



ENDLESHAM EMORIES



VOICE OF THE 34TH BOMB GROUP (H)

Buffalo

Gateway to Niagara



NIAGARA FALLS

THE ADAMS MARK HOTEL



4TH SQUADRON



7TH SQUADRON



18TH SQUADRON

34th BOMB GROUP ASSOCIATION REUNION

September 6th - 10th, 2000

at

THE ADAMS MARK HOTEL

Buffalo, New York

HOTEL RESERVATION FORM, REUNION REGISTRATION FORM
& DETAILS OF EVENT INCLUDED IN THIS ISSUE



391ST SQUADRON

MENDLESHAM MEMORIES

Newsletter of

The 34th Bomb Group Association, Inc.

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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DEADLINE

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

Jack Share, Editor

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Other web sites of interest:

<http://members.tripod.com/VALORtoVICTORY>

www.mighty8thmuseum.com

www.air-museum.org/b17.htm

share— a thought.

Taps, that inevitable list that appears in every issue of this publication – how we wish it would go away. It is not easy losing those that have meant so much to this country's freedom, and well being, and have been instrumental in keeping this organization alive and well. Those of us who have been attending the reunions of the 34th BGA over the years have had the privilege of being associated with many of these fallen heroes. Although, they will be greatly missed and we know they will never attend another reunion – in body, we feel strongly they will be with us in spirit because it was a great part of their lives. Their contributions will be in evidence for as long as the 34th BGA survives.

One such individual whom I met for the first, and only, time at the 1998 reunion at Boise, passed away recently. You who were at that reunion will remember him as the gentleman who stood up at the Friday night dinner and recited a poem he had written in tribute to the veterans of Mendlesham. That poem appeared in the December '98 issue of MM. He and I had several talks on the telephone after that and became quite good friends. I learned that two of his greatest loves were the State of Montana, where he lived, and the people he had met at the 34th BGA reunions. He wrote another poem about those people which also appeared in the Dec. '98 issue of MM.

I think he said it best in his second poem, "The Boise Reunion", in which he described the reunions as:

"Many old friendships are renewed.

Some new made,

A weekend of smiles and tears to remember

As we look forward to next September".

I'll never forget Gene Albert.

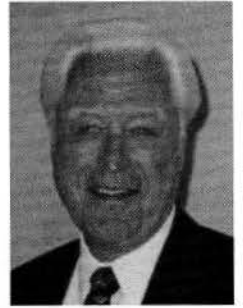
Look for your reunion registration, hotel reservation forms and the list of activities in this issue.

See you in Buffalo.



Jack

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



Once again it is time to write a few words for the June issue of MM. I have been going through a traumatic event in my life and have been unable to concentrate on my duties with the 34th, but the deadline is approaching, so I'll do my best to make sense in my message.

It deeply saddens me to read the TAPS section of the last MM. My sincerest sympathy goes out to the families of the four who passed away early this year; M. Millstone, W. Weeks, J. Farley and Cleveland Romero. Our ranks are understandably thinning out. May God bless them all.

At our reunions, Cleveland would share the experiences he had in a POW camp in Germany. To this day he would say, "I still can't stand the smell of onions!" I guess onion soup was all they fed them. He was a great person, Henrietta.

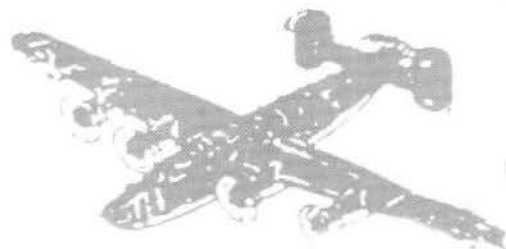
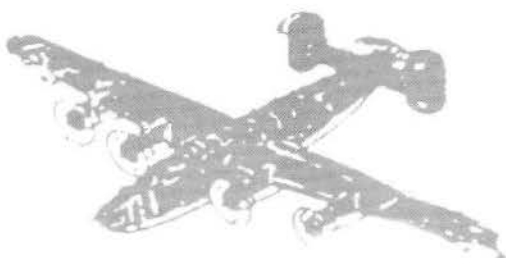
I purchased a video tape set from the History channel, "Greatest Blunders of the 20th Century". In one segment, the history of the Army's 8th Air Force in England was covered. Our effort to go it alone, without fighter escort, to the target deep in Germany was almost a failure. Daylight, precision bombing, flying in a box formation, was the way to go at the time; or so they believed. Losses on some long missions, toward the end of 1943 were approximately 20%. The German fighters ate them alive.

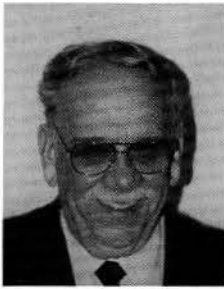
It wasn't until February 1944 that the revised version of the P-51, able to fly 1600 miles, reduced our losses dramatically. If we would have listened to the English earlier in the war, and used their engine design, many bomber crews would have been saved. As it turned out, after making the revision to the P-51, it became the best fighter in the European Theater. The 34th was lucky to have begun their missions with P-51D fighter protection all the way to the target. Thank God.

Enough of military blunders by the 8th AF. I had better stop before I blunder!!

See you all in Buffalo, NY.

Norm Mayer 20-20





TREASURER'S REPORT

I'm writing this on TAX DAY 2000 and am wondering where the year has gone. It seems only yesterday that we were speculating what effect the change over to Y2K might have on our lives and here the year is almost

33% past! I hope none of you had any trouble with the change over.

SCHOLARSHIP TIME – There is still time to get an entry to the Scholarship Committee for this years judging. A postmark of 10 July 2000 is acceptable so you may want to check on your kin who are graduating this year or a college student who may want to enter. The committee will try to have the results so they can be listed in the September issue. Thanks to those of you who included an extra \$5.00 with your annual membership dues. It will help continue our scholarship program.

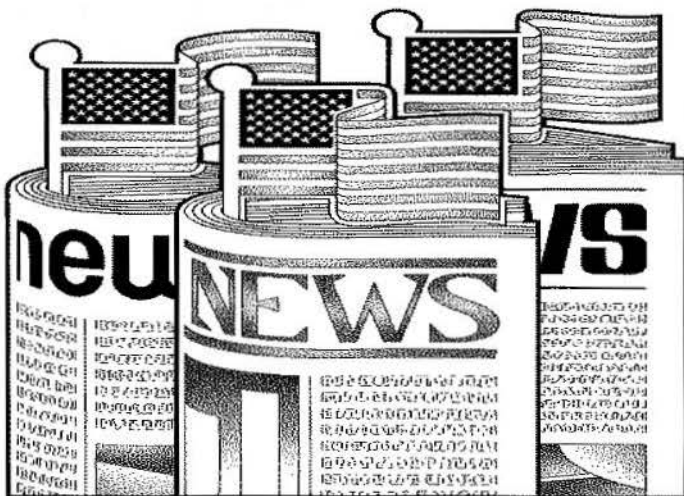
Sadly, we had to report the loss of two of our Scholarship committee members: Jack Farley and Cleveland Romero. And we sadly mourn the loss of others on our TAPS list.

Tony Coutros, John Feda, Randy Martin and yours truly (and wives) will be your representatives at the 55th anniversary of the Food Drops in Holland April 29 – May 6. Most of us leave the USA on April 26th and will gather in Rotterdam on April 27th to start the festivities. I'm sure it will be quite an emotional time, meeting and seeing those for whom we dropped the food parcels.

Reunion forms are in this issue so all will know what is to be on the agenda at Buffalo. I'm looking forward to seeing many of our members as well as visiting spots around Buffalo. I hope you are including the reunion in your travel plans for 2000!

Cheers and may God abundantly BLESS!

Hal



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

REUNION COMMITTEE REPORT

The reunion committee has finalized the arrangements for the Buffalo reunion – September 6 – 10, 2000. The Adams Mark Hotel has been redecorated, the food is excellent and the personnel is pleasant to deal with.

The hospitality room will have all the necessary facilities and will again be in operation.

The shuttle from the airport is FREE!! The first shuttle to the airport leaves the hotel at 6:00 AM and then on the hour during the day. Taxi service runs \$22.00 - \$28.00 depending on the drivers' travels.

The tour will leave the hotel at 9:00 AM – Friday, 8 September, 2000. It will proceed with an over-view of Buffalo's major city highlights. It will then proceed on to Niagara Falls' prime outlets and food court for an early lunch and shopping – for those that so desire. The tour will continue on to the American Falls area, travel along the Niagara Gorge then cross over into Canada with stops at the Floral Clock, the Whirlpool Overlook and then to the Horseshoe Falls at the Victoria Park area. We will return to the hotel at 4:00 PM

We will be looking forward to seeing you at the Adams Mark Hotel in Buffalo. This could be one of our larger reunions as one fifth of the population of the country lives within 500 miles of the Buffalo area.

The Reunion Committee

Harold Rutka
Robert Wright
Bruce Sothern

A HISTORY OF THE 34TH BOMBARDMENT GROUP (H)

A PRE-WAR UNIT

From its low unit number, the 34th. Bombardment Group (H) was obviously an old organization. In fact, it originated as a pre-war training group and was formed of four early bombardment squadrons, the 4th., the 7th., the 18th., and the 391st.

Group markings on the Fortresses consisted of a red fin and red chordwise bands across the wings and tailplane. The squadrons were identified by their white (4th.), yellow (7th.), red (18th.), and green (391st.) cowlings. Unlike other groups, the 34th. did not carry a unit letter in a square on the fin, but the individual aircraft letter was carried on the rudder.

The activation of the 34th Group took place at Langley Field, Virginia, and in the months that followed the Group had an ubiquitous career. From Langley, the unit moved to Pendleton, Ohio, and from there to Tucson, Arizona. After a short stay at Tucson the Group moved to Geiger Field at Spokane, Washington, one of the main Bombardment Group home bases, and then went on to Euphrate, also in Washington. Blythe, California, another home Bombardment base, was next on the list, it was here that several other 8th. A.F. Groups were formed later. The period spent at Blythe was more prolonged and after moving to Salinas for a short time the Group was engaged in training crews for heavy bombers and up to the time it went to Salinas was flying Boeing B-17 Fortresses, but at Salinas a conversion course was held and when the 34th. returned to Blythe it was using Consolidated B-24 Liberators. The Group changed back to B-17's in July 1944.

Crew Training School Formed

At Blythe the 34th. Bombardment Group was disbanded and formed into the 358th. Combat Crew Training School. A tremendous amount of training was done at this stage and it can be fairly stated that most Bombardment Groups in the 8th. Air Force originated in the 34th. Bomb Group or 358th. Training School.

After some time the decision was made to reinstate the 34th. Bombardment Group and place it on operational status for service overseas. A cadre was formed, and in December, 1943, the 34th Bombardment Group was reborn.

The Group flew from Blythe via Salinas to England, arriving near Liverpool on April 21, 1944, and from there flew to Mendlesham, Suffolk, which was the base for this unit until June, 1945. When the Group

went overseas it was commanded by Col. Wackwitz, who had been appointed commander when the 34th. had been reformed. After retaining this post in England for some months, he was replaced by Col. W. E. Creer. After the Group ceased operations, Col. Creer returned to the USA on May 29th., 1945, to be replaced by Lt. Col. LeBailly.

Operations

With the 34th. Bombardment Groups first mission on May 23rd. 1944, an attack on Estampes and Mandesir, to its last mission on April 20th. 1945 on Mauern, the 34th. Group had less than a year of operations over Europe. Perhaps the outstanding attack was the Plauen tank factory on March, 26th. 1945. For several months forces of the 8th. Air Force had been attacking this plant with poor results. Then on the March 26th. attack the 34th. Group laid a neat pattern of high explosives right across the factory. Other groups took part in the mission, but only the 34th. made a successful bombing attack. This action was typical of the accuracy record of the 34th., for this unit led the 8th. Air Force in bombing accuracy during the first few months in which it operated. Also, during the period it was operational, it flew more sorties than were flown by any other group during the same time. A total of 170 operational missions, 6 food missions, and many repatriated prisoner flights is no mean effort in a period of 11 months. During this time the Group dropped many thousands of bombs, 13,045 tons of which were certified as having hit their intended targets. The highest tonnage to hit a single target was 133 short tons on Bielefeld on March 3rd, 1945.

Not Long Active

Because of its relatively short period of active service, claims of enemy aircraft destroyed by the Group are small amounting to only eight destroyed, four probably destroyed and 13 damaged, while 52 of the Group's bombers were lost. The latter figure may seem out of proportion to the claims made, but during 1944 fighter opposition steadily decreased while enemy flak was on the increase. Indeed other crews reported that the period between June, 1943 and March, 1944 was the worst for fighter attacks, while from this time on the escort fighters further reduced an already waning menace and flak was the bombers' worst enemy.

Although it was over there too late to participate in some of the pioneer battles of the 8th. Air Force, 3rd. Air Division, the 34th. Bombardment Group started with a tradition born of long home service, but once in action showed itself to be more than a match for any adversary.

(Submitted by Walter Sturdivant - 18th Sqd.)

Re-deployment

The month of June 1945 arrived to find the Group under a new commander charged with re-deployment to the Pacific War for air and ground echelons. Preliminary information indicated that the air echelon would begin moving at any time and all other activities were secondary to this effort. Re-deployment of the air echelon started in June and the organization was never brought together again, as a whole group.

The program of readying the aircraft and crews for an overseas flight continued through June, although few knew just where the flight would take them, it was generally felt that flights would be made via the United States. On June 5th the Third Air Division received instructions for the Group Commander to make up loading lists for each flyable aircraft to include 20 passengers. The next few days were spent in frenzied efforts deciding who would be passengers and calling back many officers and men on leave or on furlough. It was difficult to determine just who should travel as passengers, since training conditions in the States were not known, but finally each squadron and section had its pro-rata share of key and urgent personnel selected for the loading lists.

At 0209 hours on 7 June 1945, the long awaited Field Order No. 2253. Operation "Home Run" was received alerting the Group to send all flyable aircraft to Valley Airdrome in Wales. Additional elements followed for the next few days and on 26 June 1945, Colonel Le Bailly left with the last aircraft.

The entire movement was composed of 72 aircraft transporting 1439 officers and enlisted men to the Zone of Interior. Planes were dispatched to ATC Airdromes at Valley Wales and Prestwick, Scotland. Generally, the ocean routes of the North Atlantic Wing were flown but a few of the planes were routed via the Azores.

Personnel changes affecting the Group staff were made during June, as follows:

The "Honey Project" claimed a veteran of the Group when Lieutenant Colonel William H. Fandel was ordered back to the Zone of Interior being succeeded by Lieutenant Colonel Roy E. Tavasti as Deputy Group Commander and Deputy for Operations.

Lieutenant Colonel Frank R. Crabtree was transferred from the 18th. Squadron to become Group Operations Officer.

Major Charles Cook was transferred from Group Operations to assume command of the 18th. Squadron.

When Lieutenant Colonel LeBailly left, Lieutenant Colonel Eugene H. Taylor, Group Commander of the 422 Air Service Group assumed

command of the Station.

Captain Frederick A Millard of the Ground Echelon was named as temporary Group Commander to be replaced a few days later by Captain John H. Westoff, a rated pilot, at the request of the "POM" inspectors.

Captain William Orchard, Group Intelligence Officer, was transferred to Headquarters 20th Bombardment Wing and was succeeded by Captain Samuel T. Turnipseed, Jr. as Group S-2.

After departure of the Air Echelon, the elements left on base settled down to the business of closing the base. Supplies and property were packed for shipment to the appropriate depots and the "OEL" property was packed for overseas shipment to intransit depot at Newark, NJ. This program covered late June and into the first ten days of July.

A holding party under the Command of Major Frederick R. Relyea, former Commander of the 848th. Air Engineering Squadron was charged with the final closing of the station after the departure of ground echelon. Members of the command desirous of staying in England, and some who married English girls, were transferred to the holding party. It was the responsibility of this force, consisting of approximately eight officers and one hundred seventeen enlisted men to check the buildings, pick up small items of property, protect the station from fire and marauders and to finally turn the station over to the Air Ministry. When their job was completed, they were absorbed by the Third Air Division for re-deployment with some other unit.

Movement orders for remaining personnel arrived on 9 July 1945. Post authorities were prepared to accept an approximate strength of 44 officers and 561 enlisted men of the ground echelon. Finally, on 19 July 1945 Headquarters Squadron of our associated 422nd. Air Service Group was ordered up for shipment by the Post Commander at Cardiff, Wales for departing Mendlesham on 23 July 1945. The next afternoon, 20 July 1945, Headquarters Detachment of the 34th. Bomb Group was alerted by the Southampton Post Commander for sailing on the 24 July 1945. Actually, both of these units departed together, by truck, from Mendlesham at 0030 hours on 24 July, transferring to troop train at Stowmarket at approximately 0230 hours for ports of embarkation.

Upon leaving Mendlesham, Headquarters Detachment consisted of 17 officers, 56 enlisted men and one civilian, Mr. Leonard W. Thompson, our Field Director, American Red Cross. After an uneventful trip via London, the train pulled into the docks at Southampton at about 0900 hours on the same morning and by 1000 hours were boarding the USS West Point which was to be their home for the next

week. The transport, the former SS America, was a 1200 passenger vessel some 723 feet in length. She was the largest passenger liner built in America and called Newport News Virginia her homeport.

At 1315 hours on 25 July 1945, hawsers were thrown off, anchors raised and she put out to sea through the Southampton harbor and the Western end of the English Channel. Passengers carried on this trip were generally considered to be about 7000 men, some 2000 of which were ambulatory patients.

The voyage across was uneventful, calm, and very pleasant. Troop duty consisted of guard officers, sentries, mess line and kitchen details and general police details. Abandon ship drills were practiced for the first three days out and once later for the patients. The main problem with passengers was the wearing and care of papak life vests, seemed better suited for pillows. Food was plentiful and well prepared and the canteen was usually open. Only three soldiers (none from the 34th. Bomb Group) were incarcerated in the "Brig" for breaking smoking regulations, which was a good indication of how well the men aboard were disciplined.

The ship arrived at Newport News, on schedule, on the morning of 1 August 1945 and tied up at 0530 hours. Troops began debarking about 0700 hours and by 1030 hours all except the patients were off. Bands, port officials, reporters, and Red Cross workers welcomed the troops as they poured from the gang plank in Winter uniforms on a hot summer morning in southern Virginia. Five waiting trains carried the troops to nearby Camp Patrick Henry where they were again welcomed on behalf of the Commanding General. After a short orientation, they were assigned barracks and then to the mess hall for steaks, sweet milk, and ice cream. After changing into Summer uniforms, they called home and awaited instructions for departure home for thirty day leaves or furloughs.

Inactivation

While on leave, the two atom bombs were dropped and Japan surrendered on 14 August 1945 and the re-deployment plans were changed to inactivation or rather a state of suspense until surrender terms were actually signed on 2 September.

As a whole, most officers and men were relieved of active duty and were separated from the service. Lieutenant Colonel LeBailly, Group Commander, was reassigned to the 4th. Air Force at Hamilton Field, CA.

Lieutenant Colonel Tavasti was assigned Deputy Commander of Transient Troops at Sioux Falls Assembly Area.

Lieutenant Colonel Crabtree was reassigned to a station in Texas.

Major Robert Gay, Ground Executive, was released from active duty and returned to his home in Rockwood, Michigan.

Major Harry Morgan, group Surgeon, was relieved of active duty and returned to his practice in Longview, Washington.

Major Joseph H. Ray, Air Inspector, was assigned to the Sioux Falls Assembly Area.

Captain Samuel Turnipseed, Jr. Group S-2, was released from active duty and returned to his former position with Southern Bell in Atlanta, Georgia. Without Captain Turnipseed, the history of the 34th. Bombardment Group would not have been written.

On 2 July 1945, a report issued by Headquarters of Third Air Division, the Station of the 34th Bombardment Group ranked first in efficiency as to matters handled by it's courts and boards section.

A neighboring English Constable of Eye stated that he had less trouble with the 34th. personnel during their time in Mendlesham than he did with a much smaller English force stationed there for a shorter period previously.

Mingled feelings ran through the minds of many of the ground echelon present when Colonel LeBailly, our Commanding Officer, circled the field and dipped his wings in the final salute of our last departing aircraft before winging his way homeward to the West on that afternoon of 25 July 1945. This concluded flying activities for the 34th. Bombardment Group over Mendlesham Airfield.

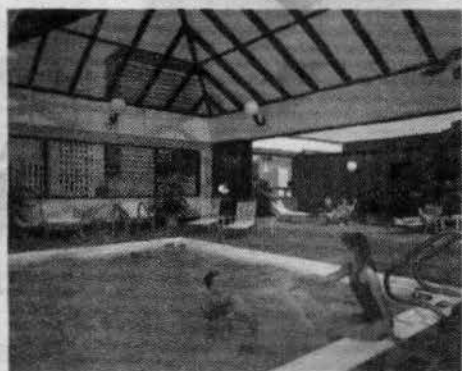
On 27 August 1945, General Order Number 116 was issued by Headquarters, Second Air Force, Colorado Springs, Colorado, stating, in part, that the 34th. Bombardment Group would be inactivated on 2 September 1945 along with several other Groups originally scheduled for re-deployment to the Pacific. Thus the 34th. bomb Group went on inactive status as prescribed by the War Department Troop Bases closing the chapter on World War II.

To those officers and men who conscientiously carried out their respective duties, God speed in their future pursuits of peace and civilian undertakings. And to the loved ones of those of us who did not return, we convey our heartfelt sympathy; and we trust that future actions of those of us who carry on will continue to hold those missing ones in such a high place of respect, that their efforts may not have been in vain.

(Author of Re-deployment and Inactivation unknown).



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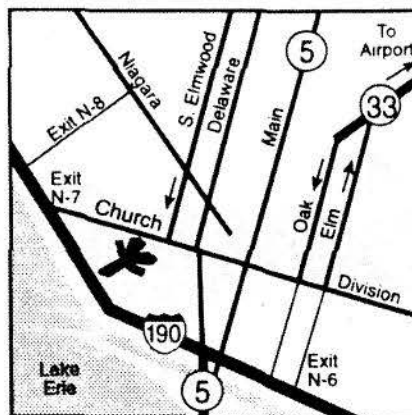
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Buffalo, NY 14202

716-845-5100

Fax: 716-845-5377

800-444-ADAM (for any Adam's Mark)



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Please tear off this portion for your personal records.

Please call for the complimentary Shuttle from Adam's Mark Hotel.
Phone located at Baggage Check Number 3.

The Adam's Mark Buffalo is pleased to host **34TH BOMB GROUP ASSOC.** (9/6/00-9/10/00)

To ensure accurate reservations, please complete this reservation request and return it before **08/07/00**. Requests received after this date will be accepted based on room and rate availability. Reservation requests must be accompanied by a deposit equal to one night's room rate plus 13% occupancy tax. This deposit will be applied to the last night of the reservation.

Room type preference:	Single	Double	Triple	Quadruple	Special Requests (subject to availability)
<input type="checkbox"/> King	\$82.	\$82.	\$82.	\$82.	<input type="checkbox"/> Roll-Away Bed (\$10 per night) Available in King bedded rooms only
<input type="checkbox"/> Two Double Beds	\$82.	\$82.	\$82.	\$82.	<input type="checkbox"/> Crib (no charge)
<input type="checkbox"/> Executive Level King	\$102.	\$102.	\$102.	\$102.	<input type="checkbox"/> Wheelchair Accessible Room
<input type="checkbox"/> Executive Level / Double	\$102.	\$102.	\$102.	\$102.	<input type="checkbox"/> Nonsmoking Room

Name: _____

Arrival Date: _____ Arrival Time: _____

Address: _____

Departure Date: _____

City/State/Zip: _____

Additional Guest(s): _____

Telephone: _____

- ☐ I have enclosed a check in the amount of one night's room rate plus 13% occupancy tax.
☐ Please charge one night's room rate plus 13% occupancy tax to the following credit card:
☐ MasterCard, ☐ Visa, ☐ American Express, ☐ Carte Blanche/Diners Club, ☐ Discover, ☐ JCB

Card Number: _____ Exp. Date _____

I understand that I will forfeit my deposit in the event that I do not arrive or cancel less than 48 hours prior to arrival (unless contracted differently). All reservations will be assessed a \$25.00 early departure charge for each night I check out in advance of my scheduled departure date.

Name of Credit Card Holder

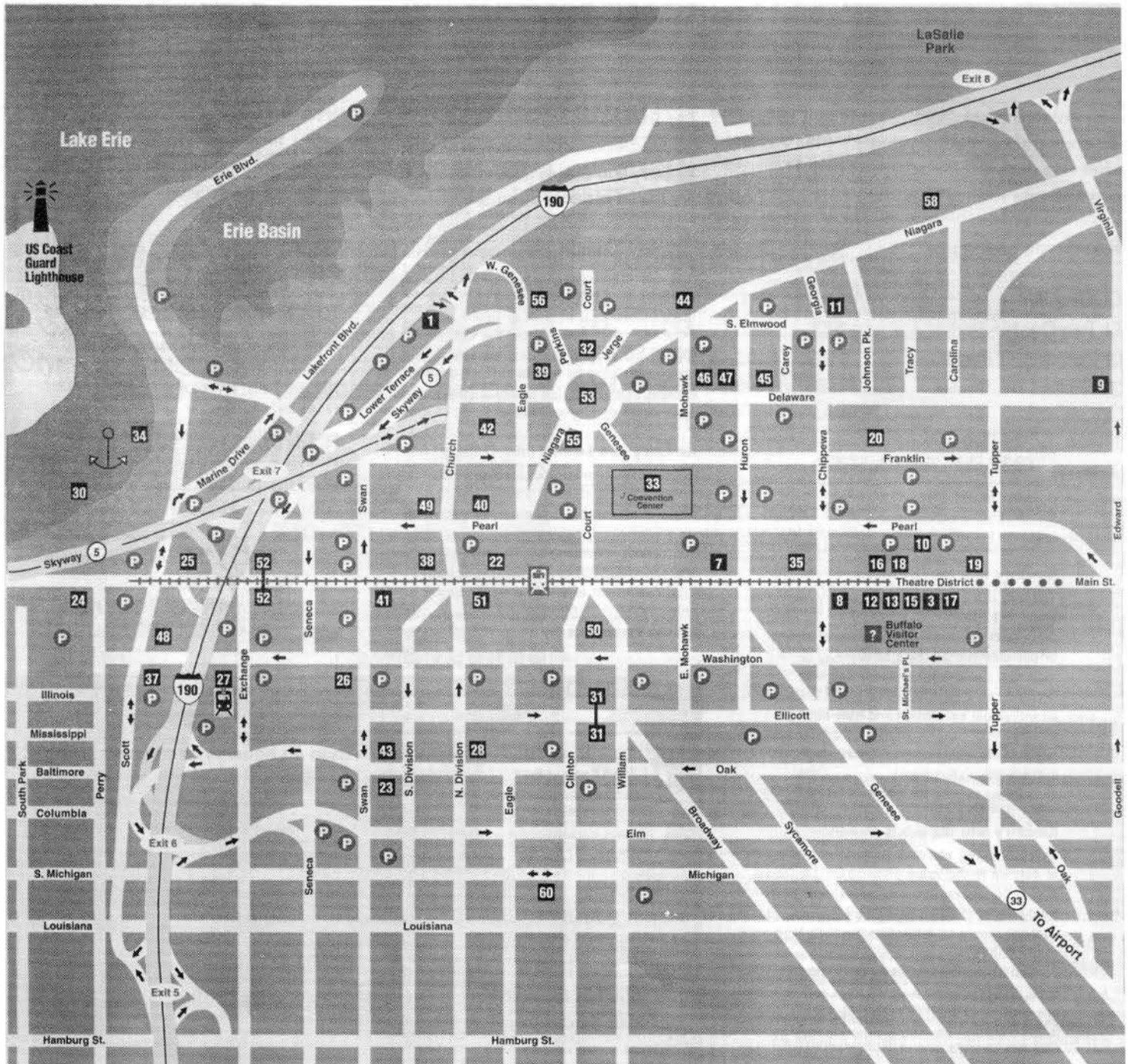
Signature of Card Holder

Maximum of two rooms held per name. Bed types are not guaranteed and are based upon availability.

- Check-in time after 3:00 p.m. Check-out time is 12:00 noon. Occupancy tax is subject to change.
- Cancellation or modification of reservation must be made at least 48 hours prior to arrival to avoid forfeiture of deposit. Ask for and retain cancellation number until you receive refund of deposit or credit to credit card.
- No charge for children under 18 when sharing room with parents and using existing bed space.
- All hotel accounts are subject to credit arrangements at time of registration and payable at departure.

Please call 716-845-5100 for reservation assistance.

downtown buffalo



REUNION 2000

The 34th Bomb Group will hold it's Annual Reunion at the Adams Mark Hotel, 120 Church Street, Buffalo, New York, 14202 TX 800-444-2326 from 6 – 10 September, 2000

Hotel reservation forms are included in this issue. Send your check or credit card number directly to the Hotel for lodging. Specify you are attending the 34th Bomb Group Reunion, along with your arrival and departure dates.

Complete the registration form below and return it with your remittance to:

Robert H Wright
411 Parkovash Ave.
South Bend, IN 46617-1029
TX (219) 232-4287

Make checks payable to 34th Bomb Group Association.

Cut here

34th BOMB GROUP ASSOCIATION REUNION-FOOD-TOUR REGISTRATION FORM

REGISTRATION AND SCHOLARSHIP FEE \$15.00 each person

X

NOTE: Both Member and Spouse or Guest must pay

9/8 Friday

Breakfast \$11.00 per person

X

Guided bus tour of Buffalo and American/Canadian Falls
\$22.00 per person

X

Lunch on your own

Dinner \$25.00 per person

X

9/9 Saturday

Breakfast \$11.00 per person

X

Gala Banquet \$25.00 per person

X

9/10 Sunday

Breakfast \$11.00 per person

X

TOTAL

Name

Spouse/Guest

Address

City

State

Zip Code

NOTE: All prices include tax and gratuity.

Squadron

First Timer check here

Need name tags?

REGISTRATION DEADLINE IS 7 AUGUST 2000

PROPOSED AGENDA

34TH BOMB GROUP REUNION

ADAM'S MARK HOTEL

BUFFALO, NEW YORK

WEDNESDAY 6 SEPTEMBER 2000

1300 – 1600 hours EARLY BIRD REGISTRATION (lobby area)

THURSDAY 7 SEPTEMBER 2000

1000 – 1600 hours REGISTRATION (lobby area)

1500 – 1700 hours Board of Directors meeting – Hospitality Suite

FRIDAY 8 SEPTEMBER 2000

0730 – 0830 hours Breakfast – Room To Be Announced

0900 hours Depart Adam's Mark Hotel for guided bus tour
of Buffalo and American/Canadian Falls.
Lunch will be on your own.
Tour lasts until 1600 hours.

1900 hours Dinner – Room To Be Announced

SATURDAY 9 SEPTEMBER 2000

0730 – 0830 hours Breakfast – Room To Be Announced

0900 hours General Membership Meeting following breakfast –
Room To Be Announced.

1200 hours Lunch on your own/free time.

1800 – 1900 hours Cash bar – Room To Be Announced

1900 hours Gala Banquet – Room To Be Announced

SUNDAY 10 SEPTEMBER 2000

0730 – 0830 hours Breakfast – Room To Be Announced
Farewells until 2001

NEARBY GOLF COURSE AVAILABLE FOR GOLF ON YOUR OWN

Post Exchange and Hospitality Suite to be open at hours yet to be determined

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.
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Ken Paxton
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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!

The People on the Ground...Group Operations

(From the Beachball Echo of the 446th Bomb Group)

Although personnel who served with the 446th bomb group wrote this article, it would probably be safe to say that all heavy bomb groups in the 8th Air Force operated in much the same manner.

The majority of those who served with the 446th Bomb group at Bungay, England, likely never had occasion to visit the compound of buildings known as Group Headquarters (stateside it would have been called base headquarters) and most didn't know, and likely didn't care, where the compound was.

The four or five buildings contained offices of Personnel (S-1), Group Intelligence (S-2), Group Operations (S-3), and Group Engineering/Material (S-4). All were in separate quonset hut-type structures. All that is, except Group Operations, which was in a flat-roofed, windowless building constructed of 12 inches of thick, solid concrete walls and roof.

Inside the Group Operations building were separate offices for our Group Commander, Group Air Executive, Group Bombardier, Group Navigator, Group Communications, Group Operations, and the base PBX telephone switchboard and Teletype machines. Due to the highly sensitive nature of activities that occurred around the clock, the building was guarded by military police at all times.

In essence, Group Operations was in charge of all flying activities, regardless whether operational (combat), or non-operational (non-combat) such as training flights. Within these parameters, Group Operations was the official liaison between the Bomb Group, Combat Wing, the Air Division, and the 8th Air Force. Communications between the various authorities could be via letter, teletype, or telephone.

Upon receipt of a bombing mission "Field Order" (via teletype), Group Operations would:

1. Immediately notify Group Operations Officer, Commanding Officer, and Group Executive.
2. Notify squadron operations of number of aircraft required, gas load, bomb load, and intervalometer settings.
3. Notify Group briefing officers.
4. Notify Group Ordnance Officer of required bomb load.
5. Notify Group Armament Officer.
6. Notify Photo Lab so cameras could be assigned to planes.
7. Notify squadron O.D.'s of air crew wakeup times.



8. Notify mess halls of breakfast times.
9. Prepare typed aircraft information plan which included aircraft number and pilots names. This was distributed at briefing for inclusion in pilots' mission kits.
10. Prepare typed navigation route plan showing navigation coordinates, times at each coordinate, altitudes, winds aloft, and temperatures. This was part of navigators' mission kits.
11. Phone London each night for official time check. This was a special service utilized solely by armed forces.
12. Notify Motor Pool of briefing and breakfast times so that sufficient truck transportation was available.
13. Notify flying control tower of number of aircraft involved and takeoff time.
14. Prepare wall map in Group Operations planning room to reflect mission route from base to target and return.
15. Coordinate and assemble all briefing data and deliver same to briefing room.
16. Have one man from Group Operations stand by at briefings, in case of quick run needed to Group Operations.
17. Prepare Group Operations planning room for lead crew interrogation.

Because loading bombs was a lengthy process, it behooved Operations to give as much advanced notice as possible to armament and ordnance personnel. Thus, the first indication anyone would have of a mission the following day would be this announcement from Group Operations over the base public address 'tannoy system. "Will all armament and ordnance personnel please report to their quarters immediately." Everyone knew what that meant.

Nighttime was when all mission preparations occurred. Thus Group Operations was a beehive of

activity during the night hours. Two night teams were created to work nights on an alternating weekly basis. A night shift was 14 hours, from 6pm until 8am the following morning.

There was only one occasion when both teams worked side by side on a single shift on the same night, and that was the night of June 5, 1945 during the "workup" of the highly important first mission of D-Day.

Other non-operational duties included:

1. Preparations of statistical reports pertaining to all flying activities.
2. Preparation of aircraft accident reports.
3. Coordination training procedures for new crews, including Link trainer and bombsight trainer.
4. Schedule practice formation flights.
5. Schedule over-water practice navigation flights.
6. Coordinate with 2nd AD for required clearances and times to utilize bombing range for practice.

No doubt there is equally as much information about Group Operations that has long since been forgotten. Strange how time does that to one.

**DOROTHY ANN NOWELL PFEFFER PEAVEY
1916-2000
(OUR RED CROSS LADY AT MENDLESHAM)**

Dorothy Ann Newell Pfeffer Peavey died at her home on Thursday, February 10th, 2000. She was born December 9th, 1916 at Columbia, Missouri. She graduated from the University of Missouri in 1939. Her first husband, Walter L. Pfeffer Jr., a lieutenant in the USAF, was killed in a B-29 training accident at Smokey Hill Air Base, Salina, Kansas, July 7th, 1944. She married Frank Peavey in 1949.

Dorothy joined the American Red Cross during World War II and was sent to Mendlesham, England with the 34th Bomb Group, who later made her a lifetime member. After VE day, the base was closed and she was stationed at Metz, France.

She returned to the states in 1946. Two years later she moved to Rio de Janeiro and worked as a secretary for Pan American Airways.

Her two daughters, Newell King of Eugene, Oregon and Martha Adrienne of Chicago, Illinois survive.

Ed: The above obituary was sent to us by Dorothy's daughter, Nowell Ann King

2660 Fairmount Blvd.
Eugene, OR 97403
(514) 343-3608

JOHN J. ROSS

It is with great saddnes I write that John J. Ross (formerly Jack Jerome Rosenbaum) of the 34th bomb group, passed away suddenly on October 11, 1999 from heart failure.

His wife Joan, his children Michael, Marilyn, Joanne and his six grandchildren survive.

If you could send a copy of your note to my address I would like to add it to a scrapbook I have compiled about his life.

He was an avid sportsman, a refined gentleman and a loving man, with a wonderful sense of humor. We will miss him terribly. Thanks so much.

His daughter, Marilyn I. Ross
10 Oxford Lane
Smithtown, NY 11787



**A Note
From the Publisher**

To the members of the 34th Bomb Group and all who served our country during the second World War, thank you. Thank you for the selfless acts of courage that allow future generations the freedom we enjoy, and many times take for granted.

I have had the pleasure of working with Mr. Share since he assumed the daunting task of editor of Mendlesham Memories. I have truly enjoyed the experience. Publications such as this are so important to younger generations like my own who may not realize, or have forgotten the sacrifices made by their parents, grandparents, or great-grandparents.

My Grandfather, also a WWII veteran, passed away before I learned of his own experiences. I am fortunate to have learned through everyone involved in your newsletter what it may have been like for my grandfather.

I sincerely hope everyone has been pleased with the publication so far. I look forward to publishing many issues to come. Thank you all again. And hats off to a superb job by all who have contributed!

Respectfully,

Justin Hobbs
Direct Mail Resources, Inc.
j.s.hobbs@pdq.net

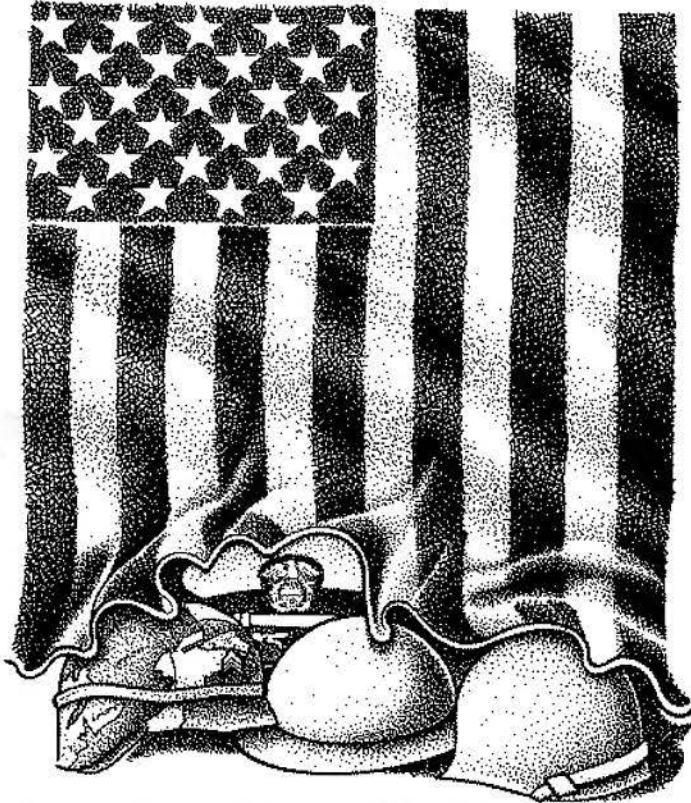
AWARD

The Bronze Star was awarded posthumously to DONALD G. MANN at a ceremony held at Fort Harrison Veteran's Cemetery, Montana on May 30, 2000. Donald was a Technical Sergeant on the Gipson's bomber crew, 34th bomb group, 8th Air Force stationed in England in World War II.

The citation reads:

"Because of his heroic and courageous actions in June 1944 when Sergeant Mann was able to shut off the aircraft's fuel valves prior to crash landing, thus preventing possible death or serious injury, not only to himself, but the entire crew. His actions are in keeping with the highest traditions of military service and reflect great credit upon himself, the 34th bomb Group and the Army of the United States."

What a shame this could not have happened prior to Donald's death in January 1999.



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THE BIG "B"

by AMERICO PENNA

391 SQDN

OUR A.M. BRIEFING BEGAN APPROXIMATELY AT THREE,
THE TARGET OF OUR MISSION WAS
THE INFAMOUS BIG "B".

EXCITEMENT FILLED THE ROOM AS NEVER BEFORE,
AS DIRECT HITS ON THE TARGET
COULD SHORTEN THE WAR.

OUR PLANES WERE PRE-FLIGHTED,
OUR CREW WAS GUNG-HO,
LOADED WITH BOMBS
AND MANY ROUNDS OF AMMO.

OUR TAKE OFF WAS SMOOTH THE WEATHER FAIR,
AS FIFTEEN HUNDRED BOMBERS
ASSEMBLED IN THE AIR

AFTER CROSSING THE CHANNEL,
OUR FIGHTER ESCORT APPEARED
TO WARD OFF THE GERMAN FIGHTERS,
MANY OF US FEARED.

FLACK EXPLOADED AROUND US,
AS WE CONTINUED OUR FLIGHT,
WITH THE 34TH BOMB GROUP,
FIT AND READY TO FIGHT.

MANY DOG FIGHTS TOOK PLACE,
SOME OF OUR PLANES LOST,
FOR A SUCCESSFUL MISSION,
WE MUST PAY THE COST.

AFTER REACHING RALLY POINT,
AND FLYING NINETY DEGREES RIGHT,
BOMB BAYS WERE OPEN,
THE TARGET IN SIGHT.

THE BOMBARDIER TOOK OVER,
SETTING THE BOMBS E.T.A.
SOME THIRTY SECONDS LATER,
IT WAS "BOMBS AWAY".

BERLIN WAS DEVASTATED,
OUR MISSION A SUCCESS,
NOW IT IS TIME FOR THE NAZI'S,
TO CLEAN UP A MESS.

THOUGH LIVES HAD PERISHED,
THIS RAID HAD TO BE DONE,
TO SHORTEN THE WAR,
AND PUT THE NAZI'S ON THE RUN.

OUR THIRTY FOURTH WAS PROUD OF THIS
EIGHTH AIR FORCE EVENT,
SINCE THE RAID WAS A MISSION,
VERY WELL SPENT.

Friends Write

BERNIE FARLEY - VERONA, NJ

It is with regret that I must inform you that Jack passed away on January 25th, 2000, after his valiant battle with cancer.

Jack served in the 8th Air Force '43 - '45 in England under Ray Summa who was his ground crew chief. He was so glad to learn about the reunions and we attended our first one at Virginia Beach. As we walked into the lobby, someone said, "Look, there's Red, the Kid!" I'll never forget that! Many old friendships were renewed at the reunions and new ones established.

Jack was very proud to have been on the Board of Directors and also contribute with the restructuring of the By-Laws.

No one will ever forget Jack's love of life, with his Irish wit and humor. His death left a big void in my life and that of our family.

LONNIE CROOK - SHREVEPORT, LA

It occurred to me that some of our people in their summer travels might be passing this way and would enjoy stopping in to visit the 8th Air Force Museum at Barksdale AFB, if they knew how easily it was to find. It is only about 1-1/2 miles off I-20 and directions are posted going both east and west.

They have greatly expanded the museum since the 34th bomb group had their reunion their in '89. They now have 17 aircraft and 8 vehicles in their outside display. The building, formerly shared with a Mobile Training Unit, is now used totally by the museum. In the building they have a small auditorium which is a replica of an 8th Air Force briefing room. Many films are available for viewing, including a history of the 8th Air Force, a history of Barksdale Air Base, Start Engines Plus 50 Years, The Memphis Belle and many others.

At present they are building a replica of Lt. Barksdale's family home in Mississippi. The mantel from the living room is currently being installed. Other items of furniture, including the family's grand piano, have been donated to Buck Rigg, the museum director.

Operating hours are 9:30 AM to 4:30 PM seven days a week; except for a few major holidays such as

Christmas and New Years.

Buck has visions of a new building just outside the North Gate to the base. It is a major undertaking requiring a lot of money, and a few years. Knowing Buck, I would not be surprised if he gets it.

CAROL & LLOYD ELLIOT - OKLAHOMA CITY, OK

Have you noticed in the last five years the recognition that World War II veterans have been getting? We have a very close neighborhood of about 464 homes. Everyone looks to Lloyd as an Air Force hero. It all started when an A-Wac pilot moved in four houses down the street. The neighborhood has been changing so fast in that young people are buying the older houses and restoring them. We've been in this house 39 years. The story soon got around that Lloyd's plane was the "Flying Dutchman". Only two are left from the crew, Lloyd and Reid McCloskey of Carlsbad, NM. Reid was the bombardier and Lloyd was tail gunner. We also have a house at the acreage 12 miles away and this year on Veteran's Day, our next door neighbor, with her husband and four little kids called and asked if they could come by in the evening. The lady, with her children, had written a poem. They all wanted to sit on the floor with Lloyd in front of them on a footstool and they honored him with the poem and two apple pies. The kids wanted to hear about his plane. He showed them his air medal and the little bar pin that his mother wore with two stars (Lloyd and his twin were both tail gunners). Also in the box were his dog tags and the piece of flak that shattered the Plexiglas near him in the tail. Because of the extremely cold temperature his ear became frostbitten. This happened on his 32nd mission and although his ear still bothered him he flew his 33rd mission. But with the ear badly blistered, he went to the flight surgeon before his 34th mission and was grounded. The crew flew another plane that day with a replacement tail gunner and was shot down. All but two were killed. He didn't have to fly his 34th and 35th missions to complete his tour.

At the 34th bomb group reunion in Nashville, a very wonderful member of the group a Dr. Alston from Tulsa was talking to Lloyd and it turned out he was the flight surgeon that had grounded him. At the Louisville reunion, General Creer gave him the little "LB" lapel pin. The pin was explained to the little kids as the "Little Boy" pin but of course we all know it stands for "Lucky Bastard", given for those who were fortunate enough to have completed their tour. To end it - the apple pie was good.

We are well and enjoying life with our four pre-1916 automobiles. Take care and we may go to Buffalo.

WINFIELD K. REYNOLDS - PINEHURST, NC

Just received my copy of MM. Hal, I read your Treasurer's Report and accordingly enclose a cheque.

I'm pleased to see that the 34th BG "old timers" continue to try, in a small way, to help toward the education of the young.

We had the GI Bill when millions of us needed it the most.

BARBARA WHITE - LAPUENTE, CA

Concerning -

Robert I. White
16053 E. Rowland St. #2
La Puente, CA 91744

I regret informing you that my father-in-law passed away on 3-24-00. He was active until a few days before his heart attack.

The reunion in Des Moines meant so much to him. It was ALL he talked about.

He is having a veteran's service on 3-31-00.

We want to thank you for his wonderful memories of the get together.

Son - Robert D. White
16044 E. Rowland St. #2
La Puente, CA 91744

ED: Mr. White attended his first 34th BGA reunion last year in Des Moines at the age of 92.

BOB WRIGHT - PORT CHARLOTTE, FL

The weather has been wonderful in Florida where we are spending 3 months, playing golf twice a week, walk 2 miles everyday and swim about every day. Try to keep in shape. Lost 40 pounds last year and feel much better with the weight gone - and keeping it off.

They had a B-17 and a B-24 on display at the Charlotte County Airport early in March and I went to see them.

We are going to Savannah, GA. on the way home to check out some hotels for our 2001 reunion.

Several members have expressed a desire to go there because of the 8th Air Force Museum.



Bob Wright & "Old Friend"

My throat isn't 100% yet and I still have some fungus from the radiation. Now, I have a lump on the left side of my neck (lymph nodes.) I had a CAT scan yesterday to see if it has anything to do with my larynx cancer.

BERNIE FARLEY - VERONA, NJ

In going through Jack's mementos, I found several copies of "The Return", a poem he had framed many years ago. I don't know if it ever appeared in MM before. I feel it may have been written by someone in the area of the base. Beryl Miles is listed as the author.

When ordering the case for the flag, that was presented to me at the cemetery, I came across information on "Military Funeral Honors". The brochure contains an Internet web site that may be accessed by the general public. It is a source of detailed information with direct links to related military and veteran sites. It can be located at:

<http://www.militaryfuneralhonors.osd.mil>. I felt this information might be helpful for family members to have. I know it took many calls before our funeral director found the "right" number. Two servicemen, representing the U.S. Army, performed the flag ceremony for Jack; it was very moving.

The Return

By Beryl Miles

Twenty-one went out this morning
And the sun was in my eyes
As I watched them circle round
Before they vanished in the skies.

Twenty-one went out this morning
And the sunlight caught their wings
As they crossed the little thicket
Where a blackbird always sings.

Like birds into the morning
They flew I know not where
But small and secret in my heart
All day I've held a prayer.

Twenty-one went out this morning
Riding splendid thru the sky
But still there is no sign of them
Though soon the day will die.

Then suddenly thru time and space
There's sunlight on a wing
And above the beating of my heart
I hear an engine sing.

The sun still goes on shining
But my world grows dark with fear
For twenty-one went out this morning
But only seventeen are here.



Back Row:

Jack Raymond, Winfield Reynolds
Norris Smith, Richard Ruth

Front Row: (not in order)

John Middleton, John Young
Rodney Parrot, Fred Hampton
Robert Chevalier, Dexter Harris



H.R. (MAC) McNIELL - NAPA, CA

Just read Ed Geoghegan's note in the March issue of Mendlesham Memories. I also flew with the 18th squadron on Tom Copeland's crew - "THE UNINVITED."

"Easy" Ed and I buddied around together until he decided to take some time off - in Stalag Luft III.

When scheduled to fly, the truck would drop us off at the "hard stands", with Ed being dropped off first. I would wish him luck and things would proceed. As the missions multiplied, I began to get pessimistic (scared). Hoping to have "mind control over matter", I started to say "see you later." Since then, I never say good-bye to people. Hope Ed sees this, we just exchange Christmas cards.

Well, "see you later". (It worked for me.)

BETTY J. FILLMAN - CAMERON, MO

I want to commend you on the article on the back page of the March issue of Mendlesham Memories, "Credit Where Due". I too felt this needed to be said.

In Cameron, MO, an all on one floor beautiful Veterans' Nursing Home has just been completed. My thoughts still remember the Veterans whose lives were laid down - lost for our benefit. I framed the article in gold and called the administrator of the facility describing what I had and asked if I could present it to the nursing home. He accepted and with great appreciation. It hangs, on display, there today.

At the dedication of this beautiful rambling brick building we heard a great speech by Governor Carmahan who announced who the administrator would be. In his acceptance reply he stated, "I have a very special place in my heart for veterans because my father is one."

The facility will also have a clinic where veterans can get medication prior to the time they may one day become patients. It is truly an honor to our veterans.

Thank you again, Betty J. Fillman, wife of Donald K. Fillman who entered the Air Corps in February, 1943 and was honorably discharged in August, 1945. He was a flight engineer on the B-24 with the 34th bomb group of the 8th Air Force.

CRIME DOESN'T PAY

There was this preacher who was an avid golfer. Every chance he could get, he could be found on the golf course swinging away, it was an obsession. One Sunday was a picture perfect day for golfing, the sun was out, no clouds in the sky, and the temperature was just right. The preacher was in a quandary as to what to do, and shortly, the urge to play golf overcame him. He called an assistant to tell him that something came up and would not be able to do the service. With that he packed his clubs in the car and drove three hours to a golf course where no one would recognize him. Happily, he began to play the course.

An angel up above was watching the preacher and was quite perturbed. He went to God and said, "Look at the preacher. He should be punished for what he is doing." God nodded in agreement. The preacher teed up on the first hole. He swung at the ball and it sailed effortlessly through the air and landed right in the cup, three hundred and fifty yards away - a picture perfect hole-in-one. He was amazed and excited. The angel was a little shocked and turning to God said, "Begging your pardon but I thought you were going to punish him." God smiled and replied, "Think about it, who can he tell?"

MEN WILL BE MEN

While on a car trip, an elderly couple stopped at a roadside restaurant for lunch. After finishing their meal, the woman discovered she had left her glasses on the table, but didn't miss them until they were back on the highway. By then they had to travel quite a distance before they could find a place to turn around and the man was fit to be tied. He fussed and complained all the way back to the restaurant calling his wife every bad name he could think of.

When they finally arrived back at the restaurant, as the woman got out of the car to retrieve her glasses, her husband hollered to her, "While you're in there, you might as well get my hat."

CHANGES OF ADDRESS

LAST NAME	FIRST NAME	ORG	ADDRESS	CITY	STATE	ZIP
GRAHAM	ALAN A.	18	11456 BENTON ST.	LOMA LINDA	CA	92354
JANSON	WENDELL S	7	123 PINESWOODS RD.	FARMERSVILLE	LA	71241
LOISELLE	JAMES A.	18	11408 YATES AVE N	CHAMPLIN	MN	55316
MARTIN	JAMES F.	7LM	13448 FM 1176	SANTA ANNA	TX	76878
STARR	JOHN J.	391	444 BURROUGHS DR.	AMHERST	NY	14226
ZIVNEY	RODNEY P. SR.	18	200 CAROLINA AVE.A306	WINTER PARK	FL	32789

TAPS

LAST NAME	FIRST NAME	ORG	DOD	ADDRESS	CITY	STATE	ZIP
ALBERT	EUGENE,J	391LM	?	BOX 145	ROLLINS	MT	59931
GRAY	WILLIAM(PETE)	7LM	?	5601 SEDGEMORE RD	VIRGINIA BEACH	VA	23455
HANSON	KERMIT,E	4LM	1-30-00	BOX 599	CROSBY	ND	58730
HOWANEC	JOSEPH	18	1-09-00	99 HART ST	HOUSTON	PA	15342
JACKOVICH	FRANCIS, V	4	?	8 HOLBROOK ST	PORT JERVIS	NY	12771
PEAVEY	DOROTHY,A	RC	2-10-00	2922 WHIDDEN ST	BOISE	ID	83702
PEREZ	JUAN, M	391LM	-99	760 EAST CT	DIXON	CA	95620
POOLE	WALTER, W.JR	4LM	?	159 SEASHORE DRIVE	JUPITER	FL	33477
ROSS	JOHN, J	18	10-11-99	12 AVERY CT	NESCONSET	NY	11767
WHITE	ROBERT, I		3-24-00	16053E.ROWLANDST#42	LAPUENTE	CA	91744
BUCHAN	WILLIAM	18	4-01-00	49312 WINCHESTER CT	SHELBY TSHP	MI	48312

NEW LIFE MEMBER

LAST NAME	FIRST NAME	ORG	ADDRESS	CITY	STATE	ZIP
VAUGHN	ROBERT, G	391	P.O. BOX 5952	HIGH POINT	NC	27262

NEWLY FOUND MEMBER

LAST NAME	FIRST NAME	ORG	ADDRESS	CITY	STATE	ZIP
ARDO	JOSEPH,G.	391	2036 W.HORIZON DR.	HEBRON	KY	41048

NEW E-MAIL ADDRESSES

LAST NAME	FIRST NAME(S)	E-MAIL ADDRESS
ELLIOT	CAROL&LLOYD	Nonty14@aol.com

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IN MEMORY OF	DONOR
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CLEVELAND ROMERO	MR.& MRS.EDWIN P.GUIDRY
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CLEVELAND ROMERO	MR.& MRS.AMBERS HANSON
CLEVELAND ROMERO	MR.& MRS.HAL PROVINCE
CLEVELAND ROMERO	MR.& MRS. DAVID DURETT
CLEVELAND ROMERO	MR.& MRS. JAMES PETTETIER
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REMINISCING

Our theme this year is a long-overdue salute to the Ground Personnel, the unsung heroes of World War II. Who were they and why has recognition been so long in coming? Let's look at "who they were" through an aircrew member's eyes. (The 'why' we'll never know.)

Take an average day in the life of an aircrew member. Rolled out of bed [Provided by Supply] by an Airman with a bright flashlight [Orderly Room Type]; a trip to the Mess Hall [courtesy of the MotorPool]; a good meal [provided by Mess Hall personnel]; then on to the crew briefing [Transportation provided courtesy of the Motor Pool] and the ever-present Intelligence Officer who would like to have gone on the mission but had a prior engagement. After the briefing, a few words of support and a source of inner strength from one of the Chaplains - peace with our Maker but not wishing to meet Him personally!. Time to get to the armament section to pick up the guns [courtesy of the Armament personnel]. Again on to the hard stand for a look at the aircraft [Motor Pool, again]; our aircraft having been gassed up and loaded with bombs [courtesy of the fuel and munitions personnel] not to mention other ground personnel; starting engines and taxi-ing out to the runway under the watchful eyes of the Tower personnel, crash crews and just plain Joes watching and hoping for a safe take off. Finally, airborne and on our way to the target.

As we left, we saw our people watching our take off, encouraging lift off with a prayer for a safe and speedy return.

As we flew on towards the target, their efforts were turned toward insuring that when we came back everything was ready for another day's effort to defeat our common enemy. Everything was placed in order for the next day's mission, supplies had to be moved from the depots, sick aircraft engines shipped to Air Depots, or elsewhere, for repair beyond base capabilities, broken beds replaced, serviceable supplies shipped for repair, meals planned, supplies repositioned, you name it - the work went on! A multiple of singularly different efforts to support the equivalent of a small town in an environment foreign to the very souls of those charged to do the job.

With the return of the aircraft, work slows and all look towards the sky to count the numbers. One can but wonder what the ground crew chief was thinking when his bird was one of the missing -

probably that she was gone and so was a part of him.

As the aircraft recovered, the aircrew knew the tower personnel were on the job, knew the crash teams were ready and pre-positioned where they would do the most good in the event of an emergency landing, knew that the medics were standing by to assist the wounded and that, yes, the mortuary people would be there to handle our dead with respect.

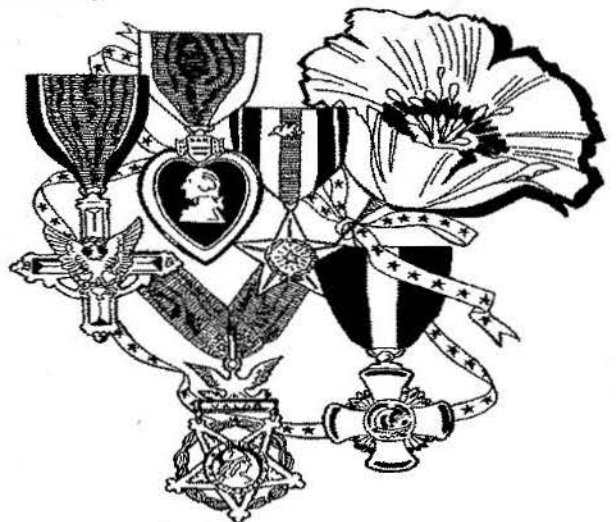
We knew the people there on the tower, beside the runway in the crash trucks and in the ambulances, alongside the mess halls and barracks and at each Squadron and Group Orderly room were part of an over all effort. We were one, dedicated to winning the war and together we did!

As we debriefed, we were impatient to get back to the barracks. Some of us so glad to be back we failed to down our medical ration of "spirits." We appreciated the Red Cross girls so far away from home and looked forward to their appearance as though from another world half a world away - still another or our family.

Still, we were glad to be back in our huts - courtesy of the Motor Pool, in or on a bed, courtesy of Supply, drinking hot cocoa, courtesy of our Mom, Dad or girlfriend and reading our V-mail, courtesy of the Post Office, and thanking the good Lord for bringing us home safe and sound to fly another day.

Every May 8th.(VE Day) we should pause and remember during that milestone year, 1945 when the war was won - by the men of the MIGHTY EIGHTH - GROUND CREW AND AIRCREW and let us not forget - They also served who stood and waited.

A Grateful aircrew member who survived to live another day.





"The Ball

And I guess we won't forget that gunner,
But I guess we'll never know,
How alone he really was,
The guy who flew below.

The ball turret was a crowded place,
About forty inches wide.
It hung below the bomber,
A gunner flew inside.

Now there are only memories,
For those who did come back.
We won't forget those fighters,
We won't forget that flak.

He could be attacked by fighters,
Or he could be hit by flak.
That's why there were so many,
Who never made it back.

That gunner fought a lonely fight,
As he hung there down below.
Some things happened up above,
That he didn't even know.

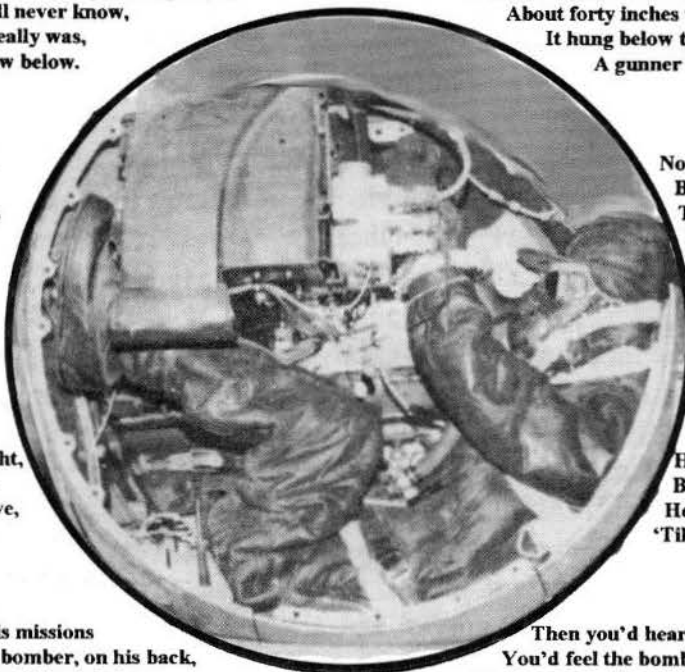
He flew all his missions
Beneath the bomber, on his back,
As he fought off those fighters,
He was alone in all that flak.

Not only was it crowded,
But it was lonely too.
The man who had to fly there,
Was the man who really knew.

He had a pair of "fifties",
One on either side,
The way he manned those "fifties",
Filled us all with pride.

He'd line up those guns,
By swinging left and right.
He kept working with that Sperry,
'Till his target was in sight.

Then you'd hear those "fifties" chatter,
You'd feel the bomber shake.
We were depending on that gunner,
Our lives were all at stake.

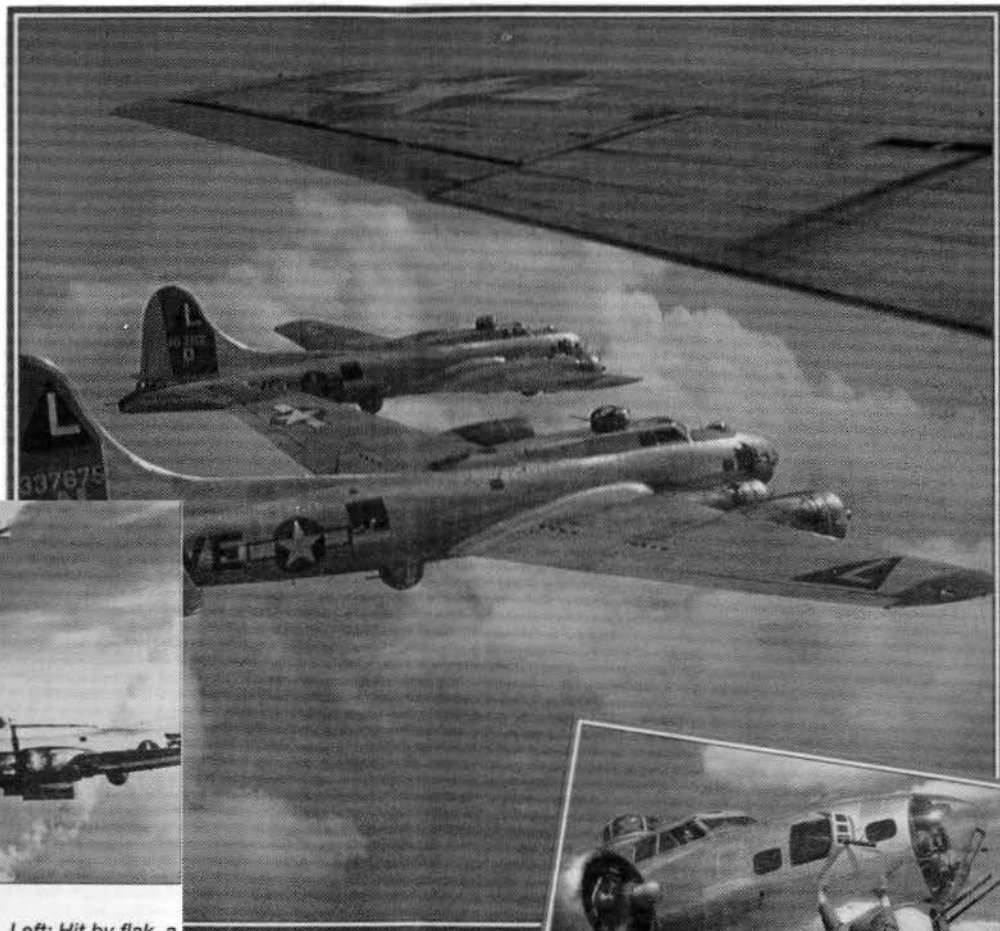


Turret"



The B-17 Flying Fortress

- Long Range Heavy Bomber
- Backbone of the U.S. Eighth Air Force



Left: Hit by flak, a burning B-17 falls away from the protection of its fellows.



The "Mighty Eighth" Air Force was the premier user of the B-17 Flying Fortress.



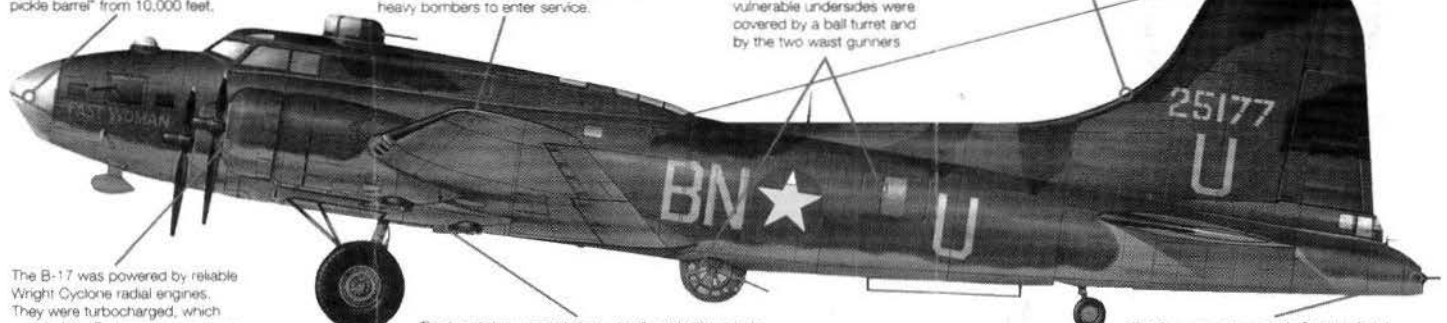
"Fast Woman" was one of the first American B-17s to arrive in Britain during World War II. Attached to the 359th Bomb Squadron of the 303rd Bomb Group, it was based at Molesworth in Huntingdonshire.

The Norden bomb sight with which the B-17 was equipped was reputed to be able to "drop a bomb into a pickle barrel" from 10,000 feet.

Boeing was among the pioneers of stressed-skin design, and the B-17 was among the earliest all-metal monoplane heavy bombers to enter service.

Fortresses were defended by as many as 13 heavy machine guns. The vulnerable undersides were covered by a ball turret and by the two waist gunners.

The B-17 was immensely strong. Aircraft managed to return to base with severe battle damage, and the big bomber could still fly even with large sections of the huge vertical tail shot away.



The B-17 was powered by reliable Wright Cyclone radial engines. They were turbocharged, which enabled the Fortress to operate at higher altitudes than its European contemporaries.

The bomb bay was relatively small, and although the B-17 could fly with an eight-ton bomb load it generally carried a quarter of that amount on operations.

B-17s were not originally fitted with tail guns. A tail gunner's position was added to the B-17E and all subsequent models.

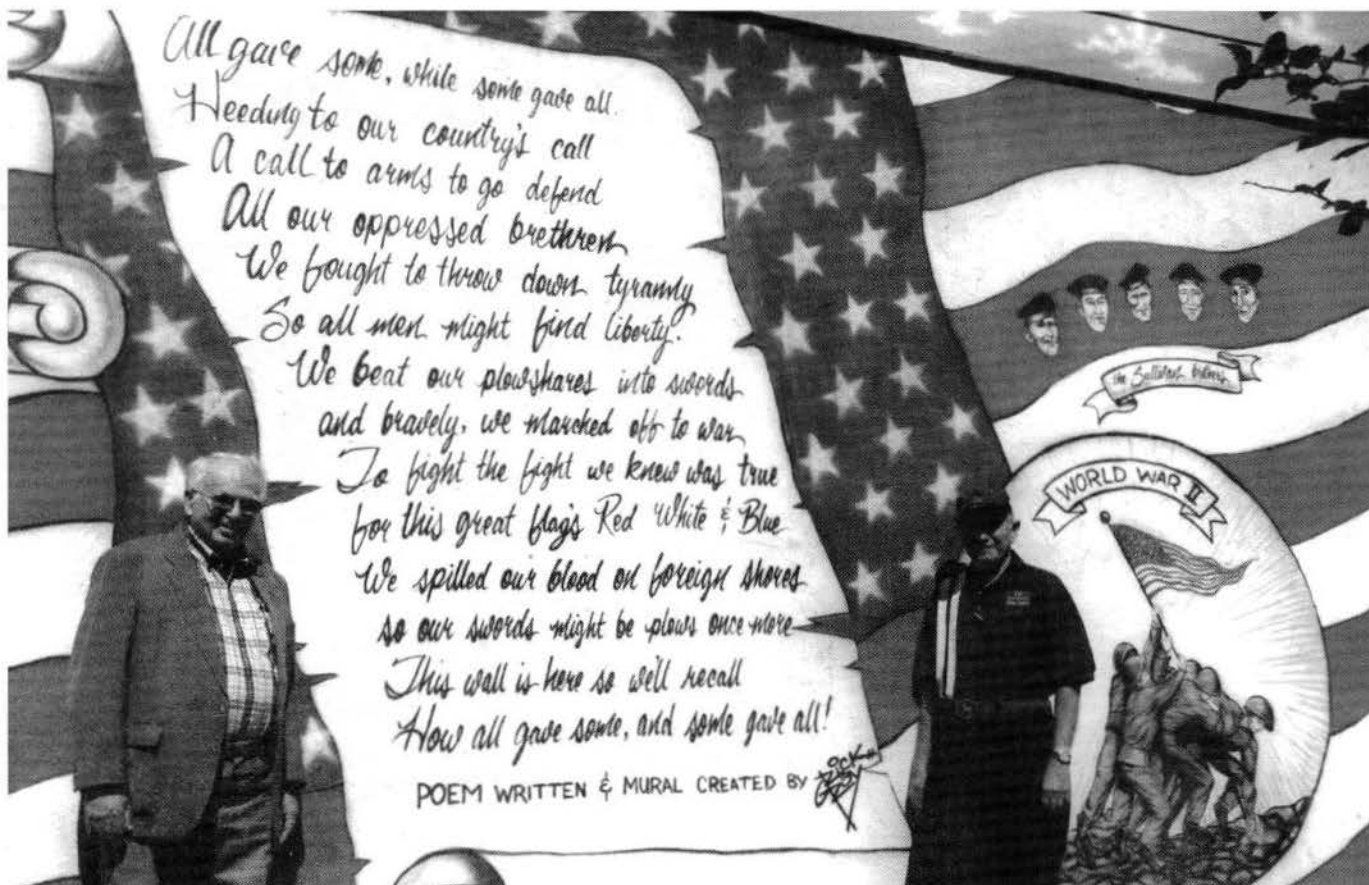


PHOTO TAKEN AT THE DES MOINES REUNION
 BY VIVIANNE (FORISTER) KUENEKE

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34th Bomb. Group



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