



ENDLESSHAM MEMORIES



VOICE OF THE 34TH BOMB GROUP (H)

An Awesome Armada



4TH SQUADRON



7TH SQUADRON



18TH SQUADRON



391ST SQUADRON

MENDLESHAM MEMORIES

Newsletter of

The 34th Bomb Group Association, Inc.

www.excel-tech.com/34th/

This newsletter is published four times a Year (March, June, September, December). All material for publication is welcome and should be sent to:

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OTHER WEB SITES OF INTEREST:

<http://members.tripod.com/ValortoVictory>
www.mighty8thmuseum.com
www.air-museum.org/b17.htm
www.jccc.net/~bgustaf/34th_Bomb

DEADLINE

All material and items for the December, 2008 issue of Mendlesham Memories should reach me on or before October 15, 2008. All copy will be going to the publisher on that date.

Jack Share, editor



DUES are DUE



2008 Dues,
for those who pay annually,
are due as of **January 1st 2008**



DUES ARE \$20.00 PAYABLE TO: 34TH BGA

Send Dues To:

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

Your cooperation in getting your dues paid now will guarantee your continued membership in the 34th Bomb Group Association and the delivery of your Mendlesham Memories. Thank you.

Share - a thought...

With the 34th Bomb Group Association winding down as a viable organization, it is conceivable that many of our members will be extremely disappointed - as I am. But, in retrospect, we have had an extremely long and interesting run. We have heard most, certainly not all, the interesting stories of our participation in the Great War, became reacquainted with our long lost service buddies and met many new friends interested in our experiences. The memories for those who have attended the reunions, the friendships renewed, new ones made, will be forever cherished. Through this newsletter, Mendlesham Memories, the excellence of the 34th Bomb Group and it's stellar performance in combat has become known, and respected, through out the world.

Those who are fortunate enough to be able to attend this years final reunion in Washington are in store for a stellar program that will close down the organization with the pomp and circumstance worthy of a great association.

Unfortunately, the end of the association this year will also see the last publication of Mendlesham Memories. Since the first newsletter was printed, under that name, back in 1984 we have had continuous printings four times a year ever since with only two editors. Eli Baldea produced it for the first 15 years and I have been doing it for the past 10. I know, for both of us, it has been an exciting and important time of our lives and has touched the lives of many people the world over. It will be a sad ending for all of us.

Probably this September issue of the newsletter will not reach you until after you have returned home from the reunion. So let me remind everyone who took pictures at the reunion to be sure and forward them to me for the final December edition. I can think of no better way of winding it down than by showing everyone that we went out in the style reminiscent of the 34th Bomb Group.



More info on page 6!
<http://www.weye.com/archives/wwiib24.html>



Jack Share

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Summer is upon us in full force and here in California we've already had our fill of extreme heat and raging wild fires. Thankfully, our courageous firefighters have done a wonderful job and have kept property losses at a minimum. At least fall is coming and with it brings cooler weather and the 25th reunion of the 34th Bomb Group Association. Planning for the Washington reunion is progressing nicely and it looks like we are going to have a tremendous turnout for our farewell bash.

Fathers' Day was last month and it's been over four years since my dad passed away. It has been very rewarding being involved with the 34th Bomb Group Association and I know that dad would have been proud of me. But what really matters is that he knew I was proud of him. I believe that is the reason so many second generation members have become involved in the organization. We want to honor all of the veterans and let them know how proud we are of everything the have done for us.

I wish all of our members good health and I'm looking forward to seeing everyone in Washington.

David Fieber, President



David Fieber

TREASURER'S REPORT

by Jack Steffen, Treasurer

The annual dues amount for 2008 is \$20.00. There is no dues amount for life members for 2008. For those who have not paid your 2008 dues, elsewhere in this issue is the address for sending your dues payment to me. Please make your check payable to the 34th Bomb Group Association.

As you know, a few years back the association decided to cease operations after the 2008 reunion in Washington, DC. I am happy to report that we should complete our tenure in good financial condition. For that achievement, we thank the many officers, board members and committee members who have diligently served over the many years of the group's existence, making wise decisions. Credit for our good financial condition also goes to our loyal members who have regularly paid their dues, sent in donations, attended our reunions and made purchases from the PX.

This is a great group. Thank you for your ongoing support.

Jack Steffen, Treasurer



Jack Steffen

The Fate of "Mean Kid"

The 16th mission of the 34th Bomb Group of the 8th Air Force was destined to bomb the marshalling yards at Cambrai-Epinoy in France. The four engine B-24 bomber "Mean Kid" was a part of the 18th squadron on that morning on June 14th, 1944 as the formation made its way to the target from their base at Mendlesham, England.

As they made their way to the target, German gunners were readying their anti-aircraft batteries 22,000 feet below preparing for their arrival. Suddenly, as the formation entered "Flak Alley" they were engulfed by a deadly barrage of 88 millimeter shells that shook the bombers violently as they exploded in near misses.

Unfortunately, not all were near misses as "Mean Kid", piloted by Sam Laskin, shook violently and with a loud bang shrapnel tears through the bottom of the pilot's seat injuring Sam's thigh and right hand. In front of the pilot and slightly below, bombardier Robert Pearce loses half of his mustache from a piece of shrapnel and falls unconscious. Being fully loaded with bombs, the blast causes the aircraft to fall out of control in a half spin while Sam tries desperately to keep the bomber under control. At 12,000 feet, Sam manages to level the aircraft, while crewman Jack Oyster gives him a shot of morphine and, with the help of crewman John Wolf, applies a tourniquet to Sam's leg. But the B-24 is in a terrible condition. One engine is already out and the electrical system and instrument panel are inoperable. Sam changes course back to England but the bomb load is making the aircraft extremely difficult to control. Flight engineer, Robert Huebler, goes to the bomb bay and releases the bombs over the North Sea thus lightening the aircraft.

But the ordeal of the "Mean Kid" is just beginning. The German Luftwaffe is on the prowl for "cripples" and their pilots know the track of damaged allied aircraft returning to

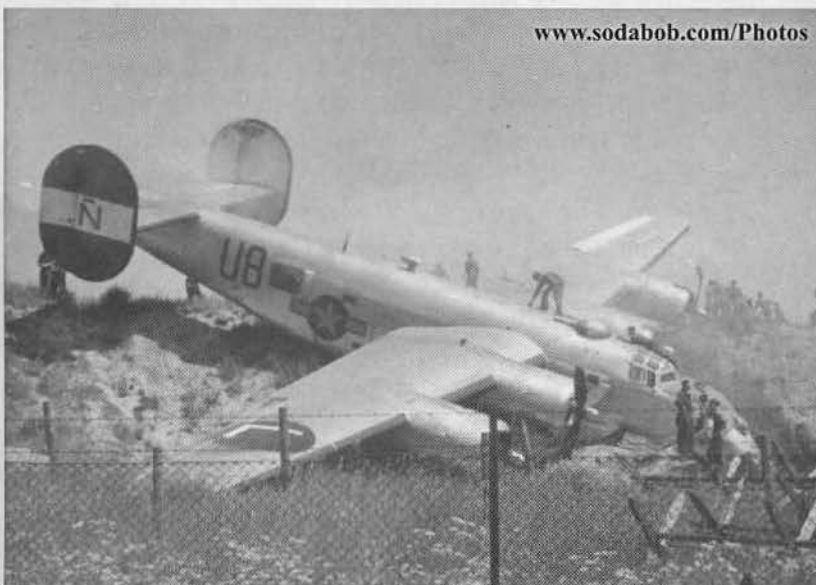
England. Sure enough, JU-88's soon swarm over the crippled B-24 spraying it with machine gun and cannon fire. Just as the fate of "Mean Kid" seems to be sealed as a casualty of war, 8th Air Force P-47 Thunderbolts arrive and chase the bandits away.

But now the bomber is flying on only two engines and dangling pieces of the aircraft are creating extra drag causing the plane to continuously lose altitude. Like the scene from the movie "The War Lover" where a crippled B-17 piloted by Steve McQueen is trying to clear the white cliffs of Dover on two engines - but fails, Sam Laskin's B-24 is only 2,400 feet above water when they sight the English coast. Sam is still bleeding and could lose consciousness at any moment but he remains at the controls and orders his to bail out. To a man, the crew refuses to leave the aircraft as they realize that Sam is badly wounded and could not possibly survive a crash landing without their help.

With his last remaining strength, Sam flies the crippled bomber to the British air base at Manston and lowers the landing gear in preparation for a landing. But only the left wheel comes down. With the hydraulic fluid nearly depleted, there is no hope of retracting the right wheel nor actuating the brakes. With power from only two engines, causing severe asymmetry in controlling the direction of flight and with only one wheel down, Sam eases the plane down on its left wheel as the bomber coasts, momentarily, down the runway. As the right wing droops and hits the ground, Sam tries to loop the bomber to the left with the twin rudders but the airplane ground loops to the right coming to a stop with the fuselage still intact.

For his miraculous effort in bringing the "Mean Kid" back to base with his crew safe, Sam was awarded the Silver Star for conspicuous gallantry.

www.sodabob.com/Photos



This crash photo was provided by Charles Cadogan in the UK. The photo was marked "Bulltofta, Malmö" and dated "June 1944." The photo was discovered in his late grandfather's photo album. His grandfather was a Swede named Hans Wachtmeister, who lived in Malmö during WWII and was head of the department of construction of Malmö harbour (byggnadschef vid Malmö Hamnförvaltning). Hans was a keen and prolific photographer as well as an aircraft enthusiast, enjoying early passenger flights within Europe before WWII.

Note the N on the tail and the "Circle-L" on the wing. The N was the RCL, or Radio Call Letter. The "Circle-L" was the group's tail code.

A Daughter's Love

It is with great sadness that I share with you that my dear father, Carroll E. Forister, died on July 3rd, 2008. He was diagnosed with lung cancer last November. Dad dedicated his life to God, his family, and his country. As anyone who knew him I'm sure would agree, words that describe him were loving, caring, loyal, brave, friendly, and a true gentleman.

Dad came to my classroom ten years in a row and shared his WWII experiences with my 5th grade students. They adored and respected him, marveling in the fact that they got to meet and get to know a "real live WWII hero". How their eyes would widen as he unfolded his experiences including being shot down and parachuting out of his burning plane. I have all the letters my students wrote to him after each presentation. His sharing helped to keep the heroic actions of the Greatest Generation alive in this new generation. When I see students from years ago they still talk about what they learned.

Dad's death leaves a huge hole in my heart and the hearts of anyone that knew him. Dad was my hero. He missed my mom (Sylvia) so very much. Those of you that saw them together know what a pair they were. May their souls now be together.

Due to my husband's disability (ALS), I will not be able to attend this final reunion which saddens me. My son, Stuart (who has attended the last four and was Grandpa's biggest admirer) hopes to attend in honor of his grandfather as does my youngest brother, Emmett. Please know in September I will be with you in spirit. I will forever have such wonderful memories of the five reunions I did get to attend and spend time getting to know all of the 34th Bomb Group "family". Take care of your dear selves.

With love and respect,
Vivienne Forister Schwab

THEN and NOW



S/Sgt Cliff Beard - 1943



Mr. Cliff Beard - 1992

Plow Jockey Crew

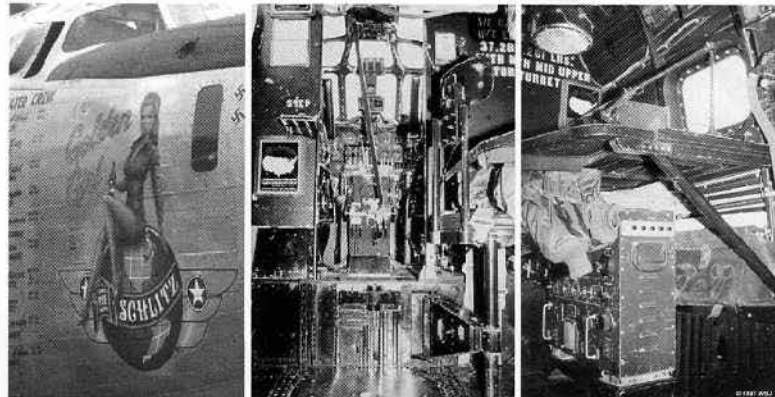


Standing L - R

**Doug Graham - Radio Op, Danny Marks - Waist Gun,
Fred Fielder - Flt. Eng, Dick Polak - Bombardier**

Kneeling L-R

**Cliff Beard - Ball Gun, Fred Edelstein - Navigator,
Bob Springer, Pilot, Anthony Ryzac - Tail Gun**



1) B-24 Nose Art. 2) B-24J Liberator inside view looking forward to cockpit. September 14, 1997. 3) Additional interior photos taken inside B-24 (also on page 2.)

As a part of the 50th anniversary a World War II B-17 and B-24 visited Boire Field in Nashua, New Hampshire. If you missed the show, you may want to check out the web site for photos & video clips.

<http://www.weye.com/archives/wwiib24.html>

On the Back Cover:

The Return

The heroics of the United States Army Air Force Bomber crews during WW2 are legend. Never before had such a mighty Aerial Armada been assembled, sending a shudder through the Third Reich. Over three long years they pounded the enemy war machine at every opportunity, never allowing the German fighters or ground fire to gain the upper hand. They fought with courage against the fiercest of resistance.

There were then few sights more stirring than a B-17 Fortress on final approach returning from a mission to Germany. Aboard, the crew were drained and exhausted, often injured, and after perhaps eight hours of gruelling flying there was a feeling of great exultation as the patchwork field of England appeared. Their return to base was finally assured. With wheels and flaps down, engines throttled back, the Skipper eases the Mighty Fortress gently down the glidepath towards a frosty touchdown. She's taken some damage from fighters and is quite a handful as she approaches the airfield.

A pair of pheasants scuttle into the air as the roar from the mighty engines reach a crescendo and local farm folk stop to watch the great warbirds coming home. In a few moments the American crews will be safely down.



CAAF REUNION

Men and women who were stationed in Carlsbad, New Mexico at the Carlsbad Air Force base are invited to attend the CAAF Reunion. Activities are scheduled for September 12-14, 2008.

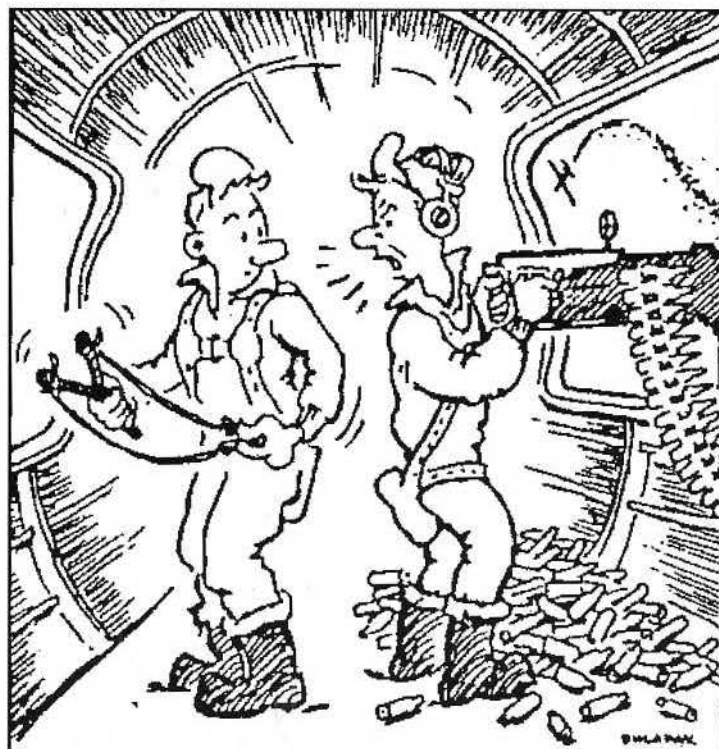
Plans are underway to welcome and honor all who were stationed at the base during WWII. The base was primarily a Bombardier training facility utilizing AT-11 aircraft and the Norden bombsight.

Many graduates served on B-24 and B-17 bombers with the 8th Air Force, including the 34th Bomb Group.

For more information contact:

Lt. Col. Reid McCloskey (Ret) 575-885-4721 or register on line at www.blankpageproductions.com

Thank you,
Reid McCloskey



AREN'T YOU BEING A LITTLE OVERCONFIDENT?

PX Order Form

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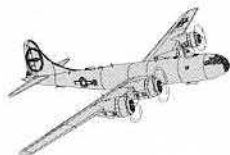
VET: WWII US ARMY AIR CORPS.....\$4.00 EACH OR 3 FOR \$10.00
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LICENSE PLATE HOLDER (2 for \$5.00).....\$3.00 ea.
LICENSE PLATE- White with blue logo. Print same as several years ago..... \$10.00 ea.
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PATCHES – 8TH AIR FORCE..... \$3.50 ea.
PATCHES – SQUADRON – 7th – 18th – 391st \$5.00 ea.
DECAL – VALOR TO VICTORY – 5" X 5"..... or \$1.50 ea.
BUMPER STICKER – 34TH B.G. – 3" X 12" 2 for \$1.50 ea.
HAT PINS (FOR DECOR) B-24 – B-17 or POW\$3.50 ea
WINGS – (about 2") – PILOT – BOMBARDIER – NAVIGATOR – GUNNER OR FLIGHT ENGR...\$4.00 ea.
WINGS (about 1")..... \$3.00 ea.
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MEN'S POLO SHIRT W/ POCKET AND 34TH B.G. Logo
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MEN'S POLO SHIRT, cotton W/POCKET AND 34TH Logo
(Royal blue,M,LR, XLR,XXL.....\$22.00 ea.
CAP – ROYAL BLUE or NAVY w Patriotic flag on bill.....\$8.50 ea.
BOLO TIE - B-24 or 8th Air Force.....\$6.00 ea.
BOLO TIE with Mother of Pearl background behind B-24.....\$6.00 ea.
BELT BUCKLE "America's Heritage – The Right to Bear Arms".....\$6.00 ea.
PIN – VALOR TO VICTORY.....\$5.00 ea.
BOOKLET – MENDLESHAM REVISITED, by our English school students and teacher,
Gordon Leathers.....\$20.00ea

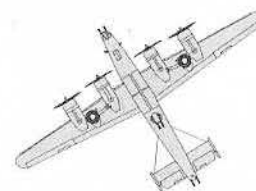
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AND INCLUDE YOUR TELEPHONE NUMBER WITH EACH ORDER
(sometimes needed for clarification)

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.



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: kenpaxton@sbcglobal.net

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

My Hat is Off and My Thanks to you 34th Bomb Group Specialists Who have Served Us for So Long

As we approach this last reunion of the 34th Bomb Group I think back over the years of the many of our members who have taken on a variety of duties that have made the Association a success. Many have served for a few years on the Board as officers. A few have taken on more permanent tasks. These I especially want to salute and thank for their many hours, days, and weeks of service. The following have worked year after year organizing the reunions of 24 years: Hal and Gen Rutka, Bob and Esther Wright and Bruce Sothern. Two couples are now at 10 years of service: Jack and Marian Share editing and managing the Mendlesham Memories and Ken and Kathleen Paxton

operating the PX. Jim Martin has served as Chaplain and he and Bruce Sothern have been the nominating committee also going back some 20 years. You are all congratulated on your dedication and your contributions to the operations of the Association.

Thanks also to the next generation members who are serving as officers, board members and as the committee for this final reunion. Your contributions to the success of the Association are also very much appreciated.

Al Israelsen

ONE OF THE FIRST

One of the first crews to leave Blythe, CA for their overseas base at Mendlesham, England, with their new B-24, was the Warren Gray crew. They named their plane Bambi and their first mission after arriving at Mendlesham was Etampes Mondesir, France, also the first mission flown by the 34th Bomb Group. The pilot, Warren Gray never flew a mission with the crew as he was replaced by Charles Cook for personal reasons. Cook was later replaced by Ralph "Pappy" Lundeen who flew the balance of the missions.



The Warren Gray Crew

John Brady - Crew Chief; ***Kneeling right to left:*** Warren Gray - Bob Braeger - Ralph Lundeen - Merle Hartman
Standing left to right: Vern Atwater - E.J. Brackeen - Norman Mayer - Fred Marsters - Tom Peterman;

FRIENDS' WRITE

VINCE HOSACK - FORT MYERS, FL

I always enjoy receiving and reading "Mendlesham Memories" and your staff should be complimented for a wonderful job, well done over the years. I should have notified you sooner, but thought perhaps someone else would, about the passing of the following members of my crew:

Capt Robert Dees (lead pilot, 18th sqd) - Torrence, CA.

T/Sgt Robert Aldrich (flight engineer) - Monroe, MI.

Farewell to two fine gentlemen and wonderful buddies.

SALLY CROWLEY - PEORIA, AZ

My husband, Ed Cowley, passed away on May 31st, 2008. Ed always looked forward to receiving "Mendlesham Memories" and remarked all the time about things he would find in it. He was able to play good golf up until two weeks before his death of jaw cancer.

Long live the 34th Bomb Group.

WALTER STUDIVAN - STOCKTON, CA



Walter Sturdivan on the left and Gordon Breeding on the right and a view of the 18th squadron Quonsons in the background.

I'm wearing a B-15 style jacket since my A-2 was burned up in the parachute equipment building when they were hit by one of our B-24's shot down by the German aircraft intruders on June 7, 1944.

BILL ORTON - TEHACHAPI, CA

I want to tell you what a fine job you are doing as editor of Mendlesham Memories. I and Maria really enjoy the newsletter. We just cannot imagine being without it.

We have booked our flight for Washington DC and have registered at the Doubletree Hotel, Crystal City. We are hoping for a real good time and a visit with all of you.

We hope the weather has been kind to you. We had a total of 10 inches of snow all winter here in Tehachapi, CA which lasted only a few days each time it snowed. With rain and snow it caused me to miss four Fridays of scheduled golf so it hasn't been too bad. But at Cascade the snow got as high as the windows on our house which is about 8 ft high. Last week our neighbor called and she said we still have about 4 ft. in the front yard.

CLAYTON MINK - HUDSON, NY

It is with saddened heart I am writing to tell you of the passing of my dear wife, Helen. After a brave struggle with her weakened heart, she left us on May 12th to rest peacefully in Heaven. Her absence is difficult for me and my daughters but we feel great comfort in knowing she will always be live in our hearts.

The girls and I are planning to attend the reunion in Washington and hope to see you all there.

C. EDWARD HAYES - SALISBURY, MD

Attached in check for 2009 dues for MM.

Wish I could attend this years reunion but our health prevents our going.

Virginia, my wife, and I celebrated our 68th wedding anniversary on June 22, 2008.

Put the balance of the check into general funds. Keep up the good work.

HUGO ANDREW CHESI - PUEBLO, CO

Please find my check for \$20.00.

Let me say this, with great pleasure, Mendlesham Memories has been a memorial event of reading each time we received it.

I am most sincerely fortunate to have been able to attend the 34th BGA reunion in Albuquerque New Mexico in 2005. I was a lucky father to have had a lovely daughter, Deborah, and son in law, Jay Hokanson make my dream come true by attending one of the 34th reunions with me. A memorial time was had.

God bless you wonderful people.

cont. on page 10

FRIENDS WRITE - Continued

CAROLYN GUERTIN - RICHMOND, VA

Enclosed is my check to pay up my dues to date. For some reason, I thought I was a life member but continued to send in my annual dues each year. Perhaps I got it mixed up with another organization

I hope the members of the 34th BG will continue to maintain their association but if not join the reunions of the 8th Air Force Historical Society. That way the 34th could perpetuate its legacy.

I am very happy that the younger generation is attempting to continue the organization and I hope, "Mendlesham Memories".

I look forward to the reunions and seeing many of my friends. If I can help the organization in some way please let me know.

ED: Carolyn is, and has been, a life member of our organization for many years. We thank you for your annual contribution.

BILL CHEEK - LAKELAND, FL

I am enclosing my check for the 2008 dues.

If my health holds out I want to make the final reunion.

I served as the first secretary for the 34th before we had any formal organization. Prior to that, Jim Carpousis served as 34th contact as it was called. He had a handful of names and addresses of former 34thers.

Perhaps you read my article in the Mendlesham Memories several years back concerning the early history of the 34th bomb group association.

Perhaps Jack Share will reprint that article in one of the final issues for the benefit of the first and second generation.

THE GIVEN FAMILY - SILVER STAR, MT

We, the Given family, were positive that this would be the year we would attend the 34th reunion to say hello and to express our thanks to you all for all you have done. Unfortunately, due to the many forest fires in our area, we feel it is necessary to stay close to home at this time.

ARTHUR BUSSE - ANAHEIM, CA

Enclosed is my check for 2008 dues. I hope to attend the next reunion in Washington, DC if there are any airlines around to fly us there.

We enjoy the hard work you fellows have put forth with reunions and publishing the "Mendlesham Memories" to make the 34th the fine organization it is, even if we don't tell you all the time. Keep it up.

WALTER STURDIVAN - STOCKTON, CA

I want to thank you for printing the picture of Lois and I in the March '08 issue of Mendlesham Memories. If you look closely you can see the number 13 on the door of the motel room. Thankfully, it didn't prove unlucky for me when I went overseas.

When Lois came to Blythe a fine lady allowed us to sleep in her front room behind a screen while she slept on the other side. After a few days Lois got a job working in the drug store on Main street. A friendly man came in one day and began talking to her. She told him of her living conditions. He told her to come and see him the next day. He owned the motel. We had that room for about two months before I shipped out for Mendlesham.

I hope to see you at the reunion.

GORDON LEATHERS - SUFFOLK, ENGLAND

I was moved to write about yesterday's flying legends air display at Duxford. This year was special as we had the "Liberty Belle", one of your B-17's visit this weekend.

Hoping to see you in September.



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

LAST NAME	FIRST NAME	ORG	ADDRESS	CITY	STATE	ZIP
BAUMGARDNER,	DONALD R	7LM	239 SHORELINE DR	NEW BERN	NC	28562
INMAN	LLOYD V	391	103 VILLA RD	KELSO	WA	98626
SIVRET	ALDA	7A	17623 EARTH AVE SOUTH	NORMANDY PARK	WA	98148

Taps

LAST NAME	FIRST NAME	ORG	DOD	ADDRESS	CITY	STATE	ZIP
ALDRICH	ROBERT G	18 TH	11-15-07	521 BELLESTRI DR	MONROE	MI	48161
BOEHMLER	BARTON L	391	06-30-08	1703 HIGHWAY 3	HAMPTON	IA	50441
CROWLEY	EDWARD J	391/7	05-31-08	8513 W ORAIBI DRIVE	PEORIA	AZ	85382
DEES	ROBERT W.	18 TH	01-26-08	5014 VIA EL SERENO	TORRENCE	CA	90505
FORISTER	CARROLL E	4	07-03-08	541 WEST ESSEX AVE	KIRKWOOD	MO	63122
JACKSON	KENNETH G	7	01-27-08	6609 CHERRY ST	KNOXVILLE	TN	37919
HAWKINS	JEFFERSON R	391	05-15-08	1250 FONTAINEBLEAU CT	LAWRENCEVILLE	GA	30043
KUBLY	A. RAY	7	06-04-08	1204 AMBER LN	WATERTOWN	WI	53098

Those Who Fall

By John Muirhead - A Bomber Pilot
from Tom Gamble - A Fighter Pilot

"I don't know if any of this is true. Everything happened that I have said happened, but it's memory now, the shadow of things. The truth lies in its own time, recall is not the reality of the past. When friends depart, one remembers them but they are changed; we hold only the fragment of them that touched us.

Their reality is gone, intact but irretrievable, in another place through which we passed but can never enter again. I cannot go back nor can I bring them to me, so I must pursue the shadows of some middle ground, for I am strangely bound to all that happened then.

We broke hard bread together and I cannot forget Breslou, Steyr, Regensburg, Ploesti, Vienna, Munich, Graz, and all the others, not cities, but battlegrounds five miles above where we made our brotherhood.

It's gone now and long ago, swept clean by the wind. Part of me still lives there, tracing a course through all the names. I linger now, looking back for them, the best ones..."

New Associate Members

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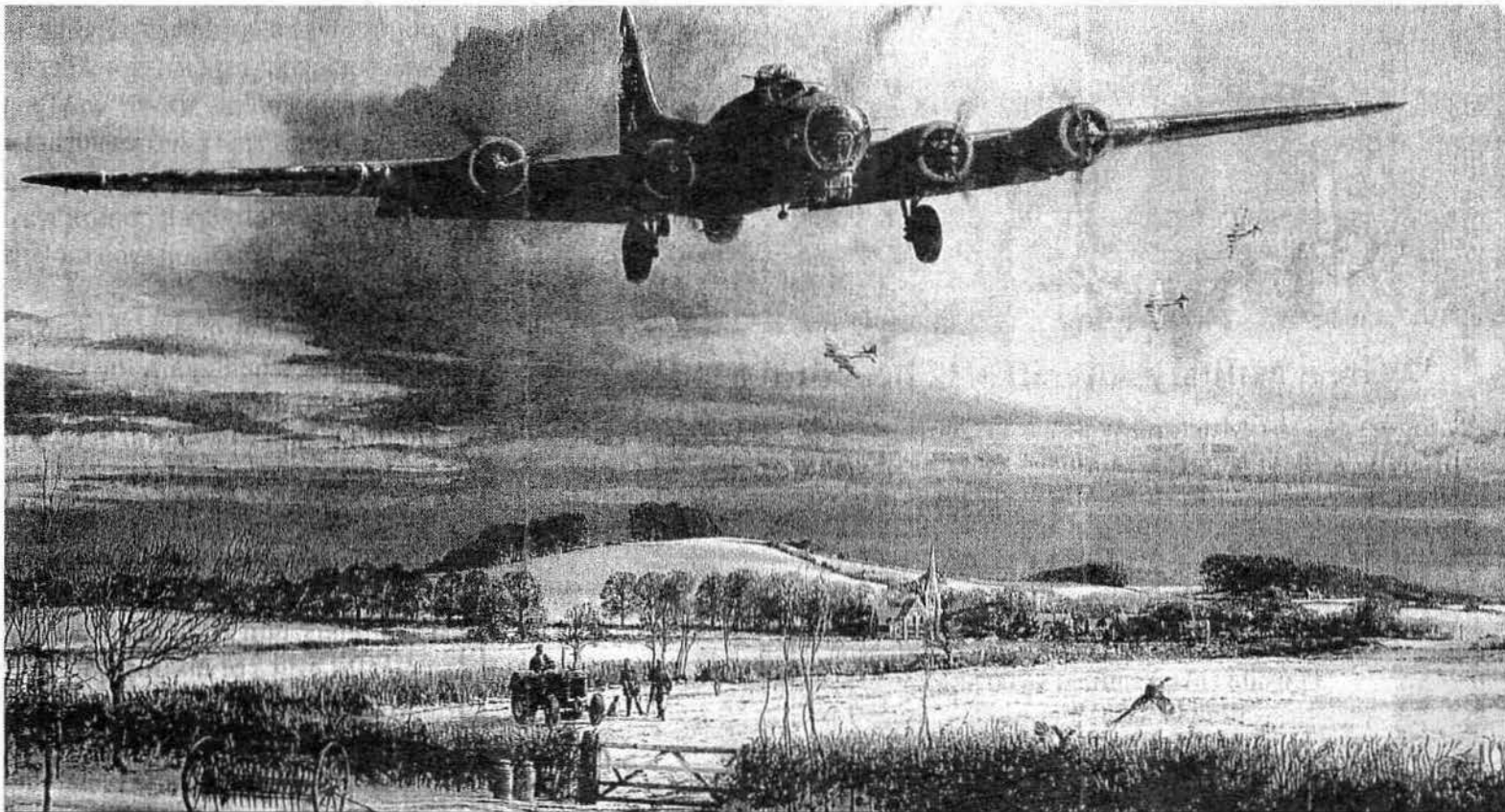
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Pilot, 4th Sq., Crew No. 12, April - Aug 1944