



# ENDLESHAM EMORIES



VOICE OF THE 34TH BOMB GROUP (H)



4TH SQUADRON



7TH SQUADRON



18TH SQUADRON

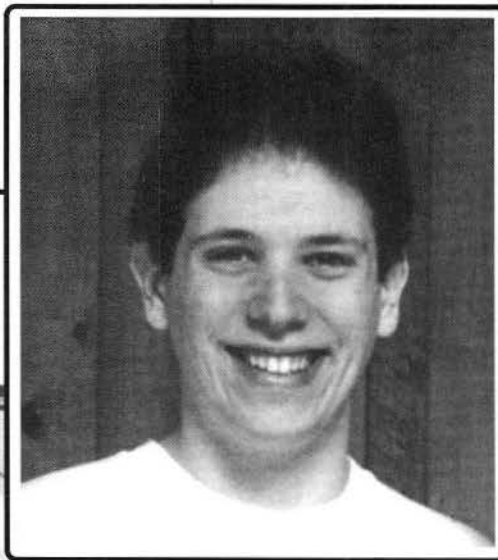
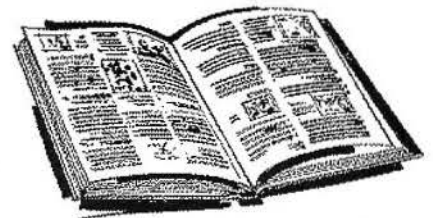
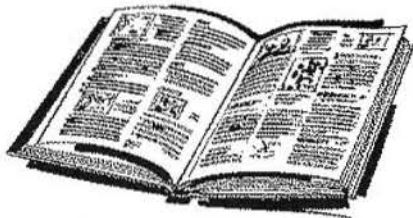


391ST SQUADRON

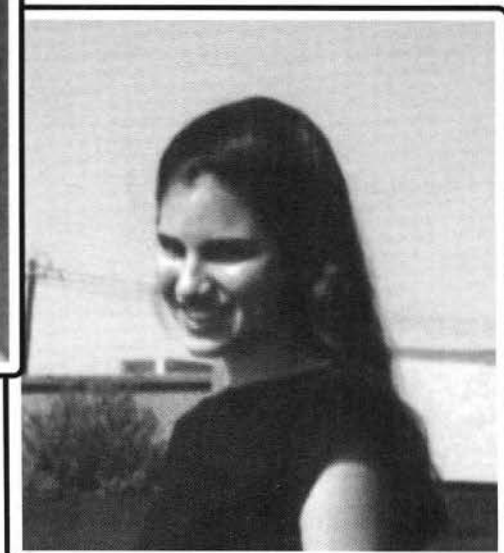
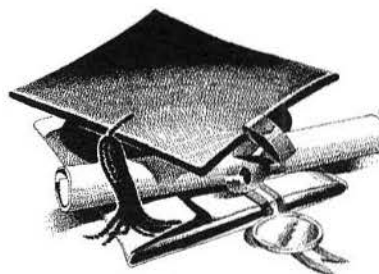
# 1999 SCHOLARSHIP AWARDS

1st Place - \$1000

ALEXANDER D. WISSNER-GROSS



2nd Place - \$750  
APRIL LANGHAMMER



3rd Place - \$500  
MEREDITH CORD

## MENDLESHAM MEMORIES

### Newsletter of

The 34th Bomb Group Association, Inc.

e-mail [www.excel-tech.com/34th/](http://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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Other web sites of interest:

<http://members.tripod.com/VALORtoVICTORY>  
[www.mighty8thmuseum.com](http://www.mighty8thmuseum.com)  
[www.air-museum.org/b17.html](http://www.air-museum.org/b17.html)

## DEADLINE

All Material and items for the June issue of Mendlesham Memories should reach me on or before April 20th, 2000 That is the date our final copy goes to the printer.

## share—

### a thought.

I was recently hit in the face with a bucketful of reality. I have always considered my self fortunate to sustain reasonably good health over the years but it all seem to come to end on December 26th , the day after Christmas. Suddenly and without warning I became violently ill and my first thought was that I had fallen victim to the flu bug, yes I did have the shot. Aspirin and lots of fluids were not getting the job done and in the evening of New Years Day my condition deteriorated to the point I could take it no more and called 911. Within minutes, I was being loaded in an ambulance on my way to the emergency room seven miles away, since our hospital was filled to capacity.

X-rays revealed I had pneumonia and I was to spend the next five days on an anti-biotic IV program. Since my release from the hospital, my strength and stamina remain sapped and will be for sometime according to those in the know.

That is my immediate problem. As for the future, only time will tell. I certainly don't want to abandon the 34th BGA and say I'm through as editor of MM, but on the other hand if it is to be a deterrent to my health I would have no other choice. This ordeal has had a devastating affect on Marian as well so all things will have to be considered.

With help from our publisher, we feel obligated to put something out for June, since that is our re-union edition - beyond that I can make no promises but am hoping for a good outcome. Hopefully, the situation will improve and eventually return to normalcy and we can continue as before.

I want to thank all those who sent Marian and I Holiday cards, they were much appreciated. Hopefully, the June issue will bring more positive signs for the continuation of MM for some time to come.

Jack Share, Editor



## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

What a relief!!

January 3, 2000, and no major Y2K computer problems. Not the end of the World, no planes falling out of the sky, nuclear reactors did not melt down, and ICBMs stayed in their silos. After years of anxiety, the technological glitch known as Y2K washed across the globe at midnight, leaving only a trace of mischief. Living in this world of high technology, as we all do, is frightening.

How did things go in your area? We only experienced a minor problem in this area. police breath analyzers, for drunk drivers, recorded the year as 1900 when they were used, but police say they will not have any problem convincing the judge the case is not 100 years old when it comes to court.

Now that Christmas is over and the weather across the country is in a La Nina mode, it is interesting to listen to people comment that what they miss most is not having snow for Christmas, like they did back home. I wouldn't know about that as I've lived in Southern California all my life. No snow, but Irving Berlin who wrote "White Christmas" had a perfect thought.

It may be too soon to put a pitch in for our September reunion in Buffalo, New York, but we're not getting any younger, so let's try and make it this year. You'll enjoy it. My one request is if anyone who lives in the Buffalo area could contact a person to be our guest speaker for the gala banquet, it would be greatly appreciated. Someone from the Niagara Falls Park Service would be perfect or any government agency would also work. Thanks for your help. Please contact Harold Rutka, Robert Wright or Bruce Sothern. Their phone numbers are in the MM.

Till the next issue -

Norman Mayer,  
President



## REUNION COMMITTEE REPORT

OUR 16TH ANNUAL REUNION OF THE 34TH BOMB GROUP (H) will be held on SEPTEMBER 6 - 10 at the ADAMS MARK HOTEL in Buffalo, New York. Now that you have your year 2000 calendars, you can mark the dates down and start making plans to meet us in Buffalo, New York.

Buffalo is located on the shores of Lake Erie and 55% of our nations population live within 500 miles. There is easy access via automobile, Amtrak, busses via Greyhound and Trailways and flying into Buffalo - Niagara International Airport. Anyone coming from Canada can travel over the Peace Bridge only five

minutes from downtown. Shuttle service is available from the airport and railroad stations.

The ADAMS MARK HOTEL is located in the downtown area and has been newly redecorated, If you have visited the Adams Mark in other cities, you know that this is a quality hotel.

The June issue of "Mendlesham Memories" will have the REGISTRATION FORMS and more information about the reunion.

If there is anything else you would like to know about the Buffalo, New York area or the hotel, please contact the reunion committee.

The reunion committee:

Harold Rutka, Robert Wright,  
Bruce Sothern



## PAST PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

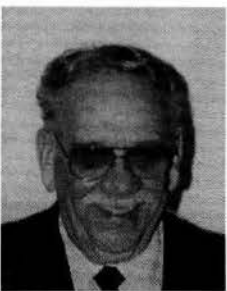


The Des Moines reunion was a success. I'm sorry that we had so many comrades missing due to illness and passing. I missed Ray Palmer, Jack Farley, and Eli Baldea. I personally feel that we should improve the hospitality room for the convenience of those who visit.

Make sure we have a "rest room" available, more chairs for us to sit on, and snacks available on tables. I was busy with my presidential obligations which kept me from entertaining in the hospitality room.

I'm looking forward to our next reunion in Buffalo and hope we continue to keep our attendance at the same level or better.

John Doronsky, Past President



## TREASURER'S REPORT

This is the scholarship issue of MM and we urge anyone who has a grandchild finishing high school to consider applying for one of our three scholarships. This DOES NOT preclude a student already in college from applying also. Please

urge your grandchildren to consider what such a scholarship might mean to them and then act accordingly! If more than one scholarship form is required, please make a "Xerox" copy and use that. Scholarship applications should be postmarked before July 11, 2000 and sent to me at the address on the form.

In a previous issue of MM the Scholarship Committee suggested that we would accept \$5.00 contributions to the Scholarship Fund from those members who could not attend the reunions. Since the inception of the scholarship program there has been a \$5.00 per person fee added to the reunion registration and the monies collected from those registrations have mainly been supporting the scholarship program. To date there has been very little received in such contributions. The scholarship program is one of the most important functions of the 34th BGA and should receive your full support. If you can, and are willing, please include \$5.00 when you pay your annual dues. If you are a Life Member we'll accept a \$5.00 check by itself! Of course we'll take more if you care to contribute - and by the way such contributions are deductible on April 15th.

Hope to see many of you in Buffalo in September. Jan and I are also looking to see some of you in Holland in April at the 55th. Anniversary of the food droppings.

## Moving???

If you are moving, send your new address to:

**Hal Province**

**153 North Hill Dr.**

**Carriere, MS 39426**

Mailing lists are given to printer on the first day of February, May, August and November for the

March, June, September and December issues

## A Request for Information Concerning Nose Art On 8th Air Force Bombers in WWII.

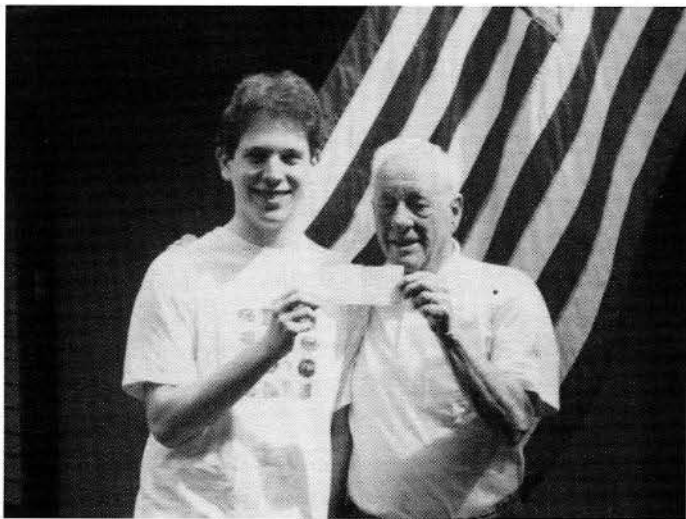
I am respectfully requesting your assistance in a research project (Masters Thesis) I am doing concerning the "Nose Art" applied to bomber aircraft of the 8th Air Force. I am especially interested in obtaining first hand information from 8th Air Force bomber crewmen concerning the "Nose Art" on their aircraft.

My questions are as follows:

- a. Their name and rank
- b. Their position on the crew
- c. Bomber Wing/Group assigned
- d. Bomber Tail Number
- e. Bomber Name
- f. What was the inspiration behind the name selected for your bomber
- g. Description of the Nose Art selected for your bomber. ( I will return all photographs provided)
- h. What was the inspiration behind the nose art selected for your bomber.
- i. Was the bomber name or nose art considered provocative due to nudity, sexually suggestive or alluring poses, language or political sensitivity? (Please describe the feature that was considered provocative and, if so, describe any attempt made to censure or change the name or nose art.
- j. Who (crewmen, amateur, professional artist) applied the bomber name and nose art to the aircraft.

Any information provided would be appreciated. I want to ensure that the individual crewmen and aircraft are recognized within the document I am presently writing. I am more than willing to work with you concerning the gathering of this information. I would be more than happy to personally write letters to interested veterans. For correspondence, my name is: Greg Griffith; phone number (775) 969 3245; mail address is 415 Bit Court, Reno, NV 89506; e-mail is LeanGRnch@AOL.com

Thank you for your support.



**ALEXANDER D. WISSNER-GROSS - 1st place winner with grandfather Bob Gross**

From Alexander Wissner-Gross - I want to thank the scholarship Committee and the members of the 34th Bomb Group Association for the generous scholarship you have awarded me. I was extremely excited to learn about this honor from my grandfather, Bob Gross, a member of the 34th BGA. I have just begun classes, as a freshman at MIT in Cambridge, MA. I plan to double major in physics and electrical engineering/computer science. The scholarship will be most helpful in advancing my education. Thanks again for the award.



**APRIL LANGHAMMER-2nd place winner with grandfather, Peter Garcia**

From April Langhammer - I am honored to have earned second place in the Ray L. Summa 34th Bomb Group Scholarship Award for 1999. I am very proud to represent the ultimate sacrifice

for this country. My grandfather, Peter Garcia, has always stressed education and higher achievement, which has helped me to get to where I am today.

I have begun classes at Truman State University in Kirksville, Missouri and I am working toward a degree in Biology. Following the completion of this degree, I plan on attending medical school then completing the steps necessary to be a licensed doctor.

I will use the award money toward my college expenses. I will work hard to attain a good academic standing and to be an outstanding representative of this organization. Thank you very much for this opportunity.

From Grandpa Garcia - I want to express my sincere appreciation to the 34th Bomb Group membership for awarding a scholarship to my granddaughter April.

The Scholarship Committee selected a very deserving student who will make us all proud of her future achievements, thanks again.



**MERIDETH CORD - 3rd place winner**

From Meredith Cord - To the Scholarship Committee and the 34th Bomb Group Association.

I was thrilled to receive the \$500 scholarship awarded to me by your organization. I will work hard at Georgia Tech this year to make all of you, especially my grandfather, Charles Sakal, very proud. Thank you so much for this valuable scholarship.

The Ray L. Summa, 34th Bomb Group Association Scholarship Fund to be awarded annually to the relative of a member of the 34th Bomb Group Association. The amount to be awarded shall be \$1000.00 for the first place winner, \$750.00 for the second place winner and \$500.00 for the third place winner.

**CRITERIA TO QUALIFY FOR THE 34TH BOMB GROUP ASSOCIATION SCHOLARSHIP AWARD IS AS FOLLOWS:**

1. Applicant must be the relative of a paid-up member of the 34th Bomb Group Association.
2. Applicant must have maintained a 3.0 grade point average on a 4 - point scale during his/her senior high school year.
3. Applicant must attend a 2 or 4 year accredited college as a full-time student and maintain a 2.5 grade point average on a 4 - point scale.
4. Applicant may also be a college student continuing education and have a 2.5 grade point average on a 4 - point scale.

**2000 Application for the 34th Bomb Group Ray Summa  
Scholarship Awards**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone (       ) \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Sponsor (paid-up 2000) \_\_\_\_\_ Squadron \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Age of applicant: \_\_\_\_\_ Graduation date \_\_\_\_\_ Best SAT/ACT score \_\_\_\_\_

Will pursue Academic Major: \_\_\_\_\_

Colleges and Universities of interest to you: \_\_\_\_\_

Summary of academic achievements (e.g. scholarships, awards, honor society) \_\_\_\_\_

Extra-curricular activities: \_\_\_\_\_

Community activities you have participated in: \_\_\_\_\_

Hobbies and Special interests: \_\_\_\_\_

List any non-government funded jobs which you have held: (Full or part time) \_\_\_\_\_

( Use additional sheets as needed )

Applications must include and are not complete until the following  
additional materials have been included and attached:

- 1: All available & most recent high school or college transcript (including current grades).
- 2: Latest ACT/SAT test scores.
- 3: An essay on "Why I wish to pursue a College Degree" in 500 words or less.
- 4: Standing in your graduating class ( usually on the transcript ).

Applications must be postmarked no later than July 10, 2000. (We suggest you include a self addressed post card if you wish acknowledgment of receipt application ).

**Mail completed applications to:**

**Scholarship Committee,  
c/o Hal Province  
153 North Hill Drive,  
Carriere, MS 39426**



## LOVE, WAR and ATHLETICS - A Diary of World War II

Anyone who spent any length of time at the 34th Bomb Group's air base in Mendlesham, England, during World War II, was probably aware that the base had a very well organized sports program. The base fielded very competitive athletic teams in all sports, competing with other American bases in East Anglia. And anyone who participated in any form of athletics or physical training activity, while stationed at the base, undoubtedly knew Sergeant Walter Souder. Walter, best known for his athletic prowess, might just be the only man in the 34th Bomb Group to have flown as a combat crewman on its very first mission on May 23rd, 1944 to Etampes Mondesir, as well as the groups last mission, before VE day, a food drop to Holland, on May 7th. 1945.

This story is not about the exploits of a combat crew's experience while in combat over Germany, rather it is about two people's lives and how World War II effected them. It would no doubt make a much better movie script than the justice that can be given to it in the limited space that this publication provides.



WALTER - 1944

The story begins in rural, central Iowa in 1940 when Harriet, a high school senior and Walter Souder, a 1st year teacher, met for the first time in a summer school class. They broke a rule against teachers dating students when they went to a local, small town dance on their first date. Walter was a physical specimen who loved sports. He had his BA in chemistry and taught several subjects, including science, during the regular school period. After school he taught both boy's and girl's physical education.

Harriet became infatuated with Walter on their first meeting. They saw each other occasionally, and wrote letters, in between, for the next five years. Each meeting seemed to draw them closer together, but he talked freely of his many dates with other lady friends. Any jealousy Harriet might have felt was not evident in her letters. However, she apparently soon came to realize that his two greatest loves were sports and girls, and he seemed proud of his accomplishments in both fields. She seemed content just being one of many friends.

His mother instructed her handsome young

son, early in life, to abstain from sex, before marriage, and instilled high moral values in him in a deep sense of honesty and religious fervor that she hoped would make him choose to be a minister. Papa Souder told him sex would diminish his athletic skills and sap his strength. Walter had a gentle spirit, hated quarreling and thoroughly enjoyed the company of the opposite sex. It was not unusual for him to date two girls at one time and end up taking one of them home with possibly one good good-night kiss, but seldom more than three.

In September of 1941, with the United States involvement in the war imminent, Walter had thought about joining the Air Force, since he knew he would have to go even tually. He was concerned about

his teaching job and to him war seemed senseless and he didn't think he would make a good soldier because of his viewpoints on war.



HARRIET - 1944

In October he filled out his draft card and in December was classified 1-A, but with a deferment until after the school year. In January, 1942 he took, and passed his draft

physical. He began to change his views and decided it would be best to enlist in the Air Corps, before being drafted, in hopes of receiving a commission - but he didn't, not at this time.

He could have taught chemistry and science in a larger school but he honored his existing contract and with some kind of service career apparent in the near future, he was becoming disenchanted with teaching so got a job as a Government inspector in an ordinance defense plant. Although, he had a lot of time for girls and sports, he was very dissapointed with the job and in June of '42 took physicals for both the Army and Naval Air Corps. The Navy thought him to be too old (on paper) and the Army rejected him because of a knee he had injured playing baseball some years past. By now he was convinced that aviation was what he wanted and even considered the Civilian Pilot Training Program in the Army Reserve.

In October the Army Air Corps decided his knee was not too bad and he was accepted for cadet training,

but was put on a waiting list to be called. In the meantime he continued working in the defense plant, playing whatever sports were available, dating profusely and keeping up the correspondence with Harriet. She told him she would continue their friendship, but would be seeing other boy's since she couldn't hope that he would ever see her as anything other than a good friend. At this time the war seemed more important to him.

In March 1943 Walter finally got his orders to report for active duty as an Aviation Cadet and was sent to San Antonio, Texas where he was classified for pilot training. He, of course, found his way into the athletic program participating in track and team events, along with basic training, which he loved, with all its physical testing, obstacle courses, etc. Although older than most of the cadets, he easily outperformed them in all aspects of physical activities and endurance. After Pre-Flight he was sent to Bonham, Texas for Primary and had his first taste of flying, which he enjoyed immensely. Then on July 19th his fun came to an abrupt ending. On his first solo he made a bad landing, stalled and crashed upside down, demolishing the plane. Finally, after losing his confidence, and that of his instructor's, he washed out of the cadet program and learned he would be shipped to Sheppard Field, Texas. It did hurt his pride when he found out he had washed out of the cadet program but he went out that night, met a nurse from a local hospital and finished off the evening kissing her the maximum -- 3 times. He made arrangements to meet her again as soon as he could get a three-day pass, but the next day he was shipped out to Wichita Falls, Texas, and Sheppard Field. After testing, for what his future would be in the Air Force, he ended up in Harlingen, Texas for turret training as a gunner on a B-24.

It was while in Harlingen that he wrote Harriet and acknowledged that in spite of all of her good qualities and virtues, he didn't love her. He thanked her for all the good times they had shared and advised her to forget him and go out with other boys. But then he asked her to write and let him know her plans for the future (keeping her on the string).

At gunnery school in Harlingen, as at all bases, Walter had no trouble getting involved in whatever types of athletic programs were available, as well as finding girls, while corresponding with several from his departed bases. After finishing gunnery school, on Oct. 9th '43, he had a delay in route home to his family and his many girl friends he had left behind.

On Oct. 27th he reported to Kearns, Field, near Salt Lake City. For the next month he was busy attending armorer's school and more turret and gunnery training. He still had time for basketball and football and attended several church functions where he met several girls at the dances they sponsored.

After Thanksgiving Day dinner on Nov. 25th, he met some of his crew and received orders to ship out for Blythe, California for crew training, prior to going overseas. Walter was assigned as a tail gunner.

While in Blythe he had a few two and three day passes which he spent in Los Angeles, dancing to the music of Harry James and other famous bands at the Palladium, dancing at the "Hollywood Canteen", breakfast at Sardis, meeting movie stars and seeing the town. He went to Phoenix, Arizona once on a pass and managed to meet and spend a couple of days courting a girl he had met in a USO. Besides the flight training, he found time for sports, and became interested in the church in Blythe. He was baptized, declared himself born again and vowed he would live a Christian life.

On March 26, 1944 the crew left Blythe, by Pullman, for the East Coast. After several stops along the way they arrived at Miles Standish camp, near Boston, on April 7th. On April 12th they boarded the S.S. Wakefield and the following day set sail for overseas, arriving in Liverpool, England on April 21st. They boarded the train and went to a great looking base near Ipswich, called Mendlesham, located in the midst of the beautiful English countryside.

After settling in at Mendlesham, Walter bought a bike and started exploring the countryside around the base. In between practice flights and gunnery classes, he did some boxing, worked on the athletic field for touch football, and did some work on the volleyball court. He rode his bike to Stowmarket where he met an English girl, by the name of Eve, at a British Legion dance. She was very pretty (a must requirement), a very good dancer (another requirement) and was to become his constant companion, until later when he met Dorothy, an English girl in uniform.

With combat mission and gunnery training winding down, little time was left for anything except for occasional sports. He did manage to get to a service in the Mendlesham church but was not impressed with the Church of England. He didn't like the drinking of the communion wine.

Now it was time for combat and on May 23rd 1944 the 34th Bomb Group, including Walter's crew, took off from the Mendlesham airfield for their first combat mission to Etampes Mondesir, some 50 miles south of Paris. All planes returned safely. After that Walter's crew flew 32 combat missions without a casualty and except for occasional minor flak damage, without serious incident. On one of their missions they spotted a ditched bomber in the English Channel and wondered if anyone survived. They were low on fuel on another mission and thought of flying to Switzerland where they would have been interned for the duration, but decided



against it and safely returned to base. This made Walter happy since he had an important volleyball game the next day!! Their last mission to Kiel, Germany on August 24th, was their roughest with the loss of several planes, but his crew returned to the base, unscathed.

During the three month period when Walter was flying combat missions he had a considerable amount of free time due to scrubbed missions, aborts, rest periods and the usual 2 day passes. His time was never wasted. He thought idle time was a sin so kept busy writing letters, reading, going to base movies and of course athletics, and time for Eve. He was on the base track team and baseball team, played softball, football, volleyball, worked on the athletic field and the gymnasium. Also at this time the Red Cross opened the Aero Club and would bring girls in from neighboring towns for dances, and of course Eve was always present. He also went to Stowmarket quite often, where Eve lived, and spent a considerable amount of time with her and her family, with whom he had become very familiar. It was during this period that Eve was becoming quite fond of Walter and told him that she was falling in love. As Harriet described it, "after a girl told him she was falling in love, the hot romance waned and he wasn't ready to carry the ball further."

Although he continued seeing Eve, and other girls, his letters to Harriet were beginning to take on a more serious and caring note. He was becoming interested in all of her activities, encouraging her to further her education and also asking about her dating which he had previously encouraged - he even seemed a bit upset if he thought she was getting too serious with other suitors.

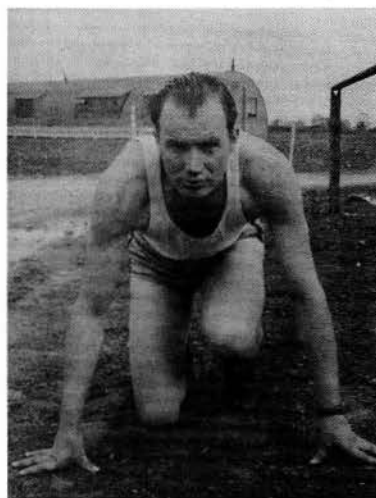
After completing his missions, he was given the option of returning to the States or staying at Mendlesham to work in Special Services, which in Walter's case meant the base athletic program. It was not a difficult decision for him, since by staying in England he would have the best of his two worlds - sports and girls.

His work in Special Services, besides playing on all the base athletic teams, consisted of grooming the athletic field and gymnasium, and scheduling all the athletic events. He also prepared the Aero Club for the dances and special events, which he always attended. He was a great admirer of the Red Cross lady at the base and helped her out whenever he could. The base chaplain (Ellers) took a special interest in Walter and they became very good friends.

Walter was being considered for a direct commission and decided to become a gunnery instructor to secure it. This gave him the opportunity to attend several schools around England and while in London,

enroute back to the base, on one assignment, he went to a dance in Covent Gardens, where he met Dorothy. This meeting would ultimately become a very big part of his romantic life for the remainder of his stay in England. She was from Manchester, where he visited many times, getting to know, and like, her family very much. On one of their romantic encounters he even kissed her 6 or 7 times - a record! It appeared things were getting serious until he got a letter from her saying good-bye since she would never leave England and he wouldn't be happy living there.

In the final months of 1944 and into 1945, Walter was enjoying life in the ETO and the letters between him and Harriet continued. His attitude towards her was gradually changing and becoming more serious and thoughtful. As the war with Germany was winding



WALTER AT MENDLESHAM

down, he was talking about what their lives would be like after he got home. The beginning and ending of his letters were taking on a more serious tone. From Dear to My Dearest to My Venus and From your Friend to With all My Love and Kisses. He also began winding

down his association with his English girls since he knew he would soon be going home and seemed ready to break off all his romantic English contacts and focus more on what would be waiting for him on his return to the States.

On April 27th 1945, Walter went back on flying status and on April 30th flew on the first food drop mission to Holland. He flew three more chowhound missions including the last mission of the 34th Bomb Group on May 7th, thus laying claim to having flown the very first and the very last missions of the 34th Bomb Group.

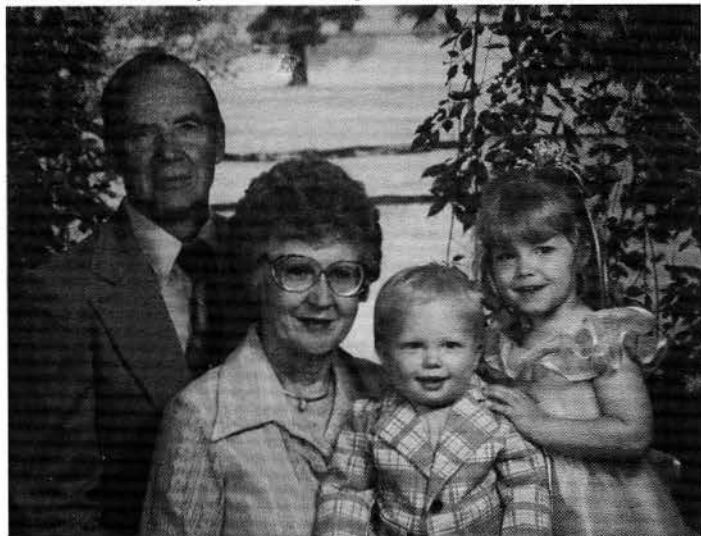
Walter's life after VE day was pretty much all athletics, movies, dances, church and travel about England attending gunnery schools, all the while keeping a couple of girls on the string, as Harriet put it, "he never gave up the chance for a little romance". Their letters were getting much more serious and he was, "counting the days when you'll be in my arms again".

On May 8th 1945 the war in Europe was declared over and although he would continue training gunners, his anticipated commission never got off the ground with the ending of hostilities in the ETO.

On June 19, 1945 Walter left for the States on a B-17, landing at Bradley Field, Connecticut on June 21st with stops in Greenland and Goose Bay, Labrador. Then, by troop train, to Jefferson Barracks, Missouri, and a furlough. He was reunited with Harriet on June 30th and they spent his entire furlough together visiting old friends and family and falling in love. He proposed, and on July 18th they were married in an elaborate church wedding. After his discharge on September 15, 1945 he taught school and went back to college, during the summer, under the GI bill and received an MA in Physical Education and Health. Later, in 1967, he received a second MA in Counseling, as near to the Ministry as he got. Civilian life sparkled for Walter, after the war, but it never could equal the life with the best athletes of the U.S. in the 34th Bomb Group of the mighty 8th Air Force.

Walter never wanted to talk about the war, so people never knew he had the best of all worlds while in England. With his days filled to the brim with sports and the wonderful opportunities to see the world, the best of shows, and stage plays, and his evenings filled with dancing and romancing beautiful girls. He came home with many medals, including the Distinguished Flying Cross. While it is true, it gets a little hairy when you are being shot at as the plane flies through flak - war is Hell - but Harriet thought Walter must have felt a little discomfort having all that fun!! Mums the word.

In looking back, she says, "Walter gave his many girl friends a lot of nice things, but he gave me 50 years and 5 beautiful daughters." They both taught school in Iowa until 1979 when they retired and moved to Fairfield Bay, Arkansas. Their retirement years were filled with family, sports, dancing, church activities and travel. Walter passed away on January 25, 1997.



Walter, Harriet & Grandchildren

*ED: Harriet Souder is an associate member of the 34th BGA. She provided the material for the story and it is published with her permission.*

## A FATEFUL MISSION

### The story of the Leslie C. Carter crew

On January 14, 1945 the Carter crew took off from the 34th bomb group airfield at Mendlesham, England for a mission to Derben, Germany. Due to mechanical problems with their own B-17, "ol' Buddy" they were flying in another B-17 that day. Their position was left wing off the squadron lead and while enroute to the target, just after crossing into Germany about ten miles north of the Elbe river they encountered concentrated anti-aircraft fire. They took a direct hit with the shell exploding between the radio room and the waist window. The aircraft was then hit by three more bursts in the right wing. The explosion tore into the outer panel of the wing at a point next to the outboard engine nacelle destroying all but a foot and a half of the aileron. The aircraft rose slightly following the hit then veered to the right in an almost vertical bank. It then went into a spiral which developed into a very tight flat spin. The plane was last seen to crash in an immediate explosion 3 km east of Suderhastedt.

The only crewmember to escape the plane and parachute to safety was the tail gunner S.Sgt. Cleveland J. Romero, Jr. Upon landing he was taken prisoner of war, interrogated at Frankfurt, then sent to a POW camp at Nurnburg. They were later marched to Mooseburg on foot, where he was eventually liberated on April 29th, 1945 by Gen. George S. Patton's Third Army.

After returning to the states Cleveland returned to his home in Lafayette, Louisiana where he and his wife Henrietta still live. He is a long time active member of the 34th Bomb Group Association having served on various committees through out the years and has attended most all of our reunions.

### DUES

**DUES ARE DUE ON JANUARY 1ST, 2000  
FOR THOSE WHO PAY ANNUALLY  
BETTER YET, CONSIDER A LIFE MEMBERSHIP FOR \$85.00  
AND QUIT WORRYING ABOUT ANNUAL PAYMENTS**

\*\*\*\*\*

**SEND YOUR DUES TO:  
HAROLD PROVINCE  
153 NORTH HILL DR.  
CARRIERE, MS 39426**

\*\*\*\*\*

**IF YOU WANT A MEMBERSHIP CARD PLEASE SEND A  
SELF ADDRESSED STAMPED ENVELOPE**

THOSE WIDOWS WHOSE HUSBANDS PAID ANNUALLY, WILL CONTINUE RECEIVING THE MENDLESHAM MEMORIES NEWSLETTER FOR THE REMAINDER OF THE YEAR. THEY CAN CONTINUE THEIR MEMBERSHIP IN THE 34TH BGA BY PAYING THE ANNUAL FEE THEREAFTER.

THOSE WIDOWS WHOSE HUSBANDS WERE LIFE MEMBERS WILL CONTINUE TO RECEIVE THE MENDLESHAM MEMORIES NEWSLETTER AND WILL STILL BE CONSIDERED MEMBERS OF THE 34TH BGA.

## The Story of Hell's Belle and Anne

Those combat crews of the 34<sup>th</sup> bomb group who flew B-24's early in the war would have heard of the collision and eventual crash of the two aircraft over Germany on a mission to Saarbruecken on July 19<sup>th</sup> 1944. The account is well documented in a book written by a German author, Dr. Horst Wilhelm (see June '99 issue of MM). Dr. Wilhelm has devoted an entire chapter to this one incident alone and after interviewing many eyewitnesses, both American and German, he has written a vivid account of the action.

One of the eyewitnesses was John E. Rielly, a former member of the 34<sup>th</sup> BGA, now deceased. His wife, Glennis Rielly, is carrying on his membership and after seeing the article about Dr. Wilhelm's book in the June issue of MM wrote the following letter:

*Glennis D. Reilly*

13307 Peach Tree Rd. , Ocean City, Md. 21842-4534

Home Phone 1-410-250-8518 Email gdreilly@juno.com

Jack Share  
Mendlesham Memories  
34th Bomb Group Assoc. Inc.  
22 So. Avonlea Cir.  
The Woodlands, Tx. 77382

June 20, 1999

Dear Jack Share:

My husband John E. Reilly died on Oct 18, 1997. He is interned at Arlington National Cemetery. I read your article about the WWII Book by Dr. Horst Wilhelm. John conversed with him & I have received this book in German. I do not have it here in Maryland.

Enclosed is a photostat of John Reilly's original diary that he kept of that mission that probably appears in this book. It best expresses the feelings of a twenty year old who was experiencing the reality of combat.

Thru the Mendlesham Memories, John conversed with William Hart & Hart told him the right wing of his airplane snapped off & pulled him & one other person out. Hart says he passed out for a moment but became conscious in time to open his chute. Hart became a P.O.W. and returned safely.

Last September I was fortunate to visit the Mendlesham 34th Bomb Group Memorial. I met with Fr. Philip Gray, St. Mary's Church in Mendlesham. He has compiled a book with the names of the men who died at this base during the war and remember them throughout the year. We said prayers for them when I was there. I know John would have enjoyed this visit.

I hope this information is of interest to you.

Sincerely,

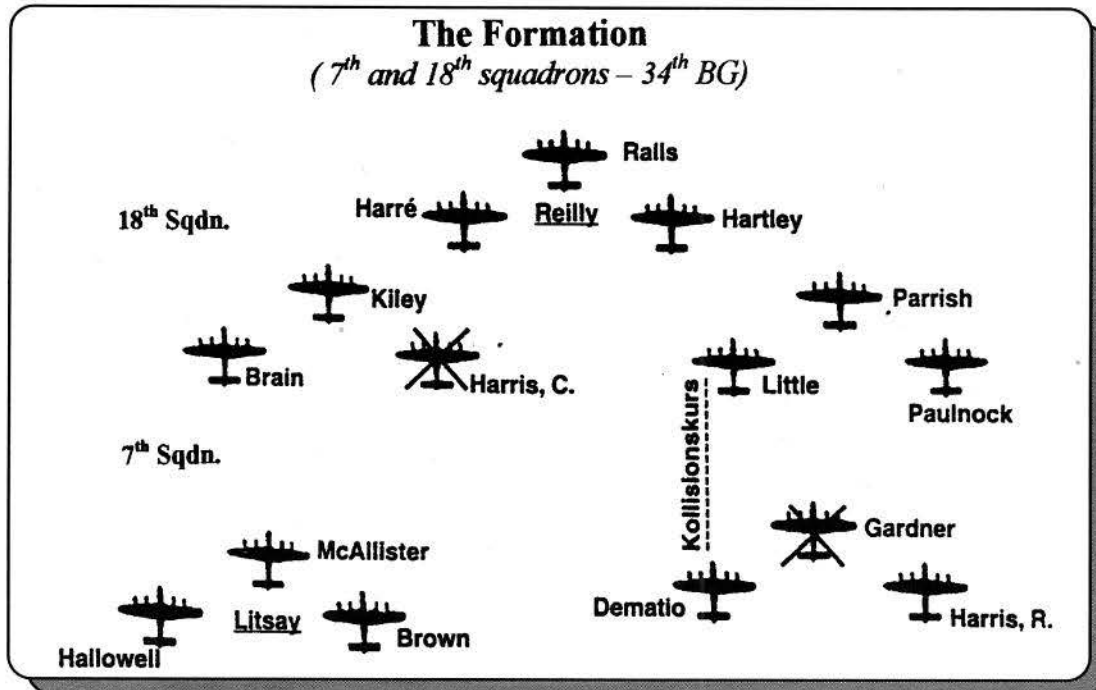
*Glennis Reilly*

Glennis Reilly



## FINAL MISSION

"Hell's Belle" and "Anne" were two B-24's from the 34<sup>th</sup> bomb group that were part of a maximum effort mission of the 8<sup>th</sup> Air Force to attack several targets in South-Southwest Germany. The date was July 19, 1944 as 1242 heavily laden B-17's and B-24's took off over the North Sea, in the early morning hours. Included in this giant armada were 51 B-24's from the 34<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group flying out of the Mendlesham air base.



As the 34<sup>th</sup> bomb group neared the coast of Holland, two B-24's piloted by Harris and Gardner, developed problems, left the formation and returned to Mendlesham, thus changing the integrity of the formation. Sergeant John E. Rielly, tail gunner on Paulnock's plane describes the mission in his diary which he wrote after returning from the mission.

### The Diary

7-19-44.

(No. 11)

Target : Saarbrücken  
S.W. Germany

Breasted : 02:45

Take Off : 05:50

Landing : 11:52

Bombs : 12--500 Pounds

The target for today was marching yards and it was guarded by sixty light and forty heavy anti-aircraft guns. I was once again flying with Lt. Paulnock



John E. Rielly

He's a damn good pilot though and I like him. Lt. Mason & Lt. Hart are flying too, but in different wings. Things were pretty nice going over, no flak and no fighters. On our run in to the target, a couple of F-110's buzzed by out of firing range. The ship in the tail had a big gun on a swivel. Never so that he couldn't pass through them in case he should attack. I glanced away from the fighters for a minute to see if the Japs were shooting at us yet from below and I saw at least twelve 20 flak guns spitting fire up. When I

looked up I saw a B24 blow up in a million pieces. Parts went flying everywhere all aflame. The collision knocked another ship into a slow roll when it came out of that, it started in a slow flat spin and lost quite a bit of altitude before it pulled out. It stuck together for a few minutes but finally started falling apart. After that it was too low to the ground to see what happened. There weren't any shots from the first ship, but there was slight possibility that one or two could have gotten out of the second one.

I said a few silent prayers to myself for them and all at once it struck me, "Where is Lt. Hart and Mission?" I knew they were back there somewhere, but where? About this time there was a loud whine as flak hit our ship and I woke up to see the whole sky black with flak bursts. Things were really rough for awhile, but the good Lord saw us through it. The hits weren't any too good on the target, but it sure slowed down Jerry's troop movements. We got back o.k. and the first thing I did after taking out my gun was to see who went down. I was almost

afraid to ask, but I had to know who it was. So as expected, the best pilot a fellow could want had gone down. Mission was o.k. though, thank goodness for that. When I was told that my pilot was one of them, I got a lump in my throat as big as an egg and I felt almost like crying, but I didn't. I sure liked him, he was just the type of guy I would want for a big brother.

I Will Never Forget This  
Day As Long As I Live.

+

32 John E. Rielly

The two planes involved in the collision to which John Rielly referred were "Hell's Belle" piloted by Lt. Donald Dematio and "Anne" piloted by Lt. John Little. Although there were various eye witness accounts of the incident, none could definitely say what really caused the collision. What is known, is that "Hell's Belle" took a direct flak hit and apparently was rendered uncontrollable. At precisely the same time it appeared that "Anne" could have been hit also, and possibly losing control to, since both planes closed in on one another and eventually collided.

Lt. William Hart, whom Sgt. Rielly was concerned about in his diary, was flying co-pilot in "Anne" and Lt. Blevins was the eleventh crew member flying as an observer for headquarters. They were the only survivors from the two planes. Lt. Hart was a pilot of his own crew on the B-24 "Ten of Hearts", on which Sgt. Rielly was the tail gunner. That crew had the day off but Hart and Rielly, elected to fill in on other crews in order to complete their 25 mission tour sooner.

Lt. Hart, from the co-pilot's seat on "Anne" heard over the intercom that another B-24 was getting dangerously close and as he glanced over his right shoulder the propellers of the left engines of "Hell's Belle" were already chewing into the fuselage on the right side and the resulting collision tore off the right wing. He partly felt an explosion and noticed that the pilot was seriously hurt. At approximately 20000 ft. Hart was ejected, unconscious, through the opening, coming to at around 5000 feet in time to pull his ripcord.

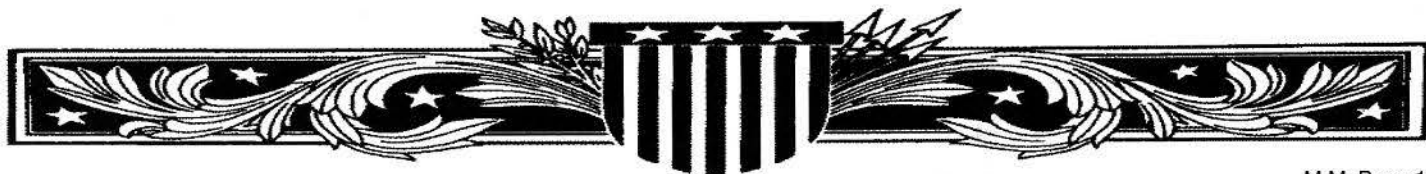
Lt. Blevins was busy in the vicinity of the bomb bay preparing to take pictures of the bomb drop. The

collision caused a fuel explosion with the resulting flash fire erupting into his face causing severe burns and temporarily blinding him as he fell from the bomb bay. Fortunately, he had an intact back chute and was able to pull the ripcord.

Both men landed in the vicinity of where the planes crashed and were immediately taken prisoners, ending up in Stalag 1, a prisoner of war camp for captured Air Force officers. Miraculously, one crewman walked out of the crashed "Hell's Belle", said a few words in English and collapsed. It was believed that this was the navigator, Garfield Morehouse. It is not known what happened to him but he was taken away by the authorities and was finally buried in the Ardennes cemetery near Luettich, Belgium. The remaining 18 dead crew men were buried in a Jewish cemetery near where they crashed. In early 1946 their bodies were exhumed and transferred to the American cemetery at St. Alvoild. Later, twelve of the airmen were returned for burial in the United States at the request of their families.

The information for this story came from the book titled "DER REGION NEUNKIRCHEN IM LUFTKRIEG" written by the German author, Dr. Horst Wilhelm who has given us permission to use it for this story. Many air incidents of WWII, that occurred over Germany, are included in this book. Interesting, also, are eyewitness accounts from German civilians and also actual damage reports both target destruction as well as civilian casualties.

Thanks are extended, also, to Mrs. Glennis Rielly for her information regarding the incident and for sharing her husband's diary with the 34<sup>th</sup> BGA members.



## ARMISTICE (VETERAN'S) DAY ENGLAND - 1999

It was a dank, dark day as I drove along the busy A14 from our motel at Thrapston (chosen for its proximity to Polebrook and Molesworth) toward Cambridge there were occasional delays due to the build-up of industrial and goods traffic. We knew we were in good time and had tried the route the day before, when we were given permission to photograph the grave of a Bombardier on behalf of his Tail Gunner. Arriving at our destination, Iris and I had time to spare and as we pulled into the US War Cemetery at Madingley car park the drizzle began.

For some time we were almost alone in the car park but gradually, at first, others arrived. First to arrive were young US Air Force and Navy enlisted men and women, then a few officers. Toward 10:15 the arrivals were of an older generation and veteran's hats were more prevalent. It was time to leave the car and walk through the drizzle to the Information Room, where the door was opened for us and we entered a room filling with at least three generations. A member of staff of Madingley Cemetery apologized for the fact that their coffee making facilities were overwhelmed. A small number of children, in arms, more of ages from about 7 years up. A few young American Officers, one lone RAF Liaison Officer and a growing number of civilians arrived.

My RAF veteran's necktie was not alone, we chatted with an ex-RAF man who lives in Madingley village and had walked up to pay his respects to his old allies. We saw the Mayor and Mayoress of Cambridge in the crowd, standing quietly with their chains of office almost out of sight under their raincoats. I was surprised and proud to see a number British veterans there among the Americans. We do not wear the distinguishing hats of the American veterans, it is our neckties and the wearing of military decorations and war service medals that identified us. One, a tall, slim man with two highly respected decoration and the necktie of the Special Boat Service (the Royal Navy's equivalent to the SAS) caught my eye. Another, with an impressive row of decorations and medals, the necktie of the Parachute Regiment on one who had obviously had a rough war, his left ear and part of his jawbone had been shot away and he had a pronounced limp.

Among the Americans, more difficult for us identify, we did see a 101st Airborne veteran among those present. As the clock signaled the approach of 11 AM, we all made our way to the Cemetery Chapel, too many to enable all to enter. There I heard a Canadian veteran chatting with a young USAF Major,

and English Royal Navy veteran joining in. There was a simple ceremony followed by the laying of wreaths by representatives of various organisations. Especially poignant was the laying of a wreath by a weeping lady, on behalf of her very recently deceased husband.

Finally, a USAF trumpeter blew Taps, the first time I had heard this, being more used to the British "Last Post". There was a benediction that ended the ceremony. The remaining moments are vignettes of veterans looking up old comrades on the Wall of the Missing, young children walking quietly beside decorative pools in the grounds of the Cemetery and of a Jewish couple, quietly visiting every gravestone surmounted with the Star of David, leaving a small pebble on each one.

As we left we heard the roar of vintage petrol engines and a Vought F4 Corsair, followed by a P-51 Mustang flew low in salute. My lasting memory? - pride that so many British came to honour the deeds of their American Allies.

( The above letter was sent to Hal Province from one of his British e-mail correspondents ).

### CAN YOU NAME THIS COUNTRY?

709,000 regular (active duty) service personnel.

293,000 reserve troops.

Eight standing Army divisions.

20 Air Force and Navy air wings with 2000 combat aircraft.

232 strategic bombers.

13 ballistic missile submarines with 3,114 nuclear warheads on 232 missiles; 500 ICBM's with 1,950 warheads.

Four aircraft carriers, and 121 surface combat ships and submarines, plus all the support bases, shipyards and logistical assets needed to sustain such a Navel force.

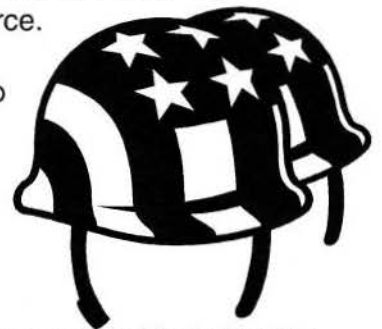
Is this country Russia?.....No  
Red China ? ...No  
Great Britain?.Wrong again  
US?.....Hardly

Give Up??

Well, don't feel too badly if you are unable to identify this global superpower because this country no longer exists, as such. It has vanished. These are the American military forces that have dissappeared since the 1992 elections.

Sleep well, America!

( From Jim Martin's e-mail bag ).





## PX ORDER FORM

REPRINT OF 34TH B.G. HISTORY BOOK, 1947 edition, EDWIN S. SMITH.....	\$37.50ea.
LATEST 34TH B.G. HISTORY BOOK, 1999 edition.....	\$49.95ea.
PERMANENT NAME TAGS ( First and last names & Sqdn. No).....	\$ 7.00ea.
LICENSE PLATE (34th Bomb Group).....	\$ 4.00ea.
LICENSE PLATE HOLDER (2 for \$5.00).....	\$ 3.00ea.
PATCHES - 8TH AIR FORCE OR 34TH BOMB GROUP.....	\$ 5.00ea.
PATCHES - 8TH AIR FORCE (Gold & Silver Bullion Thread).....	\$ 9.95ea.
PATCHES - SQUADRON - 4th - 7th - 18th - 391st.....	\$ 5.00ea.
DECAL - VALOR TO VICTORY - 5" X 5".....	\$ 1.50ea.
BUMPER STICKER - 34TH B.G. - 3" X 12".....	\$ 1.50ea.
BELT BUCKLES - 34TH B.G. (VALOR TO VICTORY) OR B-17.....	\$ 8.50ea.
BOLO TIES - 8TH AIR FORCE - 34TH B. G. - B-17 - B24.....	\$ 6.00ea.
KEY RINGS - 8TH AIR FORCE - B-17 - B-24.....	\$ 4.00ea.
HAT PINS ( FOR DECOR) B-24 - B-17 or POW.....	\$ 3.50ea.
VALOR TO VICTORY (LADY'S STICK PIN).....	\$ 3.50ea.
WINGS - 2 3/4" - PILOT - BOMBARDIER - NAVIGATOR - GUNNER.....	\$ 4.00ea.
WINGS - 2" CREW.....	\$ 4.00ea.
WINGS - 1" - PILOT - BOMBARDIER - NAVIGATOR - ENG - GUNNER.....	\$ 3.50ea.
TIE TACK - 8TH A.F. - 4TH - 7TH - 18TH - 391ST SQDNS.....	\$ 4.00ea.
BALL PEN (retractable) W/REPLACEABLE CARTRIDGE, DK. BLUE W/GOLD LETTERS (34TH BOMB GROUP, 8TH AIR FORCE) AND GOLD TRIM.....	\$ 1.49ea.
TOTE BAG - CANVAS - 34TH B.G. DESIGN.....	\$ 6.00ea.
CAPS - SOLID ROYAL BLUE (New 34th B.G. Design).....	\$ 7.00ea.
CAPS - 34TH. B.G. ( Mesh back).....	\$ 6.00ea.
CAPS - 50TH ANNIVERSARY - 8TH A.F (Royal Blue).....	\$ 5.00ea.
V.C.R. TAPE 58 mins. ( " Start Your Engines + 50 Years").....	\$27.95ea.
MEN'S POLO SHIRT W/ POCKET AND 34TH B.G. EMBLEM ( Hunter Green - beautiful) Large or X Large.....	\$24.50ea.
MEN'S POLO SHIRT (Cobblestone beige) W/34TH B.G. EMBLEM and LOGO - (no pocket) Med. or XX Large.....	\$24.50ea.
MEN'S POLO SHIRT ( White W/ Emblem - no pocket) Large or XX Large.....	\$27.00ea.
LADIES POLO SHIRT (White W/ Emblem - no pocket) Large or XX Large.....	\$27.00ea.
JACKET - ROYAL BLUE ( W/Emblem ) - Med. - Large - X Large.....	\$39.00ea.
SPORTS BAG - WHITE - W/Emblem.....	\$10.00ea.
NEW!! WRIST WATCH - 34TH B.G. Face W/Alarm.....	\$27.95ea.
RUBBER STAMPS ( 3 B-17'S IN FORMATION).....	\$ 7.95ea.
BOOK " Prescription For Nutritional Healing".....	\$19.95ea.

PLEASE CIRCLE ITEMS DESIRED  
THANK YOU FOR YOUR ORDER

Please add \$1.00 postage for orders under \$10.00 and \$2.00 postage for orders over & 10.00

Send check or money order to:      34th B.G. PX  
Ken Paxton  
6402 E. 11th St.  
Wichita, KS 67206  
Tel: (316) 683 - 2900

Continue sending in your orders!!! These items make wonderful gifts!!  
Thanks for your support of the 34th BGA. We wish all of you good health and much happiness!

# Friends Write

GARY FERRELL - SHELBY, NC

It was a real honor and privilege for me to attend the 1999 reunion with my aunt and uncle. It was more exciting than I could have possibly imagined. I was so happy to be able to share with several veterans some of the research I've done into the 34th BG history. I was also very appreciative and grateful for the financial assistance from the group in reimbursing me for the expenses of gathering that information. If I ever have the time to do so and learn the skills needed, I plan to greatly expand my 34th BG website to include even more details on the histories of the planes and crews of the 34th BG. Since the reunion I have obtained the 34BG records on microfilm from Maxwell AFB. They will prove very helpful but are still missing vital information. Bobb Pacholski, navigator on the B24 "The Near Sighted Robin" sent me a copy of his 201 file which contained the order for the deployment overseas. On one page it listed four 7th Squadron crews, including his, with the serial numbers (but no names) of the planes these crews flew over and a listing of the crew and passengers flying in each plane. I would very much like to obtain a complete set of those orders and would ask the members of 34th BG Association to check and see if they have a page like that in their own personal records and if so, I ask that they please send me a copy. This is the only place I have seen that identifies the planes the various crews flew over to England and a copy of that set of orders is not in the files at the National Archives, nor is it on the microfilm, I've already checked. A copy of the one relevant page, however, was apparently placed in each crewmember's 201 file. Again, I would ask any member who has a copy of their 201 file to please look for this one page in particular and send me a copy. The page I need is an Extract from Operations Order Number 1100 from Headquarters Station #11, Caribbean Wing ATC, Morrison Field, dated 13 April 1944. The one page that I have includes the Doell crew flying 41-29598, the Alexander crew flying 41-29559, the J.C. Smith crew flying 41-28851, and the Avriett crew flying 42-94824. Thanks, Gary Ferrell, 867 College Ave.

Shelby, NC 28152

HAROLD AND GEN RUTKA - DULUTH, MN

Wishing you the joys and blessings of this festive and Holy Season and a bright and Happy New Year 2000.

This has been a very busy year. It feels great to wind down and resume a more normal life. We celebrated our 55th wedding anniversary and we are very thankful for our wonderful years and good health. We have had a great fall - very little rain and "no snow to date"; although it is in the long range forecast. The weather has been so mild and with no snow they have had to reschedule the "SNOCROSS" snowmobile races. We were able to put up our Christmas lights and wreaths without wearing gloves.

We visited Savannah, Georgia and toured the 7th Air Force Heritage Museum three times due to scheduled events. Also we visited the 8th Air Force Museum in Shreveport, Louisiana. Those members of the 34th BGA that were there in 1989 for the dedication of the first memorial would be amazed at the row of memorials and bomber aircraft from the B-24's and B-17's of WW II to the 1980's. The museum has been moved into new quarters and is a big improvement over the 1989 museum. The 34th Bomb Group display is in need of items about the group.

Our travels also included two trips to Des Moines and other stops in Iowa. Also we visited Buffalo, New York for year 2000 reunion information. We traveled to England in July along with the 447th Bomb Group. They accepted us even though they were a B-17 group stationed at Rattlesden. We had made arrangements with our friends Leslie Lummis and his wife Sylvia for wreaths to be placed at our memorial at Mendlesham. We could not meet with all our friends because of the short time we had at Mendlesham. We had a great dinner prepared by Sylvia Lummis and then Leslie Lummis drove us back to our bus at Rattlesden and then to our hotel.

We placed a wreath for the 8th Air Force at the American Cemetery in Cambridge, visited the American Museum at Duxford and enjoyed a superb air show. We visited London, had some tours, shopping and theaters, some visited France.

Again we would like to wish all of you good health, peace and every happiness for the holidays and the coming 2000 New Year.

\*\*\*\*\*

BIRGIT LONERGAN - FT. MYERS, FL

I received my copy of the Mendlesham Memories the other day, read it from cover to cover

and am so happy that I made the effort to attend the reunion in Des Moines.

It was wonderful to see so many of the friends Ed and I had made over the years. Wish many of them were closer.

I may not make it to Buffalo, but am interested in the Return to England Tour. Ed and I so enjoyed the trip we made for the D-Day celebration.

Keep up the good work - the 34th will forever have a special place in my heart.

Hope everyone had a wonderful Christmas and I wish you all nothing but blessings in the New Year.

\*\*\*\*\*

BETTY BRESH - FORT MYERS, FL

Our best to you and yours and Holiday Blessing. Your Air Force buddy having mobility problems due to Peripheral Neuropathy of legs. I am well but due to Paul's health we may have to consider another form of housing. Hate to think of going North and cold. Family lives in Overland Park, KA, Sincerely.

\*\*\*\*\*

JUNE AND GEORGE RITCHIE - SWANSBORO, NC

Your efforts on behalf of the Group are outstanding. Keep up the good work. All's well and happy here. Our real news is that Tom is leaving the AF after 20 years, effective 4/2000. They offered him another school slot, and a promotion, but he declined. They are expecting #4.

Claude Gibbs was "on the radio" of Tiger Rag, Gerold Holmes crew in Blythe. I was the bombardier, transferred to Terry for 6 missions in the McAllister. Claude is "good people".

So June and I will try to make Buffalo to be there when he takes office.

ART WILSON - BLYTHE, CA

**ART WILSON**

590 Seville Lane  
Blythe, CA

Dear Hal,

Enclosed please find \$10.00 for associate membership in the 34th Bomb Group Association.

Name: Art Wilson, DOB - 8-19-30

Spouse: Cleatus Wilson, DOB - 2-25-38

I am currently engaged in researching the history of Blythe Army Air Base, California during World War II. I am particularly interested in first person accounts of life at the base and the nature of the

training. Photographs would be especially helpful. If a book results from this project, due credit will be accorded to everyone assisting. Any contributions will be greatly appreciated.

Thank you Hal, for your assistance, Art.

\*\*\*\*\*

EDGAR GEOGHEGAN - YELM, WA

Every Christmas since 1945 I have received cards from former roommates at Stalag Luft III, the camp the movie "The Great Escape" was all about. My role was played by Steve McQueen, to be honest I have never been on a motorcycle in my life or attempt to escape.

One of my roommates was a pilot on a Lancaster bomber. The other one, an Australian, was a pilot on a Halifax bomber. Both have visited me in the States.

I was in the British camp at Stalag Luft III as the American side of the barbed wire was overfilled.

My pilot, Terry and navigator Adams along with our co-pilot Halgren were at the same camp but in different rooms. I believe there are but four guys left on Terry's crew. I was originally on Pedigoes crew. Danielson, co-pilot, 18th sqdn., and I still keep in touch.

I have hit the big 80 and in spite of bi-pass surgery manage to play golf three or four times a week.

May you have a wonderful Holiday and a Healthy, happy New Year. Ed and Donna

\*\*\*\*\*

OLIVER BOLDUC - CHAPLIN, CT

Excuse the lined paper I'm sending this note on, it keeps me writing a bit straighter. That said, we wish you a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year and trust that year 2000 with all its glitches will not create any great problems. With 1999 about over, we can all look back and be grateful that we're still well and here. So many of those of the ground crew members have either passed away or are in bad condition. Phil Coombs passed away, Ted Janucz now with family. Jack Unwin with son. Don Kruppig has had an operation and using a cane, his wife is on oxygen all the time.

For flight crews and their status I tried not to know them too well, but I got to know Eastman very well and in fact he gave me his wallet to hold for him before he flew on his fatal flight and was shot down over the base, as he returned from a mission, by the German intruder at 11:00 PM. I witnessed all of it and I shed many a tear so often over it, a dear friend and his



crew as well and then I had to handle the return of his wallet. Certainly, there were many, many others who gave their all that we might return to our great country. Other than pilot Robert Blum, who flew my plane for many, many missions, and we got to know each other very well.

Ground crews always suffered a very deep emotional or traumatic loss when a plane they serviced and maintained, to the best of their knowledge, did not return. Whatever their fate turned out to be, often we never learned unless by chance they returned via the underground system. So it took a toll on us if we knew the flight crews real well.

I do enjoy the MM and it's articles and I take my hat off to all of you who make it happen. My wife and I have failed to take part in the reunions but some day if one were held in the New England area it would no doubt entice us to go. The Foxwood Resort and Casino has everything a group could expect as well as Mystic Sea Port and aquarium. The Groton Submarine base and Bradley Air Port have bus as well as train service at hand. Rates are not out of line, literature is available.

Well Hal, I've rattled on and on but I've got Lymes disease and been medicated for months for it. Otherwise my wife and I are well, still cut my own firewood for supplement heat.

A great winter for you and family, thanks for all you do for MM.



The 34th Bomb Group (H) - England Trip will leave 31 May 2000 and arrive in England, Heathrow Airport 1 June 2000. Bus to Dunston Hall, the same hotel we were at in 1998.

Saturday, 3 June 2000 at 5:00 PM Molesworth hanger dance.

Sunday - visit to the American Cemetery in Cambridge - then on to Duxford Airfield and return to Dunston Hall. Then on to London and the return home.

For further information, call, Dick D'Amato, Tamarac Travel - 1-800-228-9690 or: Harold C. Rutka, 1-218-724-1667.

## **LIFE HANGS BY A THIN THREAD**

### **By AL SADOWSKY, 391st sqd.**

How often have we heard the above expression without giving it a thought?

The incidents occurred during my tow with the 34th. Bomb Group and will be forever implanted in the back of my mind. Time has dulled my memory as to the exact dates, but the happenings are still vivid as if they occurred yesterday.

**INCIDENT #1** - On a mission to Mersberg, Germany, as a lead crew we were designated to lead our squadron over the target. Just prior to take off, however, we were told to switch positions since a high ranking officer was to head the entire group.

During the bomb run, the lead crew received a direct hit and the plane exploded and needless to say - no survivors.

**INCIDENT # 2** - The following incident happened when we were flying B-24's. I was a ball turret gunner and, as you recall, the ball had to be lowered when airborne and raised by hydraulics when landing. On a mission over occupied France, while on the bomb run, my co-pilot, Alf Johansen, asked for an oxygen check. When I did not respond, He told Benme Copeland, our engineer, to see what was wrong. Fortunately, my twin 50 caliber machine guns were pointed face down so that he could open the trap door to the turret and revive me with pure oxygen. Had I been in a rotating position, it would have been impossible to reach me and I would have fallen victim to anoxia.

I never was a deeply religious individual but surely a higher being was holding my hand and guiding me on these two frightening occurrences.

I know that "Life Hangs by a Thread" but it is unbreakable when "God", (whatever religion), is standing by your side.

## **ENGLAND TOUR UPDATE**

The England tour has resulted in many calls to Tamarac Travel and several to me. Our group will be joining with 100th bomb group at Dunston Hall, Norwich. I have had calls regarding our relationship with the 100th bomb group. We were both in the 3rd Air Division and we flew some missions together.

We know that Claude and Gen Conklin and Harold and Gen Rutka will be among those meeting in England. There is still time for you to make arrangements for the tour. Call Tamarac Travel - 1-800-228-9690 for more information.

Back to England coordinator,  
Harold Rutka,  
34th bomb group chairman

## CHANGE OF ADDRESS

LAST NAME	FIRST NAME	ORG	ADDRESS	CITY	STATE	ZIP
BUSS	MARY, E.	391LM	4836 N. WATERGATE RD	OLNEY	IL	62450
CAMP	JOHN, R	18LM	9250 N. BAYSHORE DR.	MIAMI	FL	33138
CASELL	ALBERT, J	7	4982 BEAVER RD	THORNVILLE	OH	43076
CUTTING	RICHARD, M	7LM	2353 YOUNGMAN AVE APT 307	ST. PAUL	MN	55116
FILLMAN	DONALD, K	18LM	1101 A CARRIAGE LANE	CAMERON	MO	64429
GRIFFITH	FRANK R	4	17475 FRANCIS ST APT 2028	OMAHA	NE	68130
HILL	ALLEN P	7 4	2210 MINERAL POINT AVE	JANESVILLE	WI	53545
HOWARTER	WAYNE	7LM	16702 S. HWY 59	WELDA	KS	66091
LEWIS	CHARLES, H	10304	27TH DR SE	EVERETT	WA	98208
MARTIN	JAMES	7LM	13100 FM 1176	SANTA ANNA	TX	76878
McCLURE	CHARLES, J	391/18	29 COACHMAN SQUARE	CLIFTON PARK	NJ	12065
MINK	CLAYTON, A	7	314 ANTHONY AVE	HUDSON	NY	12534
ROCKMUELLERSIDNEY		SPSERLM	3718 HENRY HUDSON PKWY E. #1408	BRONX	NY	10463
ROSS	JOHN J.	18	12 AVERY CT.	NESCONSET	NY	11767
VANBUSKIRK	WILLIAM F	4	18790 LLOYD DR APT1014	DALLAS	TX	75252

## NEW E-MAIL ADDRESSES

LAST NAME	FIRST NAME	ADDRESS
HARKLEROAD	LEE	Harkleroadjr@aol.com
STRONG	EARL	emstrong@txol.net

## CHANGE IN E-MAIL ADDRESS

LAST NAME	FIRST NAME	NEW ADDRESS
SOTHERN	BRUCE	Bssothern@aol.com

## NEW MEMBER

LAST NAME	FIRST NAME	ORG	ADDRESS	CITY	STATE	ZIP
HUGHEY	DANIEL	18	1072 GRETNA ST	EL CAJON	CA	92021
STALEY	DANIEL	7	9792 SAGEBRUSH DR	PRESCOTT VALLEY	AZ	86314
WILSON	ARTHUR B	ASSOC	990 SEVILLE LANE	BLYTHE	CA	92225



## TAPS

LAST NAME	FIRST NAME	ORG	DOD	ADDRESS	CITY	STATE	ZIP
MILLSTONE	MARTIN A	391	?	1424 S FARRELL DR	PALM SPRINGS	CA	92264
WEEKS	WAYNE	18	03-21-99	11475 PORTERVILLE RD	EAST AURORA	NY	14032
FARLEY	JOHN	18LM	01-25-00	4 CREST HILL RD	VERONA	NJ	07044
ROMERO	CLEVELAND	7LM	01-31-00	1008 CARMEL	LAFAYETTE	LA	70501

## DONATION TO THE RAY SUMMA SCHOLARSHIP FUND

DONOR  
GLORIA JAMES  
FANDEL, WILLIAM H.

IN MEMORY OF  
JOHN JAMES

## 50TH WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

WEDDING DATE	LAST NAME	FIRST NAME
MAY 14TH 1949	HARKLEROAD	LEE & HELEN LOIS

# CREDIT WHERE DUE

It was a veteran, not the reporter, who gave us freedom of the press.

It was the veteran, not a poet, who has given us freedom of speech.

It was the veteran, not the campus organizer,  
who has given us freedom to demonstrate.

It was the veteran, not the lawyer, who has given us the right to a fair trial.

It was the veteran who salutes the flag, who serves under the flag,  
and whose coffin is draped by the flag,  
who allows the protester the freedom to burn the flag.

Author unknown

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The Woodlands, TX 77382  
(639) 273-3561

*34th Bomb. Group*



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From the collection of:

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

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