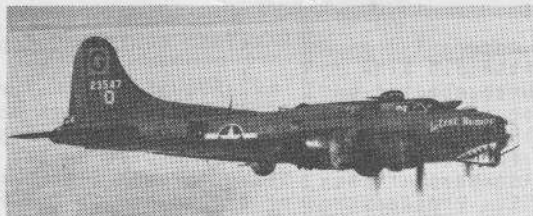


**COMBAT UNITS**

HQ. SQUADRON  
548th BOMB SQ.  
549th BOMB SQ.  
550th BOMB SQ.  
551st BOMB SQ.

**SUPPORT UNITS**

424th AIR SVS. GP.  
877th CHEM. CO. (AO)  
DET. 155, 18th AWS

## *"The Mighty Eighth Reunion Group"*

### 385th BOMBARDMENT GROUP MEMORIAL ASSOCIATION

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STATION 155

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Arkey M. Huber  
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**1981 HOST**

Joy H. Dunlap

# NEWSLETTER

Volume VIII, No. 2

August 1979

Editor: John C. Ford

## BATTLE OF BRITAIN-1980 TOUR

In late summer and early fall of 1980, England will mark the 40th Anniversary of the reknown "Battle of Britain". Many activities are already set, while others are in the early planning stage. Among the planned activities is a 385th BGMA late summer sortie which will feature an exciting "Suffolk Summer" and a "Scandinavian Scamper". The plan is segmented into two very distinct phases, i.e., Air Travel and Land Travel. The air travel section makes each person responsible for his own transportation to England and return. The basic reason for this is the multitude of air travel plans to fit the individual budget. There will be members who wish to be in Europe longer than our planned trip, while there are many other members who can take advantage of the many air travel plans now available near their homes.

As an example, in Texas, some poor folk may like to fly the fast Concorde route to England, but others may try the Delta route via Atlanta. On the west coast, over the Pole flights are much cheaper than traveling cross-country to New York for a connecting flight. PanAm and TWA have special overseas flights starting in the mid-west, featuring standby and thirty or fifteen day advance bookings at a reduced rate.

The separate travel plan will also permit folks like your editor and travel coordinator, a member of the "Jet Debt Set", to use my credit card with extended payments. All that is required to join the tour is for the individual to make his or her way to Heathrow or Gatwick Airport in London not later than late afternoon on 14 August 1980. Transportation will be available at each airport to take you to a Heathrow Hotel/Motel for a jet lag catch-up. Those persons already in Europe prior to that date must join the group that same afternoon at the selected hotel/motel.

Those arriving early on that day can make it to downtown London on the newly completed Picadilly Underground, if you are not interested in catching a little rest. That evening, there will be a cocktail party and buffet dinner for a "get-acquainted" and trip orientation meeting, led by a very well known member of the David Wade Ltd. Travel Operators. Trip brochures and coach assignments will be made this evening.

Only 180 persons can participate in this special tour due to lodging and other considerations. Four coaches will be utilized, each carrying 45 persons and a courier. All information concerning arrival in London must be conveyed to the Travel Coordinator, such as method of arrival, airline, flight number and estimated arrival time at either Heathrow or Gatwick airport. The tentative itinerary follows:

**13 AUGUST 1980:** Depart the USA for overnight trip to London.

**14 August 1980:** Transportation will be available at Heathrow and Gatwick airport to carry tour participants to the Heathrow hotel/motel selected as a gathering spot for all members.

**15 August 1980:** Depart Heathrow hotel/motel about mid-morning via coach for Ipswich and Felixstowe in Suffolk. There will be a rest stop enroute for coffee. Following arrival and check-in at your accommodations, (Post House in Ipswich and the Orwell Moat House in Felixstowe) members will be free for the balance of the day. They may dine in groups, visit the towns or amusement sites, and there will be coaches available for a "one drink per pub" pub crawl to interesting pubs in the immediate vicinity of Ipswich.

**16-17 AUGUST 1980:** The gala weekend will be centered around a return to the Elmswell-Great Ashfield area. Departing the hotels in mid-morning, a short Memorial Service will be held in All Saints Church. Following the

(Cont'd on Page 2)

**TOUR 1980..** (Continued)

service, the coaches will go direct to the old airfield where a large marquee will have been erected on or near the remaining concrete runway or perimeter. There will be booths ala lawn fete style for playing various English games such as "Bowling for the Pig", Tombola, etc. These will be manned by members of the surrounding villages and members of FOTE. Proceeds will be donated to the Church Fabric Fund. Food and drinks will be provided in the cost of the tour, but members of Great Ashfield parish and other neighbours have offered to prepare the food and serve it buffet style. There will be soft drinks and tea, with plenty of beer on tap. There will be portable toilets, fresh water, electricity, movies, slide shows and wonderful music of the 1940's. Geritol will be served to those members desiring to swing back into the "Hokey Pokey" or "Knees Up Mother Brown". Some carnival rides are being sought to add to the amusement.

Having this festive weekend will permit the men of the area to join with us in renewing old acquaintances and making new ones. On our last visit in 1976, the men of the surrounding villages were all working in the fields and unable to join with us. Selected members of FOTE will be present with their families as well as the local folks.

Coaches will depart for Ipswich and Felixstowe at 1700 or 1800 hour and Saturday evening is open for individual use. There are many fine restaurants in the area.

Sunday morning will be free until 1100 hour. Some persons may wish to attend services at All Saints church. Coaches will be provided. Other may wish to attend a service of their choice, while others might have a "sleep-in". At 1100 hour, the group will be coached back to Great Ashfield for a repeat of the Saturday festivities, plus meeting other invited guests. The coaches will depart from Great Ashfield at 1600 hour to return to the hotels. On that Sunday evening, we will have a Dinner-Dance at the Orwell Moat House. The cost of the dinner dance will be included in the tour costs. Dress for men will be a suit with shirt and necktie. The suit may be a combination affair of slacks and sports coat. Women may dress in formal or dinner dresses. Guests will be permitted, but numbers must be restricted due to the space available. Costs of guests must be borne by individual hosts. The Orwell Moat House has been reknown for its Saturday evening Dinner-Dances and we are very fortunate to have an affair on Sunday evening.

18 AUGUST 1980: Two Coaches will depart to Bury St. Edmund, Newmarket and Cambridge for a full days tour of these towns. There will be a visit to the Cambridge American Memorial Cemetery and the Duxford Museum. A picnic lunch will be held along the way. Meanwhile, two other coaches will depart for Norwich and Great Yarmouth. There are many historic areas and places to be visited. A basket picnic will also be held for this group.

19 AUGUST 1980: The coaches will take their passengers on the opposite tour of the previous day.

20 AUGUST 1980: The tour for this date will be to the old Roman town of Colchester, the wool town of Lavenham, Ixworth Abbey and on to Framlingham. A few miles from Framlingham is the location of the Parham airfield of the 390th Bombardment Group where, through the cooperation of the owner Percy Kindred, members of FOTE have rebuilt the old Control Tower and converted it to a museum. After visiting the Framlingham Castle and town, the group will go to Parham where members of FOTE will entertain us with a Bar-B-Que in the Control Tower area. Then back to hotel to pack.

21 AUGUST 1980: Coaches depart the hotels to the Felixstowe docks where we connect with the morning sailing of the modern ferry to Zeebrugge in Belgium. There will be ample time on board to enjoy lunch and relax before arriving into the Belgian port early in the afternoon. Coaches will then drive through the Belgian countryside and on to Germany arriving at our

hotel in central Cologne in mid-evening.

22 AUGUST 1980: Three choices are open. One is to sightsee in this beautiful "Rhineside" city, two is to go shopping or three, a chance to take a short cruise on the Rhine. After lunch we will drive through the German countryside to the city of Bremen and to our hotel. The evening is free.

23 AUGUST 1980: Morning drive to Hamburg where we will have a short sightseeing trip before embarking on the vessel for the short ferry trip from Puttgarten to Rtdbyhavn on the Danish mainland. Coaches will continue on to Copenhagen, arriving in mid-evening.

24 AUGUST 1980: This Sunday morning we will have a guided sightseeing tour in beautiful, wonderful, Copenhagen, seeing all the famous sights including the Royal Palace and the Little Mermaid, and we will finish the tour (and How!) with a visit to either the Carlsberg or Tuborg brewery. The afternoon and evening will be free.

25 AUGUST 1980: This will be a free day for members to do as they please.

26 AUGUST 1980: Depart in coaches for ferry to Sweden. Visit in Malmo and travel up western coast of Sweden to Halsingborg, returning to Copenhagen via Helsingør where we will visit Hamlet's Castle. In the evening we will visit Tivoli Garden.

27 AUGUST 1980: Morning drive to Odense where we visit the Hans Christian Andersen home and Museum. Time for lunch and sightseeing before we continue on to the Danish port of Esjberg where we connect with a modern North Sea ferry (two berth cabins) for the overnight return to England.

28 AUGUST 1980: Morning arrival into the port of Harwich and onward by coach to our hotel near Heathrow Airport in mid-afternoon. Time for one last evening in London.

29 AUGUST 1980: Depart selected airport on the airline of your choice for the USA, or other destination. Transportation will be available to the airports.

The tour price will include all coach travel as per itinerary, fourteen nights 1st Class hotel accommodations based on sharing twin bedded rooms with private bathroom and includes continental-style breakfast, the Cocktail-Buffer on the 14th, drinks and food at the airbase on the 16th and 17th, the Dinner Dance on the 17th, service and taxes, hotel baggage handling charges, the guided tour of Copenhagen, the visit to the Hans Christen Andersen Museum in Odense, ferry passage Felixstowe-Zeebrugge, Puttgarden-RjSdbyhvn, Copenhagen-Malmo, Halsingborg-Helsingør, Halsskov-Nyborg and Esjberg-Harwich, cabin accommodations in twin berth cabins on Esjberg-Harwich overnight sailing, Belgian Entry fees, German and Danish Road Tolls, and the services of experienced Drivers and Couriers who will accompany the tour throughout.

There will be a single room supplement for hotels and the cabin ferry. This office will try to help in the match-up of compatible members.

DON'T PUT OFF OR SKIP.

RESERVATIONS FOR THIS TRIP.

PRICING FOR THE TOUR WILL BE LISTED IN THE NOVEMBER NEWSLETTER.

One item that should be brought to you attention is that surcharges, such as the fuel cost on power bills, seems to becoming a part of the travel industry. Not on normal items such as hotels and meals, but on the cost of fuels used in aircraft and motor coaches. I do not expect we will ever be kept in the dark about changing costs, but you, the customer should know. ■

# MEMORIES...

STATION 155

(EXTRACT)

August 1944

## GROUP COMMANDER'S REPORT

For the 385th Bombardment Group the month of August marked the end of a phase. The man who put the group together had gone.

The phase just ended had been a glorious phase. In over a year of combat operations the 385th Group had rained destruction on the enemy throughout the length of Fortress Europe. In that year the group had grown into a strong, smooth-functioning, purposeful organization. It had become a monument to the man who had built it and guided it from its infancy, and now the man had gone.

The new group commander came in filled with two conflicting emotions, one of intense pride at having fallen heir to such a splendid organization, and one of trepidation at the thought of succeeding a man so thoroughly respected and so much an object of devotion. The new group commander thought to himself that sometimes the intense loyalties which troops hold for a strong man make life a miserable thing for an unknown successor. So thinking he walked softly, almost apologetically, into the confines of the office which bore the awesome notation "Commanding Officer". The new boss had come into his own. Whether or not the inconstant sprite who keeps the ledgers of fate would write, "and his own received him not", was a judgement which lay only in the tribunals of history.

But the new boss found that his fears, if fears they were, were without foundation. Of course, there was Jim, his driver and self appointed upholder of the dignity of the Commanding Officer. Jim who, when he'd disapprove some departure from custom, never hesitated to say, with just the right amount of deference, "Sir, the Colonel never used to do that." And there was Sam, the resplendent headwaiter in the staff mess, who was at first a little niggardly in his customary flourishes. But with a little subtle psychology the new boss got them on his side. The new boss has become "Colonel" to Jim, and Sam's flourishes are as harmoniously unrestrained as ever they were.

The entire staff, like the good soldiers they were, are as loyally at hard work as ever. The group is moving on into the new phase, strongly, on the sound structure welded in the fire of war. The new boss and the group are not looking back, but forward into the future.

(Signed)

G. Y. JUMPER

Lieutenant Colonel, Air Corps,  
Commanding.

NOTE: After reading this report and having traveled back to England in 1976 with Colonel and Mrs. Jumper, your editor must say the "inconstant sprite who keeps the ledgers of fate", has written in the pages of history "and his own took him unto their breast", for surely, after 1976, the Colonel has no doubt that he was accepted and respected as our Commanding Officer, and Boss.

AUGUST 1943

A LOG OF 36 YEARS AGO.

Captain Archie Benner was named Commanding Officer of the 549th Bomb Squadron. Lt. Leo A. Lacasse was cited for his heroic efforts to save his squadron flyers. When a 20mm shell exploded in one of his fuel tanks, he took his ship out of formation and bombed the target alone. He was cited for the Silver Star (which was awarded by Colonel LeMay on 19 Sept). Other pilots cited for the Distinguished Flying Cross during the month were Lt.'s Jacques, Yoder, Heuser and Schley.\* The new consolidated Mess Hall opened in Site 7. New help arrived on the scene when the 31st Station complement arrived. On 13 August, the 20mm cannon was installed in the nose of "Roundtrip Jack", after considerable work on the part of CWO

Nugent Thompson and TSgt. Elmer Blank. It was tested on this date and fired 75 rounds over the Wash. It was tested again on the 14th, but upon landing, Lt. Tommy Harrison, Group Armament Officer, had the unpleasant task of telling CWO Thompson that a "new chin turreted B-17 was on the way and it was called a "G" model. (If anyone has a picture of that installation, your editor would like to copy it, since he was the crew chief of "Roundtrip Jack" and supervised the installation). Of the seven accredited missions flown in August, the one on the 17th to Regensburg was the most memorable to those participating and it was an historical moment in aerial warfare - the beginning of the first shuttle mission and the seed of the Bernie Ley novel, "Twelve O'clock High". Our group aircraft landed at two bases in Africa - Bone and Telergma. Two crews went down, Reichardt's and Sommers. Several months later, we were to learn that Lt.'s Sommers, Brown, and McClatchey and SSgt Crabtree were killed in action and TSgt. Wieneke and SSgt. Schreppel were MIA. Sommer's top turret gunner, TSgt. Callerani, evaded capture and returned to base on 18 October 1943. On the return leg of the shuttle mission, Bordeaux was bombed and Captain Master's "Lulu Belle" was forced to ditch in the Atlantic Ocean. Lt. Colonel Piper was Group Leader flying in that aircraft. Four men died from the aircrew; Capt. Dewey, Lt. Jones, TSgt Sanders and SSgt Cameron, either washed away from the aircraft, or slipping into the ocean during the 23% hours before they were picked up by the British Air Sea Rescue. Lt. Keeley's crew had ditched in the Mediterranean Sea on the leg from Regensburg to Africa and all crew members were picked up after 20 hours in the water. The month closed out on the happy return of Lt. Col. Piper, Captain Masters, and the surviving members of the aircrew. They had been held in the hospital for a few days to recover from their experience in the Atlantic.

During the month we had lost two aircrews and had been credited with only 100 sorties in seven missions.

One year later in August 1944, four aircrews were lost (Masterson, Bristol, Rosener and Harrington), the group had flown 19 missions and been credited with 583 sorties.

\* (NOTE: Lt. John Schley was posthumously awarded the Silver Star.)

SEPTEMBER 1943

STATION 155

The first aircrew left for the Red Cross Club at Southport, Lancs. It was the crew of Captain Masters. Seven days of well earned rest???

It can be said literally that the month began with a bang. "Roundtrip Ticket" blew up on the hardstand. Cpl. Edward DeWolf, a fireman was killed in the explosion. A fire had started at the oxygen slinger ring in the top turret during a repair. The mission was scrubbed, two aircraft were severely damaged, several received minor damage and several buildings were damaged. Lt. John Schley, just three minutes from home, collided with a Fort from another group. He and his entire crew were killed. General Ira C. Eaker visited with us on the 22nd, bringing with him a delegation of general officers. Oddly, they only visited quarters and did not actually come to the airfield.

The first of the mid-air collisions involving our own aircraft occurred on the 26th when two great crews - Lt. John Keeley's and Lt. Paul Yannello's - were involved. SSgt Johnny Adams, a crewman on Lt. Yannello's crew, was the sole survivor. Both crews had completed 11 missions - which proved to be the average number of missions one could expect to survive during the first six or seven months of operations. Lt. Don Jones encountered a German fighter while on a night practice mission. The vertical stabilizer took the brunt of the German firepower. Catholic Chaplain Joseph Scherer joined the group on the 11th, while Colonel Curtis E. LeMay, 4th Bombardment Wing Commander, made the first major awards on the 19th. The group was credited with 8 missions and 171 sorties.■

# THE PREZ SEZ...

JAMES H. EMMONS

To me, one of the many highlights of the Kansas City Reunion was the couple of hours I spent in the Memoirs Room looking through scrapbooks. I particularly enjoyed those of Vince Masters and O. V. Lancaster.

Vince's gave me a good history of the Group, while O.V.'s recalled many memories of training days, for we were graduated in the same Pilot Training Class. He had copies of all his orders and several included the names of other classmates of whom I had not heard of after graduation. After enjoying the scrapbooks, I resolved to go through my records, pictures, etc., and make a scrapbook. It will be enjoyable to me and might be interesting to others at the Florida reunion. Why don't others do the same. It will make a nice cold weather project this winter.

When John Ford wrote asking for a column from me, he didn't specify just what, so I guess I'm on my own. I joined the 548th in November 1943 as a co-pilot on Bill McCammon's crew. Flew about eight missions with that crew, then started checking out newer crews for several missions. Became Assistant Squadron Operations officer under Colonel Leo LaCasse and started flying Acting Command Pilot with Deputy Lead ships. Began flying Acting Command Group Lead in May 1944.

I vividly remember leading a mission to France soon after D-Day in which we were briefed to bomb German lines just opposite our own lines. We were on the bomb run and Lead Bombardier Tony Thornock, now deceased, told me the Group ahead had bombed short of the target, mistaking the target because of smoke, drifting across the lines. We bombed our target with good results and it was later that we learned that a General McNair had been killed in that "short bombing" incident.

I recall as if it were yesterday flying two missions as Formation Control Officer in the tail of the Lead ship. The first was with Colonel Van on the Group's first mission to Berlin in the first part of March 1944. The second was in the tail of Colonel Frank Bexfield's Deputy Wing Lead ship some two weeks later. On this mission we were headed for Berlin, behind the First Division and ahead of the Second Division. Just as we approached the "coast in point" near Helogoland, we received a recall message from Division. We were at 29,000 feet and "mushing" along with noses high and poor visibility due to persistent contrails. The Wing ahead had just started a left turn to head for England when the First Division loomed out of the clouds on a reciprocal course and at the same altitude.

In the next few minutes we saw several mid-air collisions and B-17's twisting and turning like fighters. I decided right then that flying could be hazardous to one's health. Our Group maintained formation, letting down gradually on the return to England and I don't think we suffered any losses.

It was after we had dispersed and descended to low altitude that I realized that my feet had been frozen because of a failure of my heated boots. Now, when cold weather hits, I always remember the sensation of the pain of defrosting my feet, and I will never forget the sight of two 60-ships wings flying in opposite directions, trying to avoid collisions.

I look forward to the next two years with enthusiasm and hope each of you will continue the search for our former members. With help from all, we will have the biggest turnout ever in Florida.

My best wishes to all. ■

## REUNION LIST

Following is a list of personnel attending the last reunion in Kansas City, Missouri:

- |                       |                          |
|-----------------------|--------------------------|
| Ailes, Curtis A.      | Baldwin, M/M R. R.       |
| Abrahamson, M/M C. L. | Bember, M/M J. K.        |
| Albrecht, M/M H. W.   | Benefield, M/M A. L.     |
| Andrew, Hugh S.       | Benner, M/M A. V. Jr. nn |
| Andrews, Robert E.    | Berg, M/M Glen           |
| Ault, Joseph R.       | Bexfield, M/M F.W.       |
| Bailey, Robert B.     | Bishard, Rose Mary       |

- |                        |                             |
|------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Böhmerbach, M/M L.     | Donald, M/M Paul R.         |
| Brucker, M/M Noble W.  | McMicking, M/M Henry A.     |
| Bunting, Dr. W. P.     | McWilliams, M/M Clovis      |
| Bushey, Dr/M H. L.     | Mann, M/M Sol               |
| Cavan, M/M Charles H.  | Manning, M/M George         |
| Chance, M/M Kenneth    | Marano, M/M Frank P.        |
| Coble, M/M Barney J. * | Martin, Armistice E.        |
| Cole, M/M Earl L.      | Martin, M/M Earnest E.      |
| Cole, M/M Sam M.       | Masters, Dr/M Vincent W.    |
| Colentino, M/M C. J.   | Messenger, Dari J.          |
| Colthorpe, M/M S. E.   | Miller, Linda               |
| Cooper, M/M L. E.      | Milligan, M/M Robert S.     |
| Corriveau, M/M Al      | Montgomery, M/M Wayne C.C   |
| Cragoe, M/M C. R.      | Morgan, M/M Thomas A.       |
| Creegan, Helen         | Muchow, Howard A.           |
| Crosman, M/M Dorland   | Neal, M/M Gerald            |
| Cunat, M/M Rudy J.     | Nicholls, M/M William J.    |
| Dillon, M/M James L.   | Noble, M/M John D.          |
| Dunlap, M/M Joy H.     | Payne, M/M Robert           |
| Edelstein, M/M Charles | Phillips, M/M Walter D.     |
| Ellis, M/M John E. S.  | Piechotte, M/M Robert C.    |
| Emmons, M/M James H.   | Powell, M/M William C.      |
| Faroo, M/M Edward F.   | Raper, Marion E.            |
| Fife, M/M W. A.        | Reinken, M/M Floyd D.       |
| Ford, M/M Emory N.     | Relyea, M/M Merle M.        |
| Ford, M/M John C.      | Rembert, M/M Howard T.      |
| Framer, M/M David      | Rivard, Raymond             |
| Gaul, M/M Norman W.    | Roop, M/M William J.        |
| Gillis, M/M M. Drue    | Russel 1, M/M Larry         |
| Ginn, M/M C. L.        | Russel 1, Ellen             |
| Goldberg, M/M H. L.    | Salvador, M/M George        |
| Goldman, Norman        | Schneider, M/M Joseph R.    |
| Gorchak, M/M Joseph    | Schneider, M/M Joseph S.    |
| Grabowski, M/M E. F.   | Schneider, Toni             |
| Hale, M/M Donald H.    | Schulz, M/M Paul R.         |
| Harter, M/M Emmett A.  | Skeer, M/M David            |
| Heard, M/M Lyman B.    | Smith, M/M Charles C.       |
| Heiser, M/M Fred W.    | Smith, Dr/M Lewis A.        |
| Hess, M/M James A.     | Smith, M/M Ralph P.         |
| Hills, M/M John F.     | Stermmer, M/M Edward J.     |
| Hite, John D.          | Stern, M/M Edward R.        |
| Hruska, M/M George S.  | Strout, M/M Clarence L.     |
| Huber, Arkey M.        | Sutter, Frank M             |
| Ihlenburg, Frederick   | Taubkin, Dr/M Milton L.     |
| Immel, M/M John A.     | Toman, FI orian A. J.       |
| Irons, Clement I.      | Traudt, M/M Ernest          |
| James, M/M Ben E.      | Trousdale, Harold A.        |
| Jameson, M/M Russell   | Valliere, M/M Robert A.     |
| Jarosz, M/M Albert J.  | Varady, Capt/M Bertalen J.  |
| Johnston, M/M Grier F. | Walls, M/M Frank B.         |
| Jordan, M/M Harold L.  | Weikert, M/M Ruel G.        |
| Kay, M/M R. K.         | Weisgarber, M/M Glenn P.    |
| Keen, Pauline          | Wheaton, M/M Richard A.     |
| Kelley, M/M John H.    | Wiegand, M/M Arthur H.      |
| Knight, M/M Robert A.  | Wilson, M/M William J.      |
| Lancaster, M/M O. V.   | Wright, M/M LI oyd W.       |
| Lee, M/M Robert E.     | Zeigler, M/M Wayne G.       |
| Lemon, M/M Harry V.    | Zink, M/M Virgil E.         |
| Leyerly, M/M Dean      | ** Martin, M/M Earl D.      |
| Lybeck, M/M Clifford   | (Other guests were present) |
| Lyke, M/M Samuel E.    |                             |
| McCarthy, Edward F.    | ** Dykstra, M/M August      |

\*\* The editor left August Dykstra's name until the last to pay a special tribute to the former Crew Chief of the "Sleepytime Gal's". He, with his lovely wife Katheryn's assistance, has fought a long and very tough battle with cancer. Since Augie was not pre-registered, it was a great surprise to see him at the reunion, looking remarkably well. His stubborn resistance to adversity is nothing new. He was that same type of Crew Chief in WW II. And he had a great time with his favorite pilot, O. V. Lancaster, and his crew. ■

## INSIGNIA

Members wishing to buy Group and Squadron insignia on finger tip and hand towels; men or women's "T" shirts, or glass framed 8" x 10"s, should write to Arkey M. Huber, P O Box 3842, North Las Vegas, NV, 89030. He will send you a brochure with the prices and instructions. The insignia are silk screened and were on sale at the reunion. The towels make great presents to friend or foe for crying purposes. Delivery takes 3 to 6 weeks after receipt of order.\*

# "RUM DUM"'s 106th

Howard A. Muchow

It was a typical English early spring morning with a little fog hanging on the runways and a nip in the air. It was the morning of 18 May 1945 and my pick-up crew had just been briefed for "BIG B". As we made our way toward "RUM DUM", there were many thoughts in the minds of the men. There were memories of their original crews, worry about whether they would be next and when, not knowing each other and wondering if each man was capable of doing his job, and above all, they knew the old girl that had been assigned to them for this mission, #378, had already completed 105 missions without an abort and the CO, as well as the ground crew, were out to capture the all time record for the Group. They knew the flak would be as thick as pea soup over and around the Berlin area and they knew the German fighters would be making their determined stand against their reaching the target. Germany might be coming to its knees but the war was still very real.

These thoughts seemed jumbled as we climbed for altitude over the Channel. And how right they seemed going into the target, with the black and grey puffs of flak raining against our old girl. It was like someone throwing gravel, only this metallic gravel was blasting through the airplane. The thought passed through my mind that the gals down below were doing a good job today. Immediately after "Bombs Away", the number 1 engine took a direct hit... then number 3 was hit. As we feathered number 3, I saw that number 1 was on fire and we feathered it. We started losing altitude and falling out of formation, when over the airways we heard bandits being called out by another squadron. A frantic call was sent out on the fighter channel for help and protection from our little friends, and there they came - three beautiful P51's to help us down and stay with us - one high, one low, with the third dropping his flaps and gear to come alongside and give us the thumbs up and "V" sign. Then he saw the fire in number 1 engine and up came his flaps and gear and he moved away out. I gave the order to bail out, but the crew wanted to stay with 378 and ride it down, hopefully to friendly territory. Who wanted to check out, first hand, the stories of captured airmen?

We were losing altitude rapidly, when suddenly ahead I saw an open field and thought I would try my luck. It was downwind and I recall thinking we could not make it... if only we could hang on a little longer and swing the old girl around and set it down. It was like a dream... we were on the ground and rolling, when suddenly we saw troops coming out of the woods toward us. Were they Germans? No, thank God, they were English... and they were just arriving to take over the open field for front line fighter support! We had made it and no one was hurt - only Heaven knows why. The gunners removed the turret sights, I got a receipt for "Rum Bum" from the English Commanding Officer, and we were on our way home the hard way.

Upon our return to Great Ashfield, the first question asked was, "Can "Rum Dum" fly again"? The second question was "How's the crew"?

I understand that "Rum Dum" was dismantled and hauled out of that field to be assembled again, and rumor has it that she crashed either on a takeoff or on a landing, but she never made it back home. One thing she did do though, she made 106 missions without a mechanical abort. But I'll always remember the old girl and how she got us back into friendly territory. And yet, God forgive me, I can't remember the name of a single crew member who flew with me on that mission.

NOTE: The author was the original co-pilot on Charles ArmtrusCer's crew assigned to "Mr. Lucky". He became a first pilot. He was not on the crew when Armbruster and Rusecky collided in mid-air at 13,300 feet on the Ulm mission of 1 March 1945- Joe Frank Jones Jr., tail gunner on Armbruster's crew, was the sole survivor of that mission. Your editor, having been Crew Chief, Flight Chief and Line Chief in the same squadron as the author, has a deep and abiding sympathy with pick-up crews. Many of his closest friends finished their mis-

sions with pick-up crews and with crews on their first or second mission. In the 550th we had four B-J.7's who reached the 100 mark without an abortion, and many new pilots, flying in these aircraft after its fifty to seventieth mission, often felt intimidated by personnel, officers and airman, with words like, "I wouldn't like to be in your shoes and face the Old Man if you abort in this airplane". Rightly or wrongly, this implicit or explicit threat was a real nerve-wracker for many pilots throughout the Eighth Air Force. For the record, let it be known that aircraft maintenance men deplored such a situation, for to them the crew safety was the paramount issue on every flight, regardless of whether it was a crew of old friends, or newcomers on their first mission.\*

## PUBLICATIONS

Just before the reunion in Kansas City, we received reprints of the 385th Bombardment Group (H) history. They were on sale at the reunion. Two of our associate members made the printing possible by guaranteeing purchases of quantities of the book. One was Cliff Bishop, of Country Newspapers, Station Road, Elsenham, Bishop's Stortford, Herts., England, and the second member was Jim Young, 530 Broadway, McKees Rocks, PA 15136.

Cliff Bishop is one of the original FOTE members and a long time avid 8th Air Force historian. The 385th has granted his shop in England the sole rights for sale of our Group History in Great Britain. This agreement also applies to all other printed matter published by the 385th BGRA, and issued for sale.

Jim Young is an active 8th Air Force enthusiast and an active member of the USAF Reserve. He is an ardent collector of 8th Air Force histories, and is assembling one of the finest collection of 8th Air Force Group and Squadron heraldic patches in the United States.

And this is where you, the reader, comes into the picture. Jim is willing to trade one reprint of our Group history for an original Group or Squadron patch. In addition to that offer, he will trade THREE history reprints in exchange for ONE ORIGINAL copy of the 385th Group History!

Here is a man so enthusiastic that he laid out \$1000.00 before our history was even reprinted, and whose sole aim is to complete his total 8th Air Force collection and donate it to the USAF Academy Library, or the USAF Museum Library at Wright-Patterson AFB, Dayton, Ohio. Support him!

Copies of the Group history reproductions are available from the 385th BGRA for \$20.00. This includes mailing and handling charges.

Souvenir copies of the Seventh Reunion booklet was a bound copy of all the Newsletters issued since 8 August 1975. This booklet is also for sale at the price of \$3.00. A few copies of the Sixth Reunion booklet are still on hand and sell for \$1.50. This booklet contains the history of All Saints Church in Great Ashfield, where the 385th BG Memorial Altar is enshrined. All prices include the mailing and handling charges.

Make checks payable to the 385th BGRA and mark them "For Booklets". Send them to John C. Ford, Editor, 7204 Easy Street, Camp Springs, MD 20031.\*

## DUES & DONATIONS

How can you help the Association? Anthony S. Ragone, 6 Wood Lane, Valley Stream, NY, 11581, found one way. Unable to attend the reunion, he had 200 ball point pens specially made for the Seventh Reunion in red, white and blue. They were on sale at the reunion and all proceeds were donated to the Memorial Fund.

John R. Murray, 3404 Woodsville Drive, New Port Richey, FL 33552, was forced to cancel his reservations at the last minute. Ray and his wife donated their \$70.00 registration fee to the BGRA treasury. Anybody else out there with a new idea? A good old idea is to pay your 1979 dues of \$5.00 if you are in arrears.

The membership thanks the Ragone's and Murray's.\*

# OBITUARIES

C. THOMAS PANFILE  
549TH BOMBARDMENT SQUADRON  
DIED: 6 May 1979

To all appearances It was a regular reservation form for the Seventh Reunion. However, the enclosed letter stated "it will be necessary to make special arrangements with a hospital in Kansas City, so that I may go on the dialysis machine before the Dinner Dance". The member went on to state he had a kidney condition and required dialysis treatment on a regular basis. But above all, the writer stated "I expect to have the time of my life when I get together with my old buddies of the Robert Milligan combat crew". The reservation arrived early in January 1979.

That was the first time the writer knew about C. Thomas Panfile, 124 Berks Street, Stowe, PA 19464. It was not the last! The week before Easter, his wife wrote and stated that they would have to cancel for the reunion. Tom had been seriously ill for some time, suffering not only from the kidney disease, but also from diabetes and poor blood circulation. The letter also contained the bad news that the latter condition now dictated the amputation of a leg. About the same time, Bob and Ann Milligan wrote, expressing their concern and telling of Tom's condition.

Upon arrival in Kansas City, one of the first persons encountered was Clarence Abrahamson, who had been a crew mate of Tom's. He told an updated version of Tom's condition and was deeply worried. As more members of Milligan's crew arrived, the center of conversation revolved about Tom. These men embodied the very heart and soul of a great combat crew - they were family!

In the late afternoon, just before the dinner dance was to begin, the crew gathered together and placed a conference call to the hospital in Pennsylvania. His condition was rapidly deteriorating and when his wife Patricia, held the phone to Tom's head, they knew his life was slipping away. The emotional impact in the hotel room was devastating when Pat had told them of Tom's words to his doctor. "If I can't get to that reunion, I might as well be dead".

The next evening, May 6th, as his crew mates were returning home, Tom went through his final briefing and his Soul took off to meet his Maker. Though missed by all his friends on earth. Heaven has to be a brighter place with Tom there.

While Bob Milligan's crew won top honors for attendance at the reunion, not too many people knew that Tom Panfile was also there in spirit. What great quality of leadership, was provided to these men by their pilot? Bob Milligan believes sincerely that Tom was part and parcel of that leadership.

Tom is survived by his wife Patricia, and two children, Susan and Tom, Jr. Robert and Ann Milligan were present at the funeral and represented the members of the 385th BGRA. ■

RAYMOND C. NOISEAU  
549TH BOMBARDMENT SQUADRON  
DIED: 17 Aptpl 1973

Raymond C. Noiseau died in a Duluth, MN, hospital in 1973. Word of his death was received from Clarence Abrahamson. Ray had been the original co-pilot on the Robert Milligan crew, but had been selected as a first pilot. Ray was shot down over Berlin on 6 October 1944 - the day the 385th BG lost 11 crews to a 75 aircraft attack of German fighters. The entire high squadron went down. It was Ray's 35th mission and he ended the war in Stalag Luft 2 before being liberated. He was survived at the time by his mother Anna, of Duluth, and two sons, R. Douglas, of Houston, TX, and Robert C., of Kelso, WA. ■

DAVID LAING  
550TH BOMBARDMENT SQUADRON  
DIED: 20 June 1979

David Laing, 554 Farnsworth Ave., Clairton, PA, 15025, died of cancer on 20 June 1979. He had been severely ill for ten months.

Dave and this writer had served together in the Maintenance Section of the 550th Bomb Squadron and had renewed an old friendship in 1975 at the Atlanta reunion. He and his wife Rosalind were married in England in 1945. He had worked for 38 years for United States Steel Corporation in Clairton, PA., working in the Maintenance Division. He had just retired in the early part of this year.

We had last met on the weekend of 27 July 1977, when the Forrest Keen's had hosted a mini-reunion of 550th maintenance personnel at their farm in Kansas. Dave had just driven 22 solid hours from his home in Clairton to be with the group. During the weekend, we had discussed many items, for Dave had an exceptional memory of names, dates and places. He told of his many activities in the Masons and Shriners, but it was not until his obituary was printed that the full extent of his activities became clear.

He held many high positions in the Masonic Lodge and the Pittsburgh Shrine, as well as in the American Legion.

Before his death and while still bed-ridden, he was installed as Eminent Commander of the McKeesport Knights Templar. He had been Deputy Director for membership in the Syria Mosque Temple Shrine.

Dave had been a regular attendee at all the 385th reunions until illness beset him. Notice of his death was received from his lifetime friend Russell Jameson, who attended the funeral and also represented the 385th BGRA.

He is survived by his wife Rosalind, his son, Melvin David, and two grandchildren, Debra Michel and Melissa Ann. May he Rest in Peace. ■

JAMES W. FRYDENLUND  
DIED: 16 January 1978

Notice of James W. Frydenlund's death was received from Mrs. Frydenlund on 1 August 1979. Cause of death was a heart attack. ■

ROBERT LLOYD HAGAN  
DIED: 9 May 1979

Information concerning the death of Robert L. Hagan was received on 26 July from Mrs. Jane E. Hagan, 21704 Donald, E. Detroit, MI 48021. Cause of death was attributed to complications arising from diabetes. ■

"Peace and love. an.e the tujo ivlngi that beaA the good man to Heaven" - Michael Angelo.



Tom Panfile's crewmates: Top L to R: Petit, R. Milligan (Pilot), Martin, Traudt, Rembert. Lower row L to R: Curtis, Sutter, Cooper and Abrahamson

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## LOCATE A FORMER

## MEMBER !

# "SALLY B" NEEDS YOU!

In Britain, a small band of dedicated enthusiasts have fought a desparate battle to insure that USAAF airmen killed over Europe are memorialized by an unofficial flying tribute. They have maintained and kept flying, purely by voluntary efforts, the A-26 Invader and B-17 Flying Fortress of the privately owned USAAF World War II Memorial Flight.

Now they seem to be losing the fight, for without substantial financial aid, "Sally B", the only B-17 flying in Europe, will be permanently grounded at the end of 1979. The replacement of the 4 engines in "Sally B" will cost \$80,000, and that is only one of the rehab projects. This cost is beyond the resources of the private owners or the voluntary service crew.

To help raise the money, the USAAF Memorial Flight has commissioned a painting of "Sally B" and is selling prints signed by the artist and the ship's crew. Additionally, a plaque will be raised inside the fuselage on which will be engraved the name of any individual or organization donating more than \$200 toward the restoration.

During the past four years while "Sally B" has been appearing at air shows around Europe, she has been visited by General's James Doolittle and James Stewart. She has flown many times for guests of "Friends of the Eighth", as well as many other air-minded groups and has been seen in the sky by millions of airshow spectators.

If you, like the owners and voluntary air and ground crew, believe that "Sally B" should stay in the air to honor the thousands of young Americans who died in the skies over Europe, you can do your part with a contribution. As long as "Sally B" graces the skies over Europe, there is a flying memorial to our buddies..

To keep this memorial going, you can send your donations, or ask for further information about the signed prints, other B-17 sales and the history of the Memorial Flight, by writing to: The B-17 Preservation, c/o Euroworld, 277-279 Chiswick High Road, London W.4 4PU, England.

If you want to see "Sally B" in the air or on the ground when you visit England next year, join the contributory army that is needed to save her.



B-17G "SALLY B" at Duxford. Photo by Steve Cotts

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION			
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B G R A

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Photograph of Lt. Col. Elliott "Pete" Vandevanter, taken in August 1943. A veteran of 22 missions in the Pacific, he was promoted to Colonel on 4 January 1944 - 4 years, 6 months and 22 days after his graduation from West Point. After 24 missions with the 385th BG, he departed Great Ashfield in August 1944. Promoted to B/General on 21 October 1956. Retired from USAF 31 December 1959 and died on 22 December 1974, as a result of a respiratory illness.