



# ENDLESHAM MEMORIES



VOICE OF THE 34TH BOMB GROUP (H)



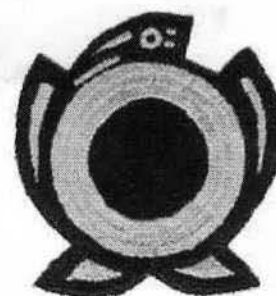
4TH SQUADRON



7TH SQUADRON



18TH SQUADRON



391ST SQUADRON



Al Escort Service

[www.wtv-zone.com/Mary/thewrongarmy.html](http://www.wtv-zone.com/Mary/thewrongarmy.html)

## MENDLESHAM MEMORIES

Newsletter of

**The 34th 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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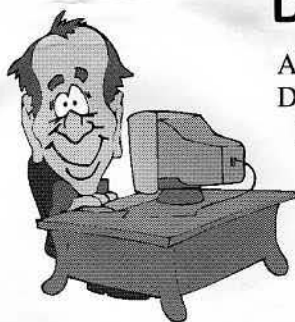
[www.air-museum.org/b17.htm](http://www.air-museum.org/b17.htm)

<http://members.tripod.com/valortovictory/index.html>

## DEADLINE

All material and items for the December, 2006 issue of Mendlesham Memories should reach me on or before October 15, 2006. All copy will be going to the publisher on that date.

Jack Share, editor



## DUES REMINDER



**Annual Dues Have Been  
Increased to \$20.00**



At the recent reunion of the 34th Bomb Group Association in Albuquerque, New Mexico, the membership voted to increase the annual dues to \$20.00.

Your dues are payable on January 1st of each year. Please submit your payment to our new treasurer:

**Jack Steffen  
6670 Powner Farm Dr.  
Cincinnati, OH 45248  
(513) 574-1171**

Thank you for your help in guaranteeing the continuance of the Association and this publication, Mendlesham Memories.



# Share - a thought...

Jack Share



Every year at reunion time I look back and reflect on how and why the 34<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group Association has managed to stay afloat all these years. Prior to my getting involved in the organization, I took many things for granted and wrongly supposed that good things just happen. I soon learned that good, caring people, who devote a good share of their lives, are responsible for maintaining the status quo of any successful and long enduring organization such as ours.

Through the years, many individuals who have contributed to our success stand out above the rest. Of course, we are indebted to all our past presidents, Board of Directors, officers, the members who have served on the various committees and all who attend our reunion.

In recognizing a few, we must go back to the beginning and the name of Grady Detheredge comes to mind. Grady was the one individual responsible for starting the organization from the grass roots level back in 1978. Grady has since passed on. Then Ray Summa took control and, along with his wife Hanna, maintained all functions of the group and developed it into a viable and stable organization. As the membership grew, responsibilities grew also and it became too much for the Summa's to maintain. Ely Baldea stepped up and assumed the role as editor of the newsletter which was named "Mendlesham Memories". Hal Province volunteered to become the treasurer and corresponding secretary. These two men held these positions for over 14 years before relinquishing them due to ill health. Ray, Ely and Hal have since passed to the great beyond.

But above all the ones responsible for maintaining the interest of the members and their families has been the Reunion Committee. For 23 years this group has successfully planned, promoted and participated in the annual reunions. Back in 1982, Gerry Pine, Harold Rutka and Bob Wright met at an 8<sup>th</sup> Air Force Historical Society reunion and decided that the 34<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group should have their own reunions and, along with their wives, Wanda Pine, Genevieve Rutka and Esther Wright, have been planning them every year since - for 23 years. Is that dedication or what? Gerry Pine passed away a few years ago and Bruce Sothern has since joined the group.

To all those who have contributed their time and effort in making the 34<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group Association so successful we commend and thank you one and all.



# PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



It's hot, rainy and humid in my part of North Carolina! The grass is growing faster than I can "eat" it! Reunion time is on the fast track and Jack wants my input to the MM last week.

My term as your president is just about up and I am going to miss all those "perks"! Funny how you can get so "entangled" in the everyday workings of this office and forget all the little things that the people have to put up with.

A few weeks ago I sat down and wrote my column for MM and tried to beat the deadline and help Jack out and make his job easier - well, guess what? It got lost in "cyberspace"! Or maybe my "staff" screwed up! Or maybe it's just old age! You know - you think you did but you didn't.

I can only pray that our reunion at Rapid City is as nice as the last one and that you all are able to make it.

Looking forward to our meeting in Rapid City.

President,  
Kivett Ivey

## SPECIAL POEM FOR SENIOR CITIZENS!!

A row of bottles on my shelf  
caused me to analyze myself.

One yellow pill I have to pop  
goes to my heart so it won't stop.

A little white one that I take,  
goes to my hands so they won't shake.

The blue ones that I use a lot,  
tell me I'm happy when I'm not.

The purple pill goes to my brain  
and tells me that I have no pain.

The capsules tell me not to wheeze,  
or cough or choke or even sneeze.

The red ones, smallest of them all,  
go to my blood so I won't fall.

The orange ones, very big and bright,  
prevent my leg cramps in the night.

Such an array of brilliant pills,  
helping to cure all kinds of ills.

But what I'd really like to know...  
is what tells each one where to go.

# Reunion Committee Report

Welcome to all the members of the 34th Bomb Group (H) Association. As was reported in the June 2006 issue of Mendlesham Memories, the dates for this years reunion in Rapid City, South Dakota are August 30th to September 3rd. The hotel where we will be staying is the Best Western Ramkota Hotel and Conference center, 2111 N. La Crosse St, 57701. The telephone number is 605-343-8550 and the rate has been confirmed at \$60.00 per night with a \$6.80 tax for a total of \$66.80. These special rates are being offered for three days prior to and 3 days following the reunion dates.

This will be the 23rd annual reunion of the 34th Bomb Group Association and it was decided at last years reunion in Albuquerque to have two more making a grand total of 25 reunions.

The Best Western Hotel and Conference Center reservation form, the reunion registration form and the reunion agenda appeared in the June 2006 issue of Mendlesham Memories. We hope you have submitted those forms to Bob Wright.

Our coach tour on Friday, 1 September 2006 has been arranged through American Tours West. The tour will start from the hotel at 9:00 AM. Following a visit to historic Mount Rushmore, we will have lunch, non hosted, at the site. After which we will depart for Bear Country, USA and Rapid City. Returning to the hotel by 4:00 PM.

Complimentary shuttle service will be provided from Rapid City Regional Airport to the hotel, a distance of 12 miles. The airport is the commercial hub for the Black Hills and is served by Allegiant, Northwest, Sky West-Delta Connection and United Express.

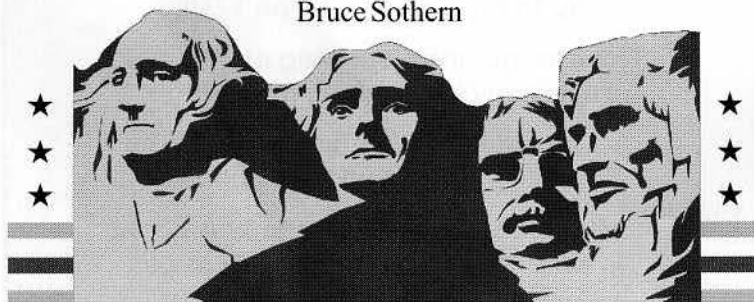
For your information, I-90, U.S. highways 14 and 16 and State highway 79 provide surface road accessibility.

Across the street from the hotel is The Rushmore Mall with its 110 stores, anchored by JC Penny, Sears, Herberger's and Target. Rapid City is close to many of the most intriguing and beautiful attractions in America including the inspirational Mt. Rushmore National Memorial and The Black Hills National Forest with its abundant wildlife and Black Hills Gold found in many jewelry shops and outlets through out the city.

The reunion will provide a wonderful opportunity to meet old friends and make new ones. We wish you all good health and hope to see you all again at our 23rd annual reunion in Rapid City.

Many thanks again to all who help make our reunions so successful.

The Reunion Committee  
Harold Rutka, Chairman  
Robert Wright  
Bruce Sothorn



# Treasurer's Report

I hope that everyone had an enjoyable summer. Thanks to the steady flow of dues payments from members, our group is in good financial condition. We continue to pay our bills without using long-term cash reserves.

As a reminder, the annual dues amount for 2006 is \$20, the same as for 2005. The \$10 special assessment paid by life members in 2005 has not been continued for 2006. Elsewhere in this issue is the address for sending annual dues payment to me. Please make your check payable to the **"34<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group Association"**.

As I mentioned in the last issue of Mendlesham Memories, some members include personal notes with their dues payments. I forward these notes to Jack Share, who publishes many of them in the newsletter. It is a great way to let your friends and others know what is new with you. Please send updates to either Jack Share or me at any time.

This is a great group. Thanks for your continuing support.

Jack Steffen,  
Treasurer



## Information Requests:

During World War II, flying from Mendlesham, the 34<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group had under command a number of attached units, such as,

**Air Service Group, Sub-Depot, MP Platoon, Chemical Warfare Co, QM Service Group, Station Complement Squadron, Finance Section, Fire Fighter Squadron, Ordnance Service and Maintenance Co., Medical Dispensary.**

These units had a number which I would like to have. I have a copy of the 34<sup>th</sup> book that was published shortly after the war's end, but this data is not included., nor are they in the films at Maxwell AFB with the history of the 34<sup>th</sup> BG. I have consulted many websites related to the Group with no luck.

I would, therefore, be most grateful if someone in the organization could provide me with this information. THANK YOU, in advance.

John A Hey MBE  
12, A.v.d. Leeuwstraat  
7552 HS Hengelo  
The Netherlands

\*\*\*\*\*

I'm trying to trace my grandfather. He was stationed at Mendlesham Air Base in England during World War II. His name was **Sgt Harry D. Lambert**. I'm not sure if he is still alive. All I'm after is a picture of him for my mother as she never saw him. Any information on how and where to look for this kind of information would be gratefully received.

Please contact me by my e-mail - [tray01@hotmail.com](mailto:tray01@hotmail.com)

Yours sincerely,  
Mrs. Tracey Parsley.





**The P.C.C. of St. Mary the Virgin,  
Mendlesham**

Vicar: Revd. Philip. T. Gray

26 June 2006

Letter to the Editor.

I am sure you will be pleased to know that for the first time the Mendlesham School attended a Remembrance service in church on 11th November to commemorate those fallen in the war. Candles were lit for each of the 190 Americans whose names are always remembered at the monthly requiem.

Since it was presented to us, the American flag is always placed over the chantry book commemorating the American fallen during this month of remembrance.

In view of our long association we hope your readers would wish to be associated with our appeal to re-roof the church tower. The project is costing £160,000 sterling and as those of you have visited us will know, as a very rural parish we have few houses to call on to raise this amount.

We wonder whether you would be prepared to mount an appeal on our behalf with a closing date of March 2007.

Any help you can give would be appreciated. Over many years we have cherished the beautiful medieval church we have inherited and all that it has meant to those living and working in this area, but the cost of its upkeep is high. It is obvious that in the past your members have also cherished their association with Mendlesham and its church. Can you help us now?

Yours in Christ,

Revd. Philip. T. Gray  
Vicar of Mendlesham

**BROOK HOUSE, COTTON, STOWMARKET, SUFFOLK. Ip14 4QS**  
**Tel: 01449-781387**

June 29, 2006

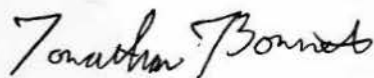
Jonathan Bonnet  
135 Aspen Woods  
Springboro, OH 45066

Dear 34<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group,

Hi, this is Jonathan Bonnet (the 34<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group Association Scholarship winner from two years ago), and I was just sending a letter to give you an update on my academic progress. First of all, I am still very grateful for the scholarship that I was awarded by you, and the prize money has really helped me out in paying for all of the expenses that college brings. I am still at The Ohio State University in Columbus, Ohio, and I've finished my second year. I have completed my Pre-Medicine requirements, and in my junior year I will begin course work for my major Exercise Science (which I declared last quarter officially). I am hoping to take the MCAT this April for Medical School. Academically, I am very happy with my progress and grades. Although I did very well my Freshman year, my Sophomore year was even better. I was able to get straight A's in all of my classes this year to raise my cumulative GPA by 0.02 points from 3.95 to 3.97. I am particularly proud of this because I had to take some fairly difficult courses this year including the Physics series, two Honors Biology classes, the whole Organic Chemistry series, as well as many other required classes. This was also done while taking almost twice the usual number of classes.

Although my academics have taken up a large portion of my time, I still find time for other activities at OSU as well. I was lucky enough to be elected the Vice President of the Psychology club, and also the Junior Vice President of the Exercise Science club. I am also involved in the cheering club at Ohio State called Block O and participate in countless intramural sports including football, soccer, volleyball, and softball. Additionally, I participated in my first 5K race that was sponsored by the College of Human Ecology at OSU, and surprisingly I won the race with a time of 18:54. Another somewhat overlooked accomplishment that means a lot to me is the volunteer work I did with the Rock the Block campaign as well as being inducted into the relatively exclusive Chimes Honorary at OSU. Even though I have a lot of things going on, I am absolutely loving my time at OSU. Time goes by very quickly when you are having fun. I am trying to do everything I can to get the most out of my time at OSU. So this is where I am at now. I hope to continue with the success I have had on my journey toward Medical School, and I would like to sincerely thank all of you for the support you have given me.

Many Thanks,



Jonathan Bonnet

## PX Order Form

AUTO WINDOW STICKER - 2"X4" BLACK AND SILVER

VET: WWII US ARMY AIR CORPS .....\$4.00 EACH - OR - 3 FOR \$10.00

(NO SHIPPING CHARGES ON THIS ITEM)

REPRINT OF 34TH B.G. HISTORY BOOK, 1947 edition, EDWIN S. SMITH .....\$37.50ea.

PERMANENT NAME TAGS ( First and last names & Sqdn. No) .....\$10.00ea.

LICENSE PLATE HOLDER (2 for \$5.00) .....\$3.00ea.

LICENSE PLATE - White with blue logo. Print same as several years ago.....\$10.00ea.

PATCHES - 34TH BOMB GROUP "VALOR TO VICTORY" .....\$5.00ea.

PATCHES - SQUADRON - 4th - 7th - 18th - 391st and Eighth Air Force.....\$5.00ea.

DECAL - VALOR TO VICTORY - 5" X 5" .....\$1.50ea.

BUMPER STICKER- 34TH B.G.- 3" X 12" .....\$1.50ea.

HAT PINS (FOR DECOR) B-24 - B-17 or POW .....\$3.50ea.

WINGS - (about 2") -PILOT - BOMBARDIER - NAVIGATOR - GUNNER OR FLIGHT ENGR .....\$4.00ea.

WINGS (about 1") .....\$3.00ea.

TIE TACK - 4TH - 7TH - 18TH - 391ST Sqnds and 8th Air Force.....\$ 4.00ea.

BALL POINT PEN (retractable) DK. BLUE W/GOLD LETTERS (34TH BG, 8THAF) .....\$ 2.00ea.

VIDEO TAPE 58 mins. ( " Start Your Engines + 50Years").....\$19.95ea.

MEN'S POLO SHIRT W/POCKET AND 34TH B.G. Logo ( Hunter Green & Cobblestone Biege)

M. LR. XLR. XXLR .....\$25.95ea.

MEN'S POLO SHIRT ( White W/ Logo -no pocket) X Large only .....\$22.00ea.

CAP - ROYAL BLUE or NAVY w Patriotic flag on bill .....\$8.50ea.

NEW ITEM (First shown @ San Antonio Reunion:

WHITE T-SHIRT W/POCKET & LOGO OF BOTH B-17 & B-24 ON FRONT & BACK - Picture on back shows

our bright red rudder. Nice for warm weather & very colorful .....All Sizes \$12 each or 2 for \$22.00.

KEYRING - B-17, B-24 or 8th Air Force .....\$4.00ea.

KEYRING with leather back.....\$6.00ea.

BOLO TIE - B-17 OR B-24 or 8th Air Force .....\$6.00ea.

BOLO TIE with Mother of Pearl background .....\$10.00ea.

BELT BUCKLE "America's Heritage - The Right to Bear Arms" .....\$8.50ea.

SWEATSHIRT (good quality) colorful logo on front "PROUD TO BE A VETERAL" S, L, XL, OR XXL .....\$20.00ea.

- PLEASE CIRCLE ITEMS DESIRED -

AND INCLUDE YOUR TELEPHONE NUMBER WITH EACH ORDER  
(sometimes needed for clarification)

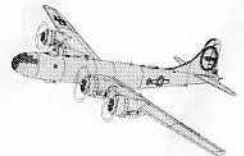
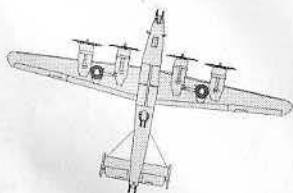
THANK YOU FOR YOUR ORDER

Please add

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

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Wichita, KS 67206  
Tel: (316) 683-2900  
e-mail: kenpaxton@sbcglobal.net



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



# The Letter From Holland

One of the rewards for those still flying combat missions when the war with Germany was winding down was the great satisfaction they received out of delivering food to the starving people of Holland. After months of day after day of flying perilous missions, their world changed completely when the food drops began and their stressful lives as aerial combatants suddenly became aerial humanitarians.

Through the years we have published numerous letters from people in Holland thanking the 34<sup>th</sup> for saving their lives but the letter we recently received from one of our members had a unique twist.

William J. Donlon from Bokeelia, Florida was a radar operator flying with the 18<sup>th</sup> squadron of the 34<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group in late April, 1945. On the 29<sup>th</sup> of the month the crews were called for a briefing, later in the day than normally. They were told that the mission would be a low level run over Holland to drop food parcels and that they would not (hopefully) be shot at.

What they witnessed upon arriving over Holland was a sight to behold. People everywhere, on the street and on the roofs of houses. American and Holland flags were seen everywhere. Roofs were decorated with colorful sheets and blankets. People waving frantically.

Bill Donon and several other airmen wrote their names and home addresses on tags and attached them to the parcels prior to dropping them.

Exactly one year from the first food drop, April 29<sup>th</sup>, 1946, Bill received a letter postmarked Holland. Upon opening it he found that it was from a A. Koppen telling that he and his friends were on the ground that day and found Bill's name and address in one of the parcels and wanted him to know that the Allied food drops would never be forgotten.

As so often happened, after we all returned home from the war we became pre-occupied with the problems involved in resuming our civilian lives and our wartime experiences were put on the back burner. So it was with Bill Donlon as he returned to school to finish his legal education that was interrupted by the war.

In 1962 Bill was chosen for a government study program that sent him to Europe and Holland was on the list of countries to

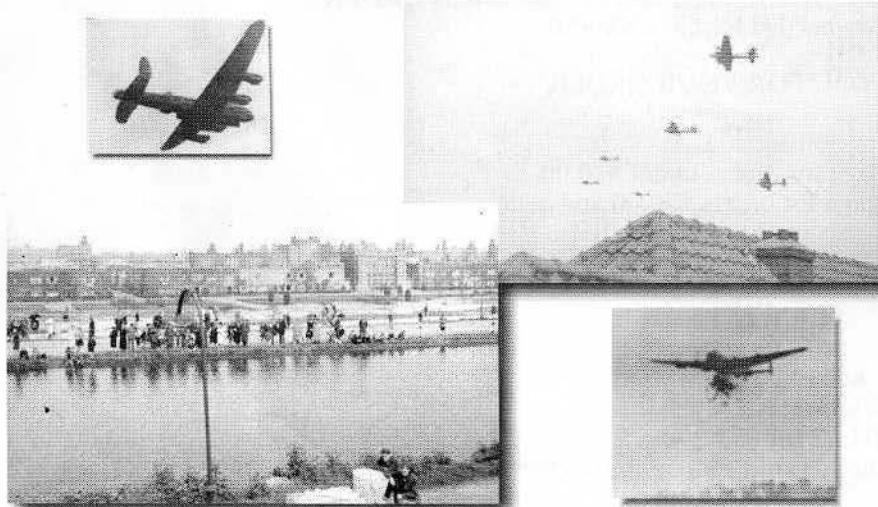
visit. Thus his memory was jogged and he was reminded of those days 17 years ago in the skies over Holland. Prior to leaving, he packed the letter from A. Koppen with the intent of finding him and answering his letter in person.

Mr Koppen, it turned out, no longer resided at the address on the letter. However, one of the people in the group overheard him talking about it and, unbeknown to Bill, began a search for Mr. Koppen.

On the last day of their visit to Amsterdam, they were entertained at a reception and, although Bill didn't realized it, it was in his honor for his role in the American food drops in World War II. The press was there, being previously advised of the letter, which they published in the newspaper. Mr. Koppen learned of the article in the paper and arrangements were made for the two men to meet the next day. That day being Sunday the meeting would take place over a cup of coffee just prior to Bill's departure.

Although this was their first face to face meeting, the years apparently had not dampened the bond that existed between them. Mr. Koppen told how he was a member of the underground during the war and had to hide in a chimney for several days as he was on the German wanted list. He stressed the hardships that the people of the Netherlands had received at the hands of the Germans during the '44-'45 time frame. As the two separated to return to their private lives, Mr Koppen, once again, thanked the Americans for their assistance.

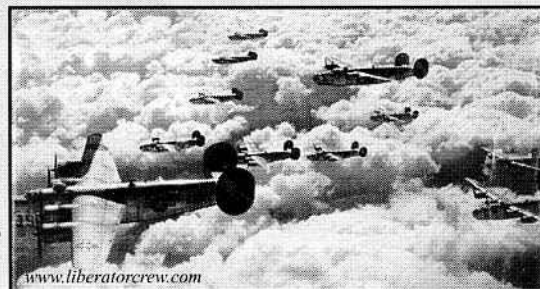
Bill Donlon had finally answered Mr. Koppen's letter - personally.







# The Old B-17 vs. B-24 Debate



*This column was sent to me by our Archivist, Gary Ferrell prior to his untimely death. - Editor*

Working with the history of the 34<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group, I've found that this group could sustain a pretty lively B-24 vs. B-17 debate among it's members. It seems the 34<sup>th</sup> switched between these two types of airplanes no less than SIX different times in the course of its WWII existence.

The 34<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group was activated January 15<sup>th</sup>, 1941 at Langley Field, VA where they flew a few B-17's, probably early E models.

First Switch - On June 11<sup>th</sup>, 1941 they ferried four B-17's to their new station at Westover, Field, MA where they switched to LB-30's before January, 1942 and also flew a few B-18 Bolos.

Second Swith - On January 22<sup>nd</sup>, 1942 the group left Westover, ferrying four LB-30's to their new station at Pendleton, OR. They left the few B-18's and PT-17's behind at Westover. On February 12<sup>th</sup>, 1942 the group received 17 B-17's and as more B-17's arrived the LB 30's were sent off to a sub-depot.

Third Switch - In May, 1942 all of the groups B-17's were sent off one by one to various theaters of operation and the 34<sup>th</sup> was left without any planes. Finally, four of the B-17's formerly used at Westover were brought back to equip the group but in June, 1942 they began using B-24's.

Fourth Switch - On July 4<sup>th</sup>, 1942 the group arrived at its new station at Geiger Field, Ephrata, WA with its B-24's. On September 1<sup>st</sup>, 1942 the group provided a full cadre for the organization of the 88<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group which took the B-24's. On that same day the first B-17's arrived at Geiger for use by the 34<sup>th</sup> for training.

Fifth Switch - The group continued to fly B-17's through a short stint at Ephrata and for a short time at Blythe, CA, where they arrived in December, 1942. Sometime between April 26<sup>th</sup> and May 12<sup>th</sup>, 1943, they again switched back to B-24's which they continued to fly through the remaining time of stateside training. The group deployed to England in April, 1944 with B-24's which they flew in combat from May 23<sup>rd</sup> to August 24<sup>th</sup>, 1944.

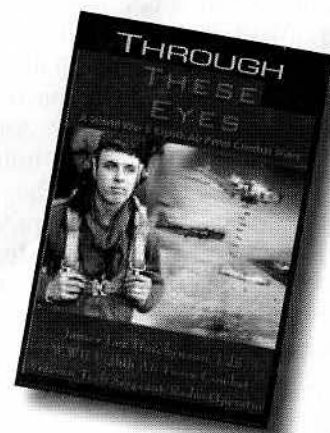
Sixth Switch - On September 17<sup>th</sup>, 1944 the group standardized on the B-17G which they flew through the remainder of the war.

Anyone out there know of a group that switched mounts more than the 34<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group did?

## NEW BOOK RELEASE:

"Through These Eyes: A World War II Eighth Air Force Combat Diary" details a young man's life growing up in the hills of southern Illinois, during the great depression, through his tour with the "Mighty Eighth". The author, James Lee Hutchinson, now 80, was one of the 16 million young men and women called to military service by Uncle Sam more than a century ago. His combat service with the 490<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group in England as a teenage radio operator on a B-17 Flying Fortress interspersed with his frank, sometimes humorous and always riveting narrative are excerpts from his tour diary.

The book contains 336 pages including 40 WWII photos and is available from bookstores-author house.com, amazon.com. An autographed copy of the original diary, complete with Stars and Stripes articles may be obtained at - [jlhutch@localnet.com](mailto:jlhutch@localnet.com)



# ARSENAL OF DEMOCRACY

Excerpt from the book "AMERICA" by the late Alistair Cook.

As it appeared in newsletter of the 390th Bomb Group "FRAMILINGHAM TIMES".

That Sunday afternoon, breathless voice said over the radio, "One moment please," and then: "The Japanese have attacked Pearl Harbor, the United States Naval Base on Oahu Island in the Hawaiian Islands. The designation of "Oahu Island" instead of Honolulu" was a small recognition of our vague sense, in those far-off days, of Pacific geography. I suspect that not one American in a hundred, on that brilliantly sunny day, knew that Honolulu was the main base of the American Pacific Fleet.

Most Americans up to that moment thought of Japan as a remote Asiatic nuisance, a friend of Hitler that had invaded China and Indochina and was now under the heel of a fire-eating general, Tojo. Reading through interminable single-column dispatches in the New York Times, it was possible to learn that for some weeks Tojo and the Japanese military had been demanding consent to the expansion of the Japanese empire through Southeast Asia. But Pearl Harbor was a bolt out of the blue.

On 8th December 1941, Congress declared war on Japan, and the next day President Franklin D. Roosevelt held a press conference. We expected to see a drawn, grave figure, but he rattled on with his usual buoyancy about the speed-up in production, and a shortage of metals, and he was wryly amused at the protests of one reporter that the Army and Navy had given him the "the run-around." They pressed him on rumors that "a lot of leaves" had been granted at Pearl Harbor, and that "someone slept." Roosevelt blew a ruffle of smoke and smiled back. "How do I know? How do you know? How does the person reporting know?"

But he already knew what we would not until the going was good. The Pacific Fleet had been pulverized. Of the fleet's eight battleships, one was blown up, three sunk, four crippled, three destroyers gone, and 177 Army and Navy planes demolished on the ground. Perhaps Roosevelt's aplomb was not merely a brave cover-up for purposes of moral. Pearl Harbor was to him a political godsend. It deflated the isolationists with a single thrust. Only a year before Roosevelt had appeared before a great rally in his third presidential campaign and had given a promise that brought heart's ease to America mothers (and votes to Roosevelt). "I shall say it again and again - your boys are not going to be sent into any foreign wars." Well, there were no more questions of sending, or coaxing, American boys into foreign wars. This was an all-American war.

Disused American factories lit up like firecrackers. America became a continental workshop, and quite safe - as Lindbergh had said and could now bitterly recall - from aerial bombing. Of course, by the 1930's everybody knew ad nauseam that the Americans were the masters of mass production. But of what? And of what quality? Air Marshal Herman Goering assured Hitler that there was nothing to fear from American industry and technology. "The Americans," said Goering, "cannot build airplanes. They are very good at refrigerators and razor blades." Even friendly Europeans still harbored a strong prejudice against the products of the assembly line and a complementary prejudice in favor of high skill and craftsmanship.

I remember an optical plant in New Hampshire that, once America was in the war, received a contract for bombsights and the like. The place was suddenly flooded with semi-skilled

young workers, and the old men - most of them foreign born - were loud in their lamentations over the slaphappy indifference of the young to precision and discipline. But to their dismay, new molds were cast, the assembling was done by newcomers, the product was stamped out in abundance, and it worked.

In the countryside outside Detroit, Michigan there was a creek running through flat, sandy pastureland. Within six months of Pearl Harbor this bucolic scene had been transformed into what somebody called "the most enormous room in the history of man," half a mile long, (880 yards), a quarter of a mile wide (440 yards). Raw materials were fed in at one end and were disgorged, one hour later, at the other end in the shape of a finished bomber, which was plucked by another assembly line and moved out for immediate testing on an airfield. From this room, at Willow Run, there emerged 8,760 planes a year. It was astounding, but it was not enough for Roosevelt. In a high-flown moment he had publicly promised the Allies 60,000 planes a year, a foolish boast that Charles Lindbergh dismissed as "hysterical chatter." By the end of 1942 Roosevelt had missed his mark by only 12,000. The following year, 1943, American factories turned out 86,000 planes.



This starting orgy of mass production sent locomotives to Iran, trucks and tanks and aluminum to Russia, airplanes and ordnance and jeeps to every ally between Scotland and New Zealand. One year after Pearl Harbor the razor-blade manufacturer had outstripped the war production of Germany, and Japan and the forced labor (slave labor) of their conquered countries. Hitler and mechanized warfare together confronted Americans with the sort of challenge to which they respond like catapults: a dare to beat the unbeatable, to choke the world's champion with massive doses of his own medicine.

Productivity was not the only triumph. There was a challenge for Americans to show their inventiveness in a new situation. They sent men off into the desert with new infrared counters to scan the rocks for minerals in a hurry. They developed the specialty of "dehydration chemists", who compounded a candy bar that could keep a man sustained in the jungle for a couple of weeks. They set the Forest Products Laboratory in Madison, Wisconsin, to testing out airplane wings of sixteen-ply paper. They produced the Jeep and the first amphibious trucks. They tapped the cunning of an old Irishman down in New Orleans who had designed a maneuverable speedboat. He appeared in Washington with a blue print within forty-eight hours of the U.S. Navy's first request, and the bootlegger's secret weapon turned into a fleet of PT boats.

But shipping was another story. There was no miracle formulas available to the shipbuilders, who were suddenly called on to provide transport and supplies for the Atlantic and now, also,

*Continued on Page 11*



for the huge Pacific. The government kept insisting on a miracle, however, and got it in the shape of a lumbering, un-dramatic tub called a "Liberty Ship". In its final form it was a brainchild of Henry Kaiser, a bald bullfrog of a construction man who liked nothing better than the word of an expert that something couldn't be done. He had helped to build Boulder (now Hoover) Dam, on the Arizona-Nevada border, where the pouring of the concrete spillway put not outrageous strain on mountain ridges as firm as steel. But when he drew plans to build the Grand Coulee Dam up in the rainy Pacific Northwest he was warned by the U.S. Army engineers that before the concrete spillway could set, the soft mountainsides would crumble and send the Columbia River cascading death and destruction through the valley towns. Henry Kaiser received the official report, and, having learned how it couldn't be done, he settled down to do it. He built refrigeration tubes the width of city blocks and the height of a skyscraper, planted them in rows, froze the mountains, poured the spillway, removed the tubes, and saw the Columbia River flow docilely along the channel he had prescribed.

He had never built a ship before. When the Liberty Ships appeared they had no furnace plates, no emergency generators, no fire-detection devices. And as steel grew short they shortened the anchor chains. The crew, instead of being scattered below, lived in a single mid-ship house. But all the engine parts were interchangeable, and the sections were welded. These tubs were not intended as proud specimens of the shipbuilder's art - and Kaiser's rivals, among the old firms in New Orleans and San Francisco, were the first to shudder at them; they were great galumphing, seagoing improvisations and at the start some of them snapped and went to the bottom a thousand miles from the enemy.

I remember going into Kaiser's Richmond, shipyard in California. The place was laid out like a gigantic chessboard, with cranes hovering over head depositing parts, engines, and booms in alphabetically marked and numbered squares. Thirty thousand components, came in this way, and it was like something out of Disney: trolleys whizzing, and hooters honking and buzzing, a whole deckhouse moving to the ways upside down. It would then be upended while the welders descended on it like an army of woodpeckers. You would have a stem and then a keel and then part of a plate A-1 would be welded to A-2, and S-13 to S-14, and so on. The workers knew even less about shipbuilding than Kaiser. Only one in two hundred had ever been in a shipyard. Kaiser himself talked about the "front" and the "back" end of a ship. Roosevelt said: "I don't care what he calls them, provided he delivers." And he did. The first Liberty ship, built on the East Coast, took 245 days from assembly to launch. Kaiser's California shipyards got this down to a ship every four days.

The best thing about the Liberty Ships was their number. The early ones replenished the dwindling food stocks in Britain. The later ones replaced transport ships in the vast Pacific and offered the first guarantee of a continuous supply line across the English Channel - the missing link that made an Allied invasion of

Europe impracticable for two and half years.

This seemingly inexplicable delay in the mounting of a second front had enraged the Russians and depressed the British, whose populations had little or no understanding of the vast scope of the war in the Pacific - a quarter of the globe for a battleground. At first aircraft carriers were the only airfields along a six thousand-mile approach to Japan, the enemy's homeland. Then for three and a half years Americans had to inch along the loose chain of the enemy's outer island bases, making contact with guerrillas, threading through jungle bush, in which, surprisingly, many Americans from the cities of the prairie and the East were at home. In 1941 they had learned jungle fighting in the swamps of Louisiana, in an enormous war game commanded by the then totally unknown Major (temporary Colonel) Dwight D. Eisenhower.

To the American soldiers, sailors, airmen and marines in the Pacific, Hitler was on another planet, and so was the clockwork precision of a blitzkrieg. The European who read daily of the tactical collision of great land armies on his own continent, there was something equally unreal and alien in the thought of the virile Americans being picked off singly along jungle trails, or trapped in batches in a clearing, or dying from obscure tropical diseases.

Yet the outcome of the Japanese war was not really decided in the Pacific. It was preordained a decade before by a pathological mistake of Hitler's: in general by his suppression of intellectuals, in particular by his persecution of the Jews and the dispatch into exile of their most brilliant scientists. These men, whether they were German or neighbors of Germany, saw the writing on the wall and fled to America. Among them, Hitler would have trembled to think, if he had been a meditative man and not a mystic, were half a dozen or more of the World's leading physicists. There was Albert Einstein. There was Enrico Fermi, an Italian. There were Edward Teller, Leo Szilard, and Eugene Wigner, three Hungarians, so obscure that in the summer of 1939 they had to enlist Einstein's help - and he in turn, with the help of a banker - to reach President Roosevelt with word of the dire consequences that might follow from the secret news that Germany had forbidden all exports of uranium ore from Czechoslovakia. Since the State Department had at the time not the slightest suspicion of the military significance of uranium, Einstein's letter - written in August but not delivered till October - probably baffled Roosevelt more than it disturbed him. At any rate, the Secretary of War did not hear the strange words "uranium" and "fission" until the fall of 1941, and the President's decision to form a small committee and put some substantial money into the project the refugees had been urging on him was not taken until the day before Pearl Harbor.

In the spring of 1943 a very small dribble of odd-looking tourists arrived in Santa Fe, New Mexico, the first capital of New Spain in North America. They came one at a time, and they never met together as a group in public. They were under instruction not to call each other by their professional titles, either doctor or professor. They were a secret team of refugees and native American and British scientists who had gathered at Santa Fe before being driven off thirty miles northwest of Los Alamos. There, in the loneliness of the desert, they would brew the Apocalypse.

*Continued on Page 12*

Today their retreat looks like some old silver miner's cabin or a relic of a long-vanished road gang. It is all that is left of the base camp of this band of eminent men who built a primitive laboratory and lived and worked for two years in a secret society. They carried false driving licenses and went under assumed names. Fermi was Henry Farmer. Nis Bohr, a Dane, was Nicholas Baker. Their leader was a forty-year-old American, Dr. Robert Oppenheimer, known as "Oppy". They were allowed no personal contact here with their families, who could write only to a Post Office Box number. They lived in tar-paper shacks. The cleaning woman and the other routine job workers were chosen for their illiteracy, in case they came on an engineering tool or a formula on a scrap of paper. A U.S. Senator whose investigating committee had achieved some fame for exposing fraud and extravagance in war costs was forbidden by President Roosevelt even to question the huge expenditures on this mysterious project or to find out what it was all about.

It was about, of course, the atomic bomb. The team had worked for eighteen months or so on the theoretical construction of the bomb, and at Los Alamos they spent another two years making it. Until the end they didn't know whether it would explode, or, if it did, whether they could absolutely control the nuclear chain reaction. They were 99.9% sure, but between the theory and the proof there was on tenth of one percent possibility of the end of all of us. The test site had to be as far as possible from settled country. It had to be a flat horizon to minimize the effects of the blast. It had to have reliably fine weather and only light winds. It had to be as close to Los Alamos to be within an easy day's ride, but far enough to discourage conjecture that the bomb and the secret work at Los Alamos were connected.

The chosen place was over two hundred miles due south from Los Alamos on a part of the Alamogordo bombing range in a blinding stretch of desert. The team's waking misgivings were not pacified by the Spanish name for this country, which was where disabled Spanish wagon trains could expect no help and were left to die Three hundred years earlier the Spaniards' route across the desert country had been dubbed the *journada del muerto*, the "journey of death."

The final assembly of the bomb began on 12th July 1945, in an old ranch house. Two days later, they had it mounted on a hundred foot tower. They locked in the central core of the bomb, and by the night of 15th July they were ready. There then blew in a tremendous storm of thunder and crashing hailstones, a final explosion of the elements they could not control. But at last the thunder rumbled away and the rain stopped, and before dawn on the 16th July they retreated to observation shelters of reinforced concrete built ten thousand yards, south, west, and north of the firing point, trucks stood by for an emergency retreat to be conducted by drivers who knew the desert roads by night. As the countdown started they stretched face down on the ground, with their feet towards the blast, and they covered their eyes. In one of the shelters Oppenheimer was seen to hold on to a post to steady his shaking body.

At 5:29 and 45 seconds in the morning of 16th July 1945, there was an immense flash of light, brighter than any they had ever seen, shocking all the colors out of the sage and the red soil and the mountains. There was a single thunderclap, and at the site itself an inferno of flame was sucked into a rising pillar of smoke, which then billowed into a vast mushroom and slowly dissipated in the high winds.

The prostate scientists were stunned out of all professional pride. Oppenheimer could think only of a line from a Hindu poem; "I am become Death, the shatterer of worlds." Three weeks later, the shattered city of Hiroshima began to count one hundred thousand dead. Three days later Nagasaki received the second bomb.

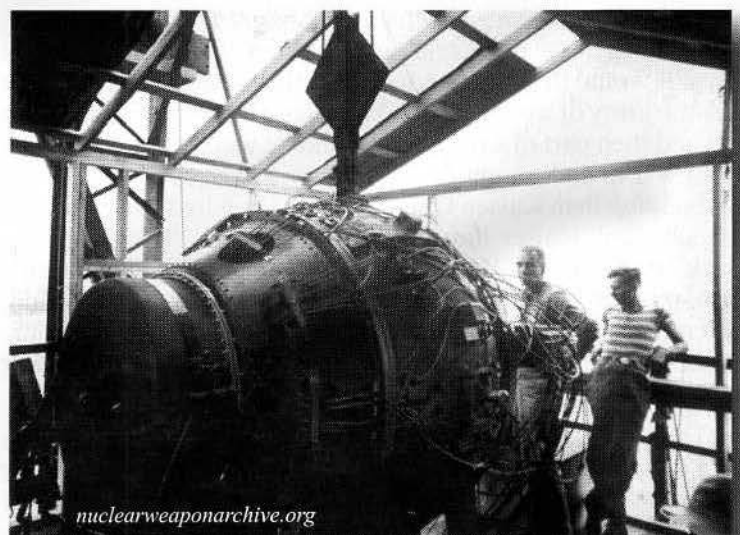
The decision to drop the bomb was made on the fateful calculation that an invasion of Japan might confront five million defenders and five thousand suicide aircraft and cost up to two million American lives. That decision was made by a man who had been permanently forbidden to look into the atomic project, by that one-time Senator who, when Roosevelt dropped dead in April 1945, was now President Harry Truman.

So the Second World War ended in a flash "brighter than a thousand suns." When the Japanese were led aboard the battleship USS Missouri in Tokyo Bay to surrender, the American Commander of the Pacific, General Douglas MacArthur, said it in four resonant words: "These proceedings are closed."

The proceedings in Europe had been closed too, but by conventional bombing and artillery. The Germans camped out amid the ruins of the Third Reich, which had lasted only twelve of the thousand years that Hitler had promised. But the cost of liquidating him was thirty million lives and the devastation of Europe

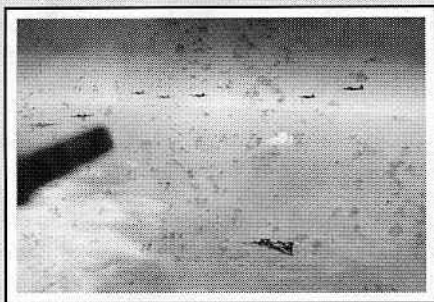
It was a good time to remember Winston Churchill's old recipe of "magnanimity in victory." Within two years, the United States devised a grand plan, the Marshall Plan (whose true author was Under Secretary of State Dean Acheson), which asked Western Europe what it needed to rebuild itself. The largesse poured out from an Act of Congress, the European Recovery - in the main to Britain, France, Germany, Italy - the railroads were rebuilt, the factories and farms subsidized, international trade reborn; the simple, breathtaking aim was, in Dean Acheson's words, "to restore the fabric of European life". This creative gesture of generosity, which cost the American people between ten and fifteen billion dollars, has not been matched in modern history; a truth only slightly dimmed by the need to convince Congress that it was a plan of resistance to the Soviet Union's takeover of Eastern Europe.

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[nuclearweaponarchive.org](http://nuclearweaponarchive.org)





## AERIAL GUNNER

They call him the aerial gunner  
His hopes they say are dim  
And his life is said,  
to hang by a thread  
that is long and weak and slim.

He loves his home  
and he loves his land.  
For he gambles his neck and limb  
And wagers his life  
in a cloud land strife  
In the game with the reaper grim.

His mount is a roaring dragon  
that flashes across the sky  
To take the dare  
in the enemies air  
and to strike him down or die.

He is a knight of the upper air  
and death his eternal foe  
rides the tail  
With an eerie wail  
Where ever his steed may go.

Your have to give him credit,  
for the job he does so well.  
For he brings her home,  
though his steed may roam  
to the very jaws of hell.

He wears no bars and he wears no stars  
for sergeant is his rank.  
But I've heard tell  
he fights like hell,  
and is proud of the title, Yank

There are others there in the upper air  
and we can't detract their fame.  
For they make a crew  
and the job they do  
regardless of who is the same.

But this is a song to the gunner,  
The hero who goes unsung  
Though the enemy knows  
his deadly blows  
and the funeral knells he's rung.

*Tsgt. James I, "Chip" Spencer*

# FRIENDS WRITE

## ARTHUR MODE - LAS VEGAS, NV

My father, Arthur I. Mode, served in the 34<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group in WWII. His plane was the "Flying Dutchman". He is very interested in getting any newsletters or any other current information on survivors of his crew. Is there something that can be mailed to him with current contact information for any of his crew? He has been in contact with Paul Gustafson but not any of the others who might still be alive. His address is: Arthur Mode

2272 Castleberry Lane  
Las Vegas, NV 89156  
702-438-8583

My e-mail (Arthur's daughter) [photomode@aol.com](mailto:photomode@aol.com)

Thank you for any information you can pass along. Also he doesn't mind if you post his contact information where some of his crew members might be able to find him.

\*\*\*\*\*

## EARL ZESCH - LAKE ARROWHEAD, CA

Delores and I now live in Lake Arrowhead, CA but receive our mail in Blue Jay, CA since the postal service doesn't deliver to the mountain residences.

We keep busy with various activities, a little house/pet sitting for a couple who also live here. We recently spent a few days at their beautiful condo in Hamilton Cove visiting the various shops and restaurants while driving their golf cart which are licensed in Avalon.

We will be celebrating our 60 wedding anniversary next fall with our family in Hawaii.

I recently received an e-mail from my waist gunner, Bob Lillie, who I haven't seen in years. Haven't heard from the rest of the crew in quite some time. Some have passed away while others I have been unable to locate.

\*\*\*\*\*

## DONALD TUTTLE - SAN JOSE, CA

With all the excitement in moving, I forgot to send you my new address and also my dues for the year. Now I know why I didn't receive the last Mendlesham Memories.

Please find check for dues enclosed.

\*\*\*\*\*

## DOROTHY WESSEL - PARIS, TN

I'm enclosing 2006 dues. Jerome R. Wessel, my husband, passed away Feb. 2001. I enjoy receiving Mendlesham Memories and the news of the members. We enjoyed the 34<sup>th</sup> reunions but I haven't gone since Jerry passed. I miss him so much and our life together. We were born in Cincinnati and lived there 'till we moved to California. I'm in Tennessee right now.

Best wishes to you as treasurer of the 34<sup>th</sup> BGA.

\*\*\*\*\*



**Friends Write - Continued**

**BAILEY ADAMS – HOUSTON, TX**

All plans were set for my wife, me and our two children to join the 34<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group in Albuquerque this past fall. My son was coming along for the first time and my daughter was looking forward to attending her 6<sup>th</sup> reunion. With growing dismay though, we realized hurricane Rita was bearing down on the upper Texas coast and we began to frantically secure our homes and property. The Houston airports closed shortly before our departure time on that Friday. We were all so disappointed to miss the reunion and especially to miss seeing the two members of my crew who were attending. However, we feel very blessed to have missed the brunt of the hurricane.

We look forward to attending the reunion this fall and hope to join 3 or 4 of our crew members there.

Enclosed is a donation for our 2006 dues.

\*\*\*\*\*

**CARWIN BAXTER – LAKELAND, FL**

I read with great interest the article on page 6 of the June issue of Mendlesham Memories regarding the 2115 Engineering Aviation Firefighter Platoon fighting a gasoline truck fire on September 26, 1944.

I am sure our crew, "Vic's Crew", was involved in that ordeal. I could not remember the date it happened, but our crew was called for our 3rd mission and, after breakfast and the briefings, I, being the radio operator, went to another briefing to pick up the "flimsy" containing the codes for the mission. The other gunners went to the gun shack to clean and get all the guns ready to install in the plane.

Two of the guns, designated for our plane, were missing from the rack so the waist gunner went to the plane to see if he could find them. He discovered them in the nose turret. As he was attempting to remove them, they accidentally discharged striking the gasoline truck that was putting fuel in the plane. The article explains what happened after that.

At the investigation, the following day, our crew explained that the crew using the plane the day before apparently forgot to take the two guns out of the nose turret but before they could interrogate the crew their plane was shot down over Germany.

I would like to thank Mr. Keith M. Anderson for his heroism in driving the burning gasoline truck away from the plane we were preparing to use. If not for his efforts, we could have easily been blown to bits. We were one of the fortunate crews in that we completed the required 35 missions.

\*\*\*\*\*

**AL SADOWSKY – BOCA RATON, FL**

I have just finished reading the latest edition of MM. I am writing this letter with a heavy heart knowing that the 34<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group Association will be disbanding in two years.

I cannot express enough the pleasures, smiles and tears that came to me when reading your wonderful publication.

The article by Michael Torre's grandson was most inspiring. I would like to thank him, in writing, if you would be kind enough to send me his address.

I intend visiting my pilot, Alf Johanson, in July who resides in Florida with his wife, Maye.

My experiences with the 34<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group turned a 98 lb. weakling into a 600 lb. gorilla.

Thanks again for bringing us memories that will last forever.

\*\*\*\*\*

**BETTY BRESH – FORT MYERS, FL**

It is with deep regret that I send this obituary on my husband, Paul Bresh who passed away on May 8, 2006. He was a very kind, honest man, proud of his service with the US Air Corps and the 34<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group.

The very best to the 34<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group Association members who are still with us.

\*\*\*\*\*

**DEXTER JORDAN – HUNTERSVILLE, NC**

We will not be able to attend the reunion this year, just too far to travel. We always enjoyed them very much. Hope one will be more central before disbanding.

\*\*\*\*\*

**AL SADOWSKY – BOCA RATON, FL**

It is with deep regret to advise the members of the 34<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group Association of the passing of Alf Johanson on July 4<sup>th</sup>, 2006.

Alf was with the 34<sup>th</sup> Group since its activation as a combat group when training in Blythe, California. He and his crew completed their tour in December 1944 and returned to the states in early 1945. Many of his missions were as a lead crew.

His wife, Maye, whom he met while stationed at Blythe, and his children reside in Seminole, Florida.

I was ball turret gunner on Lt. Johanson's crew.

He will be sorely missed.

\*\*\*\*\*

# 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, CUT THIS OUT AND SEND TO: JACK SHARE, 22 S. AVONLEA CIRCLE, THE WOODLANDS, TEXAS 77382.

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.



# Change of Address - SEPT '06 (2)

LAST NAME	FIRST NAME	ORG	ADDRESS	CITY	STATE	ZIP
VIVIENNE	CREER	GRPLM	c/o CREER & ALLISON MAYO 3800 HOWARD HUGHES PKWY, STE200,	LAS VEGAS	NV	89169
DEL BIANCO	ANTON J	18	2530 DUCHESS DR	SHEBOYGAN	WI	53083
GUERTIN	CAROLYN	18A	5309 W GRACE ST	RICHMOND	VA	23226
HANSON	SCOTT	391A	1550 CRESCENT BLVD	AUBURN	AL	36830
MACIEL	MRS HELEN	391A	10 CAPT SAMUEL FORBUSH RD,	WESTBOROUGH	MA	01581
MONGEON	OMAR G	18LM	104 ALCORN LANE	BATESVILLE	MS	38606
MORGAN	CHARLES D	391	4 LINSAX LANE	METHUEN	MA	01844
PENNA	AMERICO	391	102 F BROADGATE CT	FREEHOLD	NJ	07728
RUNYAN	GERALDINE	18A	FOREST VIEW APT614 4545 PANTHER CREEK DR	THE WOODLANDS	TX	77381
SHEESLEY	MARY	7LM	419 WYNDEMERE CIR	WHEATON	IL	60187
SMART	MARY FRANCES,	7LM	625 E 19 <sup>TH</sup> ST APT C3	EL DORADO	AR	71730
SMITH	NORRIS W	18	512 CEDARHURST RD	GREENVILLE	N	27834
TUTTLE	DONALD E	7	456 MILLPOND DR	SAN JOSE	CA	95125

## TAPS

LASTNAME	FIRSTNAME	ORG	DOD	ADDRESS	CITY	STATE	ZIP
BRESH	PAUL E	391	05-08-06	1340 S BRADYWINE CIR APT4	FORT MYERS	FL	33919
JOHANSON	ALF H	4LM	07-04-06	11648 PINEDALE AVE	SEMINOLE	FL	33772

## Inspirational Prayer

Dear God,  
The battle is over and  
victory has been won.  
But among us there have  
been many for whom  
there was no flight  
home. For those of us  
who now remain is the  
task of speaking for...



...those whose lips will be  
forever silent. And now  
as we rendezvous for that  
peaceful flight of life, we  
know they will fly with  
us, just beyond the  
horizon in the sky they  
died to free.

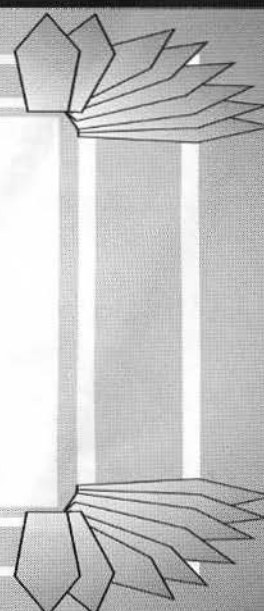
## 60th Wedding Anniversary

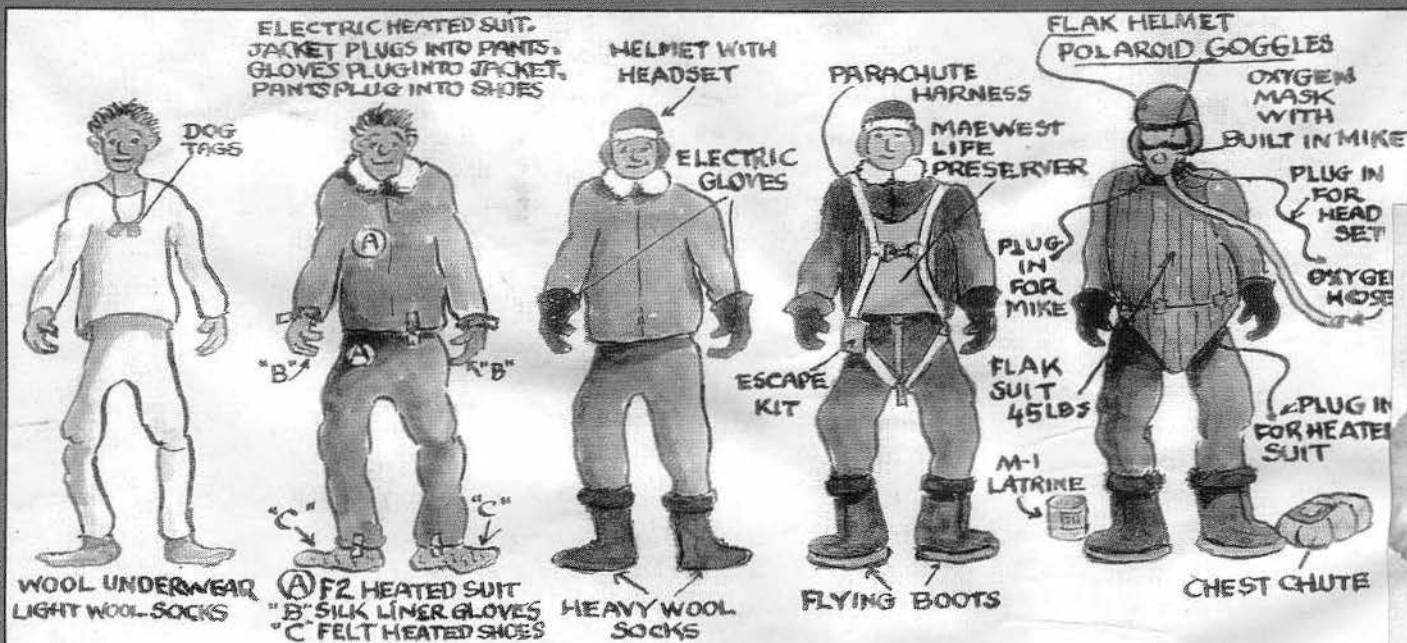
Bobb & Ginny Pacholski

June 23<sup>rd</sup> 2006

60 Years Of Wedded Bliss

*Congratulations!*





EQUIPMENT WORN BY 8<sup>TH</sup> A.F. BOMBER CREWS ON HIGH ALTITUDE MISSIONS  
WINTER OF 1944-45

Thanks to Frank McKinley for  
another one of his fine contributions  
to the 8th AF NEWS



*Frank McKinley*



**Jack Share**  
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The Woodlands, TX 77382  
(936)273-3561

**34th Bomb Group**



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**Joseph K Marks**

**Pilot, 4th Sq., Crew No. 12, April - Aug 1944**