



# ENDLESHAM EMORIES



VOICE OF THE 34TH BOMB GROUP (H)



391ST SQUADRON



18TH SQUADRON



7TH SQUADRON



4TH SQUADRON

## SAN ANTONIO

*Put Yourself In This Picture..*

34th Bomb Group Association Reunion  
September 10 - 14, 2003

# **MENDLESHAM MEMORIES**

Newsletter of  
***The 34<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group Association, Inc.***  
[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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## **Deadline**

**All material and items for the September, 2003 issue of Mendlesham Memories should reach me on or before July 15th, 2003. All copy will be going to the publisher on that date..**

**Jack Share, Editor**

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**Harold Rutka (Chairman)**-----11 E. Artavia St.  
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E-mail: [Bsothern@aol.com](mailto:Bsothern@aol.com)

### **Other web sites of interest:**

<http://members.tripod.com/VALORtoVICTORY>  
[www.mighty8thmuseum.com](http://www.mighty8thmuseum.com)  
[www.air-museum.org/b17.htm](http://www.air-museum.org/b17.htm)  
[http://www.jccc.net/~bgustaf/34th\\_Bomb](http://www.jccc.net/~bgustaf/34th_Bomb)  
[http://old.jccc.net/~bgustaf/34th\\_Bomb/](http://old.jccc.net/~bgustaf/34th_Bomb/)

**Attention 34th Bomb Group Association Members!!** Dues are due for the calendar year on January 1st. If you have not yet paid them for 2003 this edition of "**Mendlesham Memories**" will be your last. If you are in doubt as to whether or not you are paid up, please, contact Harold Province at **153 North Hill Dr. Carrier, MS 39426. Or by phone (601) 798-2059.**

Dues for this year are still only \$10.00, which partially offsets the cost of printing and postage for this newsletter. So, if you haven't yet paid your dues for 2003 make out your check today and send it to Harold at above address to assure you will not miss a single issue of "Mendlesham Memories".

## share - a thought

The above notice, hopefully, will focus your attention to the problem we are having with members forgetting to pay their dues, which are due in January. If you do forget to pay your dues you will automatically receive the March and June issues of the newsletter, however, if you still haven't paid by September, the June issue will be your last - until your dues are paid, then the delivery of your newsletters will be resumed. Each year we have several members wondering why their Mendlesham Memories have stopped coming after the June issue - that is why. So, please, make sure you pay up after, or before, the first of the year and save us all the frustration, and cost, involved with catching you up on missed issues. We understand that it is very easy to forget these things and appreciate your future consideration in this matter.

This edition of Mendlesham Memories contains all the information you will need to prepare yourselves for the 34th Bomb Group Association reunion in San Antonio in September. Our reunion chairman, Harold Rutka, details, in his column, what you can expect to see and do during your stay in San Antonio.

The **Hotel Registration Form** can be found on page 8 and should be filled out and mailed in as soon as your plans are finalized - the sooner the better. After August 10<sup>th</sup>, there is no guarantee that you will get a room in the Radisson. If you don't want to cut the form out of the newsletter, a photocopy is acceptable.

Also, of equal importance to the reunion committee is that you fill in the **Reunion Registration Form** on page 9 as soon as possible and send it to Bob Wright. Bob and Esther have much work to do in making out the reunion packets as the registrations come in. Their work is made much easier if the forms are sent in sooner than later. Again, photocopies of the registration forms are acceptable.

And there are all the particulars you will need to register for the reunion. All that's left is for you to **BE THERE!** See you in San Antonio.

God Bless You All, God Bless America  
Jack Share, Editor

**Flag Day June 14<sup>th</sup>  
Support our Troops  
Show Your Colors**



## From the Treasurer's Computer

It's over! I just heard it on Fox News - no more organized confrontation by the Iraqi forces! Thank God, it was settled so quickly. But, even so, it still hurts to think about the 100+ lives lost during the time it took to bring the SH regime down! I know you'll mourn with all of us for the lives that were lost. My prayer now is that the men and women involved may quickly be returned to their homes in the US.

I received a CD that Al Steiner built which has about 558 photos taken from the past issues of Mendlesham Memories. And believe me, they will recall memories of the days that were spent in Blythe, California as well as those spent in Mendlesham and England. Al has rendered a great service to the 34th BGA by scanning and preparing this CD. With PC's so prevalent, most of our members will want to order one so they can sit and appreciate those days. Members who have e-mail addresses have been made aware of the CD. Information on availability through the PX will be forthcoming.

Although I hate to mention this, I believe it is time to consider raising our annual dues from \$10 to \$15 or, possibly, even \$20 per year. The cost of printing and mailing Mendlesham Memories has risen over the past few years and I believe an increase in annual dues is justified. I'll have more particular data at the reunion regarding current cost. Very simply, the cost to mail each copy of MM is now over \$3.00 which means that \$2.00 per year is being absorbed by the treasury. Add this the cost of replacement copies for those who didn't notify us of a change of address or for copies, which were lost in the Postal Service. Your input will be considered at the general meeting at the reunion.

I hope you have made your plans to attend the reunion. It promises to be another great one. Come yourself, and if possible bring a second-generation guest or associate member. If you are flying into San Antonio, don't forget to ask about SENIOR BOOKS of tickets from the airline. A few years ago a book of four tickets cost less than \$500.00 and enable a man and wife to make the entire trip for that amount - four tickets, two to reunion and two to home. Sure hope to see you all in San Antonio!

Cheers and May God Abundantly Bless!

Hal



## REUNION COMMITTEE REPORT

San Antonio, Texas bids welcome to the members of the 34<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group (H) who will be holding their 19<sup>th</sup> annual reunion at the Radisson Hotel, Downtown Market Square, 502 West Durango Boulevard on 10 September to 14 September 2003. The hotel provides free shuttle service to the shopping area and the River Walk. The trolley stops at the hotel and provides service to the Downtown area for fifty cents. And, if you remember to ask for a transfer you can use it for the return trip. Parking at the hotel is free.

**Thursday - 11 September:** The hotel will provide a "Welcome Package" that will contain information that you may need to know regarding the city of San Antonio. Registration will be on the Main Floor of the hotel lobby. There will be a "Welcome and Social Hour" on Thursday from 6 to 7 P.M. with music and snacks. A cash bar is not too far away.

**Friday - 12 September:** The bus tour will depart the Radisson Hotel at 09:00 A.M. Each bus will have a professional tour guide. The first stop will be at the SAS Shoe Factory followed by a look at a 1910 General Store and an Antique Auto Collection. The second stop will be at "The Spanish Mission Conception". Lunch will be on your own at the Alamo Plaza. The historical Menger Hotel where Teddy Roosevelt organized his "Rough Riders" is nearby. The food is great, however pricey. There are several other eating places in the Plaza. After lunch we will tour the Alamo Chapel, Long Barracks and Gardens. Then on to the Mexican Market for shopping followed by our return to the Radisson at 3:45 P.M. A social and cash bar from 6:00 to 7:00 P.M. followed by a buffet dinner.

**Saturday - 13 September:** The General Business Meeting will be held at 9:00 A.M. until approximately 10:30 A.M. after which you may want to visit or tour the area and the River Walk. Our Gala Banquet and the passing of the gavel will follow the social hour and cash bar from 6:00 to 7:00 P.M.

Remember, 10 August 2003 is the "cut off date" for registering at the hotel. Our rooms are guaranteed until that date after which you will have to contact the hotel. Telephone 210-224-7155.

We hope that all of you, please, join us at the reunion in San Antonio.

The Reunion Committee:

Harold Rutka  
Bob Wright  
Bruce Sothern

## REUNION HISTORY

The first reunion of the 34<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group was at Nashville, Tennessee in 1984. The original idea was to meet every other year with the 8th Air Force but at Wichita, Kansas the following year we officially broke with the 8<sup>th</sup> and decided to go on our own each year. The last three presidents of the 34<sup>th</sup>, Gerry Pike, Harold Rutka and Bob Wright, volunteered to take on the arduous task of organizing the reunions. When Gerry passed away a few years ago, Bruce Sothern volunteered to take his place. Harold and Bob are still doing this for these many years. Applause, Applause! You are to be commended.

### PAST REUNIONS

#### 8th Air Force

##### Year      Location

1975	Miami Beach, FL
1976	Dayton, Oh
1977	St. Louis, MO
1978	Washington, DC
1979	Phoenix, AZ
1980	Orlando Beach, FL
1981	St Paul, MN
1982	Cincinnati, OH
1983	Houston, TX
1984	Los Angeles, CA
1985	Wichita, KA
1986	Hollywood, FL
1987	Pittsburgh, PA
1988	Des Moines, IA
1989	Denver, CO
1990	Las Vegas, NV
1991	New Orleans, LA
1992	Louisville, KY
1993	Chicago, IL
1994	San Diego, CA
1995	St. Louis, MO
1996	Orlando, FL
1997	Bloomington MN
1998	Cherry Hill, NJ
1999	Savannah, GA
2000	Salt Lake City, UT
2001	Irving, TX
2002	Norfolk, VA
2003	Colorado Springs, CO

#### 34th Bomb Group

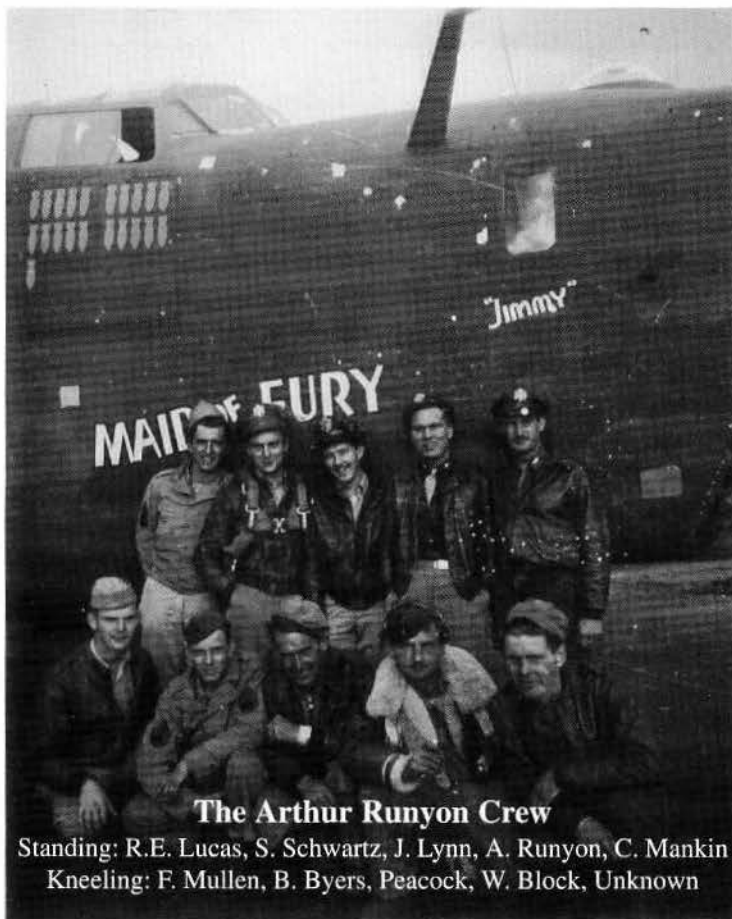
Nashville, TN
Wichita, KA
Colorado Springs, CO
King of Prussia, PA
Virginia Beach, VA
Shreveport, LA
Seattle, WA
Louisville, KY
Las Vegas, NV
Little Rock, AR
St. Paul, MN
Huntsville, AL
Raleigh, NC
Omaha, NE
Boise, ID
Des Moines, IA
Buffalo, NY
Savannah, GA
Salt Lake City, UT
San Antonio, TX

**A Note from Member, Bob Gross** to the members of the 34<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group who live in the area of Bradley Field, Windsor, Conn. and are planning to attend our reunion to be held this coming September at San Antonio, Texas. With a group travel of at a minimum of ten ticketed passengers, we can obtain a group travel price that could be a saving to each of us. If interested in joining this plan, with a departure on Wednesday the 10th of September around noon and returning on Sunday the 14th around noon, please contact Bob by any of the following ways.

**Mail** - 34 Ironwood Road  
W. Hartford, CT 06117

**Phone** -860-233-0616

**E-mail** - rhgross17@aol.com



**The Arthur Runyon Crew**

Standing: R.E. Lucas, S. Schwartz, J. Lynn, A. Runyon, C. Mankin  
Kneeling: F. Mullen, B. Byers, Peacock, W. Block, Unknown

**Humor is to life  
what shock absorbers  
are to automobiles.**



**DON'T SWEAT The small stuff:  
Surrender to the fact that life isn't fair.**

**News Release - March 1945**  
from "somewhere in England"

The 34<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group had the enviable record of not losing a bomber to enemy fighters over enemy territory. This does not mean that the bombers were never attacked. On March 2, 1945, the enemy fighters seemed bent on vengeance when about 35 enemy Me 262 jets hit the bomber stream from every direction. The 34<sup>th</sup> Group gunners claimed 8 fighters destroyed, 7 probably destroyed and 5 damaged. Not a bad day for the gunners. On March 11, 1945, the Group hit Hamburg, Germany.

*From the Narrative History of the 34<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group. Submitted by Walter Sturdivan.*

**Not All Casualties In The Air  
Were Due To Flak,  
Fighters, Or Mid Air Collisions**

(Remember the Oxygen Checks)?

Bobb Pacholski - Navigator



Bombardier to crew - oxygen check. Every 5 minutes or so Fred Munte, our bombardier, would ask us to report in and give the OK. Many a time, didn't we think that it was just a waste of time? That thought used to cross my mind as I might be busy with the flight log or making a visual check - UNTIL ONE TIME...

The "Near Sighted Robin" and crew had just crossed the English Channel and over the coast of France, heading for our target. At that time, we must have been at about 24,000 feet when Fred called for the usual oxygen check and everyone reported OK but me. Fred called to Ben Workman, our radio operator to check on me and there I was slumped over the navigator's table - out cold.

Ben quickly assessed the situation and found that my mask and oxygen tube became disconnected. It couldn't have been more than a few seconds because Fred was prompt and on the money with his report calls. Ben reconnected my hose and put it on FULL OXYGEN. I was out cold. Smitty, our pilot, reported to the squadron leader what had happened and got the OK to abort and down we went to a much lower altitude around 8000 feet, I was later told.

And me, I was oblivious to all of this. If one were to have a choice to pass on, this would be one of the most painless ways to go. After a few minutes, I came around but what a headache! I thank the Almighty that Fred, a disciplined bombardier and Ben Workman, our quick thinking radio operator for saving my life. Incidentally guys, I just turned 80 in May - you gave me many happy years of living. Thank you, Lord and thank you Fred, Ben and all of the crew of the "Near Sighted Robin". AMEN



IF YOU ARE MOVING SOON, BEFORE THE NEXT MENDLESHAM MEMORIES IS DUE, OR IF THERE IS SOME MISTAKE IN YOUR NAME OR ADDRESS, PLEASE ENTER THE CORRECT INFORMATION BELOW, CUT THIS OUT AND SEND IT TO: **HAL PROVINCE, 153 NORTH HILL DR., CARRIERE, MS 39426**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City, State & Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing labels are printed on Feb. 1, May 1, Aug.1 and Nov.1 for the March, June, September & December issues.

## LASTING MEMORIES

By Carroll E. Forister, 4th squadron  
Radio Operator/Gunner on B-24 #9491

Here is a bit of memory about Andrew (Andy) Kerr, farmer by trade but certainly no ordinary farmer. Born in Scotland, Andy, as a young man, moved with his parents to the farm named Wetherington Hall in the charming village of Wetherington, later taking over the management of the farm. Upon the death of his father, Andy and his employees tilled the several hundred acres. He was a true gentleman farmer, a stalwart figure in the County of Suffolk. His mother lived with him until her death shortly after WWII.

During the war years, Andy's place was on the farm raising food for Britain and her Allies but he was also a proud member of the British Home Guard. After farming all day, he spent many nights on guard duty searching the dark English skies for German aircraft and paratroopers. It was on such a night as this that I first met Andy, very unexpectedly, having fallen from the sky onto his farm.

On the 7th June 1944, about 10PM, just north of Mendlesham airdrome, Andy was on duty with the Home Guard, talking with friends while observing American B-24's returning from bombing sorties behind the newly established Allied beach head on the French coast. Suddenly, the sky exploded with air to air combat between the American B-24's and German night fighters that had followed the bombers back from France. One bomber that was on fire, hit and exploded on the air base, killing all on board. Moments later, a second B-24 burst into flame - my aircraft. From Andy's vantage point, he clearly saw airmen, myself included, jumping from the crippled plane, their chutes mercifully opening.

As the second bomber veered out of control and crashed, it appeared to be in the general direction of Andy's home. Being concerned about his mother, he jumped on his bicycle and

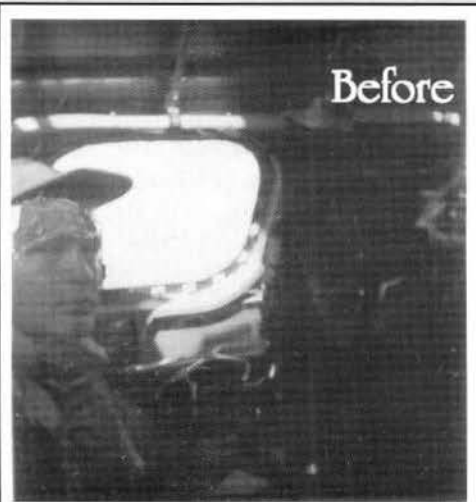
peddled for home. Grateful to find the crash was a mile or so beyond Wetherington Hall and that his mother was quite safe, Andy went outside to observe further action. That was when we met for the first time. I was the radio/gunner on the flaming aircraft. I had parachuted onto a beet field belonging to Wetherington Hall. Gathering my chute in my arms, I walked about a half-mile to a farmhouse. Standing in the barnyard a voice from the darkness challenged me, "I say there, are you one of the chaps who just parachuted from that burning aircraft?"

Andy took me in and his mother soothed my ragged nerves with kind words and a stiff shot of good Scotch whiskey. She said she had been saving it to be opened for a special occasion and in her mind, this was a most special one. Andy drove me back to my base (lights out) only three miles away.

Over the years, I have been increasingly grateful to the Suffolk farmer and his dear mom. To my regret, she did not live long enough to know that I had survived the war. Over the following years, Andy and his dear wife, Margaret, have made my whole family most welcome in their lovely home on several occasions and our Anglo-American friendship has deepened with time.

After valiantly suffering a long bout of cancer of the pancreas, Andy passed away in 1982. The eulogy, written at the time of his death, was absolutely beautiful and rightly so. A more kind, genteel and proud man is hard to find. I shall miss his annual Christmas letter, which he never failed to write. It meant so much to me and he always signed off with, "Your Pro-American Friend, Andy."

His lovely wife, Margaret, still writes to us and we have visited each other in our homes on several occasions.



&



WALTER STURDIVAN, RADIO GUNNER 18<sup>TH</sup> SQD.  
IN A FAMILIAR SETTING - THE RADIO ROOM



## PX ORDER FORM

**NEW: AUTO WINDOW STICKER – 2"X4 1/4" BLACK AND SILVER**

**VET: WWII U.S AIR FORCE OR VET: WWII US ARMY AIR CORPS.....\$4.00 EACH OR 3 FOR \$10.00**

(NO SHIPPING CHARGES ON THIS ITEM)

REPRINT OF 34 <sup>TH</sup> B.G. HISTORY BOOK, 1947 edition, EDWIN S. SMITH.....	\$37.50ea.
LATEST 34 <sup>TH</sup> B.G. HISTORY BOOK, 1999 edition.....	\$49.95ea.
"BAIL OUT OVER MUNSTER" by WALTER STURDIVAN.....	\$ 5.00ea.
PERMANENT NAME TAGS ( First and last names & Sqdn. No).....	\$ 9.50ea.
LICENSE PLATE HOLDER (2 for \$5.00).....	\$ 3.00ea.
PATCHES – 8 <sup>TH</sup> AIR FORCE OR 34 <sup>TH</sup> BOMB GROUP.....	\$ 5.00ea.
PATCHES – 8 <sup>TH</sup> AIR FORCE (Gold & Silver Bullion Tread).....	\$ 9.95ea.
PATCHES – SQUADRON – 4 <sup>th</sup> – 7 <sup>th</sup> – 18 <sup>th</sup> – .....	\$ 5.00ea.
DECAL – VALOR TO VICTORY – 5" X 5".....	\$ 1.50ea.
BUMPER STICKER – 34 <sup>TH</sup> B.G. – 3" X 12".....	\$ 1.50ea.
BOLO TIES – 8 <sup>TH</sup> AIR FORCE – 34 <sup>TH</sup> B. G. – B-17 – B-24.....	\$ 6.00ea.
KEY RINGS – 8 <sup>TH</sup> 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 or CAP DECOR.....	\$ 4.50ea.
WINGS – 2 3/4" – PILOT – BOMBARDIER – NAVIGATOR – GUNNER.....	\$ 4.00ea.
WINGS – 2" CREW.....	\$ 4.00ea.
WINGS – 1" – PILOT – BOMBARDIER – NAVIGATOR – ENG – GUNNER for (CAP OR LAPEL).....	\$ 3.50ea.
TIE TACK – 8 <sup>TH</sup> A.F. – 4 <sup>TH</sup> – 7 <sup>TH</sup> – 18 <sup>TH</sup> – 391 <sup>ST</sup> SQDNS.....	\$ 4.00ea.
BALL PEN (retractable) W/REPLACEABLE CARTRIDGE	
DK. BLUE W/GOLD LETTERS (34 <sup>TH</sup> BOMB GROUP, 8 <sup>TH</sup> AIR FORCE) AND GOLD TRIM.....	\$ 2.00ea.
V.C.R. TAPE 58 mins. ( " Start Your Engines + 50 Years").....	\$27.95ea.
MEN'S POLO SHIRT W/ POCKET AND 34 <sup>TH</sup> B.G. EMBLEM ( Hunter Green – beautiful)	
MED. LRG. XLRG. XXLRG.....	\$25.95ea.
MEN'S POLO SHIRT (Cobblestone beige) W/34 <sup>TH</sup> B.G. EMBLEM and LOGO – (no pocket).	
MED. LRG. XLRG. XXLRG.....	\$25.95ea.
MEN'S POLO SHIRT ( White W/ Emblem – no pocket) X Large.....	\$25.95ea.
CAP (w/patriotic bill) on NAVY BLUE w/ LOGO.....	\$9.50ea.
CAP - ROYAL BLUE w/ 34 <sup>th</sup> BOMB GROUP LOGO.....	\$7.50ea.

PLEASE CIRCLE ITEMS DESIRED

THANK YOU FOR YOUR ORDER

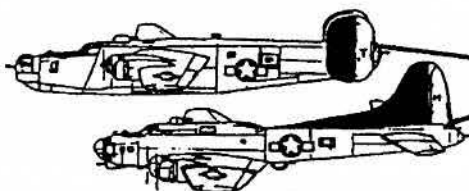
Please add \$3.50 postage for orders under \$20.00 and \$4.50 postage for orders \$20.00 and over.

Send check or money order to:

34<sup>th</sup> B.G. PX  
Ken Paxton  
6402 E. 11<sup>th</sup> St.  
Wichita, KS 67206  
Tel: (316) 683-2900  
e-mail: kenpax1@aol.com

Thanks for your support of the 34<sup>th</sup> BGA. We wish all of you good health and much happiness!

# Radisson


**34TH BOMB GROUP  
19TH REUNION**
**September 10 thru 14, 2003**

**Radisson Hotel San Antonio Market Square**  
502 West Durango Boulevard  
San Antonio, Texas 78207  
Phone 210-224-7155  
Fax 210-224-9130

*in-house reservations*
**Transportation to Hotel:**

Shuttle @ \$9.00 one way - \$16.00 round trip / person  
Taxi - \$18.00 each way - one or more persons

The Radisson Hotel San Antonio Market Square is pleased to host the 34<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group Association reunion 9/10 - 9/14.

To ensure accurate reservations, please complete this reservation request and return it before **August 9th, 2003**.

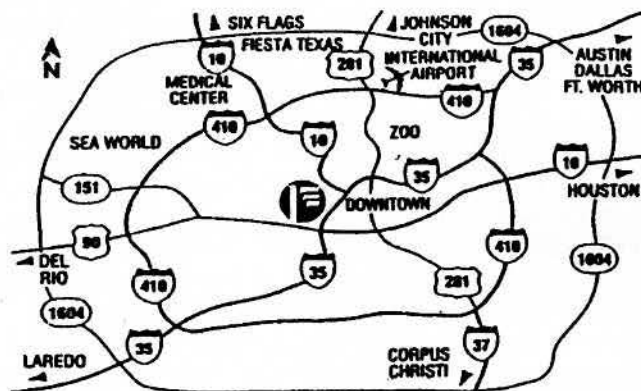
Reservation requests must be accompanied by a deposit equal to one night's room rate plus 16.75% occupancy tax or credit card number to guarantee a room. This deposit will be applied to the last night of the reservation.

All rooms \$85.00 plus 16.75% tax (\$14.24) = \$99.24

Room type preference - Single ☐ Double ☐ Triple ☐ Quad ☐

# of rooms -  # of people -

Please list any special requirements:


**Driving Directions:**

Off I-35 at Durango, Exit #155

> From Austin or Dallas:

Take I-35 South into downtown, exit Durango/Frio. Hotel is on right.

> From Houston:

Take I-10 West, exit South Alamo, turn left and South Alamo becomes Frio Street. Hotel is on corner of Frio and Durango.

Name

Arrival Date

Address

Departure Date

City/State/Zip

Additional Guests

Telephone

☐ I have enclosed a check in the amount of one night's room charge plus \$14.24 tax = \$99.24

☐ Please charge one night's room charge plus \$14.24 (\$99.24) to the following credit card:

☐ Master Card ☐ American Express ☐ Visa ☐ Diners Club ☐ Discover

Card Number  Expiration Date

I understand that I will forfeit my deposit in the event that I do not arrive or cancel less than 72 hours prior to arrival

Name of Credit Card Holder

Signature of Credit Card Holder

> Check in time after 3:PM. Check out time is 12:00 noon

> All hotel accounts are subject to credit arrangements at time of registration and payable on departure.

> **WELCOMING RECEPTION SOCIAL HOUR - THURS. SEPT 11<sup>TH</sup> - 6 TO 7 PM**





## REUNION 2003

The 34<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group will hold it's Annual Reunion at the Radisson Hotel, 502 West Durango Blvd., San Antonio, Texas 78207 from 10 - 14 September 2003.

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 34<sup>th</sup> 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 574-232-4287

Make checks payable to 34<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group Association.

### 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.

9/12 Friday

Historical Tour of San Antonio

\$33.00 per person (lunch on your own)

X \_\_\_\_ = \_\_\_\_

9/12 Friday

Dinner buffet \$25.00 per person

X \_\_\_\_ = \_\_\_\_

9/13 Saturday

Gala Banquet \$25.00 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 \_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_ No

**REGISTRATION DEADLINE IS 10 AUGUST 2003**

Full refund (less \$5.00 for Scholarship Fund) if notice of cancellation received by  
6 September 2003



**PROPOSED AGENDA  
34<sup>th</sup> BOMB GROUP REUNION**

**RADISSON HOTEL  
SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS**

CHECK THE HOTEL BULLETIN BOARD FOR ROOM LOCATIONS

**WEDNESDAY 10 SEPTEMBER 2003**

1300 - 1600 hours      EARLY BIRD REGISTRATION (lobby area)

**THURSDAY 11 SEPTEMBER 2003**

1000 - 1600 hours      REGISTRATION (lobby area)  
1400 - 1600 hours      Board of Directors Meeting  
1800 - 1900 hours      Welcome and Social Time (lobby area)

**FRIDAY 12 SEPTEMBER 2003**

0900 hours      Tour group departs for historical tour of  
San Antonio. Lunch will be on your own.  
Tour lasts until 1600 hours.  
1800 hours      Cash Bar  
1900 hours      Dinner

**SATURDAY 13 SEPTEMBER 2003**

0900 hours      General Membership Meeting  
Free time/lunch on your own following meeting  
1800 - 1900 hours      Cash Bar  
1900 hours      Gala Banquet

**SUNDAY 14 SEPTEMBER 2003      Farewells until 2004**

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

# Map of San Antonio

## DOWNTOWN SAN ANTONIO

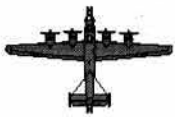


- |   |   |  |
|---|---|--|
| 1 The Alamo   | 9 Mexican Cultural Institute  | 15 Southwest School of Art and Craft                     |
| 2 Arneson River Theatre   | 10 Navarro House  | 16 Spanish Governor's Palace                             |
| 3 Blue Star Arts Complex  | 11 Plaza Wax Museum/<br>Ripley's Believe It Or Not!                                     | 17 Texas Highway Patrol Museum                           |
| 4 Buckhorn Saloon & Museum  | 12 San Antonio Central Library  | 18 The Texas Adventure                                   |
| 5 IMAX Theatre  | 13 San Antonio Children's Museum  | 19 Veterans Memorial Plaza                               |
| 6 Majestic Performing Arts Center/<br>Charline McCombs Empire Theatre | 14 San Antonio Museum of Art/<br>Nelson A. Rockefeller Center<br>for Latin American Art | 20 La Villita  |
| 7 Market Square   |   | ★ Visitor Information<br>(maps and detailed information) |
| BA-D Meeting & Entertainment Facilities                               |   | * River Walk Streetcar Station                           |

For More Information on visiting San Antonio, visit the following web site:

**[www.sanantonio.com](http://www.sanantonio.com)**





# GERMANY'S DEATH MARCH



Sometime ago the VFW magazine ran a story by Gary Turbak about the 1945, 80-day march the American POW's were forced to make from Stalag Luft IV in eastern Prussia, part of what is now Poland. "Luft" means "air" in German, and it designated a camp holding an estimated 9,000 - 10,000 POWs, mostly all Allied airmen. The prisoners, almost exclusively NCOs were not made to work. Some medical care was available. Clothing was adequate and according to those interned "life in the camp was tolerable".

When we hear the phrase "Death March" we associate it with Bataan when in 1942 Japanese troops overran the Philippines and forced thousands of GIs and Filipino soldiers to march across 60 miles of the Bataan Peninsula in tropical heat with little or no food nor water. Many died on the five to ten day trek that came to be called the Bataan Death March, one of the greatest atrocities ever perpetrated against American fighting men.

This story is about another death march that American POWs suffered at the hands of the Germans during World War II – a journey that lasted nearly three months. In the heart of a terrible German winter these men suffered unimaginable sicknesses, cruelties and death.

In early 1945, the war was going badly for the Germans and in late January, the Stalag Luft IV airmen could see the distant flash of artillery fire, which meant an advancing front – and probably their liberation – were not far away. But that was not to be, as the evacuation order was given. The sick and wounded prisoners were put on trains and more went by rail later. Then, on February 6, the remaining POWs set out on foot. The exact number is not known but they probably numbered about 6,000.

Being told the march would last only a few days; the men started out carrying food, Red Cross packages and many other essentials, which they had stored. As the days rolled by the loads became too much and most items were soon discarded.

The days rolled by. Finding barns to sleep in or in the fields if none were found. Water (often contaminated) was provided but little food was available. Marching all day long with little rest, often through knee-deep snow and temperatures well below zero, began to take its toll. Pneumonia, diphtheria, typhus, trench foot, tuberculosis and other diseases ran rampant along with the most prevalent problem, dysentery, caused by contaminated water. Lice was a common problem among the men.

Day after day the nightmarish march continued as the men helped each other survive. The Germans sometimes provided a wagon for the sick, but there was never enough room. When a GI collapsed and could not go on, he was put on the wagon and the least sick rider had to get off. Stragglers were often taken into the woods and executed. The many atrocities the men encountered were unbelievable as they trudged day after tortuous day.

In late March they arrived at their supposed destination, two stalags in north central Germany. The problem was that these camps were already overcrowded setting up a bizarre situation: the POWs already there wanted to get out and the starving desperate men from Stalag Luft IV wanted to get in.

Some of the men did, however, manage to take their first shower in nearly two months, but quarters and food for them was not available since only the permanent residents were fed and housed. The weary GIs were forced to fend for themselves much as they had done on the road.

After a short week's reprieve from the road, and with Russian army approaching from the East, the Germans decided to move the men from Stalag Luft IV farther West and they were mustered out of the camp (which was liberated a few days later) and set to marching again. Incredibly, they doubled back on their earlier route and for several more weeks the great march continued as the weary GIs were herded first in one direction, then another, depending on the position of advancing Allied forces.

Eventually, however the nightmare ended, with most GIs simply marching into the hands of approaching U.S. or British troops while others had the relative misfortune to be "liberated" by the Russians.

As the hideous march came to an end in the Spring of 1945, it spanned, from beginning to end, 86 days and an estimated 600 miles. Many survivors suffered illnesses and injuries that would plague them for the rest of their lives. Worst of all, several hundred American soldiers (possibly as many as 1,300) died on this pointless pilgrimage to nowhere. The overall measure of misery remains incalculable.

Though often overlooked by history, the death march across Germany ranks as one of the most outrageous cruelties ever committed against American fighting men. Fittingly, a memorial to these soldiers now stands on the Polish ground where Stalag Luft IV once stood.

It is not known how many men from the 34<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group were a part of this march but since the article was published we have heard from Omer G. Mongeon from the 18<sup>th</sup> squadron and Clayton A. Mink from the 7<sup>th</sup> squadron. We hope this article will encourage more of our members who spent time in Stalag Luft IV to send us their names so we can recognize them in a future issue of MM.

Clayton Mink has written about his 22<sup>nd</sup> mission when his B-17 was shot down over Kassel, Germany on September 22, 1945. His account of the long seven month ordeal as a prisoner of war and the long march is well documented. His story will be retained in the archival files at the 8<sup>th</sup> Air Force Historical Society Museum at Savannah, Georgia. The September issue of Mendlesham Memories will have excerpts from the transcript.

## AIR FORCE SONG

In 1938 there was a contest for an official song for the Army Air Corps. There were 757 entries. A group of Army Air Corps wives selected the entry from Robert Crawford, "Off We Go into the Wild Blue Yonder." After World War II the U.S. Air Force adopted "Off We Go" as their official song.

By Lt. R.L. Stenba

## PROUD OL' 17

She's the darling of the Air Corps,  
And the sweetheart of her crew,  
She's the finest damned bomber,  
That flies up in the blue.  
She's sometimes temperamental,  
And sometimes kinda slow,  
But she's always sure to get you,  
Just where you want to go.  
When you've got two engines feathered,  
And your wings are full of flak,  
You know your needn't worry,  
Your ship will get you back.  
I want no golden chariot,  
To ride the heaven's scene,  
I'll go the way I know is safe,  
In a proud old Ol' 17.

From the B-17 Flying Fortress Association newsletter.

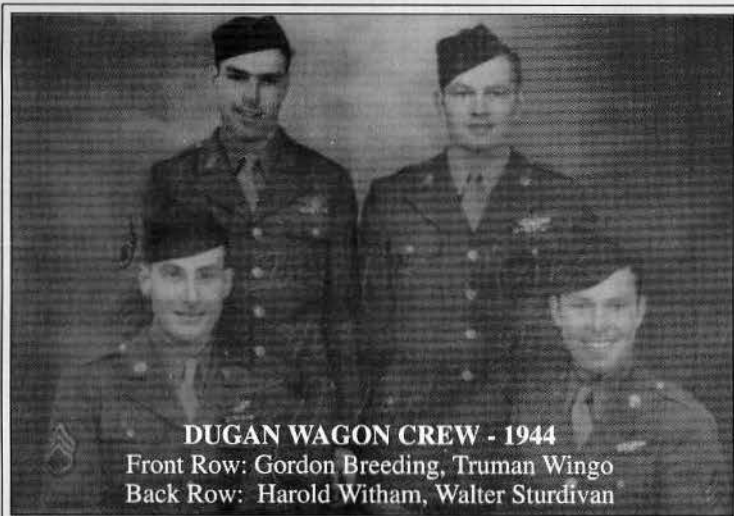
## SUICIDE!

A Texan looked up at the top of a tall building and discovered a man ready to jump!  
"Stop," he yelled, "Remember you're someone who has value!"  
The man yelled back, "I just lost everything of value in the stock market!"  
"But remember you're important to your wife," yelled the Texan.  
"She divorced me."  
"Your children! Remember you're children," yelled the Texan.  
"They never call," said the man.  
Then you're parents. "Remember you're parents," yelled the Texan.  
"Dead as doornails," replied the man.  
"Then remember the Alamo," yelled the Texan.  
"What's the Alamo?" inquired the man.  
And the Texan replied, "Jump, you Yankee son of a gun!"

Thought for today:

"Where apathy is master,  
all men are slaves."

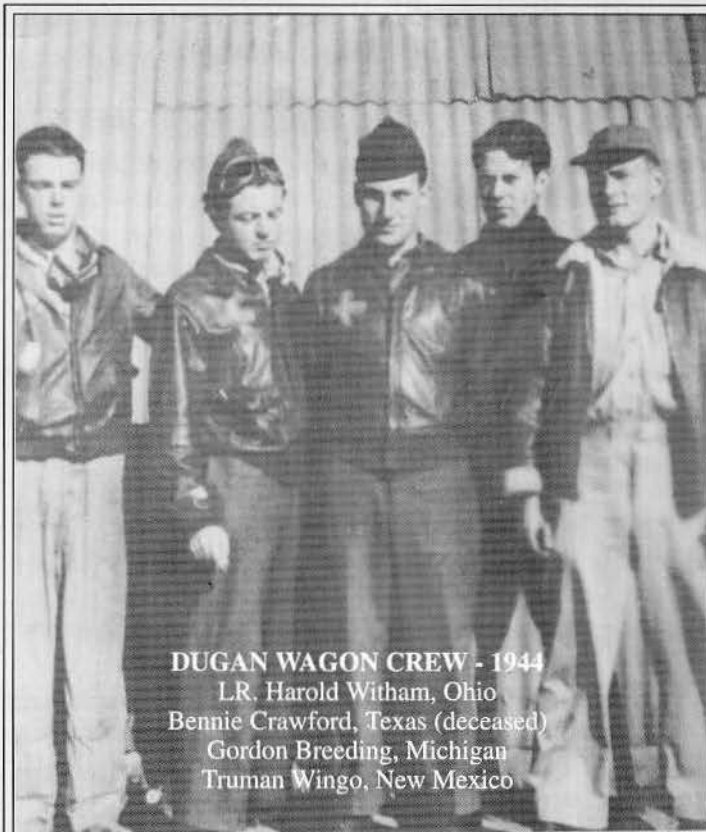
- Anonymous



DUGAN WAGON CREW - 1944

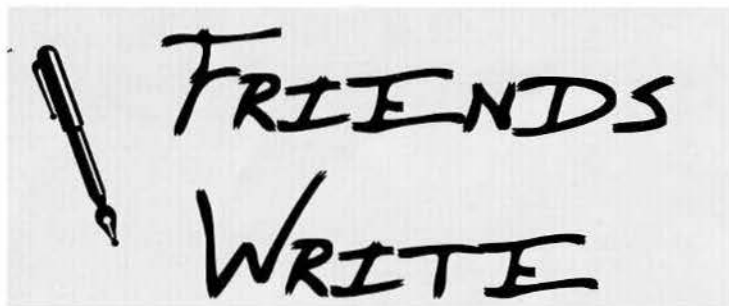
Front Row: Gordon Breeding, Truman Wingo  
Back Row: Harold Witham, Walter Sturdivan

Dugan  
Wagon  
Crew  
1944



DUGAN WAGON CREW - 1944

L.R. Harold Witham, Ohio  
Bennie Crawford, Texas (deceased)  
Gordon Breeding, Michigan  
Truman Wingo, New Mexico



#### **HERMAN FIEBER - BAKERSFIELD, CA**

Here's \$20.00 for my 2003-2004 dues. 58 years ago on this date, Jan. 17, 1945 the B-17 we were flying crashed. I'll always remember my fellow crew members who died that night. I'll say a special prayer on this day and cherish every day I'm here.

God bless all of us and hope you are in good health.

→ → → → → →

#### **WILLIAM ORTON - BOISE, ID**

In the March issue of Mendlesham Memories, I learned of the passing of William Donze. Bill was a member of the 1446 Ordnance Supply and Maintenance Company attached to the 34th Bomb Group at Mendlesham. I knew him while we were stationed there in 1944 - 45. I visited him when on a return trip to England for the 50th anniversary of D-Day. I believe there are only three of us from the 1446<sup>th</sup> left that are members of the 34<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group Association.

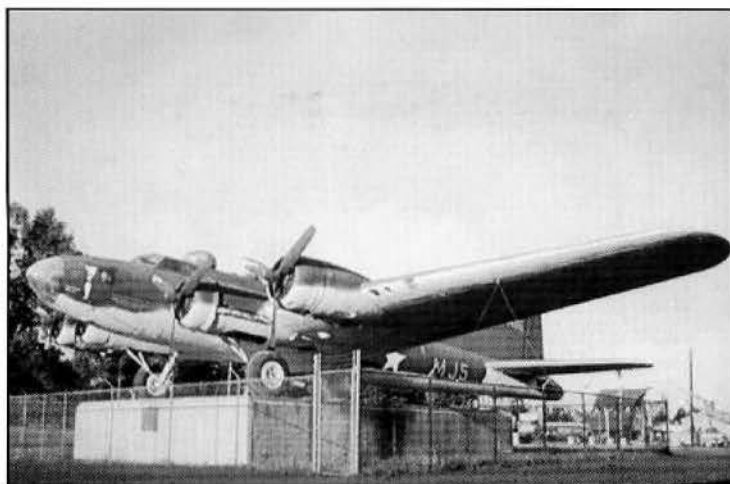
I have enjoyed attending many of the reunions and hope I can make the next one in San Antonio.

→ → → → → →

#### **JOHN DORONSKY - WILLOUGBY, OH**

I'm sorry to have missed the last reunion in Salt Lake City but will try and make it in San Antonio.

→ → → → → →



#### **J. N. ROGERS - LUBBOCK, TX**

Thanks for all the good work you do for the 34<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group, Hal. You really are a big part of keeping the Association going.

I am enclosing \$10 for my membership dues. I am also sending a check for \$10 for the scholarship fund. This is a great program!!

My memories of the 34<sup>th</sup> are really great ones. I was just a very young guy at the time I was in the group. I remember Pearl Harbor very definitely as I was on duty when it happened and we were on anti-sub patrol with a B-18!! Boy, was it tough getting our planes in the air at that time. We often lined up three B-18's for each mission and wound up taking the third plane no matter what.

Flying out of Westover Air Base in a fan shaped area over the ocean in a B-18 was not a lot of fun. We were really glad to get B-17's a little later as they were a stable airplane in comparison.

Looking forward to the reunion in San Antonio.

→ → → → → →

#### **CHARLIE SIRAGUSA - OAK RIDGE NORTH, TX**

Enclosed in check for 03-04 dues. I enjoy being an associate member of your association. I'm retired Army, but I did fly in a plane at one time - does that count? I look forward to each issue of Mendlesham Memories. Since Jack Share and I go the same church, I can really discuss with him the contents of this fine publication.

Hope to meet you all in San Antonio, just a short hop of 225 miles from my door.

→ → → → → →

#### **JIM STUTHERS - NOKOMIS, FL**

Bob Wright did not attend our annual "Butler's Bums" mini reunion and luncheon at Fisherman's Wharf this year, however, Joe Remy, Dick Scully and myself did meet and again shared some wonderful times. We reviewed my pictures and memories along with ones brought by Joe Remy. Also, he gave us a neat newspaper item which appeared in Haverford Township which is a nearby town newspaper in Philadelphia, Pa.

→ → → → → →

#### **EILEEN YOUNG - AUSTIN, TX**

Enclosed are the dues for 2002 - 2003. I'm writing for my husband, Wooten L. Young. He had a very bad fall in September, 2001 resulting in a serious brain injury. I know he would want to continue his membership in the 34<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group Association.

→ → → → → →



## CHANGE OF ADDRESS

LAST NAME	FIRST NAME	ORG	ADDRESS	CITY	STATE	ZIP
DORRANCE	JANET	391LM	APT 617 POHAI NANI 45-090 NAMOKU ST.,	KANEOHE, HI		96744
FRANCO	GEORGE, A	18/4	179 PINWOODS CRES	MIDDLE ISLAND	NY	11953
GALLOWAY	JOHN, H	4	206 52ND AVENUE PLZ W	BRADENTON	FL	34207
GRONKOWSKI	EDWARD, J	391	1530 S STATE ST APT 17R	CHICAGO	IN	60605
HACKLER	ROLAND, J	475LM	1435 BENT TRAIL CIR	SOUTHLAND	TX	76092
LEATH	JOHN, W	391LM	33505 WILL HILL RD	POMEROY	OH	45769
LEVI	MARJORIE	18	PO BOX 60186	SACRAMENTO	CA	95860
MAUNDRELL	FRED		10 PARK GREEN STATION ROAD	WETHERINGSET	SUFFOLK	P145QH
POULOS	ARTHUR	391LM	171 GOODE RD	MOORESBORO	NC	28114
WELCH	KEVIN		12A SKINNER RD	MT WELLINGTON	AUKLAND, NZ	
WRIGHT	JOHN	18	14A2 PRESIDENT POINT DR.	ANNAPOLIS	MO	21403
ZESCH	EDWARD, E	7	1315 W 8TH ST APT J	CORONA	CA	92882

## TAPS

LAST NAME	FIRST NAME	ORG	DOD	ADDRESS	CITY	STATE	ZIP
ARMSTRONG	WARREN, E	7	12-29-01	PO BOX 8301	ALBUQUERQUE	NM	87198
SCHNEIDER	CHARLES, R	4/18	01-15-03	3400 W PARK BLVD #1003,	PLANO	TX	75075

### FLANDERS FIELDS

In Flanders fields the poppies blow

Between the crosses, row on row

That mark our place; and in the sky

The larks, still bravely singing, fly

Scarce heard amid the guns below.

We are the Dead. Short days ago

We lived, felt dawn, saw sunset glow,

Loved, were loved, and now we lie

In Flanders fields.

*By John McCrae*

Take up our quarrel with the foe

To you from failing hands we throw

The torch; be yours to hold it high.

If ye break faith with us who die

We shall not sleep, though poppies grow

In Flanders fields.

## NEW ASSOCIATE MEMBERS

LAST NAME	FIRST NAME	ORG	ADDRESS	CITY	STATE	ZIP
GIVEN	GANEL	391A	416 LAVENDER	BILLINGS	MT	59106
GIVEN	WADE	391A	3323 NORTH 47TH ST	PHOENIX	AZ	85018
MACKEY	ERIC	4A	13061 STERLING WAY	FT MYERS	FL	33912

## DONATIONS TO THE RAY L. SUMMA SCHOLARSHIP FUND

IN MEMORY OF

DONOR

JOHN M. RODGERS

**Editor's note:** In the March issue of this newsletter it was erroneously reported that **RICHARD L. LEVENICK** was deceased. Nothing could be further from the truth as Mr. Levenick is alive and well residing in Ann Arbor, Michigan. The message we intended to convey was that Mr. Levenick donated to the memorial fund. We sincerely apologize to him and his family for any inconvenience or embarrassment this error might have caused them.

# **“Thanks for the Memories”**



**HAPPY 100<sup>th</sup> BIRTHDAY, BOB**  
**FROM THE MEMBERS OF**  
**THE 34<sup>th</sup> BOMB GROUP ASSOCIATION**



**Jack Share**  
22 South Avonlea Circle  
The Woodlands, TX 77382  
(936) 273-3561

**34th Bomb Group**



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