritance traveling.

SAM BAGLIO - Exeter, PA.

From the bottom of my heart, "I THANK YOU!" I especially want to thank those of you who sent mementos from the reunion in Virginia Beach and to those of you who telephoned me in my hospital room the night of the banquet and the over 200 people who signed the menu and program at the banquet. I surely realize that the above acts of kindness played a major roll in my recovery for which I say, "Thank you, God."

It was very disappointing not being able to go to the reunion as I had planned. When the angioplasty failed to correct my problem, surgery was necessary on the day I had planned to be in Virginia Beach.

That is all behind me now. I've begun making plans for the Shreveport reunion and am hoping to see all of you, especially my crew, at the Sheraton Pierremont Hotel in September. Let's all try to repeat the "1984 REUNION IN NASHVILLE" with that tremendous attendance of our crews.

FRED BERGLUND - Englewood, FL.

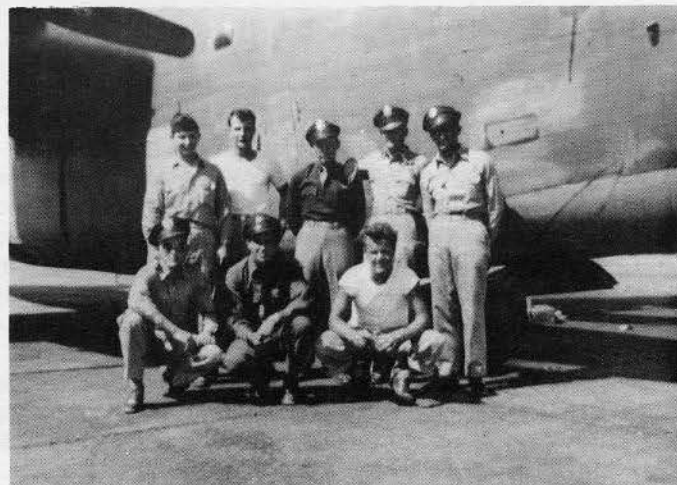
Saw the picture in the March issue of the "Sex Machine", no doubt a very sexy B-17. I remember Louis Gluek, the bombardier pictured on the far right. When Louis and I were getting out of the service his father met us at Ft. Snelling, MN to drive us home. They were of the Gluek Brewery family. I asked Mr. Gluek what he thought of the famous (or infamous) Glueks Stite, a green colored bottle of ale called the "Green Death" by all who drank it in WWII. He said he had never tried it! We had an offer at one base that anyone who could drink six bottles of Stite and walk out under their own power could drink for nothing.

I called the Gluek family a few years ago and they sadly reported that Louis, the 34th Bombardier, had passed away.

GEORGE RITCHIE - Swansboro, NC.

The Mendlesham Memories arrived today and I just want you to know that I feel you are doing a fine job. The officers, board of directors, and, I am sure, the membership appreciate your efforts. This publication is the "adhesive" that binds us together and all of us want you and Rose to know of our appreciation and gratitude. These feelings also embrace Ray and Hannah Summa because we know that their input and assistance are great. On behalf of the entire membership, we "Thank You, All."

I would also like to remind the membership that their contributions make for a more interesting newsletter and invite all to contribute some stories and reflections.



Standing L. to R.: Bowers, Duffelmeier, Anderson, Hayes and Maw. Kneeling L. to R.: McPherson, Gibbons and Gray.

EARL STRAWDER - Sanford, FL.

Merle and Rosalie Russell, who now live in Granby, CO came down to see me lately. He brought me a tape of the O'Grady crew reunion at Rev. Donald Forsman's residence in El Paso, TX this past November. It was great to see my crew again since I was unable to make it.

We visited Orlando together and had a wonderful dinner with Weyman and Carol Carver. He was our co-pilot. Don't think I'll be able to make it to Shreveport as I'm going to our 50th graduation reunion from Moultrie H.S. in Moultrie, GA.

LaREE (ALVIN) GIBBONS - Clearfield, UT.

Alvin passed away on Sept. 20, 1984. He had gone on a 3 day fishing trip with 2 friends. They went to bed and he never woke up. He died in his sleep without any sign of a struggle.

Alvin often talked of his experiences with the 34th B.G. and I am sure he would have loved attending reunions and renewing acquaintances. He spoke so often of Bowers, Murphy and Hayes and tried several times to locate them. He had many fond memories of them.

I appreciate your efforts to find him more than you know. Please keep me informed of your activities as I feel a small part of your group. I received my experiences second hand, but over and over. Thanks again.

GLENN R. GOODNOUGH - Portsmouth, VA.

I'm finally getting around to thanking you for the very nice picture you sent of us taken at the reunion. You and Walt were busy persons that night, acting as "official photographers." I'm so glad you were able to get all six of us in the picture. Thanks again.

VINCE DORAN - Anchorage, AK.

In one of the stories in MM, I told about landing a B-17 at our base after a mission behind a plane that spilled a 2000 lb. bomb on the runway right in front of us. In the March issue, Ray Kubly wrote that he was the bombardier of that plane. He remembers it as only a itty-bitty 250 or 300 lb. bomb. I have two explanations for the discrepancy:

1. My wife, Jean, says that I add 100 lbs. to the bomb every time I tell the story.

2. At the time we swerved to miss it, while it was still rolling down the runway, it LOOKED like a 2000 pounder!

Continued on page 8

Notes From Our Friends

Continued from page 7

BOB KORF - San Bernardino, CA.

I turned senile at 70 and entered my own car in the reinstigated Mexican Road Race. Judge Penick and I were 2nd through the worst (best) mountains. On a long straight part we blew the engine at 155 mph. We blew off John Von Newman in a Ferrari, several Porsches, many Jags, and a Maserati. It cost me \$4200.00 and six months. It is tough for a guy 72 to get a good sponsor!

My old combat buddy, Johnny Soler, and I were in the 7th under Roy Tavasti. We found an old coal yard office where we could get some sleep. Bill Fandel was good about it but Tavasti was tough on Soler.

ELLY VEON (KEITH ANDERSON) - Mantua, OH.

Keith got to read the article he had written in the last issue. He sure got a kick out of that one. One thing for sure — the 34th Bomb Group Reunions were the high-lite of his life. Always looked forward to getting ready for them. We had great times and many wonderful memories at those reunions. I only wish he could have lasted a little longer for he really looked forward to the one coming up at Shreveport. However, through the winter he knew we wouldn't make this one so we were thankful for the ones we had together. I feel honored and proud to know that the 34th accepts me as one of you. Thank you.

I wish to express my thanks for the telephone calls, cards and letters at the time of Keith's death. Also to those of you who sent memorial contributions in memory of him. The Kent Hospice (for terminal cancer) wanted to send their special thanks to all of you out there.

JACK ASHBURN - Hastings, NE.

Always look forward to receiving the Mendlesham Memories. Keep up the good work.

CHARLES HARMON - Fair Haven, VT.

Enjoyed the March issue. My wife, Grace, has had M.S. for 26 years so we get our traveling from books and magazines. Keep up the good work.

AL BECKWITH - Stow, OH.

Keith Anderson was a great friend and a very sincere supporter of the "34th Bomb Group" and the members he had personal contact with. My pleasures in life include those times I've spent with Keith and his friends.

I look forward to your next reunion. Please keep me posted on anyone in our area that might like to share cost and airplane for the trip down. Depending on what Ellie Veon plans to do, I will have up to 4 seats available.

(Ed. Note: Contact Al at Commercial Aviation Corp., P.O. Box 1606, Stow, OH 44224 if you're interested in flying down with him.)

**Sit Down Now
and
Send In
Your Dues**

NEWS FROM HERE AND THERE

From HAROLD RUTKA we have the following:

1. Permanent 34th B.G. "Name Tags" are available at \$4.00 each. Tags are Azure Blue with Yellow letters; 3 inches wide and 2 inches high with a pin back. About 103 members and wives wear them at reunions. Send orders to me at address below.

2. The 34th B.G. is preparing to have a reunion at Mendlesham at the end of May, 1990. The dates have not been set until we find out when Memorial Day will be in England. During the past three reunions we have visited Mendlesham and our Memorial, hosted the Ladies of the British Legion at dinner, visited St. Mary's Church, the local pubs for lunch, Mattingly Cemetery, the 390th Control Tower Museum, Duxford Imperial War Museum, Hendon Royal Air Force Museum, and finally, into London for shopping, shows and sight-seeing. We are interested in people contacting persons and companies arranging tours for their suggestions and proposals. We would like your opinion on where to go, what to see, and the length of tour.

For both of the above items, contact:

Harold Rutka
Eleven East Artavia St.
Duluth, MN 55811

From VERN AMES we have the following:

Father Fred Brooks, our Chaplain, has asked to be replaced. All members are asked to send any suggestions for a suitable replacement to Vern Ames, 70 Greenfield Dr., Tonawanda, NY 14150.

The new 8th Air Force Museum had its grand opening at Barksdale AFB in January, 1989. The museum, complete with display of restored WWII aircraft, focuses on the history of air bombardment, especially strategic bombing.

On display are memorabilia from the beginning of air force operations. All of the exhibits trace either the physical pattern of operations or follow the movements of air and ground crews. This collection, presentation, and accumulation has taken over 10 years to bring into reality. The varied collection of art and photographs spellbind the visitor as they reflect on air battles, visualize air strikes and review the results of the combat missions through a fine collection of strike photos.

The exterior displays are meant to excite not only the former airmen of the 8th AF, but everyone who followed their exploits. There you will find P-51 Mustangs, the B-17 Flying Fortress, the P-47 Thunderbolt, the B-24 Liberator and more from WWII. Then you will find aircraft that saw service in the Korean conflict thru the Vietnam war. Strategic Air Command has presented a B-47 Stratojet plus the fighters of that era.

The museum curator is H.D. "Buck" Rigg who heads up a dedicated volunteer group that staff and service the museum.

Outside, along the aircraft static display, is the Memorial Walk where, on September 16th, the 34th B.G. (H), the oldest group in the 8th Air Force, will dedicate their memorial to their fallen comrades. Their memorial has a special location between a B-17 and B-24 on static display along the walkway. You are invited to attend.

The museum is located at the north entrance of the base and admission is free. COME ON DOWN!!

News From Here and There

Continued from page 8

COMMERCIAL SOURCES FOR MEDALS

George Ritchie writes that he has received a list of sources of medals from Randolph Records. Please note that this list does not necessarily constitute Air Force sanction of any or all of these individual companies. If you wish a catalog of available medals, write to one or all of these:

1. Kel-Lac Uniforms, 7016 West Highway 90, San Antonio, TX 78227
2. Sugerose, 3419 E. Commerce St., San Antonio, TX 78220
3. N.S. Meyer, Inc., 215 E. 91st St., New York, NY 10028
4. Hilborn & Hambuger, 15 E. 26th St., New York, NY 10010
5. Nash's Ribbons, 14359 Redwing Dr., Moreno Valley, CA 92388, PH: 1-800-433-3186 (Except California)

If any of you are in need of medals which you have not received or have lost, write to the above companies and we're sure you'll be able to correct that deficiency.

From TURNER PUBLISHING CO., who published our latest 34th B.G. History Book, we have the following:

Turner Publishing Co. will publish a comprehensive history of the B-24 in conjunction with the 50th Anniversary reunion. This book will take the participation and assistance of every unit associated with the B-24 to be both successful and complete.

We will mail a brochure announcing the project to everyone involved with the legendary Liberator. This brochure will explain the book and invite everyone to participate in this historic project.

We firmly believe the time is right for this tribute to the B-24 Liberator, the workhorse of the bombers, and the people behind her. This book will be sought out not only by those associated with the plane but also military and civilian libraries and everyone interested in military history. We ask for the support of each and every one of you.

The Collings Foundation, who are restoring the only flying B-24 known, again write us that they are in need of funds. Progress is going well on the restoration and they hope to have the plane ready for the B-24 50th Anniversary Reunion at Fort Worth in May. Anyone interested in helping can send their donations to:

The Collings Foundation
River Hill Farm
Stow, MA 01775

We hear via the "Grapevine" that in December of this year, 1989, Ray and Hannah Summa will be celebrating their 50th Wedding Anniversary. Although we do not have an exact date, I'm sure this is enough advance notice that we'll all be interested enough to ask them at the reunion in Shreveport.

VETERANS OF THE BATTLE OF THE BULGE

We have been requested to advertise that the VBOB, established in 1981, is looking for new members. It was organized to help commemorate that historic battle. If you are interested but have never been awarded the Ardennes Campaign Battle Star, you can still be an associate member with full membership privileges. Dues are \$10.00 per year. For more information write to:

Vice President for Membership
Veterans of the Battle of the Bulge
P.O. Box 11129
Arlington, VA 22210-2129

LOU DUBNOW (446th B.G.) writes:

Recently I visited the Air Force Museum at Dayton, OH and enjoyed it immensely. I found one thing lacking... "a WWII ETO Control Tower". I'm sure that many of the air and ground personnel would be interested in seeing the interior of a typical tower and the primitive equipment we had. I would like to see the tower built at Dayton, together with ambulance, crash truck, fire truck, checkered caravan, etc., just the way it was, way back in 1942-45. It would be a good project for the 8th A.F.H.S. to undertake. It wouldn't be TOO difficult to build, nor too expensive, either.

If you'd like to see a WWII ETO-type Control Tower at the Air Force Museum at Dayton, please write to: Lou Dubnow, 1189 Galesmoore Court, Westlake Village, CA 91361, and I'll see to it that your card or letter gets into the right hands.

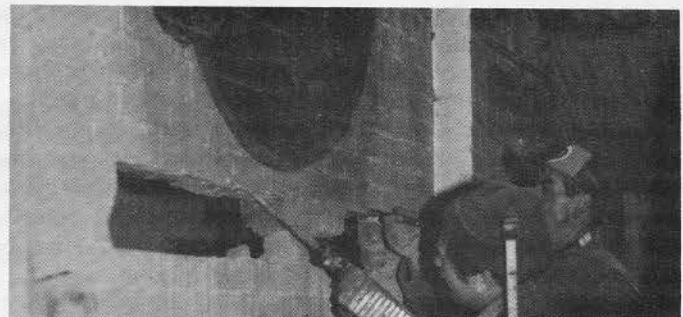
18TH SQDN. DAY ROOM WALL ART

From Mr. Bill Espie of the Eighth Wall Art Conservation Society (EWACS) we have the following report:

Mission Accomplished! The mural has been removed keeping our success rate at 100%. Our artist will have to do some restoration work on the painting. Damage was incurred when the owner of the factory knocked down half the wall, which in turn lifted some of the paint off the brickwork. This work will be done during the summer months and a protective coating will be applied which will give it a new lease on life, well into the 21st century.

As you already know, the painting is now housed in the "Red Feather Club" at Horham, home of the 95th B.G. The "Red Feather Club" is being turned into a museum and part of this will become an 8th USAAF Wall Art Centre. If anyone in your group has any photographs taken during 1944-1945 with any crews or individuals in front of the mural, we would sure appreciate receiving them. They would be nice to display with the painting. Anything sent for the display would be gratefully received.

All our work is sponsored by ourselves. We do not have anyone to back us, just some loyal and sympathetic friends who lend us generators and cutting equipment and the USAF to provide the transportation. All help is appreciated.



Beginning the job of removing the wall mural from the 18th Sqdn. Day Room wall.



Moving the wall mural into the "Red Feather Club" by manpower.



9 Oct. 1988 — Fr. Douglas Culver, Vicar of Christ Church, Bayfield, WI.



ROSE'S CORNER

Greetings to all of you who are taking the time to read this column. I feel that I must make another plea for the St. Mary's Church in Mendlesham, so bear with me, please!

The following two words and their meaning are very important to the cause that we should all be backing. They are: Need and Solace.

NEED: A necessity created by some emergency or crisis.

SOLACE: An easing of loneliness or discomfort. Something or place that eases and consoles.

These two words tell the tale of St. Mary's Church, where some of our young boys turned to during the dark days of the war and where there is a real NEED today. We can erase the present day discomfort by sending money to be used for repair of the floor or putting in a loo, which they've never had.

The parishioners have adorned a corner, on the inside of the church, with flowers and a list of names of our young men who lost their lives and pray for them every week. This memorial corner will always be there and, being that this church has withstood the ravages of time (built before 1066), it will be there for many more decades to come.

Let's send the money now so that we can see the results of its use when we get to England next year, the Good Lord willing. How many years can we say that we will be here to make that long distance trip? If we look upon our mortality, we must get this project done and hope to find another good cause, whatever it may be.

Always look forward, but stop once in a while to look back and see what you have done in the past.

My column may look a little different this time but attention had to be brought to this cause. Also, I haven't received any input from you out there. I was hoping for some letters to let me know if you've tried any more of the recipes I gave you. Let me hear from you!

With my best regards and wishes to see you all in Shreveport!

Rose

Special Notice

At our meeting in Virginia Beach last September the hat was passed for donations to Rev. Douglas E. Culver's church in Wisconsin, which was badly in need of funds. A total of \$500.00 was collected and given to Harold Rutka to deliver to the reverend. Following is Harold's report and Rev. Culver's response:

On 9 October, 1988, Gen and I left Duluth and traveled to Christ Episcopal Church in Bayfield, WI, where we met Rev. Douglas E. Culver and Lucy Culver. We attended services and presented the check for \$500.00 at the Offertory and explained how the money was raised at our reunion at Virginia Beach. We posed with the treasurer, Esther Thayer, Vicar Rev. Culver, and Lector Robert Tucker after the services, presenting the check. (See photo).

The church was established in 1856; the nave of the present building was erected in 1870. A luncheon was held at the Rittenhouse Restaurant; the food was excellent. It was a pleasure to take the day off and spend time with such fine people that make you feel that you have known them for many years. If any of you are in the Bayfield, WI area, stop by and say "Hello" to Culver and Lucy. Services are at 11:00 A.M. on Sundays.

Harold Rutka

To the Members of the 34th Bombardment Group (H):

On behalf of the congregation of Christ Church, and myself, I wish to extend our deepest thanks for your most thoughtful and generous gift to our church. Thanks, also, to Harold and Genevieve Rutka for driving over from their home in Duluth to make the formal presentation. The whole congregation was greatly impressed.

Personally, both my wife, Lucy, and I were deeply touched, having been part of the Group from the very beginning at Blythe. Your thoughtfulness merely confirms what I have known through the years since we all flew together; that the 34th was (and still is) the best outfit in the whole Corps.

Thanks again, and
All Blessings,
Fr. Douglas Culver
Vicar of Christ Church

A FUNNY THING HAPPENED ON THE WAY TO THE WAR



by HAROLD PROVINCE

The event I am about to relate occurred subsequent to the "bomb on the runway" happenings in Vince Doran's story. The Wm. H. Wilcox crew engaged in considerable, oft-times heated, discussion regarding the reaction of the airplane following the release of the bomb load. Sitting in the nose I was never aware of any particular reaction of the plane, but the waist and tail gunners said they felt the plane jump when the bombs were released. On this particular raid I felt I would be especially aware of the feel of ten five-hundred pounds bombs leaving the ship.

We finally made the IP and the bomb run. When the smoke bombs on the lead plane broke away I hit the SALVO switch and sent two and a half tons of bombs on their way. And I was aware of their leaving! It felt like someone had run into the plane with a bulldozer. I SURELY DID FEEL THE LIFT WHEN THE 5000 LBS. LEFT THE SHIP.

While I was musing on why I had never before felt such a response the intercom crackled and the waist gunner said, "Hey nose, you've got a bomb hung-up back here!" And I thought "How can that happen? It's never happened before." For the next few minutes I tried every way I had been taught to get rid of that bomb. That darned bomb wasn't about to let go, regardless of what I did to get rid of it. Since we were leaving the target area we decided to temporarily table the issue until we were under more favorable conditions.

As we headed back toward friendly lines and lost some altitude, I polled the crew to see what their reactions might be to returning to Mendlesham with a de-fused bomb on the bomb rack which would be safe and give no-one concern about being able to land safely. All the crew were willing to land with the bomb EXCEPT our flight engineer, Tony Courtrous. He remembered the "bomb on the runway" and wasn't about to let our plane land with a bomb aboard, fused or defused. Wilcox then ordered me to see what I could do to get rid of the bomb after we lost a little altitude and were closer to friendly territory.

Since I had tried every way I knew to get rid of the bomb, I decided to go to the bomb bay and see why it had not released. I took my chute and portable oxygen bottle and made my way to the bomb bay to find that "the No. 2 bomb" was hung low on the right outboard rack. The salvo operation normally released the bombs in rapid sequence with just a slight delay between releases. What we felt was one or two bombs falling and hitting on the hung-up No. 2 bomb. No wonder it felt like a bulldozer hitting the plane!

By this time we were approaching the Zeider Zee and figured that the least damage to the Dutch would be to drop the bomb into the Zee where it could explode harmlessly. With my chute on one "D" ring and the bomb bay walkway rope hooked into the other "D" ring I sat down on the walkway and leaned over to see why the bomb had hung up. It was readily apparent — the electronic release had functioned properly but the arm had managed to trip without taking the bomb shackle arm with it. I motioned to Tony to open the doors and then leaned over to try to throw the shackle arm. The release arm prevented the shackle arm from releasing and there it hung while the air was streaming into the bomb bay. And there I was with my feet dangling in Dutch airspace about 15,000 feet above the countryside. I needed something to beat the shackle arm past the electronic release arm. Seeing the emergency hand crank for

the flaps and landing gear hanging on the bulkhead, I motioned to Tony to hand it to me. I leaned over and gave a mighty swipe to the shackle arm. With that we had our second "bombs away" of the day. Seeing the fall start the fuse propeller spinning I thought "At least I'll get to see the darned thing explode." It was impossible to see your own bombs explode from the chin turret position. But it was not to be. Tony had signaled Clyde to close the bomb bay doors and he did. After all of my hard work I still wasn't going to see the bomb explode.

And so, Dear Reader, the Wilcox crew was able to restrain the Mendlesham tower from having to call you with the message, "Please keep to the left of the runway when you land." And we did have a Happy Landing (WITHOUT THE BOMB!).

HOMING BICYCLE

by STEPHEN NIATAS

It was now May 12, 1945 and spring in Mendlesham, the home of the 34th B.G. In the 18th Sqdn. area this evening there was much activity in one special hut. George Mehling's crew was sprucing up in dress OD's to a party given to our ground crew in honor of our return from our splash-down in the North Sea in our B-17G, "Dinah Mite", on the 5th of April. Our welcome-home party is being held at the pub in Mendlesham tonight.

Then, as now, I was an ardent bike rider so I decided to ride alone to the pub. The others decided to walk. The pub was happy with activity and the evening air was warm so many of the customers were on the lawn as well as in the bar.

In my brief time in England I drank scotch whiskey when available and that was very limited due to rationing. As for beer, it would be half-and-half with, normally, only two mugs in three hours. Boy, was I in for a wet surprise. Our hosts, our ground crew, could drink a barrel of beer each and walk a sober, straight line. Not me! This Greek lost count after four mugs. By the time the pub had "Lights Out", my lights were not ON or OFF! OOPS!!

I now straddled my bike, singing a variety of tunes, most not recognizable. In my liquified state I talked to my bike. It's a good thing it was an English bike for it understood me. I told it we must go through the farm field, which was a short cut. I said, "Dear Bike, use your homing skill to get us home." Don't ask me how we got back to our hut in one piece without broken limbs or damaged bike.

I walked into our hut, sat at my bunk and looked at my wife's picture. I then turned her picture to face the wall so she would not see me in my sorry state. Believe me, I was a sick pup for days and was unable to taste beer for better than two years.

Yes, I still ride my bike every day, but I have not talked to one to this day. Nor have I found one that could home in, over all terrain, as my bike in Mendlesham did in May of 1945.



The Mendlesham Memorial after the memorial service, Nov. 13, 1988. Wreaths laid by British Legion and U.S. 3rd A.F. (Bentwater AFB).

ADDRESS CHANGES

(As of 4/30/89)

LAST NAME	FIRST NAME	ADDRESS	CITY	STATE	ZIP
BALDEA	ELI	2576 BROOKWOOD DRIVE	CROWN POINT,	IN	46307
BARTA	ALAN J.	721 LAKESHORE DRIVE	WICHITA,	KS	67230
BASSINGER	JIMMY	6211 CARMEL ROAD	CHARLOTTE,	NC	28116
BROOKSHIRE	LESTER	P.O. BOX 413	LINDALE,	GA	30147
BUJALSKI	FRANCIS	206 DESSA DRIVE	HAMDEN,	CT	06517
BUXTON	JOHN A.	2425 JAKE ALEXANDER BLVD. N, #502	CHARLOTTE,	NC	28144
CASELL	ALBERT	10000 PARK BLVD, HOL. CP. GRDS.	SEMINOLE,	FL	34643
CLARK	AMY	15 ROSECLIFE ST., AP. 2	ROSLINDALE,	MA	02131
DOZIER	JOHN	P.O. BOX 2557 BSL	SOUTHPORT,	NC	28461-9270
FRANGELLA	PATRICK	P.O. BOX 8078	WEST CHESTER,	OH	45069
GOLDEN	ROBERT	3401 MEAD STREET	APPLETON,	WI	54915
LEVI	MYRON	P.O. BOX 4321	VISALIA,	CA	93278
NELSON	HENRY B.	1050 S. VRAIN AVENUE	ESTES PARK,	CO	80517
OKRASINSKI	STANLEY	Zip Code should be			18702
PETERSON	RALPH C.	2477 WALDORF CT., NW.	GRAND RAPIDS,	MI	49504
POOLE	WALTER	Change Zip Code to			33447
PRITZ	JOHN	347 AMAZON	CINCINNATI	OH	45220
RILEY	JAMES W.	3561 THUNDERBIRD LANE	LAKE HAVASU CITY,	AZ	86403
SCHARMEN	MERRILL E.	162 LEASON COVE DRIVE	LUSBY,	MD	20657
SCHROEDER	ROBERT	2440 HIGHWAY 39	AMERICAN FALLS,	ID	83211
SCULLY	RICHARD	1649 QUAIL DRIVE	SARASOTA,	FL	34321
STRAWDER	EARL	2600 GEORGIA AVE.	SANFORD,	FL	32773
SUTTON	CHARLES	Zip Code should be			62946
WORKMAN	BENSON	3570 RIVERSIDE A.P. RD.	ZANESVILLE,	OH	43701
ZELENESKI	JOHN	BROOK RD., BOX 133	LANCASTER,	NH	03684

LIFE MEMBERS

(Total now 126)

LAST NAME	FIRST NAME	ADDRESS	CITY	STATE	ZIP
CONKLIN	CLAUDE R.	1001 9TH AVENUE	BELLE PLAINE,	IA	52208
SPAYDE	DONALD E.	156 E. 7TH STREET	BLOOMSBURG,	PA	17815

NEWLY FOUND

(As of 4/30/89)

LAST NAME	FIRST NAME	ORGN. ADDRESS	CITY	STATE	ZIP
ARCHER	VERNON	3000 MONROE VA FACILITY	GRAND RAPIDS,	MI	49505
BREWER	GARLAND	RR. 1, BOX 77-1	KENNARD,	TX	75847
BROWN	RON	6205 VISTA SIERRA ST.	ALBUQUERQUE,	NM	87120
COUTROS	ANTHONY	11 CARRIAGE PLACE	EDISON,	NJ	08820
FLOOD	JOHN J.	4016 HIGHGATE DRIVE	VALRICO,	FL	33594
GARFINKEL	BERNARD	209 ANITA COURT	REDLANDS,	CA	92373
GARRETSON	WILLIAM	1004 HOLLIS ST.	PORT HURON,	MI	48060
GOLDEN	ROBERT	2616 KIRKLAND CT.	APPLETON,	WI	54911
LYNN	JOSEPH	2685 - 11TH AVE.	SACRAMENTO,	CA	95818
NELSON	JOHN JR.	316 CHURCH ROAD	MOUNTAINTOP,	PA	18707
OLDENBURG	WILFRED F.	6907 FISHBORN AVENUE	BELL,	CA	90201
RATHBUN	EDGAR H.	2780 CONBUSIER DR.	MELBOURNE,	FL	32935
TANKING	EUGENE	76 BROTHERS ROAD	WAPPINGERS FALLS,	NY	12590
WOMACK	FRED H.	1069 TRYON CIRCLE	SPRING HILL,	FL	34606
ZEMAN	ROBERT	1940 6TH STREET SO.	WISCONSIN RAPIDS,	WI	54494



TAPS

(As of 4/30/89)

LAST NAME	FIRST NAME	ORGN.	ADDRESS	CITY	ST.	ZIP
ANDERSON	KEITH M.	7 (LM)	3327 WORK ROAD	RAVENNA,	OH	44266
BABCOCK	ROY JR.	18	520 COO RIDGE DR. #8	CARMEL,	IN	46032
CHAMPION	FRANKIE L.	4	RT. 3, BOX 47	MORTON,	MS	39117
DICKERSON	JOHN N.			OXFORD,	OH	
DINGELDEN	GEORGE E.		DIED IN 1967	LA CROSSE,	WI	
EMBERTON	DANIEL P.		7780 LOUISE STREET	WESTLAND	MI	48148
ERICKSON	TRUMAN			ARGYLE,	WI	
FLORIO	MIKE					
GIBBONS	ALVIN		1146 E. 1050 SO.	CLEARFIELD,	UT	84015
HANN	JOHN F.	18	501 HOLLY (DIED, DEC. 1987)	DENVER,	CO	80220
KING	THOMAS C.	18	3330 TEMPLETON GAP RD. #3	COLORADO SPRINGS	CO	80907
LASKY	DONALD J.		DIED IN 1957	KENOSHA,	WI	
McLEAN	LEWIS					
MOEN	ERWIN			BLACK FALLS,	WI	
OKEY	JOHN L.			CASSVILLE,	WI	
TEPPER	HENRY	391	5074 VILLAGE DRIVE	LAS VEGAS,	NV	89122

MEMORIES

REMEMBERING By BRUCE SOTHERN Crew Chief of "Gotta Haver"

We hadn't been in England long when I noticed a young lad with his bicycle watching our activities from the far side of the nearby fence. We soon got acquainted and, our being short-handed, he soon became a very efficient helper. He took over the duties of going through the plane replacing the equipment; oxygen masks, mikes, etc., to their proper place, usually from the floor to a hanger. In exchange he occasionally found a chocolate bar or some such tid-bit that the air crew had left behind. Sweets were something hard to come by in those war years.

When we returned home, I had left without getting the chance to tell Robin how much I had appreciated his help and enjoyed his friendship. We did correspond briefly. Then, like many others, I got busy trying to settle into civilian life, raise a family and get all that grease out from under my fingernails. In so doing the war years and most of my service-connected friends gradually vanished from my life.

The years went by and, finally, I went to a 34th B.G. reunion. Gradually the light bulbs in my head, one by one, started re-lighting. Names and places, long forgotten, started coming back. While searching through some old letters I found one from England with the name Robin Harrex, the lad I once knew at Mendlesham Air Base, station 156. With help from Ray Summa and Ian Hawkins we discovered that Robin lives and works only a short distance from his boyhood home.

The boy I once knew is now 55 years of age. I am looking forward to the day we meet again and get re-acquainted. A trip to England is now something I can start planning.

Editor's Note: In the "Then And Now" section of the March, 1989 issue you can see Robin Harrex as a lad and as he is now.)

★ ★ ★

KAMIKAZE? By FRED BERGLUND

I was the co-pilot on Bob Schwartz's crew and remember flying 12 missions in 13 days. Why we got a day off after our first mission I'll never know, unless it was to wash our underwear. I "browned out" on the Kiel raid where we were trying to hit a German battleship and saw the big 155 M.M. flak explosions.

We then bombed 11 targets from Nurnberg thru Aussig in 12 days. I remember Col. Creer was leading the raid near Munich on the marshalling yards and we had to go around twice thru the heavy flak. Pilots were breaking radio silence to bitch about the heavy flak. At the Orlando reunion I asked Gen. Creer if he was looking for a D.F.C. or a Purple Heart — and he couldn't answer; being modest, I guess.

I was amazed (from the new 34th BG book) to find out that our third mission (Gustrow) was all that I thought it was. The Germans had a kamikaze squadron which attacked the 34th and the yellow-tailed group ahead of us. I saw two B-17s hit by two ME-109s flying straight down and all that was left of the four planes was two big black puffs of smoke and no debris! When I reported this to the intelligence de-briefing officer he stated that it was just inexperienced German pilots.

Bill Cheek's story in the new book titled "The Last Big Splash for the Luftwaffe" clears this up. It tells about the German suicide squadron called the Sonderkommando Elbe, comprised of 300 of Germany's finest (though maybe not the smartest) pilots formed at Stendal, Germany. He used excerpts from Roger Freeman's book, "The Mighty Eighth", in his story.

The 34th hit Stendal a few days later and one of our planes was knocked down and fell right through the lower elements. I have since found out that the plane was none other than Bruce Sothern's "Gotta Haver". The pilot, Paul E. Roscher, was badly injured and the crew bailed out. Some of the crew were back in Mendlesham a few days later. The co-pilot was severely beaten by the German civilians when he was captured. I met Paul Roscher at the 8th AF Los Angeles reunion years later. He says he has never been able to get in touch with any of his crew. Does anyone recall the co-pilot's name and where he is now?

MEMORIES

"GEE WHIZ — A PIECE OF CAKE"

By ROY TAVASTI

The events I am about to relate would not have happened if it had not been for Giles Avriett. So, a little background information is necessary for this tale to have any rational continuity.

First of all, it should be known that Giles Avriett commanded one of the B-24 flight crews at Blythe when the 34th Bomb Group was activated for combat operations. Avriett as a 2nd Lieutenant seemed much more mature and experienced than the rest of the pilots (2nd Lts. and Flight Officers) who also had recently graduated from flight training. In fact, if I recall correctly, he had served as an adjutant in his unit before going to flight school, and was promoted at Blythe to 1st Lt. at the time orders were issued for the 34th BG to move overseas.

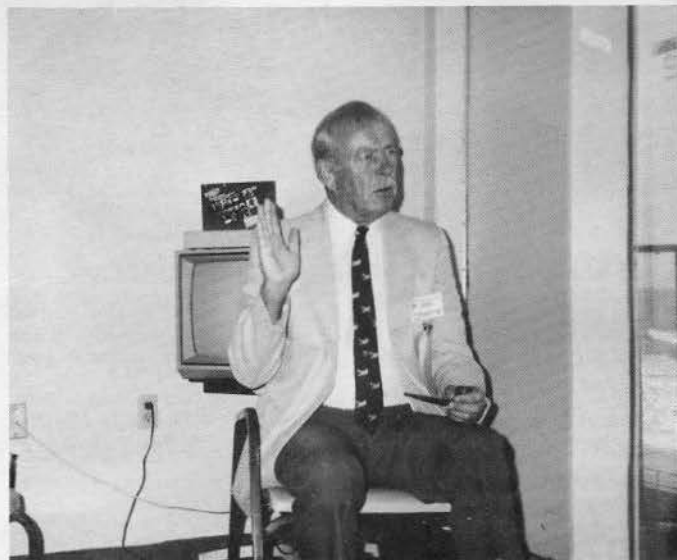
In my judgment, at the time, I considered him to be a capable pilot and an outstanding officer and individual. The same, however, could not be said for the rest of his crew. It was my impression that they were by far the most motley collection of renegades ever to be dignified by the designation of "flight crew." I am sure they individually or collectively sorely taxed their commander's ingenuity and patience just to keep them out of the stockade (guardhouse), but in the air these troops were well disciplined and apparently knew what they were doing. At least I, as their Squadron Commander, never heard of any goof-up on an operational mission. On the ground, however, it was an entirely different story. For example, on the very day that Avriett and crew landed in Sweden, I was about to "lower the boom" on John Soler, the copilot, for the unauthorized confiscation of my jeep "Bessie Mae Mucho" a few nights previously. I was determined to court martial the scoundrel for that dastardly deed, but Soler outwitted me by getting shot up and evading to Sweden. All I could gracefully do was to tear up the "Statement of Charges" (basis for courts martial). My apologies to the surviving members of Avriett's crew, but for the most part, I believe they will agree with my evaluation at the time, and even be damn proud of it.

As they were creeping up on their last mission, Avriett and crew were badly shot up over northern Germany but managed to make it to Sweden where they were duly incarcerated, ostensibly for the "duration." Some months later, however, they were unexpectedly released from Sweden. Avriett appeared in the squadron area, en route to the States because of some rule that he could no longer fly combat missions after having been incarcerated in a neutral country.

Having held Giles in such high regard, it was not surprising that I greeted him like a long lost brother when he reappeared on the scene. In fact, his appearance was almost like an answer to a maiden's prayer.

Now, some may think that I had ulterior motives (which I did) when I tried to persuade Giles to consider rejoining the 7th Squadron in a noncombatant capacity as Squadron Administrative Officer. This vacancy had been recently created when the wiley Group Adjutant, a.k.a. Robert Gay, snatched Leonard Arteel from the 7th Squadron to fill what in my view at the time was some "Mickey Mouse" position at Group level.

Although Avriett was somewhat reluctant at first, I was able to sweeten the ante with an assurance that I could guarantee his promotion to Captain in the minimum time then prescribed in the regulations. I was elated when he finally agreed to stay with the 7th Squadron, because I had gloomy visions of having



Correction — I'm afraid that I was indeed in charge of that fiasco!

Roy Tavasti

(see page 8, Dec. MM)

to spend more and more time in the Orderly Room shining my britches behind a desk, tussling with administrative headaches instead of being on the flight line where the action was. Adjutant Jim Mansfield and recent Admin. Officer Arteel, ably assisted by our no-nonsense First Sergeant Walt Wolinski, up to that time had been keeping things on a relatively even keel, but then with Arteel's departure the future took on a somewhat gloomy aspect. Now, with the fortuitous arrival of Avriett, who "volunteered" to take Arteel's spot, a potential dilemma had been eliminated.

To celebrate the occasion I invited Avriett to the Officers' Club that evening for a drink or two before chow time. We were in the bar relaxing, as he related some of the details of having been shot up over Germany and finally limping into Sweden, when we were joined by the Group Flight Surgeon, Harry Morgan. Giles continued with a description of the trials, tribulations and delights of his incarceration and subsequent release. He also pointed out that when he went to Sweden the 34th was flying B-24's, and now that the Group had converted to B-17's, he wasn't qualified to get his monthly flying time for his flight pay. I resolved that problem by suggesting a four hour check-out ride the following morning. Knowing in advance that Avriett was a competent B24 pilot, I figured I could have him qualified on the B-17 in a breeze. Doc Morgan suggested that since he, too, needed four hours for his flight pay he would like to join us the next morning. I was pleased that one routine four hour flight was to simultaneously solve several problems.

The next morning the weather was near zero-zero, so all combat missions were scrubbed, along with the projected check-out ride. So, with time on my hands I was wandering around and, more by accident than design, found myself in a building where a so-called "Gee-Box" was set up to train navigators who were not familiar with that particular piece of equipment. The "Gee", incidentally was a navigational system developed by the British, somewhat similar to Loran in that it displayed bearing data from two selected ground based transmitters simultaneously. This information appeared on a scope and then was plotted on a special chart with an overlay of Gee LOPS (Lines of Position). The intersection of the Gee LOPS was supposed to be your position at the time the scope reading was taken. Since I had never seen the gear operate, I asked the

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sergeant in charge to demonstrate it for me. In about thirty minutes he showed me how to turn on the set, select the most appropriate Gee LOPS, and how to plot one's position on the "Gee" charts from the reading on the scope. Up to that time the "Gee Box" had been something of a mystery to me, so I felt somewhat smug when I left the trainer facility.

The next morning the weather was still marginal enough to scrub any operational missions, but as far as I could see, no reason why Giles and I couldn't proceed with his B-17 orientation. Doc Morgan was also free to join us. I don't recall the particular airplane that was assigned to us for this training mission, but I do remember that the crew chief elected to go along for the ride. The weather wasn't exactly ideal, but for our purposes it seemed adequate. The ceiling at take-off time was a good 1500' to 2000' and visibility was perhaps a mile or more. So, compared to the morning before, it was a "piece of cake."

Giles was in the left seat for his first B-17 take-off and all went off quite routinely. We went through several layers of low stratus clouds up to 6000' where we leveled off. There was another solid deck at roughly 8000' so we had about 2000' to maneuver in and the visibility between those layers was reasonably good.

Since this was Avriett's first ride in a B-17 and we had time to kill, we went through the whole gamut of basic needle, ball, and airspeed maneuvers — all the conceivable stalls, power on and off, plus a variety of simulated single and multiple engine failures. I recall that Giles was amazed at how simple it was to control the B-17 with both engines feathered on one side, as compared to the B-24. After we had been airborne a little over three hours, it seemed reasonable to head for home, knowing that by the time we landed and taxied to the hardstand we would be able to log the necessary four hours. As a consequence, Morgan and Avriett would be qualified for their flight pay for that month.

Although we had turned on our "Bird Dog" (radio compass) and tuned in on our home "Buncher" (low power/short range radio beacon, located near Ipswich) shortly after take-off, we complacently forgot about it while goofing around with the check-out exercises. Now, when we were ready to return to base, I was somewhat surprised that the "Bird Dog" had apparently malfunctioned, because we were receiving no signal whatsoever.

My immediate thought was to request a position fix and a bearing to Mendlesham from "Darky" (a British emergency ground based triangulation network). Doing so, however, would obviously indicate that we weren't exactly certain of where we were (which was indeed the case) so I relegated "Darky" to a last resort option. Furthermore, I was interested in trying out my new found prowess with the "Gee Box." I plunked Doc Morgan into the copilot's seat to help Avriett eyeball for airborne traffic in our vicinity. I then went down into the nose compartment to find the "Gee Box" while keeping my fingers crossed that the proper charts would be aboard. Luck was with me and I was breathing easy as I flipped the set on and started going through the motions of getting a fix on our current position. When I finally plotted the fix on the chart, I was less than complacent. In fact, I was downright terrified, because the fix placed us over the North Sea — due west of and within a stone's throw of Helgoland. We were on a 180° course heading for the German coast between Emden and Wilemshaven. I should point out that Helgoland is an island about 30 miles off the coast of northwest Germany, and fairly bristled with 88mm

antiaircraft batteries. In addition, it was a base for a substantial number of Luftwaffe fighters. Furthermore, the coast of Germany where we were headed was even more formidable. I called Giles on the intercom and asked him to pick up and hold a heading of 270° due west.

I was certain that I had goofed up on my original fix but I was in no mood to relay that information to the crew. After recovering from my initial shock, I took another fix 15 minutes later. I could now see that we had a little extra breathing room, away from the flak and fighters on Helgoland, although our progress seemed painfully slow. Further, it served to verify the accuracy of the original fix that I had found so hard to believe. I then informed the crew that we were somewhere over the North Sea, but neglected to tell them that we had come within an eyelash of being in range of the 88mm flak guns on Helgoland.

Knowing how deadly the 88s were, even at 20,000' and above, I'm sure we would have been a sitting duck at 6000' had we gotten within their range. Also, we could easily have been bounced by the Luftwaffe fighters, so I could only speculate that crummy weather had kept them on the ground. We continued on the 270° heading until I could plot a southwesterly course to Ipswich and be well clear of the heavily fortified coast of Holland.

It seemed like it took forever, but finally our "Bird Dog" slowly came to life and the needle steadied down onto the Ipswich buncher as we came within its limited range. Then and only then did I start to relax. I crawled up to the flight deck and eased Doc Morgan out of the copilot's seat. Although the "Gee Box" was, without doubt, instrumental in saving our fannies from a possible catastrophic fate, I still felt much more at home with the faithful "Bird Dog."

The rest of the flight was quite uneventful. We broke into the clear at a comfortable 2000' in our standard let-down corridor off the Ipswich buncher, and Giles was pleased because he managed to "grease-in" his first B-17 landing at Mendlesham.

I was more than a little curious to find out what had gone so far amiss with our routine 4-hour training flight that had ended up more like six hours and had taken us uncomfortably close to enemy territory. Checking with the weather troops in the tower, we found that the winds at our flight altitude were in the ballpark of 80 knots out of the southwest. The unanticipated high winds provided a logical explanation for our having been so far out over the North Sea. When I asked Giles what his reaction was to having been blown more than halfway back to Sweden because I goofed up by not checking the winds aloft before takeoff, he said "Gee Whiz, it was a piece of cake."

It is only after putting this down on paper for the first time that I fully realize what a stupid (but lucky) ass I was. In retrospect, I did everything wrong with the exception of accidentally stumbling into the "Gee Box" trainer the previous day for my serendipitous 30-minute orientation. First of all, I should have checked the winds aloft information before, not after, the flight. Knowledge of the 80-knot winds would have altered our procedures and alerted us to pay closer attention to our position. Even better, I could have commandeered a navigator to keep track of our position while Avriett and I were preoccupied with B-17 orientation procedures. However, if I had done all the right things, there would not have been a yarn to spin about a semi-routine training flight which, unbeknownst to all but me (and now you), for a few hairy minutes was a disaster about to happen. To be jolted unexpectedly with the prospect of being blasted out of the sky by flak or fighters was a real shocker. So, what started out as a relaxing interlude between combat missions ended up being, at least from my point of view, ANYTHING BUT "A piece of cake."

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HDD



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From the collection of:

Joseph K Marks

Pilot, 4th Squadron, Crew #12, April - Aug 1944

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TRADITION

By VINCE DORAN

At rare intervals we were given a two-day pass. Usually we went to London, an exciting city, well prepared to entertain the hundreds of thousands of military men and women who were always there on pass looking for entertainment. It was only three or four hours away.

Somehow or other I had access to a small, private men's club across the street from Hyde Park. I can't remember now why they let me in. It was probably that most of the members were away in the armed forces, and they needed the money to keep the club going. Its most notable feature was that every evening at least a dozen attractive, well-dressed young civilian ladies were in attendance. They were not prostitutes, but they did not encourage questions about themselves, either. That was all right with us; it was enough that they were there and friendly.

It was a delightful, miniature two-story structure sandwiched between other buildings. The bar, library and meeting rooms were on the ground floor. With hardwood wall paneling and old leather the club reeked of British tradition.

Half of the upstairs was occupied by a stately dining room. The dining table and hand-carved high-backed chairs were obviously priceless antiques. The leaded crystal and delicate bone china could have been museum pieces. The linens were faultless and the ornate sterling silver service was fit for a king. The walls were covered with brocade, the ceiling was graced with oak beams, and the monstrous ancient chandelier had held candles in the distant past before being converted to electricity.

Sadly, the uniforms of the elderly doorman, bartender, and waiters were becoming thin and frayed. The building and furnishings were also showing wear and tear. The war had been going on since 1938 and, in those days of privation and sacrifice, there was just no way for the club to maintain its former glory.

One evening I was favored with an invitation to dinner. About twenty of us gathered at the festive table. We toasted the King and Queen, drank to victory, and to each other's survival. There was plenty of hard liquor, but no wine. Wine in Britain seemed to be a casualty of war. The service was impeccable. The two waiters were splendidly attired in white tie and tails.

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They anticipated our every desire and responded instantly; seat the ladies, refill our glasses, light our cigarets, etc. The room had a romantic dimness that only candle light could provide.

The meal started off with a light consomme. It was followed by a dish of spaghetti covered with a thin, reddish sauce, served in modest portion. Then nothing. That was the end of the meal except for brandy and small talk. I was stunned; they had almost no food! They were going through the motions of a nightly ritual that had been carried on since the club began. The scene had the unreal quality of actors in a stage play pretending to eat a meal. Being a private club, they had very low priority in obtaining food rations, but they were determined to carry on tradition as well as they could. The people in the U.K. didn't really go hungry in those war years, but food was not plentiful nor choice. I never felt sorrier for, nor prouder of, the British than that evening in that dining room!

NIGHTMARE

By FRANCIS JACKOVICH

On 24 Aug., 1944, 12 B-24s of the 4th Sqdn. took off from Station 156 to attack a high-priority target in Kiel, Germany. When we started our bomb run at the I.P. we only had 9 B-24s left; 3 had aborted.

Kiel was heavily defended with anti-aircraft guns, ground and naval ships. I saw a B-24 on our left wing receive a direct hit from AA fire. The hit blew off the right wing and the plane and crew took a dive for the ground. I know they were killed, not missing in action. The B-24 on our right side caught fire from AA; the whole wing and fuselage were burning. Then we hit maximum prop-wash from a B-24 directly in front of us. It almost turned us upside down. What a nightmare!

I was so upset when we landed I never reported it to our intelligence officer when I was debriefed after the mission. Our B-24 was heavily damaged. It was my 23rd and last mission. (Maybe someone else can remember more about this mission.)

HOPE TO SEE YOU IN SHREVEPORT, LOUISIANA