



ENDLESHAM EMORIES



VOICE OF THE 34TH BOMB GROUP (H)



4TH SQUADRON



391ST SQUADRON



18TH SQUADRON



7TH SQUADRON



SOUVENIR

PHOTO



RESPITE FROM BLYTHE - 1944
(Raymond & Rachel Lucas, top left in photo.)

MENDLESHAM MEMORIES

Newsletter of
The 34th Bomb Group Association, Inc.
www.excel-tech.com/34th/

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Deadline

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

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
http://www.jccc.net/~bgustaf/34th_Bomb
http://old.jccc.net/~bgustaf/34th_Bomb/

share - a thought

If someone had told me six years ago that I would be the next editor of Mendlesham Memories I would have probably told them they had rocks in their head. Then, at the 1998 34th reunion in Boise, Idaho we learned, suddenly, that our editor of fourteen years, Ely Baldea, was relinquishing the reins due to health problems, after many unsuccessful attempts to find a replacement. The rest of the story is history. After considerable prodding from some of the members, I caved and accepted the responsibility - on an interim basis. After five years we are still looking for a permanent replacement. Any offers?

Do I regret my decision? I can't say that I do. There have been frustrating times, for sure, but on the positive side, the pluses have outweighed the negatives. I have been involved with many wonderful and appreciative people, both within the organization and out, who have contributed to the success of the newsletter while tolerating my many shortcomings. My reading, writing and computer skills have certainly been put to the test and I have learned much about the publishing/printing business. Frankly, at this point, I don't know what I would do with my time without the demands that the newsletter requires.

Going into my sixth year, I feel confident that we can continue as a viable organization for some years to come. Of course, no one knows what the future holds for us. At the age when most of us are slowing down, a bit, anything can happen. Until then, and with continuing cooperation and good health, we can only hope for the best and endeavor to keep the great 34th Bomb Group Association an active organization - for as long as possible.

It looks like we'll have this newsletter out before the end of the month. Hopefully, with a little cooperation from the USPS, they will be available prior to our leaving for the reunion.

To all that can make the reunion, we look forward to seeing you in San Antonio. For those who can't, for whatever reason, we will miss you greatly.

We learned, as we were about to go to press, that Hal Province was to undergo a very serious operation on July 22. From your many friends and comrades in the 34th bomb group, Hal, we wish you a speedy and complete recovery.

Jack



Jack Share, Editor

From the Treasurer's Computer

I don't know what caused it, but I have been receiving quite a number of 2003 dues since the June issue of MM was delivered. Obviously, the senders of those dues didn't pay attention to the announcements in December 2002 that dues were due.

Perhaps it was Jack's remarks in his "SHARE- a thought" column pertaining to the dues situation or my column that we might want to raise dues and they were trying to pay before a raise went into effect. Whatever, dues have been arriving like it was the first of the year! Several hadn't paid for several years so we're glad they are back on the mailing list. Even had a first time dues payer even though he was "Found" several years ago. Keep them coming; I'll take all you send!

Several have commented that they miss the red circle I once put on their mailing label to indicate that dues were due. While I was printing the labels for both Ray and Eli it was easy for me to do that marking. Since we changed to a Texas publisher, who now addresses the copies via a computer program, this practice seems to have fallen by the wayside although the "dues date" is supplied with each list. For those who wish to note the year for which their dues are paid, I can only suggest they look at the returned check. I write the year for which the payment applies on the top of the check. In the past, I used A1, A2, A3 to indicate year 2001, 2002, and 2003 but have started to write the true year on the top. Perhaps we will once again be able to have the publisher include the date of dues year on the mail label.

Scholarship applications have been very slow in arriving this year but there are still 10 days, at this writing, for them to arrive. Results will be presented at the reunion.

The BIG battles for IRAQI FREEDOM are over but there are still skirmishes taking place that involve our service personnel. Please, don't forget them in your prayers.

I hope you have made your reservations for the reunion. We will be looking for you in San Antonio! Take care and MAY GOD ABUNDANTLY BLESS!

Hal



Hal Province, Treasurer

IN MEMORIAM BOB HOPE

1903 - 2003

May you rest in peace

"Thanks for the Memories"

DUES

(for those who pay annually) are due on January 1st each year.

Please remit your \$10.00 to:

HAROLD PROVINCE
153 NORTH HILL DR.
CARRIERE, MS 39426

If a membership card is desired, please send a self-addressed stamped envelope with your remittance.

REUNION COMMITTEE REPORT

Our 19th Annual Reunion is rapidly approaching and the reunion committee is looking forward to seeing all of you at the Radisson Hotel, Downtown Market Square, 502 West Durango Boulevard, San Antonio, Texas on 10 September to 14 September, 2003

This morning being Independence Day, we were out motoring around the outskirts of town when I switched the radio stations and came up with music of the "Battle Hymn of the Republic" by the Mormon Tabernacle Choir. We continued listening as the choir sang all the songs that we had heard at our last reunion in Salt Lake City. We can not guarantee that kind of inspirational music this year, but it will bring back many memories in future years to come - as all our get togethers do. The Tabernacle Choir rendered a series of songs and hymns that pertained to today - INDEPENDENCE DAY. We always list the names of the "Reunion Committee", but we neglect to mention Esther Wright and Gen Rutka who do a lot of work before, during and after the reunions. In the past, we had a "Special Couple" - Wanda and Gerry Pine. One person that we don't think about as a member of the Reunion Committee is our editor, Jack Share. Without Jack there would be no "Mendlesham Memories" and the word would not get out about when and where we would hold our reunions. Jack gives an excellent report to all the members who are not able to attend. Many thanks, again, Jack. He provides the information to all.

We wish you all good health and we hope to see all of you at the Radisson Hotel in San Antonio. Those that are not able to attend, we will miss you and hope to see you at a future reunion. Our thanks to all who help to make our reunions successful - especially the attendees. Take care and God Bless.

The Reunion Committee

Harold Rutka

Robert Wright

Bruce Sothern

A Request for Information

I joined the 34th Bomb Group in September, 1942 in Spokane, WA. and went with the group to Ephrata, WA. In December we moved to Blythe, CA. and in June, 1943 we moved to Salinas, CA.

It was while stationed at Salinas on June 13th that I was seriously injured in a plane crash somewhere between Salinas and Soledad. Five of the crew members were killed and three of us survived. I was hospitalized at Ft. Ord, CA. By the time I was released from the hospital the group had returned to Blythe.

I, along with a group of personnel, were sent to McCook Field, Nebraska where we formed the 465th Bomb Group. We were sent overseas in February, 1944 by way of North Africa to Italy.

I am looking for anyone in the Armament Section of the 391st squadron of the 34th Bomb Group who might remember me and the crash at Salinas and can testify that I was injured in the crash.

Thanks for any information you can provide me.

LeRoy L. Klug

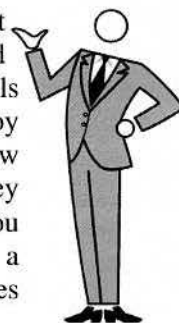
1011 1/2 West Street

Beaver Dam, Wisconsin 53916-1250

e-mail: lcklug@powerweb.net

TOP THIS

Three boys are in the school yard bragging about their fathers. The first boy says, "My Dad scribbles a few words on piece of paper, he calls it a poem, they give him \$50". The second boy says, "That's nothing. My Dad scribbles a few words on a piece of paper, he calls it a song, they give him \$100". The third boy says, "I got you both beat. My Dad scribbles a few words on a piece of paper, he calls it a sermon, and it takes eight people to collect all the money!"



Two Heros Meet (Fifty Eight Years Later)

In May 1945, with the war with Germany winding down, the 34th, along with other bomb groups in England, made several humanitarian food drops in Holland to save the starving Dutch people after one of the worst winters ever. Food was so scarce that 2,000 people were dying each week. A young man in Holland in those days by the name of Jaap Penraat came to America in 1958. Recently, with the help of a neighbor, he put his story in print in a book titled "Forging Freedom". In this true story of heroism and bravery, it tells how Penraat put his life on the line helping as many as 400 Jews escape the cruelty inflicted upon them by the Nazis in Amsterdam, The Netherlands. In a time when you could be killed for being a Jew, or aiding them, Penraat, who was not Jewish, devised a plan of forging papers to obtain travel permits to secure the way to freedom for many of these Jewish people. Those caught would be shot with the bodies left on public view as a warning not to help the Jews. Recently, Penraat and Hudson Talbot, the author of the book, paid a visit to the Bremen, Ohio Elementary school where the sixth grade students had read the story of Penraat's World War II heroics. Meeting the man face to face and listening to his story first hand was a very exciting experience for these young people. Also, in attendance for Penraat's presentation was Carl B. Stemen, B-17 pilot in the 34th bomb group who now lives in Bremen, Ohio. He also played a pivotal role in the war. He made three trips to Amsterdam to drop food. One of those drops, on May 1st, 1945, saw many people standing on the roof of a building watching the planes as they flew in to make the drops. One of those on the roof was Jaap Penraat. The two heroes met for the first time at the school. As Penraat described it, "It's remarkable that 60 years later I meet a man who did it. I was standing on that roof - we must've been 100 feet apart." It was also a thrill for Stemen to meet someone who benefited from his efforts. He says, "We got so interested in talking about our food missions I had to tell him that it was past time for him to be on stage to present his program. I was surprised with his reply when I said that we heard that they were so hungry they ate tulip bulbs". He responded that they could not eat them because they would make you sick.

Ed: This story appeared in the Lancaster, Ohio Eagle-Gazette newspaper and was provided by Carl Stemen.



THE ORDNANCE MAN

The Ordnance man, with muscles of steel,
Have probably the roughest deal
Of any G.I. in the Army Air Force,
Day in, day out, they work like horses.

In the middle of night they get jerked from the sack,
And it's usually noon before they get back,
Weary and worn from going the rounds,
With bombs weighing up to four thousand pounds.

And then when they're certain their work is through,
And they're wondering what the hell to do --
Sleep or drink or drink or sleep
Comes an order designed to make strong men weep.

Mission scrubbed...back to the line...
"Unload the bombs," yet not a whine
From these martyred sons of Total Strife
Who are sweating and straining away their life.

Yes, the Ordnance men are brawny and tough,
And always ready to strut their stuff
So they can't be blamed if they pray for rain,
Or the blessed words "released to train".

1446 ORDNANCE SUPPLY AND MAINTENANCE

ATTACHED TO THE 34TH BOMB GROUP (H) MENDLESHAM AIRBASE,
MENDLESHAM, ENGLAND 1944-45

By William J. Orton, 1446 Ord. S. & M. Company

The 1446 Ordnance Supply and Maintenance Company at Mendlesham was made up of approximately 150 enlisted personnel and 4 officers. The operation and duties of the 1446th consisted of the following responsibilities:

- Bomb dump
- Motor Pool – repair and paint shop
- Bicycle shop
- Armament supply
- Skeet range
- Cooks and K.P.'s for the consolidated and crew mess halls.

Duties consisted of receiving, storage and issue of all the bombs to the Squadron personnel. Repair and issue of all vehicles issued and repair of bicycles to authorized personnel. Supply and load all flak suits on each plane scheduled for that day's mission. Operation of the skeet and pistol range.



Loading Flak Suits

L to R - Joe Tulino and Bill Orton



Armament Maintenance

L to R - Bergie, Benny Arcario, Peligrini, Jack Ivie



Armament Maintenance

L to R - "Pops" Hunter, Herman Allen, Lt. Gannet, Skytte, Dulan, Massaro, Malamed

The 1446th was at Mendlesham before the 34th Bomb Group's planes arrived, getting things ready and preparing the base for transfer from the RAF. Yes, I remember the "German Intruders over Mendlesham". I had worked two shifts that day issuing flak suits for each mission. I was routed out of bed and went up to the flight building and saw how close the plane, that crashed, came to hitting our arms shop.

I remember how hard it was to go out and pick up the armament after planes crashed on take off and landings. I remember having to help dig up the bombs that were on board or dropped at the end of the runway. I remember going out, at times, and shooting birds at the end of the runway before the planes could take off. I remember when Joe Tulino and I bought some War Bonds during a drive and we won a vacation to Edinburgh, Scotland. On the day we were to be picked up for return to base, the field was fogged in so badly that we ended up returning by train causing us to be three days AWOL. I remember taking part in Operation Chow Hound. I drove a truck to pick up supplies and volunteered to fly the missions, flying one to Amsterdam and one to LeHarve. I don't remember which crews I flew with but do remember helping push the food sacks out of the bomb bay, over the bombed out airfields, and looking back seeing some drop through the roofs of a few greenhouses.

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 TH B.G. HISTORY BOOK, 1947 edition, EDWIN S. SMITH.....	\$37.50ea.
LATEST 34 TH 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 TH AIR FORCE OR 34 TH BOMB GROUP.....	\$ 5.00ea.
PATCHES – 8 TH AIR FORCE (Gold & Silver Bullion Tread).....	\$ 9.95ea.
PATCHES – SQUADRON – 4 th – 7 th – 18 th –	\$ 5.00ea.
DECAL – VALOR TO VICTORY – 5" X 5".....	\$ 1.50ea.
BUMPER STICKER – 34 TH B.G. – 3" X 12".....	\$ 1.50ea.
BOLO TIES – 8 TH AIR FORCE – 34 TH B. G. – B-17 – B-24.....	\$ 6.00ea.
KEY RINGS – 8 TH 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 TH A.F. – 4 TH – 7 TH – 18 TH – 391 ST SQDNS.....	\$ 4.00ea.
BALL PEN (retractable) W/REPLACEABLE CARTRIDGE	
DK. BLUE W/GOLD LETTERS (34 TH BOMB GROUP, 8 TH 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 TH B.G. EMBLEM (Hunter Green – beautiful)	
MED. LRG. XLRG. XXLRG.....	\$25.95ea.
MEN'S POLO SHIRT (Cobblestone beige) W/34 TH 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/ 34th 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:

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

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

JUST AN ORDINARY SOLDIER

He was getting old and paunchy and his hair was falling fast,
He sat around the Legion, telling stories of the past.
Of the war that he once fought in and the deeds that he had done,
In his exploits with his buddies: they were heroes, every one.
And 'tho sometimes to his neighbors, his tales became a joke,
All his buddies listened quietly for they knew where of he spoke.
But, we'll hear his tales no longer, for ol' Bob has passed away.
And the World's a little poorer for a soldier died today.
He won't be mourned by many, just his children and his wife,
For he lived an ordinary, very quiet sort of life.
He held a job and raised a family, going quietly on his way,
And the World won't note his passing, 'tho a soldier died today.
When politicians leave this Earth, their bodies lie in state,
While thousands note their passing, and proclaim that they were great.
Papers tell of their life stories from the time that they were young,
But the passing of a soldier goes unnoticed and unsung.
The politician's stipend and the style in which he lives,
Are often disproportionate, to the service that he gives.
While the ordinary soldier, who offered up his all,
Is paid off with a medal and perhaps a pension small.
It's so easy to forget them, for it is so many times
That our Bobs and Jims and Johnnys went to battle, but we know.
It is not the politicians with their compromise and plays,
Who won for us the freedom that our country now enjoys,
Should you find yourself in danger with your enemies at hand,
Would you really want some cop-out, with his ever-waffling stand?
Or would you want a soldier - his home, his country, his kin
Just a common soldier, who would fight until the end.
He was just a common soldier and his ranks are growing thin,
But his presence should remind us we might need his like again.
For when countries are in conflict, we find the soldiers part
Is to clean up all the trouble that the politicians start.
If we cannot do him honor while he's here to hear the praise,
Then at least let's give him homage at the ending of his days.
Perhaps just a simple headline in the paper that might say:
"OUR COUNTRY IS IN MOURNING, A SOLDIER DIED TODAY."

Bought The Whole Farm - Almost

From Arnold Prillaman, 7th squadron

Fortunately, they didn't buy the farm but the Eugene James crew got a good look at the real estate. With their B-17 skimming dangerously close to the ground, the four Wright Cyclone engines straining at every one of their 1200 horsepower, to lift the aircraft, as they took off for another mission to Nazi Germany.

Getting a B-17 off the ground with a full crew, 6,000 pounds of bombs, full gas tanks and thousands of rounds of .50 caliber machine gun ammo on board in World War II was precarious to say the least. Arnold Prillaman, waist gunner on the Eugene James crew, 7th squadron of the 34th bomb group recalled such an incident recently in an article he wrote for his local newspaper, the Martinsville Bulletin, Martinsville, Virginia.

One snowy morning in February, 1945 the 34th took off for a mission into Germany. Due to a change in the wind direction they were forced to take off on the short 4,200-foot runway. With three inches of snow already on the ground and poor visibility, the James crew proceeded to take off.

Standard rotation, or lift-off, on a fully loaded B17, as they were, was 120 M.P.H. indicated air speed. Just short of the end of the runway they bounced off a little bump and were airborne with an indicated air speed of only 95 M.P.H., 25 M.P.H. below climb speed. Fortunately, they were over flat farmland with no obstructions immediately ahead.

The Broad Oak farmhouse stood 1,200 feet from the end of the runway, slightly to the left of the runway heading. Standing at the left waist window Arnold remembers looking into the house windows instead of at the roof as they flew through the front yard, barely off the ground. Needless to say, since Arnold is here to tell the story, the plane finally did climb because of the masterful job that the pilot, Eugene James, did in keeping the plane airborne and out of a stall. James is a retired Eastern Airline captain now living in New Jersey.

Arnold recalls an old saying in aviation circles that goes, "When you bore a hole in the ground with an airplane, you have bought the farm. On that snowy morning, 58 years ago, we almost bought the farm and the farmhouse."

34th Bomb Group Anecdotes:

(From the Walter Strudivan files)

Second Lieutenant Carl L. Washburn, Jr. 21, of Wichita Falls, Texas flew his B-17 Flying Fortress safely back to its base at Mendlesham, England after Nazi jet propelled fighters attacked his group with 20 mm. cannon fire. One shell gnawed away a large part of the wing and the Fortress came home on three engines. "My gunners saw him approaching from the rear," Lt. Washburn said, "but he was traveling so fast he was gone almost before his bullets struck. He must have been going 500 miles an hour. The cannon shells fired by the Messerschmitt 262 exploded as soon as they hit and the left side of the radio compartment was peppered with hundreds of tiny holes made by shell fragments. If he had demolished just three more inches of the forward wing, the fuel cells would probably have caught fire or exploded." Fighter escort had engaged other numbers of the enemy. Although minor damage was sustained by other ships in the formation, when the attack by the six jets was made, all the fortresses returned to the base. An engine on Lt. Washburn's plane developed trouble from freezing conditions at high altitude and he was unable to maintain sufficient speed to remain with his squadron. He dropped back into successive squadron formations and was able to bomb oil refineries at Hamburg, Germany with his group. Ten minutes after leaving the target found him at the rear of the formation as the Messerschmitts closed for the attack "Controls were very sloppy because the left aileron hung by one bolt and we were not sure we could get home. We considered either landing in Sweden or bailing out into the North Sea," he added, "but we stuck with it and were able to land safely, without further problems or injury to any of the crew."

"Lucky Me"

A narrative by Clayton A. Mink, 7th Squadron, 34th Bomb Group

Anyone reading Clayton Mink's World War II account of his experiences while a member of the 34th Bomb Group of the 8th Air Force would have to agree that he was one "lucky" individual to have survived the war.

Luck seemed to be on Clayton's side after he had completed 21 missions as a ball turret gunner on the B-24 crew of "The Near Sighted Robin" after which the 34th Bomb Group transitioned to B-17's. His first mission on the B-17 "The Wrangler" was on September 22, 1944 to Kassel, Germany when his troubles started in earnest. After several hours in flight, a hydraulic leak developed in his turret obscuring his visibility. His pilot instructed him to vacate the turret, a decision that was soon to prove beneficial to his survival. As they approached the target, another B-17, from his squadron, came up from underneath "The Wrangler" severing the entire tail section. Clayton, who was now in the waist section, witnessed the calamity and now at 25,000 feet without oxygen, immediately made the decision to bail out. Grasping the ribs of the fuselage, he pulled himself to the opened rear of the crippled aircraft and tumbled out into space.

After free falling several thousand feet, he reached for the ripcord but his parachute was not on his chest. In his haste to exit the plane, he had apparently neglected to hold the parachute in the crook of his arm and the wind from the props' slipstream contacted the chute and broke the tacking that secures the chute harness to the body harness. For some unknown reason he extended his leg and rolled on his back. Then immediately noticed his parachute dangling by one side of the harness. Grasping the harness he pulled the chute closer to his body and pulled the ripcord.

He landed in an open field which at the time was being harvested by forced laborers. As he landed he was staring down the barrels of three rifles being aimed at him by three civilian guards – luckily, no shots were fired. After being searched by all three guards, one guard walked him to a mobile trailer. Early that evening he was taken to the city jail in Paderborn. During the night he was ordered to strip for a body search probably in hopes of finding something containing some military information.

The next morning he was joined by S/Sgt. Wallace Brauks and boarded a bus where they were amazed and shocked to see three officers who had successfully escaped from the out of control aircraft. The five very fortunate and thankful survivors of "The Wrangler". 1st Lt. Henry Lambert, 1st Lt. Wayne Jorgenson, 1st Lt. Myron McDonald, S/Sgt. Wallace Brauks and Clayton proceeded to the railroad station where they awaited transportation to the Interrogation Center in Frankfurt, Germany. After spending four days in solitary confinement, Clayton was summoned for interrogation after which he was returned to solitary for six more days.

After his release from solitary, he along with a large group of POW's were herded onto 40X8 box cars, standing room only, not unlike a drove of cattle, for distribution to prisoner of war camps. Clayton described the situation. "It was an overwhelmingly devastating experience to witness the sick, the wounded, the depressed and those who seemingly appeared to be oblivious to their surrounding."

After a long tiresome and uncomfortable trip, the train finally arrived at Grosstychow, Germany where they were welcomed

by armed guards with fixed bayonets and several ugly police dogs. The POW camp, Stalag-Luft 4, was about one and a half miles from the train station but, because of all the physical problems, some of the prisoners could not keep pace and were continually being jabbed with bayonets and bitten by the dogs.

Stalag-Luft 4 was built to house some 10,000 airmen but at the time Clayton arrived it was thought to have contained between 4,500 and 6,000. The compound was divided into four sections or lagers as they were called. Manned guard towers at each corner and guards walking in opposite directions patrolling the inside and outside perimeters secured the compound. Twenty feet from the main fence was a wooden rail called the "Warning Wire", *touch this and you will be shot!*

The wooden barracks were divided into several 16' X 18' rooms. Each room housed seventeen POW's, in very close quarters, who slept on slumber pads on a straw strewn floor with one blanket. Twice a day roll calls were taken and at 4:00PM each day blackout blinds were put in place and the front and rear doors were barred. Life as a POW was lowly and dreary and their very existence depended wholly on Faith and Hope.

Red Cross parcels were the lifeline of the POW's and were a welcomed change from the regular camp rations of soup, likened to hog slop, black bread, tea and Ersatz coffee with an occasional soup treat consisting of several vegetables and horse meat.

Unannounced shake down inspections were common occurrences. Everything in the room was turned upside down looking for nothing in particular and nothing was ever found.

In February, 1945, with the Russian Army advancing rapidly, evacuation of Stalag-Luft 4 became inevitable and on February 6th, Clayton's group departed. Each man was issued a Red Cross parcel that would prove to be a blessing as German rations were few and far between. They never imagined that they were starting on a march that would ultimately last for 80 days. Coping with the severe winter weather and pangs of hunger it boggles the mind how so many of the POW's ever survived. At nightfall they were housed in a farmer's barn, if available. If not they slept on the ground. It would not have been difficult to follow the route taken by the POW's as the highways and byways were literally covered with vomit slime and human excrement. A few days before liberation, the march was taking its toll. Men were falling by the roadside physically unable to continue. Some were picked up by horse and wagon, others who fell, no longer needed attention. At the end of the march they were a slovenly group of physically exhausted human beings with gaunt facial features, long dirty hair, thin, unshaven, unbathed malodorous bodies covered with lice.

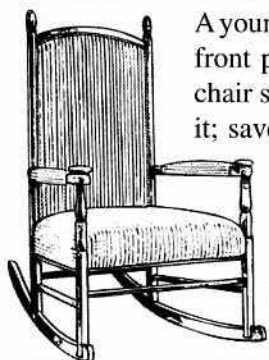
After an unbelievable, gruelling, excruciating, horrible, inhumane, depressing, degrading 80 days on the forced march they were finally liberated on April 26, 1945 at Bitterfeld, Germany where they were greeted by a unit of the 104th Division of the United States Army.

Hopefully, nothing of this magnitude will ever occur again.

Clayton's story ends with a comment. "It was one hell of a ride and I was very proud to have been a small part of the 34th Bomb Group."



Grandpa's Rocking Chair



A young boy walked out onto his grandparent's front porch and stopped to study the rocking chair sitting there. It had not a spot of paint on it; save for a few dried flakes of varnish still clinging to wood here and there. A homemade affair, it seemed that no two parts exactly matched. "Why don't you paint that old rocking chair, Grandpa?" The youth asked. "I'd sooner paint the American flag green!" The old

gentleman responded as he settled into the chair with a smile that said it fit him just fine the way it was. The youth sat down in the porch swing and gave his grandfather a quizzical look. Grandpa lit his pipe and blew a cloud of smoke into the summer breeze. "Let me tell you about this chair son," he began. "When I was stationed in the Solomon Islands during the war an enemy cruiser came through the straits one night and began to shell our base. We had no defense against a ship like that so everyone just jumped into foxholes to wait out the barrage and hope for the best. Everyone that is, except the crew of a lone PT boat tied up in the inlet. They scrambled out, cranked her up and headed straight for that cruiser." "Now they could have fired a shot from a safe distance and skeedaddled out of there, but that's not what they did. No, they pressed home their attack zigzagging through shell fire until they were really close. They fired two torpedoes just before the ship's guns hit the PT boat dead center. The small wooden torpedo boat exploded in a fiery blast, but seconds later so did that cruiser. We couldn't believe the bravery of that crew." "The next day a piece of the PT boat's bow washed up on the beach near the base. Many of us went over to look at it. No one said much, we thought about those sailors who had just stopped at our base for repairs a few hours before the attack. We didn't even know them. I saved a piece of the deck in my tent for a while and eventually sent it home to your grandma and asked her to save it for me. I really didn't know what I was going to do with it at the time, but after the war I decided to use it for the seat of this rocking chair so I'd remember the crew of that PT boat every time I sat in it." "Later I found a radio operator's desk from a B-17 that had been scrapped and used it for the arms. You can still see a piece of German flack embedded in the underside of the right arm. It reminds me of all the guys who fought in the sky to keep those of us on the ground safe." "The arm posts came off of an old Higgins landing barge I found rotting away in a boat yard. The helm station was pretty badly shot up. They remind me of the Coast Guardsmen who protect our shores in war and peace. I don't know if the officer piloting that barge met his fate at

Normandy, North Africa, Iwo Jima or one of a dozen other landing beaches, but I know he was one brave man." "The back boards came from a rusty military ambulance that had carried wounded Marines from the front lines near Pusan, Korea to an aid station somewhere. The boards are stained with their blood, sanding them would be treason in my mind." "The rockers were made from a wooden rocket box I picked up in an Army surplus store after the Viet Nam war. They remind me of all the brave men and women who gave their lives in that war." "This front panel with two bullet holes in it here below the seat was given to me by a friend. He picked it up on the shore of Ford Island the day after Pearl Harbor was attacked. He didn't know for sure what ship it came from, but he said that he thought it was a bench off the Arizona. It reminds me of the price we paid for being complacent." "You see son, for over 200 years men have fought and died when they had to so this great land would remain free. They paid for our right to speak, write and worship as we please. It's because of them that we can sit here on this front porch on a Sunday afternoon and enjoy the peaceful view of this tree-shaded lane. This rocking chair reminds me of that." The youth walked over to the chair and ran a finger down the smooth arm. Without saying a word he inspected the bullet holes, the stained backboards and the jagged piece of flack still protruding from the bottom of the right arm board. "Wow, Grandpa, I never knew this chair was so important." He said reverently "I'll tell you what," the old man said. "You can have it when I'm through using it, if you want, but you gotta promise me one thing." "What's that grandpa?" The boy inquired. "Promise me that you'll never paint it." The old warrior replied. "I'd never do that Grandpa, that would be like painting the Statue of Liberty." A subtle smile crept up the corners of grandpa's face. "Now I think you understand son, I think you understand."

*Submitted by Lance Anderson, son of
Paul and Beryl Anderson.*

Thought For today:

"Life is made up of desires that seem big and vital one minute, and little and absurd the next. I guess we get what's best for us in the end."

-Alice Caldwell Rice, American humorist, (1870-1942)

MOVING??



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**

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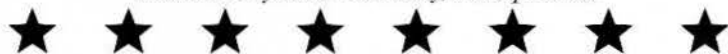
★ Is military duty really a job? ★

Senator Metzenbaum posed the following question to Senator Glenn: "How can you run for the United States Senate when you've never held a real "job"?"

Senator Glenn replied: "I served 23 years in the United States Marine Corps. I served through two wars. I flew 149 missions. My plane was hit by anti-aircraft fire on 12 different occasions. I was in the space program. It wasn't my checkbook; it was my life on the line. It was not a nine to five job where I took time off to take the daily cash receipts to the bank. I ask you to go with me...as I went the other day to a Veterans Hospital and look those men with their mangled bodies in the eye and tell them they didn't hold a job.

You go with me to the space program and go as I have gone to the widows and orphans of Ed White and Gus Grissom and Roger Chaffe and you look those kids in the eye and tell them that their dad didn't hold a job. You go with me on Memorial Day coming up and you stand in Arglington National Cemetery, where I have more friends than I'd like to remember and you watch those waving flags. You stand there, and you think about this nation, and you tell me that those people didn't have a job. I'll tell you, Howard Metzenbaum, you should be on your knees every day of your life thanking God that there were some men - SOME MEN - who held a job. And they required a dedication to purpose and a love of country and a dedication to duty that was more important than life itself. And their self-sacrifice is what made this country possible. I have held a job, Howard!"

*From the American Legion Forty and Eight newsletter
Submitted by John Doronsky, 7th squadron*



OUT RANKED

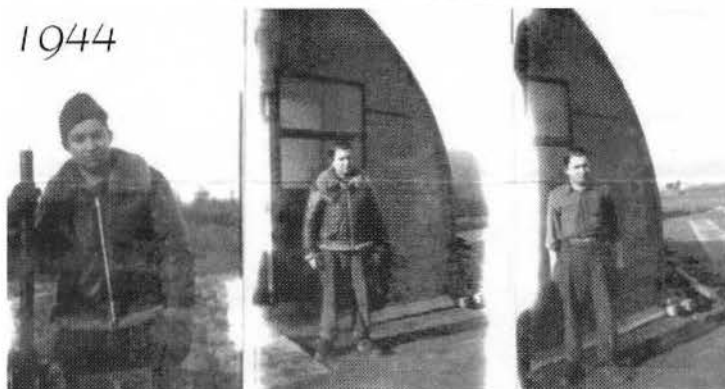
Having just moved into his new office, a recently promoted Air Force colonel was sitting at his desk when an airman knocked on the door. Wanting to look busy, the colonel quickly picked up the phone, told the airman to enter, then spoke into the phone: "Yes, general, I'll be seeing him this afternoon, and I'll pass along your message. In the meantime, thank you for your good wishes, sir".

Then he looked up to the young enlistee and said, "What do you want?"

"Nothing important sir," the airman replied. "I'm just here to hook up your telephone."

Then & Now

1944



William J. Orton

1446 Ordnance S. & M. Co. 34th Bomb Group H



'43 Incident in France

One of our members alerted me to an article in the July 7, 2003 edition of "The New York Times" newspaper. The article is about an incident that took place in France on July 4th, 1943 during World War II. On that day, B-17's from the 368th Bombardment Group left their base to bomb Nazi munitions plants in and around LeMans, France a city some two hours drive southwest of Paris.

One of the B-17's took a direct hit from ground fire and exploded, spiraling down and crashing in a ball of fire. Miraculously, the tail gunner, a Sergeant Butcher, was ejected, unconscious, from the wreckage as the tail section was severed from the fuselage. He came to several hundred feet from the ground when he pulled the ripcord and landed in the village of Poille-sur-Vegre.

Fortunately for Sgt. Butcher, the first villagers he saw after landing were members of the French Resistance who took him into hiding. The Germans searched the aircraft but since they only found nine bodies they knew there was another one since at that time they knew a B-17 carried 10 crewmen. However, they never found Sgt. Butcher who was hidden for eight months' clandestine stay in a dozen Resistance houses. They then made arrangements for him to hike across the Pyrenees to Spain and safety.

The villagers, many of whom were teen-age kids at the time, endured the Nazi occupation and celebrated the Allied victory in 1945. Two years after the war they erected a "Monument America", near the crash site, to commemorate the miracle of Sergeant Butcher's survival and the tragedy of other American lives ruined or lost in the War. This year, the road near where the monument stand, was renamed "Route De La FORTERESSE VOLANTE" or Route of the Flying Fortress.

Every year the village celebrates the Fourth of July. In 1984 the Resistance alumni, quite unexpectedly, reconnected with Mr. Butcher through a French exchange student whose airfare was paid by the Poille-sur-Vegre villagers. They have been in contact ever since.

Mr. Butcher who was too frail to attend the ceremony this year but spoke on telephone. The guest of honor this year was the sister of the plane's pilot. Also present was the son of the people who built the monument and were tortured and interned as a result of helping Sgt. Butcher.

As for the strained French-American relations resulting from the Iraq war, speakers seem to echo the sentiment expressed by Mr. Butcher when he said "I love those people."

The mayors assessment was perhaps the most elegantly put: "Despite our governments' divergent ideas, the French people remember with gratitude that it is to the American that we owe our freedom."



Freedom Isn't Free!!!!

I watched the flag pass by one day,
It fluttered in the breeze.
A young Marine saluted it,
And then he stood at ease.

I looked at him in uniform
So young, so tall, so proud,
With hair cut square and eyes alert
He'd stood out in any crowd.

I thought how many men like him
Had fallen through the years.
How many died on foreign soil
How many mothers' tears.

How many pilots' planes shot down?
How many died at sea
How many foxholes were soldiers' graves?
No, freedom isn't free.

I heard the sound of Taps one night,
When everything was still,
I listened to the bugler play
And felt a sudden chill.

I wondered just how many times
That Taps had meant "Amen,"
When a flag had draped a coffin,
Of a brother or a friend.

I thought of all the children,
Of the mothers and the wives,
Of fathers, sons and husbands
With interrupted lives.

I thought about a graveyard
At the bottom of the sea
Of unmarked graves in Arlington,
No, freedom isn't free.

Enjoy Your Freedom
and God Bless Our Troops.

FRIENDS WRITE

RICHARD MERKLEY - AMERICAN FORK, UT

I am sad to report that my father, Floyd Merkley, passed away on October 19, 2002. Dad was 89 years of age and would have been 90 on May 10 of this year.

Besides his wife and family, his college football days and his service during WWII were his most treasured and most talked about memories. Dad attended BYU on a football scholarship from 1931 to 1935, graduating with a degree in Business Management. It was not "cool" to keep newspaper clippings of one's accomplishments in those days so we have only his recollections of his football experiences. But, an Idaho journalist who was a student at BYU, at that time, wrote that he was the "Steve Young of the '30's for BYU."

It was his speed afoot that saved his life when a bomber crashed at Mendlesham Air Base as recorded in the book "Eighth Air Force Bomber Stories" by Ian McLachlan and Russell J. Zorn. His retelling of this story and of many other experiences he had while serving in the Army Air Corps created in me a fascination for aviation and I eventually served 7 years as a pilot in the U.S. Navy and am now flying commercially.

Please know that I hold my father and the men he served with in the highest regard for their service rendered in the Great WWII. I wish you all associated with the 34th Bomb Group Association fair wind and a following sea (it's the Navy tradition to do so). Your publication was always heartily received by Dad and read thoroughly several times.

OLGA M GRENDZINSKI - MIAMI, FL

Enclosed are the dues for 2002-2003. My husband is in poor health but he still likes to read and receive the Voice of the 34th Bomb Group.

Sorry I forgot to send them before.

DANIEL STALEY - PEORIA, AZ

Here is my check for the 2003 dues for the 34th Bomb Group Assn. Please, keep the Mendlesham Memories coming.

My crew (John Hopper, pilot) arrived in England and was assigned to the 34th after VE day. Consequently, we flew no missions, except one - a POW run to Linz, Austria.

BLAINE HANEK - MADISON, WI

Thank you for sending the 34th Bomb Group magazine. I enjoy it very much.

Sincerely, Blaine Hanek, Ken Clark's crew 98th Bomb Group, 415 Bomb Sqd. 15th Air Force.

BILLIE LOGAN - COLORADO SPRINGS, CO

Enclosed you will find a check in the amount of \$20.00 to pay membership dues for the years 2003 and 2004. Please continue to send us copies of Mendlesham Memories.

BIRGIT LONERGAN - FORT MYERS, FL

Received the June issue of MM and always enjoy reading it, but sure hate to see the taps list grow. Appreciated the list of former reunions and fun to discover I had been to most of them while husband Ed was alive.

Will not be joining you in San Antonio, as I have been there many times, but hope to join you all again at a future date. I'm still angry at myself for not attending Savannah, but that is history.

Everyone is to be commended for the wonderful job they do. I have so many wonderful memories of the 34th, which took us to places we might never have visited. I miss you all.

MALCOLM "TED" BLOMQUIST - PALOS HILLS, IL

Great to get your e-mail and be brought up to date on what's what with the 34th and MM. Not quite sure what my status is in regards to "doos" but am enclosing a \$20.00 check and hope that will bring me back into the fold.

Have been to San Antonio and it is a wonderful place for the reunion. Loved the River Walk. Sorry that I won't be able to attend due to problems on the home front, but my heart will be with you all. God Bless and take care. So far we are still on the topside of the divot.

ARTHUR BUSSE - ANAHEIM, CA

Enclosed is my check for 2003 34th BGA dues. I'm sure I haven't paid for this year. The June newsletter was the first for me in about a year. Thought the 34th Assn. went out of business. Glad that they haven't.

Hope to attend the reunion. Will see you there.

ALICE PAWLOSKI - DUNKIRK, NY

Enclosed are the dues for 2003. I am a widow of Al Pawloski for almost 12 years. I enjoy reading Mendlesham Memories. Keep up these little news items.

EILEEN ANDERSON - WADENA, MN

Here's our dues for '03 and '04. I know we were past due but our memory isn't what it used to be. We are both in really pretty good health after all Ken's problems of 5 years ago. He turned 80 in March and I'll be there in September. We'll have a 60th wedding anniversary in February. We married when Ken was at Blythe.

We both enjoy Mendlesham Memories.

Don't think we'll make the reunion but would love to visit San Antonio once more.

JUANITA SANTAS - DUNEDIN, FL

This is something that is very hard for me to talk about but Verne passed away night before last. The cancer had spread and spread very fast. He didn't have pain, thank God, but he was failing each day. I miss him so much and wish I could have gone with him!! In fact, I am with him, and he will always be in my heart - with me every minute.

BOB DAVIS - HUNTSVILLE, AL

We were young - once.

June 1945 - R&R at Miami Beach



Bob and Zoe Davis - Leslie Holt & wife

Leslie Holt in the above photo was a happy and interesting young man. He flew 25 missions prior to 1945. He volunteered and flew 25 more missions with us in 1945.

Thanks again for help with the Giardini article two years ago.

BILL YOTHMENT - CROWN POINT, IN

The last issue of Mendlesham Memories alerted me to the fact that I have not paid my '03 dues for which I deserve at least ten lashes! My-o-my where does the time go?

Hope this finds you in good health and good spirits and if all goes well between now and September, I may see you in San Antone.

Check for dues enclosed.

ROY FRAZIER - LAWRENCEBURG, TN

I have lost contact with this group. I was in the 34th Bomb Group, 7th squadron as an airborne radar counter measure to jam the enemy radar over Europe.

I am glad I was able to serve in some capacity, especially in this group.

I attended the first reunion in 1984 in Nashville, Tennessee. I plan to attend this reunion in San Antonio. Being 80 years old makes plans uncertain.

CYNTHIA K. KNOWLES - BALTIMORE, MD

"Honor My Father"

"Life of the party, scrappy fellow, an honorable man, these are but a few phrases used by Dad, (Bill) C. Huber's friends and family to describe him during his lifetime. He served 6 years in the armed forces. Starting out in the National Guard, moving on to join the Army Air Corps. His tour of duty during WWII consisted of 26 combat missions and 6 unofficial missions. Dad and his crew dropped food to the starving Dutch towards the end of war. According to his war diary, they were angered when "the Krauts just won't respect the truth" long enough for them to drop the load. He also reenlisted after WWII and spent some time overseas during the Korean War.

One of the best days of dad's life was when he retired after 32 years of service to the City of Baltimore, rising through the ranks

to the proud status of Civil Engineer II. One of the worst days was when he witnessed "a fort gets its' wing shot off and it then crashed into another one and both went down. Nobody got out," it was awful."

Many days have transpired between the best and worst days of his life. These days, to his family and friends, were memorable days.

Like most WWII veterans, dad was very humble about what he did. "I was doing my duty for my country" was the quote heard most when asked about his time in the military. He didn't consider himself a hero and would bristle when the word was mentioned with his name. "I did what I was told to do," he would say - but I know better. He gave more mentally and physically than could ever be quantified.

Towards the end of my father's life, he would reminisce about his service days. My sister, Frances, and I learned more about dad during this time than at any other point in our lives. We cherish all that he cared to share with us. He told of the good times with his flight crew and not so good times fighting "the Krauts". The crew became like a family to him; he loved and respected each one. We also learned even more about dad from his brother, Cleaveland and sister Jane. It was a tragic time for all of us, but it was also a time that we will cherish for the rest of our lives. We discovered so much more about dad's life in addition to all the medals that hung proudly on the wall of his home.

His love for his family transcends death - we feel his spirit with us every day and honor his memory. To all of you from the 8th Air Force, 34th Bomb Group, please, take a moment and honor my father too.



"BATTLIN BUTCH"

Bill Huber's B-17

IRV LEVY - PHOENIX, AZ

Please accept the enclosed check to help with the cost of the Mendlesham Memories.

Altho I am a lifetime member I feel I could contribute more to keep the publication coming.

I also would like to commend you and all the officers and board of directors who are so active in keeping the 34th together.

I enjoy receiving the MM and wish you all good health and be blessed to continue the good work.

ED - Bless you brother!!

CHANGE OF ADDRESS

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ATKIN	WILLIARD, S	391	646 W NAOMI AVE	ARCADIA	CA	91007
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MANERO	ANGELO	7	23 BLOSSOM SQ	HOLDEN	MA	01520
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TAPS

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BELL	ROBERT E	391LM	01-22-03	148 TURLOCK WAY	HAYWARD	CA	94544
BROSOVICH	JOSEPH	475 SD	10-29-00	1950 LOWRIE ST	PITTSBURGH	PA	15212
CLEMINIS	JAMES, A	391LM	05-01-03	2820 NORWOOD DR	RACINE	WI	53403
HUBER	STEINER, C	391	06-09-03	6904 OLD HARFORD RD.	BALTIMORE	MD	21234
MERKLEY	FLOYD, R	4HDQ	10-19-02	421 E 400TH ST	AMERICAN FORK	UT	84003
ROSE	EVERETT, M	7LM	07-18-03	PO BOX 472	OCEAN PARK	WA	98604
SANTAS	VERNE, F	4	07-13-03	1415 MAIN ST #159	DUNEDIN	FL	34698
WANFRIED	HAROLD	18	08-30-01	9141 SPRING BRANCH CT.,	CHARLESTON	SC	29406

NEW MEMBERS

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LEED	FREDERICK, S		460 WASHINGTON AVE	PITTSBURGH	PA	15228

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C. EDWARD HAYES, JR
AMBERS HANSEN

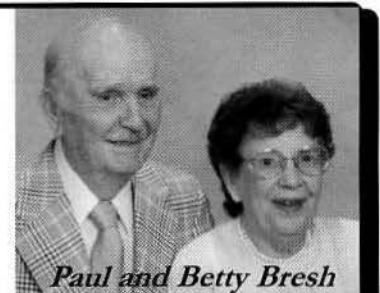
60TH Wedding Anniversary

Congratulations to Paul and Betty Bresh of Fort Myers, FL. Married in 1943 in

Taylorsville, Illinois, Paul and Betty celebrated their 60th wedding anniversary on

July 6th, 2003.

Congratulations, Paul and Betty, from the members of the 34th Bomb Group Association (H) on this memorable occasion.



Paul and Betty Bresh

In the Dust of September

In the dust of September
Where the flag still flies
And the fire fighters
Who are still saving lives, lie

In the dust of September
We might be in pain
But now we are reunited
With much more to gain

In the dust of September
Where the families were lost
But the heroes that saved the day
And did not quit because
They knew the cost

In the dust of September
Where the heroes lie
The people joined unitedly
To hear their burning cry

In the dust of September
The Marines are now fighting
The Seals helping
The great country of America

In the dust of September
The children are cheering
The retired veterans are crying
For the men and women, who are dying
To fight, for the freedom, ignited
In the dust, of September

*- Jennifer Ericksen, 12 years old
Granby, CT
(Her dad was a Marine)*



Jack Share

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

34th Bomb Group



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

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