



ENDLESHAM MEMORIES



VOICE OF THE 34TH BOMB GROUP (H)



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MUTUAL RESPECT

MENDLESHAM MEMORIES

Newsletter of

The 34st. Bomb Group Assoc. inc.

e-mail www.excel-tech.com/34th/

This newsletter is published four times a year (March, June, September, December). All material for publication is welcome and should be sent to:

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share—

a thought.

With this issue, I will have completed my first year as editor of your Mendlesham Memories newsletter. Most of you know the story of how I acquired the position, but few, if any, I'll bet, know of what has transpired in my life in the past twelve months. I left the Boise reunion full of anxiety and indecision but determined that I would put out a newsletter no matter what. The rest is history.

I said at the time, that due to the fact I was starting from scratch, with no backup material, I would need a lot of input from the membership and boy - did they respond. I can't say enough for those who have sent in ideas, suggestions and stories never before told of their lives not only in the service but also before and after. You've read the material and from your feedback I believe you enjoy reading of your fellow members lives, experiences and accomplishments as much as I do.

As for me, I am still not entirely comfortable in this position. I have been frustrated at times, and have logged many hours of computer time but thanks to our publisher, who has had to put up with my shortcomings, I am becoming more and more familiar with the many facets of the trade. It's a new experience for me and your kind words of encouragement have been appreciated.

After saying all this, what makes it all worthwhile is that I get to communicate with the membership. So keep those stories coming by letters, telephone calls and e-mail.

A very popular part of the newsletter is the "Notes from Friends" section. Drop a note anytime, about anything, just to let us know what's on your mind and how you're doing, where you're traveling, who you're seeing or just say hello. Keep those stories and correspondence coming, they're the heart and soul of the newsletter.

And now, on to Des Moines and then into the next millennium with as much enthusiasm and gusto as can be mustered in these Golden Years.

Jack Share, Editor



DEADLINE

All Material and items for the December issue of Mendlesham Memories should reach me on or before October 20, 1999 That is the date our final copy goes to the printer.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



This being my final report as your President, I thought to relate an experience the "Gotta Haver" crew had on our fourteenth mission.

It all began in our briefing room that our target was Hamburg, Germany and we are told to expect some heavy flak.

Well they were certainly right. After we had just dropped our bombs over the target we were hit with a huge barrage of anti aircraft "88" guns.

Two of our engines were "knocked out" and it caused us to leave the bomber stream and fly alone. Darkness was setting in as we made it to France but just then our third engine stopped running.

Our pilot gave us the order to jettison our guns and anything with weight as we began losing altitude at an alarming rate. The gunners deposited their guns over France and our radio operator, Frank Fogg threw out all of his radio gear. This not smart decision cut us off from any communicating link with our forces.

Our plane was continuing at a perilous 15 degree angle and was losing altitude. Our pilot, Paul Rosher, asked our navigator, Lou Long, to try and guide us back to England. Thank God for his knowledge on the heavenly bodies (stars). Lou, with his equipment, directed the pilot on our western course.

As we crossed the Channel at approximately 2000 feet Paul told me to check the tail wheel for a "crash landing".

In a B-17, when the ball turret is gone there is nothing in the waist but a gaping hole. I had to slowly walk around the narrow platform to reach the area of the tail wheel section. This was very difficult with the plane flying at a steep angle the wind blowing up at me through the opening.

As I checked and found the tail down I called the pilot on the intercom to advise him. Ten seconds later we crash landed on a P 51 air strip and I was tossed around the waist section like popcorn.

The plane started to burn and the ground crew hosed us down with foam. We were then driven by a truck back to Mendlesham where Bruce Southern, our Crew Chief was sweating us out.

Because we crash landed, we were given a two week "vacation" to Southport, England on the Irish sea coast to what the Air Force called the "Flak Shack". After the two week rest we returned to the base and continued to fly our missions.

As I look back, I could never understand why our pilot and navigator were never given the "Distinguished Service Cross" for their exceptional call above duty in bringing us back on a "wing and a prayer".

Continued on page 4

TREASURER'S REPORT



Writing on July 20, 1999 about something that you will read sometime around Labor Day requires some deep thought about what should be mentioned that would be of interest to all of our members. July 20 to September 19—that means in less than two months we will have met in reunion

at Des Moines and most of us will be on our return journey to our homes! Back in 1983 before I started attending reunions I didn't have a thought about how I would feel about attending a reunion. At that time I didn't know anyone in the group except my crew and I didn't know where most of them were living. But now, after missing only two in that time frame, I, and Jan, eagerly look forward to attending each reunion that comes along and to seeing the many many friends we have made in the interim! It is not a normal year unless we can go to the reunion! If you haven't been to one you ought to try it. I think you'd like it!

Most of you, like me, have been impressed with the job Jack Share is doing with our Mendlesham Memories and avidly look forward to getting and reading the Memories. Jack can't do it all, he needs some copy of stories which only some of you can tell. Those of us who flew know very little of the daily jobs of the ground crews and we'd really like to know more! And I'm sure that some of our kids would appreciate reading about the job that Dad did during WWII. I'll bet you never sat down and told your child what you did! And they really want to know. One internet page is full of requests for information regarding what Grandpa, or great-uncle did during the war. Get that pencil out and write it down. You'll be glad you did! And especially proud when you see the article in the MM!

We received a great many notices from the Postal Service that it wasn't possible to deliver a copy of the June MM. Granted that some haven't been in touch with us for several years and never were members. But too many were Life Members and members who failed to notify Jack Share or me of their recent move. In one case I know the change of address was a single digit on the street number, from 204 to 205. But with the way the USPS operates now, it is necessary for you to let us know when such items change. I'd hate to think about missing an issue of MM. I suspect you would also!

I'm still looking for birthdays, wedding dates, and e-mail addresses. If you haven't sent me one of these items—PLEASE DO! I need to leave Jack some room. I hope to see a goodly number of you in Des Moines!

God Bless, Hal



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Congratulations to all the applicants and especially to the sponsors for raising such smart children! Hopefully the committee will have judged and selected the winners by 15 August, 1999. The names of the winners will be announced at the September reunion in Des Moines.

PRESIDENT - Continued from page 3

In conclusion let me thank you for the privilege of being your 1999 President. Every ending is part of a beginning. Though we may have grown misty eyed when we hear "Auld Lang Syne", our hearts may have skipped a beat with anticipation of the new year to come.

Like blank pages of a notebook, it waits for us to fill it with dreams and moments of happiness. Each new year is a gift - live it to the fullest.

Sometimes feeling pressured by the demands of our hectic lives, we forget what makes our lives truly worthwhile. Every now and then we need to take a few minutes and remember all the blessings we have.

John Doronsky



Moving???

If you are moving, send your new address to:

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Mailing lists are given to printer on Feb. 1, May. 1, Aug. 1, and Nov. 1 for the March, June, September and December issues.

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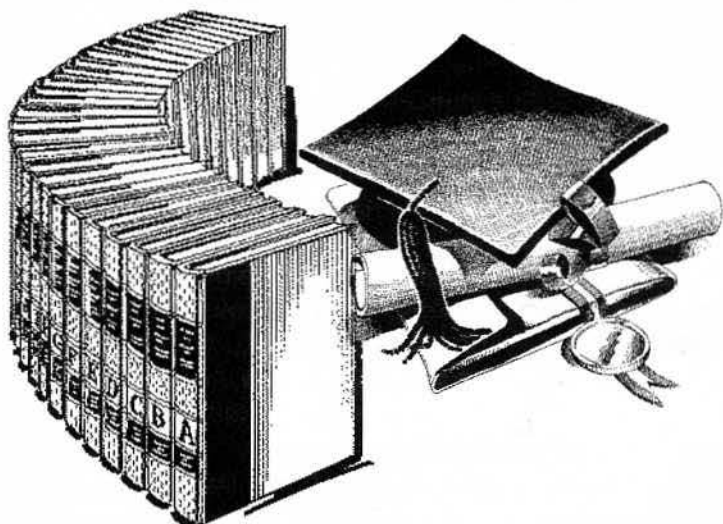
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ONE MORE RIVER TO CROSS

This is the incredible story of Lt. Col. Ray Kubly's USAAF (Ret) 8th AF bombing mission on October 7, 1944 and the events that followed after the crew was shot down. Pilot Jim Heiby and his crew of ten were assigned to 7th. Sq.. 34th Bomb Group and Ray was the navigator. As the story unfolds the crew left Mendlesham enroute to bomb the synthetic oil refineries in Meresberg, Germany.

All went well, as Ray relates, until we started the bomb run. Our plane was hit several times by flak, forcing us out of formation. We were losing altitude as smoke and fire were coming from number one engine, then we lost number three engine. Number one prop was feathered and the pilot was able to extinguish the fire. Number three engine could not be feathered and was wind milling causing us to lose altitude faster than we wanted. We thought we could make it back to England at first, but a short time later the pilot decided to try for Eindhoven, Holland which was then in Allied hands. P-51,s and English Spitfires came along side to escort us to Holland but we were still losing altitude and wondering whether or not we could reach Eindhoven. Suddenly, the pilot called to prepare for ditching, then the buzzer rang for everyone to bail out.

We all made it out of the crippled aircraft and as I was swinging in the air, I heard shots and then a sharp sting in the calf of my right leg. I knew I was hit and could feel the warm blood running down my leg. As I landed and was pulling in my chute, two Jerry's came running up with their rifles pointed at me yelling, "Comrade! Comrade!, for you the war is over." I was a POW.

The Germans saw I was wounded, the bullet having passed through my leg. They allowed me to dress the wound with sulfa powder and compresses from my first aid kit. Then they carried me to their headquarters 1/4 mile away. We had bailed out right over the German front line staging area.

Shortly, they brought my pilot, Jim Heiby up on a stretcher, he had been shot in the back and was bleeding internally. He kept asking for a doctor, but none came. A medic gave each of us a shot of morphine but Jim died that evening. Wiley Moore, our radio man, was brought up with a broken leg, from the parachute landing. I never saw any of the rest of the crew. It was my understanding they were taken to a POW camp in Germany. Later that afternoon a German Lieutenant told me our waist gunner, Hubert Betterton, was killed - his chute failed to open. We bailed out at less than 1000 feet so there was little time for error.

That night I was taken, with other wounded Germans, to a front line first aid station. We were only 5 to 10 miles behind the front line and could hear the artillery shells going off and lighting up the sky.

The next morning the wounded Germans, the radio man and me were loaded on a truck and headed for Utrecht, Holland and the St. Antonious hospital filled with 300 to 400 Germans and about 20 wounded allies, all nationality, POW's. We slept on the floor with two blankets, one to lie on and one for cover.

On October 26th. 1944, a Dutch engineer, named Mr. Dekker, came to us and asked if anyone would like to escape. After much thought and consideration, six of us, including the radio man and myself, decided we would take the chance.

The plan was to go to the basement of the hospital and crawl through the heating system inspection tunnel and follow the hot, insulated steam pipes to the furnace room. There were civilian clothes for us to change into in the tunnel. The Dutch underground people met us with bicycles outside the main furnace building and all went like clock work. By the time the German guards came around for bed check, we were safe with three different families outside Utrecht. The Germans made several attempts to find us with road blocks and house to house searches, but thanks to the Dutch people they never found any of us.

I was at the Mythisan family's home in Utrecht and while there, I became ill with a high fever and sore throat so severe I couldn't swallow. Fortunately, I was directed to a member of the underground who had some brief medical training and he discovered a bad case of tonsillitis. Without an anesthetic, he proceeded to crush the inflamed tonsils with a pair of pliers.

After about a week, the underground decided it would be safer if we moved out into the country. The Dutch guides moved us first to Ziest and then to Doorn ending up at the Hulsker's home in Leersum. We felt secure and had a pleasant stay for 10 or 11 days waiting for a chance to escape through the front lines.

At about this same time over in Arnhem, Holland another drama was unfolding. As a result of the failed Market Garden operation, 130 trapped British paratroopers, with the help of the Dutch underground, were engaged in their own "Great Escape" from the clutches of the German army. Somehow, they made their way through enemy infested territory and finally, on November 14th. 1944 ended up with us in Leersum. We all had a little party at the Hulsker's home prior to our departure and for our attempt to escape through the front lines.

Two of us were led by two girls to the home of the Idenburg family. While hiding in the chicken coop,

the girls brought us some "Speck" which they thought to be a treat. We got "Speck" sick, but survived the ordeal. While there, a German patrol came through the area looking for any one suspicious. We hid under some evergreen trees and could see the Germans' feet as they walked by. Luckily we were not spotted.

Gerit Van Ee, an underground guide, took us next to some woods between Ede and Otterlo where we rendezvoused with some of the English rangers and airborne fellows and were issued English uniforms. We were ordered to hide in the woods for the arrival of Major Maquire and his underground friends. We got going on November 18, 1944 on a very dark and overcast night with the experienced English rangers and airbornes leading the way and us "flyboys" bringing up the rear. We were all excited because they said we would be across the Rhine and be drinking wine on the other side by midnight.

We were to cross the river between Renkum and Wageningen. There were about 50 of us in the group.

After walking across fields and through fire lanes in the woods, we heard a voice calling "Halt". All at once someone yelled "Germans!" Then machine gun fire erupted ahead of the group. We threw our English sten guns into the woods and ran as fast as we could back in the direction from which we had come with the intention of getting back into the woods where we could re-assemble and try to contact the underground again.

From the 50 men who started out, 40 or more were taken prisoner with 8 being wounded and one killed. As far as I know, the two of us who had been together throughout were among the few to have evaded capture.

After several hours we were wet and thirsty, quenching our thirst by licking moisture from the evergreens. We lay down on some dry leaves and pine needles and spent the night.

At daybreak, extremely thirsty, hungry and tired we made our way to a small farm building in a clearing in the woods. As we approached a dog came barking at us followed by an old farmer. We told him we were "Tommies" since we were wearing English uniforms and asked for something to eat and drink. He took us

into the house and gave us some warm milk and some kind of porridge - boy did that ever taste good! He showed us to the barn loft where we covered up with hay and slept all day.

When we awoke, the farmer was gone so we decided we would try to find the underground again. After walking about an hour we stopped at a house and asked if they knew anyone in the underground. Soon someone came and took us to a little country guest hotel named "LEPERKOEN" owned by a Mr.

Schreuder who told us we could stay in the attic so none of the guests would know we were there. They presented us with strict rules that we could only go down to the toilet when the guests were out or eating a meal in the dining room.

After about 10 days at below freezing temperatures, the attic was no longer the place for us and we were finally taken to the Dries Klooster home in



Reit & Jan Klooster - Ray & Ruth Kubly

Barneveld, Holland. Mr. Klooster was the postmaster and knew a lot of people and whom to trust. After about 4 days Mr. Klooster said we would have to move again as the Germans would probably be coming to their house looking for us. That evening we were moved to the Cor Lof home on the outskirts of Barneveld.

The time between December 5th. to late February, 1945 went slowly as the "Battle of the Bulge" was going on nearby. The Cor Lof family was our contact with the underground.

We were joined at this time with several of the British airborne group who had also evaded capture or had escaped from the Germans. Many ideas were discussed as to how we could get across the Rhine to freedom.

A new route through the "Biesbosh" on the river Waal through which many escapees were being successfully repatriated during February and March 1945 was developed but first we had to get across the Rhine. So another attempt was being organized with the help of Cor Lof's underground group. They led us to the Chris Cornelius home in Amerongen, Holland.

From here we were to go to Schoonhaven, but as we were to cross a dike near Vianen we ran into a check point and the men ahead of us got stopped. I

was next in line and when I saw what was happening I turned around and said, "let's get out of here." We rode our bikes "Hell Maal Schnell - footsie," which means get the hell out of here!

We got back with the underground group at Vreeswijk. In a few days another attempt to cross the river would be made. Our guide took us to the Henk Ryneveld farm near Schoonhaven where we finally crossed the Rhine without any problem; but this area between the Waal and Rhine was still in German hands. After we crossed the river another underground group took charge of us and we biked to Sliderecht on the north shore of the Waal River. The "Biesbosh" is a marshy area forming the mouth of the river as it flows into the North Sea.

After a wait for a dark, moonless night, the underground said we were going through the "Biesbosh" and would be free by midnight. Four of us set out in a small row boat with a Dutch guide. German patrols were watching the area for any activity so we had to be very quiet - this was the front line!

The Canadian Army, with whom we had radio contact, was positioned on the south shore of the Waal. They knew when and where we were to land and would be waiting for us. As we hit the shore, some one yelled "Halt!" I remember yelling back, "Don't shoot, we are Americans." They told us to come up and over the dike with our hands over our heads and informed us, "You are now free!" What a great feeling. This was March 12th., 1945 - 156 days since being shot down.

We were taken to headquarters for a wonderful welcome and, with the wine provided, toasted our new freedom.

After being interrogated by the British and Canadians in Antwerp we flew to Paris where we spent another few weeks being interrogated by the American Intelligence Services. After which I was sent to 8th. Air Force Headquarters to lecture on escape and evasion tactics at bomb groups through out the 3rd. Air Division.

With the end of the war on May 8th., 1945, I returned to the states by ship and then to my home farm. After 3 years on the farm I decided to go to the University of Wisconsin, graduating with a BS degree in agriculture in 1952. Since then I have been associated with the seed business, the last 32 years with Dairyland Seed Co., West Bend, Wisconsin. I am still working part time and was active in the Air Reserve, retiring in 1973. I have served on the school Board, am active in the Reserve Officers Association and have been Executive Secretary of the Wisconsin Reserve Officers Association and editor of the "Wisconsin Reservist".

A three week trip to Holland in 1992 has prompted a completion of this lifelong memory. Many thanks to all my Dutch friends for their gracious hospitality and the cooperation in visiting many of the places I stayed at.

Ray Kubly
7th. Sqd.
34th. Bomb Group



GO AHEAD, SMILE
Here's a collection of
"thoughts about life".

1. I started out with nothing, I still have most of it.
2. Funny, I don't remember being absent minded.
3. If all is not lost, where is it?
4. If at first you do succeed, try not to look too astonished.
5. The first rule of holes: If you are in one, stop digging. (No small number of politicians need to frame this and keep it on their desks.)
6. I went to school to become a wit, but I only got halfway through.
7. It was all so different before everything changed.
8. Some days you're the dog - other days, you're the hydrant.
9. I wish the buck stopped here. I could use a few.
10. It's hard to meet expenses. They are everywhere.

LIAN'S LEGACY

Elmer T. Lian, USAAF Lt. Col.(Ret) from Grand Forks, ND flew with the 18th. Sqd. 34th. Bomb Group and was shot down in 1944. He was captured and held prisoner for nine months in Stalag Luft I. He is now a member of the 34th. BGA and, since retiring in 1964, has become an amateur historian documenting his experiences as a POW and encouraging others to write down their recollections, which he compiled in booklet form. From that he expanded into video and began conducting home videos with his own camcorder. He soon came to feel that the work deserved a more professional treatment than he could provide alone and contacted the director of the AeroSpace Network audio-visual department at the University of North Dakota from which he graduated in 1940. They immediately recognized the tremendous historical value of the project and videotaped twenty two former POW's and informally named the series the Kriegerland Collection, "kriegie" being short for kriegsgefangenen, the German word for prisoner of war.

The result is more than 32 hours of taped interviews. The entire collection has been turned over to the Chester Fritz Library Department of Special Collections and is available for reviewing by students, scholars, and the public as part of the Carleton Elliot Simenson Military Heritage Collection.

While the majority of those interviewed were World War II aviators shot down over Europe, the series also includes men captured by the Japanese and prisoners from the Korean War.

Lian said he plans to conduct interviews with about 10 other POW's this summer and, if funding is available, will develop a comprehensive documentary from the collection.

The AeroSpace Network plans to convert the series into a digital archive suitable for distribution on CD-ROM or over the Internet.

In a letter accompanying this excerpt from the Grand Forks, ND newspaper, Elmer writes:
Dear Sirs:

At this time I have in my possession about 50 professionally made video tapes (total 60-75 hours). These tapes are the stories of American ex-prisoners of war in which they relate their experiences as prisoners in various enemy POW camps.

The ex-prisoner of war stories cover the range of wars all over the World; Germany, Africa, Italy, Poland, Japan, Korea, etc. Our camp included military prisoners from various countries.

The video tapes were produced at the AeroSpace school at the University of N. Dakota.

I am looking for someone, or some organization, to help me reduce the mass of raw material into various printed, or video, documentary tapes suitable for showing in schools, churches, and on television.

If you know of someone that I could contact to further this project, it would be greatly appreciated.

To the best of my knowledge this is the only comprehensive collection of stories as told by a number of ex-POW's of the Twentieth Century.

I am over 80 years of age so consequently I lack the physical skills necessary to complete this historic project.

Sincerely,

Elmer T. Lian, 18th Sqd - 34th BG

Elmer's address if anyone could be of help in this most worthwhile project is:

Lt. Col. (Ret.) Elmer T. Lian
2520 Chestnut Street
Grand Forks, North Dakota 58201
Telephone - 701-772-3807



WESTOVER FIELD HISTORY

A Mr. William R. Butman is writing a book titled "Westover—Yesterday and Today" He has obtained information from the Air Force History Office that the 34th. Bomb Group was there from 29 May 1941 to 22 January 1942. He is looking for any information, experiences, and photographs from our membership who were there during that time frame. Any information and photos that are used will be properly documented from its source. The photos will be scanned and returned back to the sender. In the event you have some information, his address is:

Westover: Yesterday and Today
William R. Butman
637A Pendleton Ave.
Chicopee, MA 01020

MY MARCH 1996 REUNION IN ENGLAND

At around this time of the year, I look at my calendar and see the circle around the 6th. June and recall that day when I sailed as the coxswain on a Royal Air Force High Speed Rescue Launch, with thousands of others, from a base near Southampton to take part in Operation Overlord. These were exciting times with lots of action and ado, but let's forget what happened in between and advance ten months to the 5th. of April, 1945.



RAF High Speed Rescue Launch

My boat, HSL 2579 was operating out of the old German E Boat pens at Ostend, Belgium. The afternoon of that day we were on a standing patrol off the entrance to the Scheldt awaiting the recall to base when we received a Crash Call saying that there was a ditched Flying Fortress down off the entrance to Dunkirk harbor, which was still in German hands. As we headed out into the North Sea towards the downed Fortress, we were picked up by a Thunderbolt which guided us through the terribly rough seas and extremely foul weather to the crew of Dinah Mite who had been in dinghies for some five hours about a mile or so off shore and wondering what was to happen, as they were suffering from wounds, exposure, and shock and darkness was setting in fast. We picked up the six survivors and this, as it turned out, was my introduction to the 34th. Bomb Group and the beginning of my story.

As the survivors were made comfortable and the wounded being administered to, we made a very high speed dash back to our base, reaching it about a couple of hours later and the crew was whisked off for hospital care. The following day another crew man and I visited the hospital in Blankenbergh, Belgium where Jack Share, the wireless operator, had been taken. He had, by then, had his right leg amputated and his left leg in a cast. He was alert and seemed especially glad to see us. On leaving, he asked if I would write his mother and tell her he was really OK - he said she

would never believe him! A few days later, I paid him another visit but he had been moved to an American hospital in Antwerp. I did not see him again. I wrote to his mother and had a very nice reply. A year or so later I wrote again expecting that to be the end of the relationship - and was it? NO!!

Fifty years later on our Battle of Britain Remembrance Day I received a telephone call asking if I was Aubrey Meadowcroft and did the name Jack Share mean anything to me? I was aghast. It transpires that having found his mother's letters, Jack had been trying to find me for years. As a last hope, this was achieved with the assistance of Peter Gaskin, a member of FOTE (Friends of the Eighth), who I learned later was an honorary member of the 34th. BGA and had, on occasion, attended their annual reunions in the US where he met Jack. After mulling over the chances of finding me they went their respective ways. One year later, 1995, I was found through the RAF Air-Sea Rescue Association, of which I am a member. At that time I learned the 34th. was having it's reunion in Huntsville, AL. I phoned the hotel where they were staying and after a few calls back and forth we made contact. When I told him who I was, there was, for a moment, complete silence on both ends, we were both overcome with emotion, as you can imagine. But, this is not the end of the story.

In March 1996, while home in Dorset, England, I received yet another phone call from George Mehling, the pilot who was flying Dinah-Mite on that fateful day. He stated that he and his wife, Jody were visiting England and could he come to see me? Could he!! I'll say he could and after hugs and handshakes we got down to talking, over lunch, at my golf club. He had continued for 25 years in the USAF and I had been employed by the British Government. In the picture are his wife, Jody and my wife Joan. Did anybody ever finish up at St. Lukes Hospital in Guildford? - nurse Joan Nelson might have given you a blanket bath.



*Reunion in England: George and Jody Mehling
Joan and Aubrey Meadowcroft*

Jack and Marian Share have also visited us and shared our home for a short while. This story is so important because seldom, if ever, did ASR Launch crews know what had happened to the men they rescued, even a day or so later; but to find that out fifty years on is something very special. I now have two of the finest friends that one could ever wish for, and long may it remain that way.



George Mehling----1944---Aubrey Meadowcroft

I can not let this narrative end without paying a tribute to George Mehling - and he will probably kill me for saying this. It was not because of the RAF that his crew survived that day, had it not been for his courage in deciding to put that crippled aircraft down in the sea, his skill in landing it just right, and his strength in holding it all together on impact, this would never have been written.

I had worked for a great deal of time on a flying boat base off the northern isles of Scotland and seen probably hundreds of aircraft designed to operate off water, take off and land, some with disastrous results and believe me when I say that it was not even flying boat weather conditions on April, 5th. 1945 and we were told that an ASR Catalina had decided against trying to land before we arrived. George, I salute you and send my best wishes to all members of the 34th BGA, especially those "dragged out" of the drink by the RAF.

Aubrey Meadowcroft

ED. Aubrey has since become an associate member of the 34th. BGA.

EIGHTH AIR FORCE REUNION SAVANNAH, GEORGIA 27-31 OCTOBER, 1999

Details of the reunion will be announced in the June issue of the 8th, AF NEWS. If you do not receive that publication, contact Harold C. Rutka, 11 East Artavia St. Duluth, MN 55811
Telephone - (218) 724-1667

GRANDMA'S BUMPER STICKER

She writes:

The other day I went to the local religious store where I saw a "Honk if you REALLY know Jesus" bumper sticker. I bought it and put it on the back bumper of my car and I'm really glad I did. What an uplifting experience followed.

I was stopped for the light at a busy intersection....just lost in thought about the Lord, and didn't notice that the light had changed. That bumper sticker really worked!! I found lots of people who love Jesus. Why, the guy behind me started to honk like crazy. He really must love the Lord because pretty soon he leaned out of his window and yelled, "Jesus Christ" as loud as he could. Why, it was like a football game with him shouting, "Go, Jesus Christ, Go"! In a clear ringing voice, somebody behind him yelled, "move along for Christ's sake!" Then everyone else started honking too, so I leaned out of my window and waved and smiled to all those loving people. There must have been a guy from Florida back there because I could hear him yelling something about a sunny beach, and I saw him waving in a funny way with only his middle finger stuck up in the air. I had recently asked my two grandsons what that meant. They kind of squirmed, looked at each other and giggled and told me that it was a Hawaiian good luck sign, so I leaned out the window and gave him the good luck sign back. A couple of the people were so caught up in the joy of the moment that they got out of their cars and were walking towards me. I bet they wanted to pray, but just then I noticed that the light had changed again and I stepped on the gas. It's a good thing I did, because I was the only one to get across the intersection. I looked back at them standing there. I leaned out the window and gave them a big smile, and held up the Hawaiian Good Luck sign as I drove away. Praise the Lord for such wonderful folks!

Love ya all,
Grandma

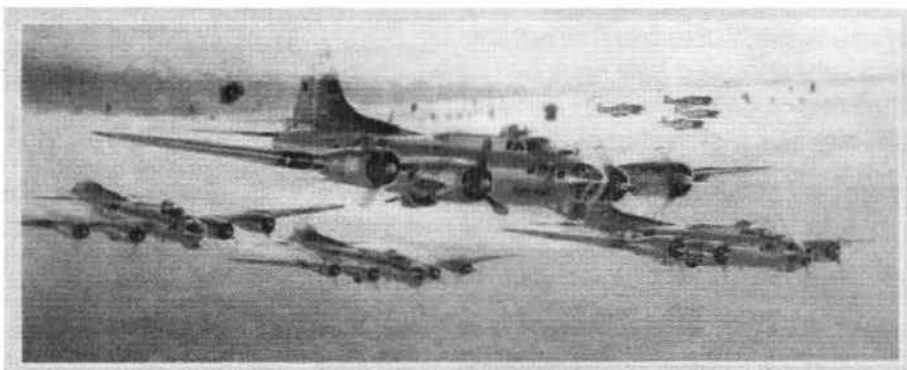
REUNION COMMITTEE REPORT

The reunion committee is preparing for the "Year 2000" at the Adams Mark hotel in Buffalo, New York. This hotel will be completely remodeled before we arrive on 6 September, year 2000, departing on 10 September. The hotel is located downtown and has free shuttle service to the airport and train terminal. If you can't make our Des Moines, Iowa reunion this year, plan on meeting with us as we "SHUFFLE OFF TO BUFFALO" in year 2000.

Harold C. Rutka
Bruce Sothern
Robert Wright

"Dies Irae" Day of Judgement

A New Work by Raymond Paul, Moats



Winter 1944, 27,000 feet, deep over Germany...

Bombers of the 34th. Bomb Group and Fighter escort from the 359th Fighter Group

... "Dies Irae" Day of Judgement is beautiful, impeccably executed!

It is also chilling!...a reminder to those that understand what tis unfolding in this image, in the hearts and minds of the air crew as well as those on the ground..."Roger Allen Moats

A limited edition full color art reproduction of this work is available on museum quality stock. 17" x 34", 185 prints, 18 artists proofs, 21 press proof copies, certified, signed and numbered.

Issue price **\$128.00/\$147.00**

Remarques, custom or graphite available *from* **\$50.00**

This limited edition reproduction is available to members and relatives of the 34th. BG and 359th. FG for the special price of **\$78.00** *You must have your name on the official mailing list of your group association to qualify for this offer.*

Special Remarques are available for **\$25.00**. Please supply a picture or details of the aircraft or subject for your remarque. Free shipping in continental United States, priority mail, certified.

U.S. funds only.

Please, feel free to contact me

Raymond Paul, Moats, Jr.

38 "R" Oak Boulevard, Lansdale, Pennsylvania 19446

Telephone 215-393-0638 / e-mail, hmoats@prodigy.net

World wide web, <http://pages.prodigy.net/hmoats>

In Memoriam

Robert Bice, Jr. 1920-1999

Robert Bice died as he slept on April 8 of this year. He did not respond to his daughter and granddaughter's calls to dinner that day. His wife Zelma had died three years to the day before that.

Bob had an interesting career in the Air Force. He retired as a Lt. Col. in 1965 and was a painting and wall covering contractor until retiring again in 1990.

Bob's experiences with the 34th. Bomb Group began in Blyth. There he was assigned as co-pilot of crew number 1. As co-pilot of a lead crew, he flew several missions in the tail gunners station as "eyes to the



rear" for Command Pilots Wackwitz, Gerhard, Bostrom, Burton and Garrett. After the disastrous events of the June 7, 1944 mission, Bob was selected as pilot of Crew 17 and he flew his remaining missions with his crew in "Picadilly Tilly". He also flew seven missions in B-17's.

Bob and Zelma Bice drove cross-country to many of the reunions of the 34th Bomb Group Associations beginning with Nashville in 1984. After Zelma's death in 1996, Bob continued the cross-country trips including a trip, in his new Mustang, to the reunion last year in Boise, Idaho. He will be missed at Des Moines and the reunions to come.

Then and Now

RAY & RUTH KUBLY



1948



1998

CHANGE OF ADDRESS

LAST NAME	FIRST NAME	ORG	ADDRESS	CITY	STATE	ZIP
ATA	PATRICK, A.	391	1513 NOTTINGHILL LN	HAMILTON	NJ	08619
ACKERMAN	HARRY	HDQLM	55 N. PARK BLVD	GRAPEVINE	TX	76051
BARRON	JACK, D.	391	1420 WOODLAND CIR	JUNCTION CITY	KS	66441
CHAMBERS	WILLIAM, H.	418	170 W. CARRIAGE DR.	CHAGRIN FALLS	OH	44022
COLE	SANFORD	7	PO BOX 501	SIMSBORO	LA	71275
CONNELLY	ALFRED, T.	7	115 RAND CIRCLE	OAK RIDGE	TN	37830
FOX	ROBERT, C.	18	18 S. MAIN ST.	VILLAGROVE	IL	61956
GIBSON	JAMES, L.	7	C/O BARN 149 PO BOX 15507	ST. PETERSBURG	FL	33733
GRIFFITH	FRANK, R.	4	17475 FRANCES ST. #2028	OMAHA	NE	68130
HASSETT	ROBERT, H.	4	204 CENTRAL AVE	HOUMA	LA	70364
HAVRON	WILLIAM, A.	7LM	121 DRY BRANCH RD	BLUE RIDGE	GA	30513
HOHNSTREITER	JOHN, I.	7LM	560 S. MAIN ST	MARTINSVILLE	IN	46151
IVERSON	RICHARD, J.	4	3395 LAKE GLENN DR	EUGENE	OR	97408
JELLUM	WALTER, H.	391	11125 TH ST NE	WASECA	MT	56093
JOHANSON	ALF, H.	4LM	1231 WILLOWICK CIRCLE	SAFETY HARBOR	FL	34695
JOHNSON	DONALD, R.	EWACSLM	2768 MANUEL DR	LILLIAN	AL	36549
LETALIEN	EUGENE, J.	1ST	PO BOX 5627	VACAVILLE	CA	95696
MUNNIS	ELDON, L.	391	22219 84TH AVE W	EDMONS	WA	98026
OWENS	HAROLD, G.	7	1614 LINDSEY CEMETARY RD	DUE WEST	SC	29639
SCHMIDT	HAROLD, C.	7	1113 PINEHURST CT	MANSFIELD	TX	76063
SEAMONS	RICHARD, L.	4	2312 BETA ST SE	LACEY	WA	98503
SLAUGHTER	HERMAN, F.	391	1215 FOREST DR.	HURRICANE	WV	25526
SMITH	PAULINE	7A	2440 ROBERT ALN	CLEARWATER	FL	33764
STARR	JOHN, J.	391	444 BURROUGHS DR	AMHERST	NY	14226
SWAN	RAYMOND, F.	7	925 RIVER RD	ENGLEWOOD	FL	34223
VAN BUSKIRK	JOSEPH, P.	4	18510 N PARKVIEW APT 322	SURPRISE	AZ	85374

TAPS

LAST NAME	FIRST NAME	ORG	DOD	ADDRESS	CITY	STATE	ZIP
BICE	ROBERT, G. JR	4	4-8-99	4091 DEERWOOD PARKWAY	SMYRNA	GA	30082
GALT	GEORGE, T.	7WP	11-98	480 SHERWOOD AVE	SATELLITE BEACH	FL	32937
HARRISON	JOSEPH, J.	391	5-16-99	25 WOODBINE AVE	PITTSFIELD	MA	01201
KRYSTOF	JOSEPH, P.	391LM	?	31 WOODHAVEN DR	KENSINGTON	CT	06037
LONERGAN	EDWARD, J.	7LM	5-20-99	6013 FOREST VILLAS CIR	FORT MYERS	FL	33908
METZLER	JAMES, L.	391	12-10-97	1940 EAST 4TH. ST.	COLBY	KS	67701
MISLAK	FRANK, C.	HDQW	4-19-99	35 WAKARD ST	LUDLOW	MA	01056
POCHTER	IRWIN, P.	7	6-20-99	2501 E. CALLE SIN PECADO	TUCSON	AZ	85718
RASPICA	JOHN	391	?	401 W. SPRING	STAUNTON	IL	62088
SCIMECA	ANTHONY, V.	7-4	3-21-98	102 OVERLOOK RD	GOLDSBORO	NC	27534
SIGOURNEY	DAVID, W.	7	7-01-99	530 BOWSPIRIT LANE	LONG BOAT KEY	FL	34228
SWENSON	ELBERT, H.	7	?	10293 ARROWHEAD DR	PUNTA GORDO	FL	33955
TURNMIRE	LEE	18LM	2-7-99	519 WEST TAYLOR ST. #276	SANTAMONICA	CA	93458
WALKER	RALPH	391	9-27-98	1008 CLOVER LANE	OKLAHOMA CITY	OK	73131

WEDDING ANNIVERSARIES

LAST NAME	FIRST NAMES	WEDDING DATE	NO OF YEARS
KUBLY	RAY AND RUTH	SEPTEMBER 4, 1948	51
JALVING	MARVIN AND LOIS	JUNE 23, 1951	48
PRILLAMAN	ARNOLD AND GEORGIA	AUGUST, 1947	52
YATES	FRANK AND MURIEL	JANUARY 5, 1942	57
JALVING	MARVIN AND LOIS	JUNE 23, 1951	48



BIRGIT LONERGAN - FT. MYERS, FL

It is with deep sorrow that I must inform you of the death of my husband Edward on May 20th. 1999.

He was so very proud of his Air Force and 34th Bomb Group Association and always looked forward to the yearly meetings where he could gather with "the boys" and swap tales of his youth. Not only will I miss him, but I'll miss seeing all the friends we have made over the past fifteen years together. I have no definite plans as yet, but perhaps I may see some of you in Des Moines in September. I wish you continued success with your wonderful group.

WALTER STURDIVAN - STOCKTON, CA

I received my 34th. Bombardment Group Volume II from Turner Publishing Co. and discovered that on page 98 they had reversed my picture with James A. Stutheis (possibly Stuthers), Sr. I'm sure that James is as disappointed as I am. Although Turner has promised to correct our personal copies, that does nothing for the hundreds of other copies shipped around the world. Anyway those of our members who read this will know the difference.

JIM STUTHERS - NOKOMIS, FL

It's sad that the new edition of the 34th. Bombardment Group Volume II was a disappointment when it arrived and I found my name spelled wrong, my wife's and my picture in the middle of Mr. Walter Sturdivant's biography. Also Mr. Joe Remy's picture taken in 1945 mistakenly showing our radio man "Kal" Martin Kallinen as Joe. I am glad to report that Mr. Mark Thompson, the editor, requested I mail back my book for "corrections" for my personal book and a full refund of the book price. Naturally, that does not correct the other two hundred and fifty copies that were published and sold to members of our 34th. Bomb Group Association.

Ed: This was a most unfortunate situation for those parties involved, and there is no doubt it should have been more carefully proof read, at least to catch glaring errors such as this. However, in all fairness to the publisher, it would be virtually impossible to publish a book of this magnitude with out some errors.

HERB ROY - ST. LOUIS, MO

After the trip back to England with the group, I stayed over most of July and toured Italy. A great experience but it makes me a little late getting the photos from the group trip processed. I hope I am not too late with these. If you need identification, Harold



These are the members, with wives, at the Mendlesham community center

Rutka is better qualified than I am to sort them out. The trip was marvelous. The arrangements and schedules, made by Harold and Tamarac Travel, were perfect — particularly the hanger dance; it was something I'll never forget. I'm only sorry that everyone couldn't have been there.

IAN HAWKINS - BACTON, STOWMARKET, ENG.

Thank you very much for the latest Mendlelsham Memories. Very interesting, as always. I hope you and your family are doing well and you are enjoying the early summer. Here in England all the plants and trees are at their best. Two or three weeks ago various coloured blossoms, etc., created vivid picture postcard scenes.

Alice, our daughter, (now 19) is now at Camberwell College, London, studying art, graphic design and photography. She has a natural talent for drawing. She is going to north western New Jersey during the summer holidays with an organization called "Camp America" to assist in supervising young

American children in a range of activities and sports. James (17) is still at the Royal Hospital School, Holbrook, Suffolk, studying for his four A-level exams which he takes later on this month. He wants to go on to University and study product design, but it all depends on his exam results. Youngsters these days have so many pressures, etc., and the threat of unemployment is much greater than it was. I attended RHS, (a boarding school teaching Royal Naval traditions and discipline) from 1950 to 1956.

The 390th BG Memorial Air Museum is going from strength to strength. It incorporates the whole 8th Air Force and has several RAF exhibits and two display cabinets of WWII Luftwaffe exhibits. A recent small addition is the British Resistance Organization (BRO) Museum, a kind of last ditch effort dating from the early summer of 1940.

Mary is still working, five mornings a week, at a lawyer's office in Stowmarket. She keeps busy and active in her spare time, Bacton Parish Council, gardening, housework, tennis at Stowmarket and Mendlesham, British Legion, taking our dog, a flat-coat retriever called "Bramble", for her daily walks around Bacton, in addition to her cooking, etc.

I'm knee deep in researching for a book about the nine Royal Navy "B" Class destroyers (1939-1945), and finishing off the book concerning my Saudi Arabian experience, etc. There aren't enough hours in the day.

Regarding the present war in the Balkans, (one of about 30 going on in various locations around the world): Let's all hope for a speedy and successful conclusion.

Our best wishes to all the members of the 34th Bomb Group

Sincerely,
Ian Hawkins and family

ARNOLD PRILLAMAN - MARTINSVILLE, VA.

I want to express my appreciation to you for becoming editor of the Memories which we look forward to receiving each month and read from cover to cover. I also want to express my gratitude to Eli Baldea for his many years of service to our organization.

My wife, Georgia, was diagnosed with lymphoma in 1996 and it's been almost a continuous battle since then, and I had prostate cancer surgery in June of 1998. Incidentally, Georgia and I celebrated our 50th wedding anniversary in August 1997 and I failed to report this.

Our navigator, Tom Wright, (Lt. Eugene James crew, 7th squadron) died in January, this year. Tom finished his tour in the 34th bomb group and flew in the Korean War as a B29 navigator. Then he flew many sorties as a navigator on B47's flying out of Turkey, served a stint in the Pentagon and at Sac Headquarters in Omaha. He retired about 1970 as a Lt. Col. Whenever I hear the expression, "An officer and a gentleman", an image of Tom Wright flashes through my mind.

We regret missing the Boise reunion but did have a mini-crew reunion at Savannah in November with Fred Schoch and Eugene James. Fred was recovering from serious surgery and Eugene was favoring a broken ankle at the time.

Georgia and I were fortunate to spend a couple of weeks in Tucson, Arizona during spring training in March. I visited the Pima County Air Museum and was lucky to hear an hour-long speech by George Litzenberg on the history of the B29 Sentimental Journey and her crew. This plane has been beautifully restored and is under roof at Pima

If the Lord is willing, we hope to see our many friends in Des Moines in September. A passing thought; flying combat missions and playing the stock market have one thing in common; in flying a mission there is always doubt about the outcome, when you go into the market there is doubt about the income.

HAROLD & GEN RUTKA - DULUTH, MN

Milton Hansen and Sandy Krepps and the Rutkas all from the 34th bomb group joined members of the 100th, 303rd and 447th bomb groups for a trip to England on 7-15 July, 1999. We visited Cambridge, then on to Rattlesdon, the home of the 447th bomb group. We were picked up by Leslie Lummis and Peter Gaskin and had a very brief visit to Mendlesham. Milt and I place two wreaths on our memorial there. The memorial is still being well maintained and had the usual fresh flowers. We had a delightful lunch prepared by Sylvia Lummis and then back to Rattlesdon and our bus to Cambridge. The 447th bomb group had a turnout of about 80 members. Sunday morning we presented a wreath in memory of the 8th Air Force members at Madingly cemetery. The next stop was Duxford Air Museum and the air show that was spectacular. The next day it was on to the RAF Bomber Command museum and then to London. Some went shopping, some sight seeing and we took in a theater show at the old London Palladium Theater where we saw "Saturday Night Fever", which was great. We then departed for the return to our home base.

HARRIET SOUDER - FAIRFIELD BAY, AR

I have saved all the issues of MM and am going to give them to my grandchildren. I have Walter P. Souder's war time diaries in my lock box and have tried to construct a story for my 5 daughters and 12 grandchildren. They are now interested in helping me. One grandson is a computer whiz.

At some future date you may be interested in part or all of his diary story.

Ed. We'll be looking for it. Stories like this are what make the newsletter interesting.

ROSE HARRISON - PITTSFIELD, MA

Enclosed is the death notice of my husband Joe who passed away on May 16th. of this year. I am not sure of this picture, in uniform, was taken, probably around 1942 or 1943. (I didn't meet my husband until April, 1956.)

He always looked forward to receiving the Mendlesham Memories newsletter. He enjoyed reading it so much.

I will miss him so much. He was a wonderful, kind and thoughtful husband to me.



Joe Harrison

JACOB GREENSPAN - CHESTNUT HILL, MA

I have read your latest issue of Mendlesham Memories with great interest, to say the least, and could not help but be touched with nostalgia of the WWII period. Enclosed is a check for the yearly dues and a stamped and addressed envelope for a membership card, as your offer.

JOSEPHINE BLAND - PASADENA, TX

I will not be able to attend the 34th reunion but wish to support their worthwhile activity to honor my late husband, Jack Wallace Bland, Sr. who died on January 22, 1996

To the Ray L Summa, 34th Bomb Group, Memorial Scholarship Fund:

From my children and I:

Josephine Bland - wife

Kerry Bland Gries - daughter

Jack Wallace Bland, Jr. - son

Gregg Bland - son

I enjoy reading Mendlesham Memories and save every copy for my grandchildren.

DOROTHY M. METZLER - COLBY, KS

This letter is to inform you that my husband, James L. Metzler, died on Dec. 10, 1997 of a pulmonary embolism from complications from hip replacement surgery.

We had anticipated celebrating our 50th wedding anniversary on April 30th, 1998. It wasn't to be. My children, Sharlyn, Jeff, Roger and their families and I miss him.

Jim was with the 34th bomb group 391st sqd. stationed at Mendlesham as a cryptographer.

I am sending you a copy of the story our son, Roger of Sugarland, TX recalled as a memory of his Dad in our memory booklet.

I am enclosing a check for \$10.00 and a self addressed stamped envelope for which please send me a membership card for 1999. Jim enjoyed the Mendlesham Memories and so do I.

Stories, traditions and recollections of Roger Metzler, son of James L. Metzler:

With respect to Dad's service in World War II:

Dad spoke very little about his service. One story that I do recall, relates to the invasion of Normandy. This was a major offensive by the allied forces that are often credited with turning the tide of the war. Dad's base was under blackout and bomb alert. The base commander was secure in a bombproof bunker, which was not to be entered or exited during a blackout. Dad received and decoded the orders for the base's participation in the Normandy invasion to take place the next day. The orders directed Dad to immediately deliver the orders to the base commander. This required him to breach blackout from his facility; as well as enter the bunker. Despite the importance and critical nature of the orders, Dad received a serious chewing out from the base commander.

BOB HARTLEY - RANCHO CORDOVA, CA

I was only with the 34th bomb group for about two months at Blythe Cal. In early 1944, I still enjoy getting your newsletter. I spent my combat days with the 493rd bomb group at Deback, England, about which I have never heard a word since I left the group in August of 1944. The only thing I've ever heard about the group was in your newsletter of June of this year in the article titled "The 8th AF's Biggest Boo-Boo". The 34th BG had B-24's when I was with them.

MALCOLM BLOMQUIST - PALOS HILLS, IL

I thought you and the membership might be interested in the enclosed obituary that was published in the Chicago Tribune on June 20th 1999 (Father's Day). The length of the obituary certainly pays tribute to an extraordinary individual.

ED: Irwin "Bud" Pochter and his wife Bev died June 8th while flying to their home in Tucson, AZ. Although, because of his many endeavors and humanitarian contributions to his fellow man, Irwin Pochter's obituary is much too long to relate in its entirety, but and interesting portion follows:

His greatest joy was flying for over 3 decades. A most important contribution during his life was his service through the United States Air Corps during World War II. He was a member of the 8th Air Force, 34th Bomb Group and achieved the rank of 1st Lieutenant. He received an honorable discharge on April 28th, 1944 and shared stories of his adventures and memories throughout his life with his family and friends.

DONALD E. CONNELLY - McALESTER. OK

I'm writing to let you and all the readers of Mendlesham Memories know that my Dad, Alf T. Connelly of Oak Ridge, TN passed away February 26, 1998.

Born in Lyles, TN May 3, 1912, he entered the service in April, 1942. After basic training and having been moved to several different locations, he found himself stationed in the desert just west of Blythe, CA in late 1942 or early 1943.

As a supply sergeant with the 7th Squadron, he went, with his unit, to England in the spring of 1944. When the war with Germany was over he returned to the United States in August 1945 and was discharged one month later.

All during my upbringing, and on into adulthood, I never tired of listening to the stories of his experiences during the war. One of the tasks he said he found most difficult was his sad duty to gather the personal belongings, for shipment back to the States, of bomber crews that didn't return from a mission. He also spoke, with pride, of having tried his best to shoot down the German aircraft that had infiltrated a bomber formation downing four B-24's just as they were returning from a mission.

Throughout his life, he was very proud of his wartime service and would have been pleased to know that he was buried with military honors.

ROSE'S COLUMN



Greetings and Salutations,

I guess I should explain why I, and not my mother am writing her column this month. Well for starters I guess I should tell you that after being single for the past ten years I finally found someone to share my life with. I would ask if you believe in miracles but I know you already do, and now so do I. Mom has been busy trying to arrange all the particulars for this wonderful event. I would be doing more myself but unfortunately I injured myself at work (torn muscle in my abdomen) I lifted a pan that was much heavier then I expected and felt something tear and go pop. So I am busy in physical therapy and recovering slowly. So mom being mom has graciously pitched in and is helping me out. Since I can not lift much nor spend too much time on my feet (walking up the isle doesn't count) mom has been doing a lot of the running for me, so I told her I would write her column for her.

Since the upcoming nuptials will be a simple tea, champagne punch and sweet table, I thought I would share a recipe for the champagne punch I decided to serve. We already tried it out and boy is it good! It got even better as we tried more and more of it.

Sparkling Champagne Punch

24 oz. Frozen lemonade concentrate thawed and undiluted

24oz. Pineapple juice concentrate thawed and undiluted

6C. Water

Ice cubes or ice ring

2- 33.8 oz bottles ginger ale chilled

28 oz. Tonic water; chilled

1-25.4 oz bottle champagne chilled

Instructions:

Combine first 3 ingredients; chill well. To serve punch, pour juice mixture over ice in a large punch bowl. Gently stir in ginger ale, tonic water, and champagne.

Yield: 7 quarts

When you make this punch please raise a toast to us and keep us all in your mind as well as in your prayers, and as mom would say "God bless you all".

Marianne McCombs(formerly Mandich formerly Baldea)

'Roses daughter'.

SORTIES RECALLED

ROBERT J. FILIP - LAGRANGE PK. IL

It's a long story as to how I happen to have this issue of "AIRPOWER", on hand, as I read Fred Berglund's account of the German suicide planes in the March issue of MM. The underlined portion (pg. 52) of the attached article indicates the ramming. The yellow tailed B17's were most likely from the 487th. BG based at Lavenham. The 94th. BG based at Bury St. Edmonds had yellow tails with a vertical red band just in front of the vertical tail.

Editors note: The article to which Bob refers was from the Nov. 1977 issue of the magazine "AIRPOWER" describing, in detail, the reasons for the gradual decline of the German fighter force from supremacy to annihilation - 1942 - 1945, from the German viewpoint. The pg. 52 portion to which he refers coincides with Fred Berglund's account of the mid-air collisions on the April 7th, 1945 mission against 16 targets by 1300 B-17's assembled in three massive air divisions. One unit of this mighty armada, belonging to the 3rd. air division, lost ten planes, five of them to mid-air ramming.

FRED BERGLUND - ENGLEWOOD, FL

I was a WWII B-17 pilot based at Mendlesham, England with the 34th. Bomb Group. In the spring of 1945, we took off on a bombing mission to a target in Germany. A B-17 from my squadron took off just minutes before us - (on their first mission). Minutes later, while we were climbing to 25,000 ft., through heavy mist, the B-17, which had preceded us was observed spinning down out of control with many parachutes blossoming from it's doors.

To make a long story short, the same pilot who spun down, out of control, that day, did the very same thing on the following days mission! All the crewmen bailed out again, except the courageous bombardier, who helped the hapless pilot pull the B-17 out of the spin before they hit the ground. They landed downwind and the B-17 rolled into the mud at the end of the runway. One wing was bent up about two feet higher than the opposite wing. The entire crew, who never completed one mission, was sent back to the States, possibly to teach parachuting technique.

ROBERT WRIGHT - SOUTH BEND, IN

I was reading Walt Sturdivan's book and I noticed I was on my first mission to Kassel, Germany on 22 September 1944 when the two aircrafts came together over Buren, Germany, piloted by McDermott and Whitehead. Both planes broke apart and started for me. I had to pull out of formation to let them by, otherwise I would have gone down with them. Wally Brauks and McDermott got out alive. I thought, if this is combat I really got initiated fast - scared the hell out of me!!

INGEMAR MELIN - SWEDEN

Mr. Melin is a native of Sweden who saw Rev Gary Ferrell's web site on 34th bomb group missions. One aircraft, "Near Sighted Robin" caught his eye since it landed in Sweden on 24th of August 1944. In his letter written to Rev. Ferrell he relates what actually took place after the aircraft landed in Sweden:

Dear Mr. Ferrell:

I found your posting on Daniel Stockton's web page with photos of B24H "Near Sighted Robin", 41 28851, from the 34th BG that landed in Sweden 24th August, 1944. The plane did not land at Bulltofta Malmo. Instead, it went down on a grass field called Sovde, located around 30 miles east of Bulltofta. I have some contact with one of the Assistant Engineering Officers, 1st Lt. Barrick, who was one of the internee Americans that belonged to the repairing and maintenance group based at Bulltofta during 1944-1945. The group consisted of USAAF pilots, navigators, engineers, radio operators and gunners all crewmen from force landed American bombers that came down in Sweden. Lt. Barrick was leading a small group that repaired a number of B24's and B17's that had force landed at Sovde airfield during the summer of '44. One of the planes was "Near Sighted Robin". See below a part from a technical report of the aircraft.

"...the worst headache of the whole job was the B24 "Near Sighted Robin". This airplane had major damages from flak, and a right waist window had been thrown out, smashing the leading edge of the horizontal stabilizer. We estimated a long job, after surveying the battle damage, but we had a bit of bad luck when we tried to taxi it out of a mud hole to the ramp. The nose wheel had been previously damaged due to the Swedes moving the aircraft without a guide bar for the nose wheel, resulting in the nose wheel collapsing and causing major damage to the nose structural members. The aircraft was jacked up, a new nose wheel assembly installed and moved to the ramp.

The sheet metal crew removed all damaged parts, replaced plexi-glass with sheet metal and salvaged parts from wrecked aircraft at Malmo. Another B24, with approximately the same damage at Malmo, took one month for eight of ABA's highly trained men to complete. Whereas, four men - Brand Gooding, McDaniels and Thompson, under the direction of Lt. Grosscup completed their job in two weeks time. On the same aircraft, No 4 engine was changed, including the electrical wiring and junction box. Both vertical stabilizers were removed and repaired. The horizontal stabilizer was replaced. The wiring to the No. 1 and No. 2 superchargers were shorted through in two places resulting in many difficulties for all of us, especially T/Sgt. Marcotte, our electrician.

I thought you might find this interesting and also that you maybe wanted to add these details to your records. Best regards, Ingemar Melin, Sweden

M.M. Page

The Forgotten Man

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, and 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 Lindberg,
And we've read of his flights 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 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.

Author unknown



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34th Bomb. Group



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

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