

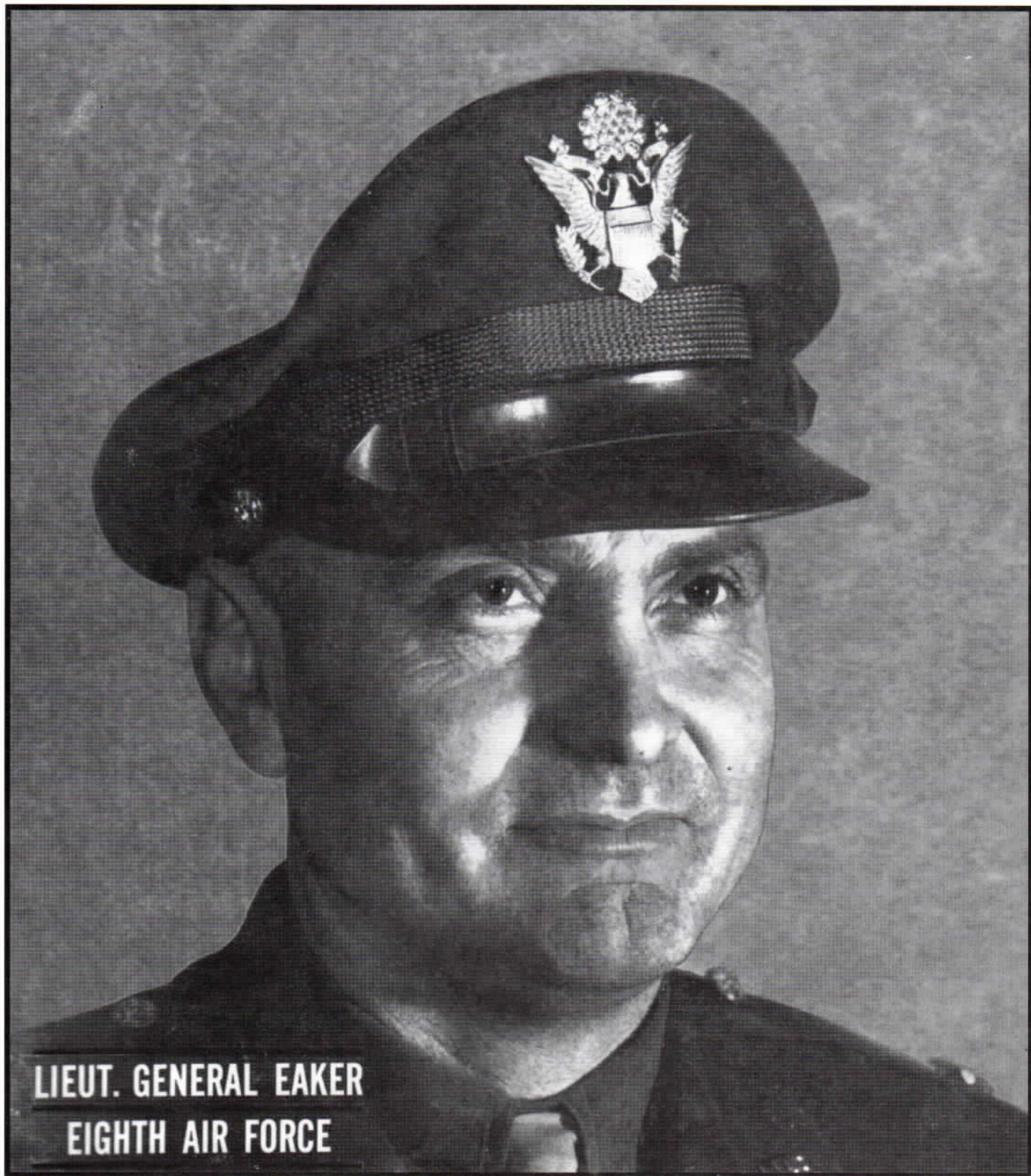


# th AF NEWS

VOLUME 96, NUMBER 1

- Voice of "The Mighty Eighth" -

FEBRUARY 1996



LIEUT. GENERAL EAKER  
EIGHTH AIR FORCE



# th AF NEWS

Magazine of

## The Eighth Air Force Historical Society

Managing Editor – James W. Hill

Please address questions concerning membership, address changes, distribution, and missing copies to the Membership Records Manager listed below. (\*)

This magazine is dedicated to Lt. Col. John H. Woolnough, founder of the Eighth Air Force Historical Society and editor of the Eighth Air Force News for 16 years.

The Eighth Air Force News (8AFN) is published four times a year (February, May, August, November). Please submit material to the editor at least 30 days before the desired issue month. We cannot acknowledge receipt of material or be responsible for its return. All unused material will be deposited in the 8th AF Archives. For advertising rates, call editor (See below). The 8AFHS does not endorse or guarantee the products of its advertisers.

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**Front Cover:** Lt. Gen. Ira C. Eaker, Commanding General of 8th Bomber Command,  
2/22/42 - 11/30/42; 8th Air Force 12/1/42 - 1/7/44.

## Mission Briefing

This issue should make the B-24 boys happy because of its high twin-tailed content. We begin with the President's message and biographical information about artist John Batchelor, our main speaker at the forthcoming Annual Reunion in Orlando. This is followed by a story on MMF's contribution to the P-47 restoration project at Duxford. Photos and information are given on the recent passing of Mrs. Ira C. Eaker, who has always been most gracious to veterans of her husband's "Mighty Eighth." Did you know that crews wearing the 8th AF patch bombed Japan? See page 9 for details. A major article is included on Willow Run's production miracles in producing the "Liberator." Roger Freeman contributes an article on the lengths of combat tours, a bombardier dangles from the bomb bay by one hand, and excerpts are given from letters received by POWs.

Don't miss the call for nominations to the 8AFHS Board of Directors, new information about Life Memberships, and information about the new 8th AF poetry volume on page 29.

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## Artist John Batchelor To Be Reunion Speaker

John Batchelor got his start at an early age. His earliest work dates back to September 1, 1940, when, as a 4-1/2-year-old child in Essex, England, he witnessed an air battle between two German Messerschmitts and a British Hawker Hurricane. The lad rendered a faithful sketch of the encounter, and hasn't looked back since.

To ensure the authenticity of his illustrations, Batchelor maintains an impressive research library consisting of some 3,500 files and 2,500 technical books and manuals. "The more I know, the better my work will be—even if it's a detail that doesn't appear in the final illustration," says Batchelor.

But the artist has found that the best source of information is the real thing. For this reason—"and because it's fun"—Batchelor takes every opportunity to drive, fly, and sail in any military or civilian machine he

can. "I've always said that the best job is the next job, and it's true. There's always a surprise, always something new. That's what makes my life so much fun."



Pres. Jim Hower (L), and John Batchelor (R) with Batchelor painting of B-17s in flight.

## President's Message

"I have mechanical things, and I love drawing--and somehow I have put the two together to make my living. Who could be luckier?"

These are the words of John Batchelor, who will be your featured speaker at the Orlando Reunion October 1st through 6th. Batchelor is from Dorset, England, and is one of the world's foremost illustrators of aircraft and other "mechanical things." Millions have seen Batchelor's work in over 100 volumes of Time-Life books; Reader's Digest; Popular Mechanics; Air and Space; and dozens of other books, magazines and even postage stamps in 18 countries.

The February 1977 Air Classics magazine has a story "Tigers over Texas" about the Confederate Air Force "Air show '76." The story relates that Batchelor traveled 6000 miles in England to ride in the nose of a B-17 and the B-26 Mitchell. He will be traveling from England again, so plan to meet and hear John Batchelor at our 1996 Annual Reunion in Orlando.

This is just one of the many enjoyable events planned for the Reunion on October 1-6, 1996, so start making your plans now. The site is the Clarion Plaza in Orlando, and the room rate is \$73.00 per day. Why not make it a family holiday! Hope to see you there!

Jim Hower



## Election Notice

Nominations for candidates for election to the Board of Directors of the 8th Air Force Historical Society must be in the hands of the Secretary not later than April 15, 1996. The following information must be included with the nomination:

- Full name of person being nominated
- 8AFHS membership number
- Nominee's complete address
- 8th Air Force unit nominee served in
- Short resume of nominee
- Full name and address of nominator
- Nominator's membership number and unit

The Secretary will send all nominations to the Nominating Committee. Nominations not received by the Secretary by April 15, 1996, or any nominations without complete information, will not be considered.

Send all nominations to:  
Tex Shields, Secretary, 8AFHS  
POB 1438, Azle, Texas 76098-1438

## P-47 Restoration Project at Duxford

By John E. Greenwood, President, 8th AF Memorial Museum Foundation

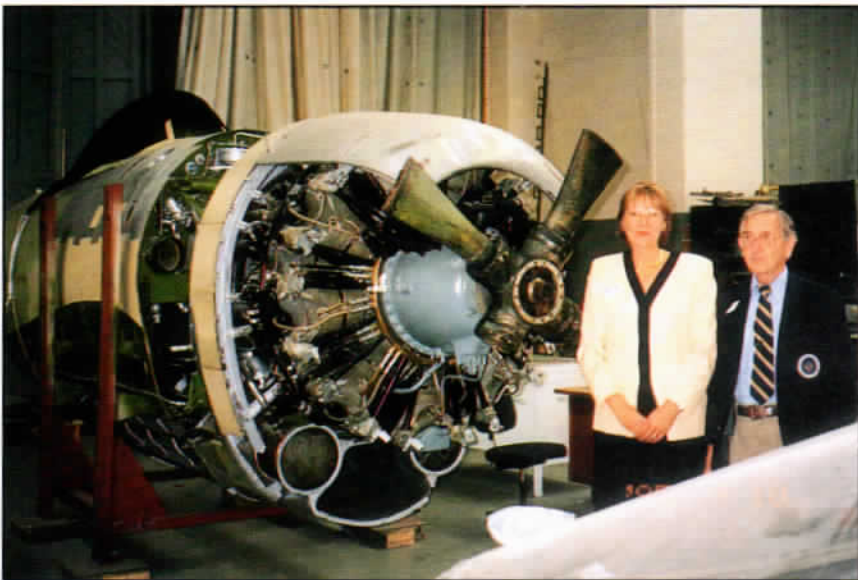
During my September 1995 visit to Duxford to attend the ground breaking for the restoration project of a P-47 "Thunderbolt," which the 8th Air Force Memorial Museum Foundation has been involved with for the past ten years. We provided one-half the deposit funds for its acquisition in 1985, and in the intervening years have given additional funds and helped in the acquisition of hard-to-find aircraft parts. The Duxford staff estimates that the project should be completed in another two years, in time for display when the new American Air Museum is scheduled for completion in 1997.

The aircraft has an interesting past. In 1985, E. O. (Ted) Inman, Director of the Duxford Airfield, Imperial War Museum, scheduled an aircraft search trip to Chino, CA, a center for restoration of WWII warbirds. His wife, Sherida, accompanied him, and while Ted was in conference, she wandered through the restoration facility. She came upon boxes marked "P-47," and on examining the contents found many small, ragged aluminum pieces and other aircraft parts including a Pratt and Whitney R-2800-59 engine. She reported her discovery to Ted after his meeting.

Upon further inquiry, it was determined that the P-47 "basket case" was for sale and was owned by Dave Tallichet, a warbird collector. One of his friends was flying the aircraft when engine problems caused a forced landing and he "augered in." The large radial engine took most of the impact, but the more fragile aluminum fuselage and wings were badly damaged. In this 1980 accident, the pilot survived, but the P-47 seemed beyond repair. The five-year interval between the crash and discovery indicated that there were few buyers for this badly damaged hulk.

The museum at Duxford had been slowly building up the 8th Air Force exhibit with a goal of displaying each of the major aircraft flown in England during WWII, and Ted Inman saw a chance to add a P-47 to his collection. A sale was negotiated and the boxes of ragged metal and crushed parts were sent to Duxford for a very lengthy restoration. This project was put in charge of aeronautical engineer Ted Hagger, and over the past ten years many of the parts have been constructed by him and his staff.

The 8th Air Force Memorial Museum Foundation donated some of the funds necessary to acquire this aircraft for the 8th Air Force exhibit at Duxford. This exhibit was dedicated in



1980 and includes the beautifully restored B-17G "Mary Alice," which the 8AFMMF also partially funded and arranged for the purchase and shipment of restoration parts back to Duxford. The restored aircraft of the 8th Air Force are for static display only. A P-51 "Mustang" was the first to be completed for this display and is now on view at the Imperial War Museum in London.

The cost of the eleven-year P-47 restoration project will be over \$180,000. The 8AFMMF has funded \$20,000 of this and the Imperial War Museum has paid the rest. THANK YOU, DUXFORD!

Still missing from the 8TH AF collection are a B-24 and a P-38.



All photos by Greenwood

LT: Taken at ground breaking for the Air Museum in Britain. (L to R) John Greenwood, Lady Avril Bramall, Lord Bramall

LC: Power plant of the P-47 under restoration. Greenwood and Sherida Inman, who discovered the boxes of crashed P-47 parts.

LB: Recent view of construction underway on the American Air Museum to be completed in 1997.

RT: Front end of P-47 under construction

RC: Duxford restoration staff working on engine installation

RB: Construction detail of underside of wing



### Future 8AFHS Reunions

1996 Oct 1-6  
Orlando, Clarion Plaza Hotel

1997 Sept 8-14  
Minneapolis, Radisson South

1998 (Omaha, Albuquerque, ?)



**B-24 Coverage.** In a note from Herb Wheble of Springfield, MA, he writes, "How about giving the B-24 more press in your 8th AF News." (Editor: OK Herb, this issue is dedicated to you. If we received more contributions relating to the B-24, we would put more in. To be perfectly honest, except in this issue, I make no effort to feature any particular aircraft. If the copy is good, I run it. Unfortunately, many people belong to the 2nd Air Division only, and not to the 8AFHS. They don't even know we exist. Maybe you can help remedy this. Thanks for the input.)

**LeMay Biography.** Proposal being prepared for a grant to prepare a definitive biography of Gen. LeMay for airing on PBS. We need your help in the form of letters of support from knowledgeable people explaining why LeMay is a compelling subject for a documentary. Explain who you are, your relationship to LeMay, and what you think is important about his legacy. Tell how much influence he wielded as commander of SAC, in creating policies concerning our nuclear arsenal, in developing nuclear strategies, policies, and arms control. Please send letters to Andrew Flum, 22201 Wisconsin Ave., NW, Suite 401, Washington, DC 20007 or call 202-298-7607.

**8th AF Book.** Author working on book about the 8th seeks air crews, fighter pilots, ground and staff people for accounts of their experiences. Will pay for copying of diaries, journals, etc., and will conduct interviews by mail. Contact Gerald Astor, 50 Sprain Valley Rd, Scarsdale, NY 10583 or call 914-723-0733 collect.

**452BG History.** I am writing a comprehensive history of the 452nd and need special orders and photos of various aspects, including all missions, esp. "Frantic," "Chowhound," "Revival." Cook's Tours, crossings, ground crews, other ground personnel. William Hurley, 9501 S. King Dr, Chicago, IL 60628 (312-995-2086).

**PBS Special for Memorial Day.** Need letters exchanged between combat veterans and loved ones dealing with the war and feelings about the war. The program will air on Memorial Day 1996. Contact John Holstrom, 3213 Bennet Dr, Los Angeles, CA 90068.

**USAAF Fighter Stories.** Established author-historian preparing book desires fighter stories, particularly relating to June 5 and 6 at Bodney during night takeoff of the 486th. Send copy and photos to Bob Powell, 1545 Rainier Falls Dr, NE, Atlanta, GA 30329. He will transmit them to author Ian McLaughlin in England.

**Merseburg Stories.** Historic researcher seeks contact with bomber flight crews, S-3 Group Ops personnel, and S-2 personnel who participated in 8th AF missions to Merseburg in May-Dec 1944. Contact Craig Stier, POB 539, Oakton, VA 22124 (703-860-9588).

**Military Police.** I would like contact with former members of the MPs to get information about equipment and photos taken in WWII. There is no book on the subject. I've collected some items and names and want to learn more about them. Contact Eric Verlinden, Halensebaam, 8, 3461 Molenbeek-Wersbeek, Belgium.

**Bert Stiles.** I am doing research on the career of Bert Stiles and would be pleased to hear from any men who flew with him in the 91st BG and 339th FG. Please contact John B. Watson, POB 489, Southold, NY 11971 (516-765-2545).

**Atomic Bombing of Japan.** I am conducting research on how combat aircrew of the 8th felt about the atomic bombings of Japan. Please send me your comments, views, and reasons for feeling the way you do. Please write to Richard B. Dondes, 21 Firethorn Ct., East Brunswick, NJ 08816-2778.

**Operation COBRA.** I am looking for first-hand accounts of people who flew on COBRA. I am also researching the causes of the "short" bombing. Please contact Richard C. Baynes, 71 Nighthawk, Irvine, CA 92714 ((714-552-3889). (Ed: I learned recently that some of those killed weren't supposed to be there--they were just rubber-necking.)

**Doo Doo Doo** I would like to hear from members of the 509th Composite Bomb Wing who were based at Roswell AFB in 1947. This is the time of the famous UFO crash and other strange happenings from July to December 1947. Contact D.M. Mace, 15 Plough Lane, Northampton, NN2 8DB

**Sardines in a Can.** In contrast to the comforts enjoyed by a B-17 Navigator, the spatial dimensions in the nose of a B-24 was about the size of a Porta-John. On wing crews there was probably enough room since the Bombardier's position was in the nose turret and the Navigator salvaged the bombs. However, lead crews had the Pilotage Navigator in the turret and the Bombardier was also squeezed into the Navigator's compartment. Most of the time the Bombardier would have to sit under the Navigator's desk trying to be comfortable among the parachutes and other paraphernalia. Going over the target was quite a scene since the Navigator was required to confirm the Bombardier's selection of the target area. George A. Risko, 491BG/855BS, Birmingham, MI

**Blow It Out!** Jim Keefe, past president of the Minnesota Chapter, recently had to get medical treatment. His doctors were named Huff and Puff. The ailment did not deal with breathing. (Ed: Is his house still standing?)

**Fuselage Squadron Codes.** Does anyone know why the 452nd, 34th, 490th, 493rd, and 447th Bomb Groups were assigned fuselage codes that were never used. How were the codes assigned? John Chopelas, Killeen, TX.

**Smoking Gun.** Early on a June morning in 1944 I accidentally shot up the tail of a B-17 on the hardstand next to us (452BG/728BS). I was tried and acquitted and fined a carton of cigarettes. Does anyone remember? Hubert Campney, Emmetsburg, IA.

**The Germans Are Coming!** Luftwaffe veterans who were our mortal enemies 52 years ago will be our guests at the Midwest Regional 2nd Air Div Assn meeting on Sept 27, 1996 at the USAF Air Museum at Wright-Patterson AFB, Dayton, OH. A number of German pilot veterans and civilians who created the Kassel Mission American/German Memorial near Bad Hersfeld, Germany, have

accepted invitations and will attend this anniversary commemoration. The program will focus on the highest group loss in 8th AF history, and will include the showing of a new media-quality video which includes archival combat footage and interviews with participants. For information, contact William Dewey, KMMA, POB 413, Birmingham, MI 48012 (810-644-1492).

**"Ice Cream Caper".** The 34th Bomb Group had an ice cream machine made of airplane parts in early 1944. The responsible officer was Capt. Barks, supervisor of the Consolidated and Station Complement Mess Hall. The ice cream was most enjoyable! Anthony M. Stevens, Flushing, NY.

**Victory Fly-Over.** A great fly-over was planned for London on V-E Day, but it was canceled because of bad weather and to the great relief of everybody, dreading exuberant pilots or simple FUBAR principles resulting in civilian-killing crashes all over London. So the long-suffering British people never got to see the awesome power of the "mighty Eighth." Maurice F. X. Donahue, Hazel Crest, IL. (Ed: Has anyone else heard of such a planned "Victory Fly-Over?")

**Aviation Engineer Battalions.** These companies were assigned to bases to keep fields in good repair. Company A, 827th Engineer Battalion (AVN) put up the longest at Station 153. They moved in and out several times. It was a black outfit with high morale. No matter what happened, or how big the job, they always appeared cheerful. Their main responsibility was maintenance and repair of runways. Their biggest job was the re-laying of the 8-inch-deep perimeter track, 18,000 feet long by 50 ft wide, while keeping the field 100% operational. Company A completed a similar job at Debach while quartered at 153. Bob Waltz

**Black Stevedores.** Black battalions were responsible for unloading 500-lb bombs and other supplies from Liberty ships in the harbor near Hull on the Humber River. They numbered about 200. The black soldiers would gather and dance in a dance hall at Grimsby at the entrance to the Humber, and in pubs in Scowthorpe. Bill Burchard, Pinedale, CA.

**Appreciation.** In WWII a USAAF doctor operated on my mother, enabling her to have children, and I am the result. I am truly grateful to the 8th not only on this count, but also for the sacrifices that you and other forces made ensured that we are here and free today. I am a member of FOTE, and there are many others like me who will always promote the memory of the 8th. I'd appreciate hearing from the doctor and from some of you. Peter Worby, 26 Woodgreen Rd, Luton, LU28BT, England.

**Blythe Personnel.** Want to hear from personnel stationed at Blythe AAF in the summer of 1943 when a B-24 crashed. H. E. Harvey, Rt 1, Box 259, Clarksville, AR 72830.

**National POW Museum.** The Andersonville National Historic Site has received \$2.8 million in Federal funding for the all-wars POW Museum. \$1.25 million from the State of Georgia, and more than \$2.5 million from private donors, and is well on its way to being a reality. Send donations to Carl F. Runge, President, Friends of Andersonville, 1020 Wordsworth Dr, Roswell, GA 30075.

**"Century Bombers" Still Available.** The 100th Bomb Group Memorial Museum at Thorpe Abbots has sole distribution rights for this book, and they have asked me to be their stateside contact. Cost is \$35 incl S&H. All proceeds go to museum upkeep. Ray E. Miller, 1619 E. Siebenthaler Ave, Dayton, OH 45414.

(Ed: Does anyone remember a place in WWII England called "Willow Run"?)

# A B-17 crew's oddest landing

By Chuck Offenburger  
Des Moines Sunday Register  
October 15, 1995

**P**eosta, Ia. — Well, of all places, New Melleray Abbey.

The surviving members of a B-17 bomber crew from World War II, after going nearly 50 years without any contact among themselves, finally got back in touch and longed for a reunion. Where would they have it?

"I've talked to several other crews that have had reunions, and they all wound up like in some large city, maybe at some big hotel," said Lauren Porter, 74, of Canby, Ore., this particular crew's pilot.

But most old B-17 crews don't have one member who wound up as a monk in a Catholic monastery.

"I told the guys that by the nature of our lives at the monastery, I just couldn't get permission to go anywhere to a reunion," said the Rev. Jim O'Connor, 71, who has lived at New Melleray near here in Dubuque County for 46 years.

"The truth is, I was really worried I'd feel so out of place if I got to some reunion and they all turned out to be two-fisted, hard drinkers."

But a wonderful thing happened when O'Connor sent his regrets to his war buddies. They asked if they could bring the reunion to him.

O'Connor got permission from the abbot, and on Sept. 20 and 21, six old Army Air Corps fliers and four wives got together and re-fought World War II at New Melleray Abbey, which is probably one of the most peaceful places on Earth.

Did the setting seem a little strange?

"Well, yes, I guess at first," said Porter, "but we had a grand time there, and Jim was the perfect host."

O'Connor arranged for the monastery's meeting room and decorated it with pumpkins and other autumn produce from the abbey grounds, as well as with old war photos and books.

Of the original 10-member crew, two are deceased and two others have not been located — Bill Moell, originally from Elko, Nev., and Wally Blumenthal, originally from Chicago. The five who came for the reunion were

Porter; Bill Malley of North Kingstown, R.I.; Nick DiMartino of North Fort Myers, Fla.; Harvey Cohen of Palm Beach Gardens, Fla., and B.A. Webb of Columbus, Miss.

Together, they flew 35 missions over Germany in 1944. They were flying through heavy ground fire more times than not, and they limped home from three missions with one or more of their four engines shot out.

They nicknamed their B-17 the "La-Dee-Do" for a song one of them would sing anytime they faced danger.

"My recollection is that we got that from Pappy Yocum in the Li'l Abner comic strip," O'Connor said. "Whenever he was scared, he'd start singing 'La-Dee-Do.' So we did, too."

The crew members got on with their lives and drifted apart after the war ended. "Right at first, we had Christmas cards going back and forth, but that dropped off," O'Connor said.

For more than 40 years, there was no contact. Then Porter came across addresses for Malley and O'Connor in a 388th Bomb Group veterans newsletter. Five years ago, he began corresponding with them, and in the past six months he found the others.

When O'Connor wrote his first letter back to Porter, he noted, "I hope that the 'Rev.' on the return address doesn't scare the hell out of you."

It didn't.

Porter said he always knew of O'Connor's religious commitment. While he may have been surprised when he first learned that his old copilot from Chicago was spending his life in a monastery, "I think it was probably a good choice for him. I admire him for it."

That choice, O'Connor says, was shaped by the death of his older brother in the war. All the harrowing experiences his crew had in Europe influenced him, too.

"You don't think of 18- to 20-year-olds being confronted with so much death normally, but over there we sure were," he said. "We'd be drinking a scotch and soda with a guy one night, and the next day he'd be gone."

"It really weighed on me then about the brevity of life and how fleeting it can be."

"So several years later when I was getting my life together, I realized that you only have one life to live, you only have so many years, and you need to invest them wisely. I felt I wanted to use them spiritually, to do God's work and help my fellow man in the best way I could."

"All that led me to New Melleray."

## Lengths of Combat Tours

From Roger Freeman's "Combat Diary"

A combat tour of 25 missions for bomber crewmen was originally introduced by the 8th Air Force in the early spring of 1943. Then it was deemed necessary to bolster morale among airmen who, aware of the attrition amongst their kind, had hitherto the bleak prospect of flying until they were killed, made prisoner, or removed from operations due to wounds or for medical reasons. A year later, losses as a percentage of sorties flown had almost halved, theoretically doubling an individual's chances of completing a tour. At the same time the strength of the 8th Air Force had increased tenfold, and its commanders were faced with the prospect of more crews finishing 25 missions than there were new arrivals to replace them. Early in 1944 the decision was taken to increase a tour to 30 missions, but for those men who had at this time completed 15 or more, there would be a sliding scale—the nearer to 25 the fewer extra missions required. However, it was soon evident that, with the increased rate of operations and the comparatively safer tactical missions in support of the forthcoming cross-Channel invasion, it would be necessary to extend a bomber crew's tour to 35 missions and a fighter pilot's tour from 200 to 300 combat hours flying. A directive to this effect was issued in late May. It was difficult for the crews of the B-17s and B-24s to accept that their sorties were any less dangerous, and a definite drop in morale was quickly evident. Matters were not helped when, a month later, USAAF HQ in Washington directed 8th Air Force that it required no relief of combat duty determined by missions or hours flown. Only after evidence of positive combat fatigue was a man to be taken off operational flying. Mindful of the current morale problem, 8th Air Force complied and at the same time circumnavigated the Pentagon's insensitive direction by hastily issued one of their own which stated that examination of airmen for flying or combat fatigue was to be conducted at the discretion of unit flight surgeons; but under no conditions would this be postponed beyond a fixed specific maximum of 35 heavy bomber missions, 300 operational hours for fighters, 200 hours for photo reconnaissance, and 500 hours for weather reconnaissance men. In practice, these remained the maximum for tours with the respective types, and airmen were still encouraged to think of them as points of relief.



Recent photo of Mrs. Ira C. (Ruth) Eaker who died last month. To her right was General Russ Doherty and Jim Parton was on the left. Parton was an aide to Gen. Eaker during WWII and author of his biography entitled, "Air Force Spoken Here."

### Obituary – Ruth Apperson Eaker

Ruth Apperson Eaker, 87, wife of deceased Lt. General Ira C. Eaker, former Commanding Officer of the U.S. Eighth Air Force, died December 13, 1995 at Malcolm Grow Medical Center at Andrews Air Force Base.

Mrs. Eaker was born in Washington and attended George Washington University. In 1931 she married Ira C. Eaker, an Army officer who retired as a general after having served as Deputy Commander of the Army Air Forces and Chief of Air Staff. He died in 1987.

During the 1930s, Mrs. Eaker accompanied her husband to military posts in California, Alabama, and Kansas. She remained in Washington during World War II, when she did volunteer promotional work for war bond rallies and made ceremonial trips to war production plants.

After her husband's retirement in 1947 they lived in Oregon and California before returning to Washington in 1957.

Funeral services were held at Fort Meyer Memorial Chapel on December 18, followed by interment at Arlington National Cemetery.

We are told that this is a "torso" not a "bust" of General Ira C. Eaker, by Sculptor Jerry McKenna of San Antonio, Texas. It was commissioned by the 8th AF Memorial Museum Foundation in 1989 and is now located at the Experimental Aircraft Association (EAA) Museum in Oshkosh, WI. A second casting has been made, which will be in storage in London until its installation at the completed American Air Museum in Britain in 1997.





By Jack McIlhenny, Sun City, AZ

In 1945 I was assigned to the 482nd BG in Alconbury, and a fellow radio operator, Joe Leone, arrived on the base from the 92nd BG (I think). He had completed a tour but had not been overseas very long.

However, during his tour he had participated in both of the "Frantic" missions. His photograph appears on page 10 of the August issue, farthest to the left of the left-hand photo.

Our mission had been changed from Pathfinder to training navigators in the use of airborne radar for bombing. After a short hitch with us Joe got orders to return home to Albany, NY.

Problem! Joe had one more training mission to fly. He was convinced he would crash and burn on that last mission. The night before the mission we took him into town and got him very drunk. The following morning I went to briefing, signed in as Joe, and flew his mission. His crew knew what was happening and ignored it.

Joe went home. Happy ending.

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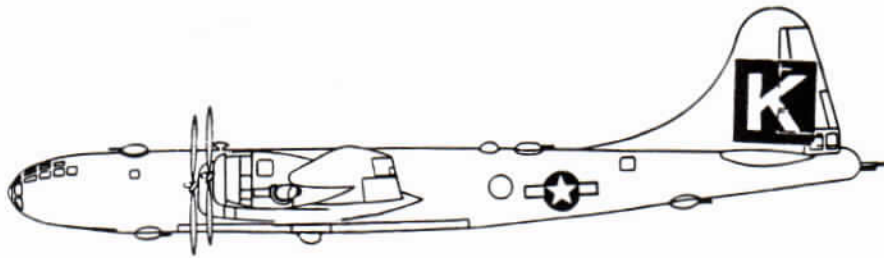
## Chanute Field Museum

(From "Bad 2 News")

Those who served at Chanute at one time or another might like to know that the new "Chanute Air Museum" is proving very successful.

Don Weckhorst (a volunteer) is listed as Museum Curator/Historian. In the Museum's Fall/Winter newsletter, Don says that William McLane has volunteered to be the Museum Artifacts Manager. Don and Bill feel that those who have donated items to the Museum "deserve our best efforts to ensure that donated items are: 1) credited with the donor's name; 2) displayed with correctness and dignity; and 3) exhibited under secure conditions, e.g., locked display cases." The library is available to researchers, writers, and history buffs interested in Chanute AFB history.

Those desiring to become members of the Octave Chanute Museum can do so by writing to Jim Snyder, Executive Director, POB 949, Rantoul, IL 61866-0949. Dues are \$20/yr for "regular" members and \$25/yr for a "Family" Membership.



## Did the "Mighty Eighth Bomb Japan?"

Adapted from a story by Don Murray in the Newsletter of the 330th BG(VH), 20th AF

In December of 1944 the 346th Bombardment Group (VH) arrived at Pratt Army Air Field in Kansas from Dalhart, Texas to start training its B-29 crews. They arrived hard on the frozen heels of the 29th Bomb Group (VH), which had completed its training at Pratt and was en route--gratefully, one suspects--to the warmer precincts of Guam.

But the new bomb group settling in at Pratt would not be going to the Marianas. Unlike the B-29 groups that had trained at Kansas bases from 1943 on, this group would not be a part of the 20th Air Force. It would bomb Japan from Okinawa, and its crews would wear the shoulder patch of Jimmy Doolittle's 8th Air Force.

When the war in Europe was over, the 8th Air Force had been ordered to stand down from its bases in England and begin training new crews to fly the B-29 alongside the 20th Air Force in the Pacific. Okinawa had already been chosen as the 8th Air Force B-29 base, and the newly constituted 346th Bomb Group (VH) of the 8th Air Force would depart from Pratt for Okinawa as soon as it was deemed ready for combat. Meanwhile, the thousands of B-17s and B-24s of the 8th Air Force still in England were to begin moving to other Pacific bases to prepare for a massive pre-invasion bombing of Japan.

The winter of 1944-45 slowly thawed into spring. In April, the 346th's air crews broke out sun-tans and were off to Borinquen Field, Puerto Rico for overwater navigational training, a TDY similar to the 330th's sojourn at Batista Field in Cuba three months earlier. The ground echelon was scheduled to board a ship for Okinawa in July, with air crews departing in August.

In the early spring, three crews were selected for advance assignment to the 314th Wing of the 20th Air Force, which was already in the Marianas. These crews--one from each squadron--would gain combat experience ahead of the rest of the 346th, and be qualified to brief the group on what to expect once they arrived on Okinawa in August.

One crew was assigned to the 19th Bomb Group, one to the 39th, and one to the 330th.

So in mid-July of 1945, Crew 3-11, 463rd Bomb Squadron, 346th Bomb Group, 8th Air Force, quietly began TDY with the 457th Squadron, 346th Bomb Group, 20th Air Force, North Field, Guam. The aircraft commander was 1st Lt. John D. Dickinson. The crew began combat operations on July 17th with a run up to Chichi Jima, a round trip of 15 hours and 40 minutes in the air. After that they flew seven other combat missions to Tsu, Omuta, Ogaki, Mito, Nishinomiya, Tokyo, and Kumgayo.

The two other 8th Air Force crews assigned temporarily to 20th Air Force groups compiled equally distinguished records. Lt. Reeve's crew flew eight missions with the 19th BG (VH) between July 24 and Sept. 2, 1945. Lt. Frey's crew flew ten missions with the 39th BG (VH) between July 17 and Sept. 2, 1945.

Dickinson's crew completed its TDY tour with the 330th by flying the August 30th POW mission to Osaka and the Sept. 2nd "Show of Force" mission over Tokyo. Lt. Paul Hill, the crew's navigator, recalls that the crew remained on Guam until October, when they rejoined the 346th BG of the 8th Air Force, which arrived on Okinawa just as the war ended and never had the opportunity to fly a combat mission. Thus, the three crews temporarily assigned to the 19th, 39th, and 330th Bomb Groups of the 20th Air Force were the only crews wearing the 8th Air Force patch to bomb the Empire of Japan.

(Editor's Note: A number of former members of the 8th Air Force in England did fly missions wearing the 20th Air Force patch. Did any make it with their original crew? What was the typical method of recycling? How about sending an article.)

# Chapter News

By Gene Person, Chairman  
Chapter Development Committee

Chapter presidents and editors are reminded to please get news items in before the deadline when the items go to the printers. Also highlight any news items in your newsletter that you want printed, as space is limited. I enjoy reading all of your correspondence even though some chapters put out several pages. Also, let us know when you have election of officers. Keep up the excellent work.

**Arizona Chapter.** The Arizona Chapter will have its annual meeting February 15, 1996 with a luncheon at Luke Air Base in Phoenix. The previous meeting was in Lake Havasu City at the original London Bridge. Hope to see you all in Phoenix on Feb. 15.

**Arkansas Chapter.** Vice-president Dick Thormahlen conducted the October 27th meeting. General Lou Lyle gave a brief report on the Heritage Museum. Charlie Cook, Facilities Director, gave an informative talk on the new Aeronautical and Space Museum at Little Rock Airport. Arnold Wright reported on his P.O.W. book on the 8th Air Force. After the luncheon, they viewed a film at the IMAX Theatre at the Museum.

**Colorado Chapter.** Anonymous benefactors have helped underwrite memberships and luncheons to former members whose circumstances would have kept them from participating in chapter activities. On December 8 a luncheon was held at Fitzsimmons Community Club at Aurora. Lt. Col. James Harvey was the speaker. The Annual Meeting will be in February with the Regional Meeting taking place in Colorado Springs Sept 23-27, 1996 at the Holiday Inn Gardens of the Gods.

**Georgia Chapter.** The membership and election meeting was held in Atlanta January 19-21, 1996. The Georgia Chapter was recognized as a WWII 50th Anniversary Commemorative Community. The chapter will host the 7th Annual Southeastern Regional Meeting in Savannah on May 12-15, 1996. This will tie in with the May 13 opening of the Heritage Museum.

**Illinois Chapter.** The Illinois Chapter met Jan. 3 at the Club--Military O'Hare. The speaker was new member Verne Jobst, pilot of the B-17, "Aluminum Overcast." The chapter signed up two new members last month--Ray Wagner and Chester Skiba. Harold Jarchow recently passed away. Next meeting will be in Feb. with Fred Olivie as speaker.

**Iowa Chapter.** The Board of Directors met October 28, 1995 at Starlite Village in Ames. The Annual Reunion will be held at the Best Western in Cedar Rapids August 23-25, 1996. President Rudy Nelson and Millie are in charge of the arrangements. Next Board Meeting will be April 27, 1996 at Starlite in Ames. The Northeast Iowa Wing met at the Elks Lodge in Waterloo Oct. 20, 1995 with Bob Reeves presiding. Former Governor Norm Erbe spoke on the WWII Monument on the Statehouse grounds.

**Kentucky Chapter.** The quarterly meeting was held in Lexington on Nov. 18, 1995 with dinner at the Springs Inn. Wayne Tabor was in charge of the entertainment, and the members of the Board of Governors were elected. Paul Teismann brought a desk nameplate cut out of a B-17 propellor, which he made in England in WWII.

**Minnesota Chapter.** The Annual Meeting was held Nov. 10, 1995 at the VFW Babcock Post in Richfield. Two new board members were elected. The regular Wednesday noon luncheon meeting that is held every week for board members and guests continues to draw 25 to 30 members. The chapter supports both the Planes of Fame and the Minnesota Air Guard Museum. The Chapter has bought a TV and VCR for use at future air shows.

**Massachusetts Chapter.** The chapter celebrated its tenth annual chapter Rendezvous recently. Guest speakers were volunteer members who spoke of their experiences. Chapter members also assisted the Collings Foundation as volunteers on its B-17 (909) and B-24 (All American)

exhibits to answer questions about the aircraft at air shows. A plaque has been designed for WWII veterans who served in the 8th AF.

**Mississippi Chapter.** The Mississippi Chapter held its Fall Meeting Oct 27-29 at the Harvey Hotel in Jackson. They had a delicious dinner on Friday with Mr. and Mrs. Lew King, a song and comedy team, and a Saturday dinner with an update on the Heritage Museum with Gen. Buck Shuler. They also had a raffle.

**Missouri Chapter.** The Annual Meeting of the chapter convened in the Fireside Room of the Richards-Gebaur Military Club with Joe Jameson conducting the meeting. Chapter membership is 261 at the present time. Officers were elected: Pres. Joe Jameson; Vice Pres. Joe Pruet; Treas. William Ransdell; Secy. Kevin Pearson. New Directors are George Everhart, Carl Neely, and Paul Shull.

**Nebraska Chapter.** The Oct. 21, 1995 meeting was held at the Wagon Wheel Inn in Auburn with Fred Farington in charge of arrangements. A jazz band from the high school entertained the members. The January 13 meeting was held at Offutt Officers Club in Omaha. Pat Schenk, who is stationed at Offutt, talked to the group about restoring a B-17 which the chapter donated to this effort.

**New York West Chapter.** The Xmas party was held Dec. 14 at the familiar restaurant at the local airdrome. Vice Pres. Larry Paul suggested that the February meeting might be a good time to have the membership conduct their own thing by having memorabilia brought to the meeting for discussion. The Chapter has 72 paid up members. Ruth Zorn is in charge of meeting sites and meals.

**Ohio Chapter.** The Ohio Chapter was to hold its Nov. 4 meeting at Hope Hotel, but the Bosnia Peace Committee commandeered the meeting place. The staff found another meeting location. The tour at Wright-Patterson and the meeting went off on schedule. Joseph Vintolo, past curator of the museum, was the guest speaker. Bob Bee was presented the 8AFHS plaque as Founding President of the Ohio Chapter.

**Oregon Chapter.** The November meeting was the Annual Meeting when Chaplain Roland Stewart listed all those that have passed on with his always thoughtful service. The B-17 bomber will be restored at the Bomber Gas Station on McLoughlin Boulevard. The station was sold, so Jayson Scott and Tom McLain of the Bomber Foundation need our help.

**Rhode Island Chapter.** The 4th Anniversary Dinner was held in Oct. with Pres. Eric Spurrier in charge of arrangements. The membership drive has slowed, but the chapter continues to look for "lost souls."

**Tennessee Chapter.** The Chapter held a meeting in Knoxville to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the end of WWII. At the banquet Ray Zuker gave a great talk on the revision of WWII history. The next day everybody attended a Veteran's Day parade and luncheon at the Foundry.

**Texas North Chapter.** The chapter held its Xmas party at the Petroleum Club on top of Continental Plaza in Fort Worth. Pianist Joe Allsen performed several selections, officers were installed, and door prizes were given. It was tentatively decided to hold the first meeting of 1996 in Feb. at the Cavanaugh Flight Museum in Addison with several restored historic aircraft from WWII.

**Utah Chapter.** The Annual Meeting was held Nov. 9 at the Red Flame Restaurant in Bountiful. Officers were elected: Pres. Dan Dufphey; Vice Pres. John Lusk Moore; Secy/Treas. Gerald Folsum; Directors Claude Sherwin, Newell May, Samuel Ross, Floyd Burraston.

**West Virginia Chapter.** A veteran's memorial was dedicated Nov 11, 1995 on the Capitol grounds, honoring all veterans. The Annual Meeting was held recently with a turkey dinner. Colonel Shonedel was the banquet speaker. Changes in the chapter by-laws were approved. The 1996 Annual Meeting will be held June 19, 1996 at the Twin Falls Resort State Park.

**Wisconsin Chapter.** The December meeting was held at the Sunset Bowl in Wausheka. Mr. and Mrs. Anthony LaPorte were in charge of arrangements. Treas. Bob Abresch has been doing a good job handling the membership and dues. A lot of materials and models were available for viewing after the delicious dinner.

# Reunions

- 2BAD Assn Reunion, Oct 3-5, 1996, Myrtle Beach, SC, Contact Dick McClune, 527 Quarterfield Rd, Newport News, VA 23602-6140
- 2nd Air Division IV Regional Reunion, Feb 3, 1996, Orlando, FL, Contact Lawrence Gilbert, 1482 Granville Dr, Winter Park, FL 32789 (407-647-2623)
- 2nd Air Division Midwest Regional Reunion/445BG/Kassel Mission, Sept 26-29, 1996, Marriott Hotel and Wright-Patterson Air Museum, Dayton, OH, Contact William R. Dewey, KMMA, POB 413, Birmingham, MI, 48012
- 7th Photo Recon Group, Reunion with 8AFHS, Oct 3-6, 1996, at Clarion Hotel, Orlando, FL, Contact George Lawson, 4390 14th St, NE, St. Petersburg, FL 33703, (813-526-8480)
- 8AFHS Mountain and Plains FUN Reunion, Sept 23-27, 1996, Colorado Springs, CO, Contact Dave O'Boyle, 715 Locust St, Denver, CO (303-399-6993)
- 8AFHS National Reunion, Oct 1-6, 1996, Clarion Plaza Hotel, Orlando, FL
- 34th BGA Reunion, Sept 19-22, 1996, Marriott Hotel, Raleigh, NC, Contact Hal Province, 111 Province Lane, Carriere, MS 39426 (601-798-2059)
- 351BGA Reunion, May 27-June 1, 1996, Holiday Inn, Chattanooga, TN, Contact Cline Hammond, POB 281, Mechanicsburg, PA 17055 (717-766-1489)
- 339FG Reunion, Sept 6-10, 1996, Seattle, WA, Contact Richard C. Penrose, 142 SW 17th St, Bend, OR 97702
- 355FG Reunion, Oct 10-13, 1996, Nashville, TN, Contact Bob Kuhnert, 4230 Shroyer Rd, Dayton, OH 45429 (513-294-2986)
- 465th Service Sqdn Assn Reunion, Sept 11-14, 1997, St. Louis, MO, Contact Bill Butts, 611 Clyde Ct, San Marcos, TX 78666 (512-392-2517)
- Santa Ana Army Air Base 21st Reunion, April 20, 1996, Orange Coast College, Costa Mesa, CA. Everybody welcome. Contact SAAAB Wing, POB 1764, Costa Mesa, CA 92628 (714-631-5818 Thurs 1000-1500)
- All Former Aviation Cadets Reunion, Oct 9-12, 1997 in Dallas, TX, Contact Errol D. Severe, Rt #4, Box 416, Eureka Springs, AR 72632 (501-253-9471)
- CAF Bluebonnet Airshow April 13, 1996, Burnet, TX
- CAF Air Group One Airshow, May 6-13, 1996, San Diego, CA
- Annual CAF Ranger Wing Fly-in, June 8-8, 1996, Waco, TX
- CAF Gathering of Memories Airshow, Aug 17-18, 1996, San Marcos
- CAF Wings of Freedom Airshow, Aug 24-25, 1996, Frederick, MD
- CAF Wings Over Houston Airshow, Sept 21-22, 1996, Houston, TX
- CAF Airshow '96, Sept 28-29, 1996, Midland, TX

## Notice to All Units and Chapters

Please send in your new list of officers, contacts, and editors to this editor by April 1 so that we can put a new Directory in the May 1996 issue. If no entry is received, we will rerun the old one. (JWH)

# Organizational Changes

## Unit Contacts

- 34BG Hal Province, 111 Province Lane, Carriere, MS 39426 (601-798-2059)
- 78FG Pres. Jack Miller, 925 Orchard Ct, Flushing, MI 48433 (810-659-6470)
- 94BG Pres. Don Lindamood, 3109 Waltham Ave, Dayton, OH 45429 (513-299-0216)
- 325 Recon Wing Eric Hawkinson, 109 Evelyn Circle, Vallejo, CA 94589-1864
- 452BG Hank North, 901 Poling Dr, Columbus, OH 43224 (800-452-9099) (Replaces John Witty)
- 492BG Pres. Truman Hermansen, 5414 Capella Ct, Atlantic Beach, FL 32233 (904-249-4968)
- 493BG Jack D. Rude, 2609 South Bowie, Amarillo, TX 70109 (806-353-2486)

## Station Contacts

- Abbots Ripton--Add Connie & Gordon Richards, 14 Pavenham Rd, Oakley, Bedford, MK43 7SY
- Little Staughton--Connie & Gordon Richards " " "
- Lavenham--Delete Tony Cox (need new contact)
- Ramsbury--Tony Cox, 13 Timpsons Row, Olney, Buckinghamshire, MK46 4JJ
- 91BG Bassingbourn Tower Museum, Vince Hemmings, Curator, 53 Malthouse Way, Barrington, Cambridgeshire, CB2 5RR, England
- 390BG Memorial Air Museum--Colin Durant, Manager, 101 Avondale Rd, Ipswich, Suffolk, IP3 9LA, England
- 356FG Kenneth J. Male, 8282 NW 47th St, Ocala, FL 34482 (352-622-9976)

## New Addresses

- Albert J. Postma, Kruislandsedijk 27-A, 4651 RH Steenbergen, The Netherlands

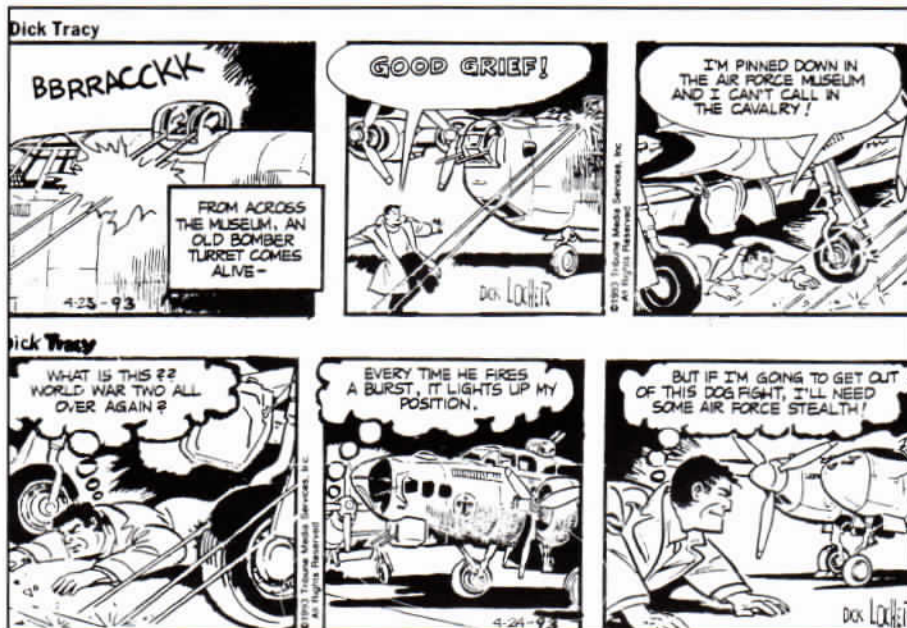
## Newsletter Editors

- 8AFHS "The Advisor," new editor Frank Frison, 140 East County Road C, St. Paul, MN 55117
- Nebraska Chapter needs an editor. Contact Homer Sheridan, 4903 Chicago St, Apt 7, Omaha, NE 68132
- Eric Hawkinson has resigned as editor of the 7th PRG Journal and 7th PRG Mini-Jnl
- 7th PRG Newsletter contact is George Lawson, 4390 14th NE, St. Petersburg, FL
- 78FG Newsletter editor C. E. Behrens, 1021 Parakeet Trail, Lakeland, FL 3809 (941-853-4168)
- 325 Recon Wing journal is named "Wing Power"
- CA Doolittle Chapter newsletter is named "Air Power," has new editor William Gaines 1122 Cameron Way, Stockton, CA 95207
- 355FG Newsletter is named "Mustang"

# And She's Still Going Strong!



Lauren Bacall  
**YANK**  
Pin-up Girl



# Membership News

By Art Swanson, Membership Records Manager

Many thanks to all who sent in their 1996 dues payments and RETURNED THEIR CARDS. If you didn't return your card, your payment had to be set aside until there was time to look up your member number and manually prepare a card (there were over a hundred of these).

Especially appreciated were the many kind comments and holiday greetings. When you are sorting hundreds of pieces of mail, it sure brightens the day to get a pat on the back and a friendly greeting.

## Address Changes

Please keep us posted on your whereabouts. We are willing to make numerous entries to track you so that we avoid the cost and disconnects of not knowing where you are. Hundreds of dollars are spent unnecessarily to get address corrections. Remember--everything is sent bulk mail--NOT FORWARDABLE! So, we have to pay to send the original mailing, then 32 cents for the address correction, plus up to another dollar because the second mailing of the magazine has to go first class. At this rate, it doesn't take long for you to become a liability rather than an asset to the Society.

A word of warning to those of you with only post office boxes for your address. THE POST OFFICE WILL NOT FORWARD--even if it is only to a different box number! This also applies to mailings of the magazine.

If you send in an address change, please indicate if it is temporary or permanent. If you list two addresses, remember to give exact dates where you are when. The computer doesn't know "winter" and "summer."

## Life Members

If you sent in a Life Member fee, please don't think you've been forgotten. A list of new Life Members is being prepared to have personally embossed Life Member cards printed, which will be sent to you as soon as we receive them.

Also, a reminder that the spouse or widow of a Life Member can also become a Life Member by sending in the applicable fee, less \$25.00, as follows:

60 and under	\$150.00
61-70	\$100.00
71-80	\$75.00
81 and over	\$50.00

Example: If your spouse was 71, deduct \$25.00 from the above and send in \$50.00. She will then become a Life Partner. A widow would also deduct the \$25.00 and become a Life Member.

## Memorial Fund

A very sincere "thank you" to the many who included contributions to this fund.

## Unit Rosters

Finally, many units forwarded copies of their rosters so that we can personally invite those 8AFers who are not members of the 8AFHS to join us. Carolyn is handling this, and we had to put it on hold while processing dues payments and related correspondence. This membership project will continue through 1996, so if you need Unit Board approval, we will honor the offer of \$3.00 per new or reinstated member obtained through the mailings from your roster. Your cooperation in forwarding this information is appreciated. Reimbursements will be made within a reasonable time after each unit mailing.

## To the Widows and Wives of the 8th AF:

I am the widow of an 8th Air Force man and I am addressing this letter to other widows and wives of the "Mighty Eighth."

Our men were part of history--an important part of history--but their story may be lost forever. Our pride and gratitude should lead us to ensure that their military life is properly preserved.

It has been said that the widows of veterans are the historian's worst enemy, because in their grief, or haste to get moved, widows may destroy many things without regard to their historical significance. If you are a widow--or if you are fortunate to still have your husband with you to help--please thoughtfully gather together the records, diaries, and mementoes from footlockers, attics, and bureau drawers and prepare them, or copies of them, to be transferred to the Archives of the 8th Air Force Historical Society.

Four years ago the Society established a permanent and safe Archive for proper storing and displaying of our history at The Pennsylvania State University in central Pennsylvania. The Penn State Library is one of the largest university libraries in the nation, and it has been in existence for 108 years. It has a large staff of professionally trained and experienced librarians and archivists who log in and index all contributions and process and store them using the latest in archival technology.

If you have any questions, or want to make arrangements for transfer, please communicate with the Custodian of the Archives, James W. Hill, 125 Ramblewood Road, Pennsylvania Furnace, PA 16865 (814-234-1376). Your contribution to history should be sent either to him, or to the Archives directly at the following address:

Supervisor, 8th Air Force Archives  
Historical Section, Pattee Library,  
3rd Fl West,  
The Pennsylvania State University  
University Park, PA 16802

**YOUR LOVED ONES  
DESERVE THE BEST!**

## As I See It



by Editor Jim Hill

### A Bunch of "Sky Pilots"

As the above photo shows, I was recently privileged to ride along on a "Pastor's and Chaplain's Flight" on a Pennsylvania National Guard C-135 to observe a refueling operation. From left to right above you can see me with my nephew, Master Sergeant Kenneth M. Stanton, and assorted pastors and chaplains.

**Perspective**—The Pennsylvania Military Museum recently featured a major exhibit on "The U.S. Army Air Corps in WW II." The study and preparation of a map showing the various U.S. Air Forces (there were 16 of them) was an interesting and enlightening experience to me. The 8th Air Force of course was related to many of them: the Ninth, Twelfth, Fifteenth, and the Twentieth; and many of us served in the First, Second, Third, and Fourth Air Forces while undergoing training and serving Stateside. Very few of us had any choice as to which zone of combat we would be assigned, and many of us had buddies who served all over the world.

This leads me to suggest that we do not limit our State and local 8th Air Force meetings and reunions to members of the 8th. We may have superiority in organization and membership, but certainly not in combat stories, experiences, or even importance in winning the war. Just as we enjoy lively and good-humored debates within the 8th over group combat records, B-17 vs. B-24 vs. B-26, or whatever, we can also have lively debates between the members of various Air Forces. After all, to get a correct perspective of our role in World War II, we have to consider the entire war and Air Force experience.

Parochialism, Chauvinism, Provincialism—emotional adherence to a limited, biased view of anything—always leads to a skewed perspective and narrow outlook.

**Modern History Department**—We have just received word of a high school history teacher who recently announced to his class, "Next week we're going to study World War Eleven."

### There was a time...

Our years of peril, and of triumph, were from 1942 to 1945--three short years that were punctuated indelibly by mission numbers, casualty figures, catastrophes, fear, deprivation, and months and years of separation from our homes and the people and things we loved.

We returned home in triumph and reestablished our lives, families, jobs, and careers. Fifty years passed, falling unnoticed like leaves in the breeze, while we pridefully watched our families grow and our fortunes wax and wane in the brave new world we had made.

Occasionally our minds would flash back to times almost forgotten--lying in bed in the dark, trying to relax, and hearing the distant, cacophonous chorus of engines running up on the flight line; awakening with a start in the dead of night, heart pounding, sweating, dreading the call to combat; dressing in the pre-dawn darkness and shivering with cold anticipation, thinking of the bomb dump or flight line; suddenly encountering barbed wire and feeling again the claustrophobia and despair of being a captive; suddenly breaking into blinding sunlight at 30,000 feet and looking in wonder at the White Meadow of Heaven stretching from horizon to horizon. Then we shook ourselves back to present reality, putting those all-too-familiar thoughts behind us.

With the passage of time other thoughts began to intrude into our consciousness--softer, kinder thoughts. We began to remember those who had shared our time of peril--our brothers and sisters and Allies in arms who shared the dangers and hardships of battle; members of the underground and secret armies who fought a hidden, desperate war and often helped us at great risk to escape or evade capture; and the wonderful people of Britain who adopted us and cared for us as best they could--and still do!

With these reminiscences came the realization that although we were extremely grateful and fond of those who had shared our time of peril, we had never properly thanked them or told them how much they meant to us. So we spend these last remaining years trying to reach them and memorialize them so that all will know that this was and is our time together.

James W. Hill, Managing Editor  
8th Air Force News Magazine  
February 1996



## Wartime Romance

By Margaret Cline Rose  
(Reprinted from June 1995 issue of 92nd BG News)

As I sat in the office of our home surrounded by B-17 pictures, crew pictures, a "Wings of Freedom" poster and the framed Croix de Guerre certificate, I was reminded of a time 50 years ago when I met the B-17 pilot.

It all began when my brother, Frank Cline, the radioman on a B-17 crew in the ETO, sent a picture of his crew home to our parents in September 1943. Mother examined the picture and remarked, "Margaret, I wish you would write a letter to this pilot and tell him we are offering our prayers for the safety of the crew."

I was reluctant at first, but when she insisted I wrote a friendly note to Lt. William B. Rose telling him of our concerns. The letter was on his bunk when he returned from a mission over Germany, and he promptly wrote back saying that their plane had been a flying chapel on that particular day and that he appreciated our prayers. He asked me to write again.

The crew completed 25 missions six months later and returned to the States. Crew members had two weeks leave and then went to a rest home at Miami Beach for another two weeks. My brother Frank had an additional two weeks of rest at a home in St. Petersburg, FL, and Lt. Rose was sent to Lockbourne Army Air Base in Columbus, OH where he became an instructor.

Our family invited Lt. Rose to visit us for a weekend at our home in Latrobe, PA in August 1944. Frank

was not there, but I was anxious to introduce Lt. Rose to some of his home town buddies, so we "made the rounds" that Saturday night. He was well received, we had a good time, and he made a favorable impression on those he met.

Soon after returning to Ohio he wrote that he was going to return to England with another crew and do another tour of duty, which he did. We continued to correspond on an infrequent but very friendly basis.

When he returned to the States at the end of November 1945 he phoned and asked if he could come by again. This time Frank was home and it was quite a reunion!

After dinner at home a group of us went out to our favorite bar and restaurant in Ligonier, PA. When now Captain Rose and I were dancing he said, "Do you know why I'm here?"

My knees turned to jelly and I replied, "Yes."

"Will you marry me?"

"Yes."

We kissed for the first time.

We were married two weeks later.

This year we will celebrate our 50th wedding anniversary with our seven wonderful children plus two on-the-way grandchildren.

I guess it can truly be said that our romance was written on a "wing and a prayer."

(Ed: Compare this with many of our so-called modern "romances.")

## A B-17 (Tall) Tail Tale

(From BAD 2 Assn News)  
(From 43rd BG Newsletter)  
(From George White in NJ)

The B-17 bomber of WWII was in a class of its own, as anyone who ever flew one will tell you. Disgruntled B-24 crews invariably grumble about the popularity and the "good press" that the B-17 always seemed to have. The following tale, however, would seem to prove the merits of the wonderful things written and said about the grand old "Flying Fortress."

A B-17 received a direct hit in the bomb bay over the target, causing it to break into pieces. The wings, fuselage, and engines spiraled down separately, and the tail fluttered like a maple leaf toward the ground. The tail gunner, seeing that the rest of the airplane was gone, tried to bail out, but couldn't because of the mangled wreckage blocking him in.

Like the typical tail gunner, he decided to make the best of the situation, and strapped himself back into his seat. He reached overhead and grabbed a rudder cable, and then reached down and pulled on the cables that controlled the elevator. The controls checked out OK, so he turned the tail around and proceeded to steer a course back to England. All went well, and as he approached the coast he radioed the tower: "Tower, this is B-17 tail gunner. The rest of my plane was shot away and I need clearance to make an emergency landing straight in on runway 27."

The tower responded, "Roger, B-17 tail gunner, give me a call on five mile final."

When he was five miles out, the tail gunner radioed again: "Tower, this is tail gunner, five miles out on final approach. Am I cleared to land?"

The tower operator answered frantically, "Negative, B-17 tail gunner! Do not land. Pull up and go around. There is a B-24 in the traffic pattern with one engine shut down!"



## Keith Hill Presents “Mary Alice— Almost Home”

One of our Official 8th Air Force Artist's latest paintings is entitled “Mary Alice--Almost Home.”

The “Mary Alice” is one of the Duxford Air Museum's prime aircraft exhibits, and it may well be the best restored and most authentic B-17 in existence today.

The original “Mary Alice” was assigned to the 401st Bomb Group, where it had a long and illustrious military career. It was named for the mother of its first pilot, Daniel Knight. It flew many missions and was shot up many times, but it always came home. Eventually, however, it became war-weary and had to be scrapped.

The present “Mary Alice” was received in England after the end of the war and never went on a combat mission. It was acquired by the Duxford Air Museum for the purpose of static display, and was dubbed the “Mary Alice” and painted with the colors and markings of the 401st Bomb Group.

Keith says that he wanted the painting to illustrate the coming home of so many damaged bombers from typical missions over typical English countryside--it's just there, keeping going, just as its namesake did. Mother Mary Alice brings 'em home.

Prints of this painting can be obtained directly from Keith at the following address.

Keith Hill, Artist  
24 St. Peter's Avenue  
Rushden, Northants  
NN10 9XW, England  
Telephone 011-441-933-502-83

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Next time you are in England, go visit Keith's newly opened art gallery in the center of Rushden and see all of his paintings. He's almost through with making a special painting for each one of the 8th Air Force bases; and he's also done many other paintings on commission. Aircraft and railroads are his specialties. Prints are available on most of them.



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*Keith Hill* *Robert Proff*

MARY ALICE - ALMOST HOME'  
By  
Keith Hill

# Willow Run's B-24 "Liberator" Bomber

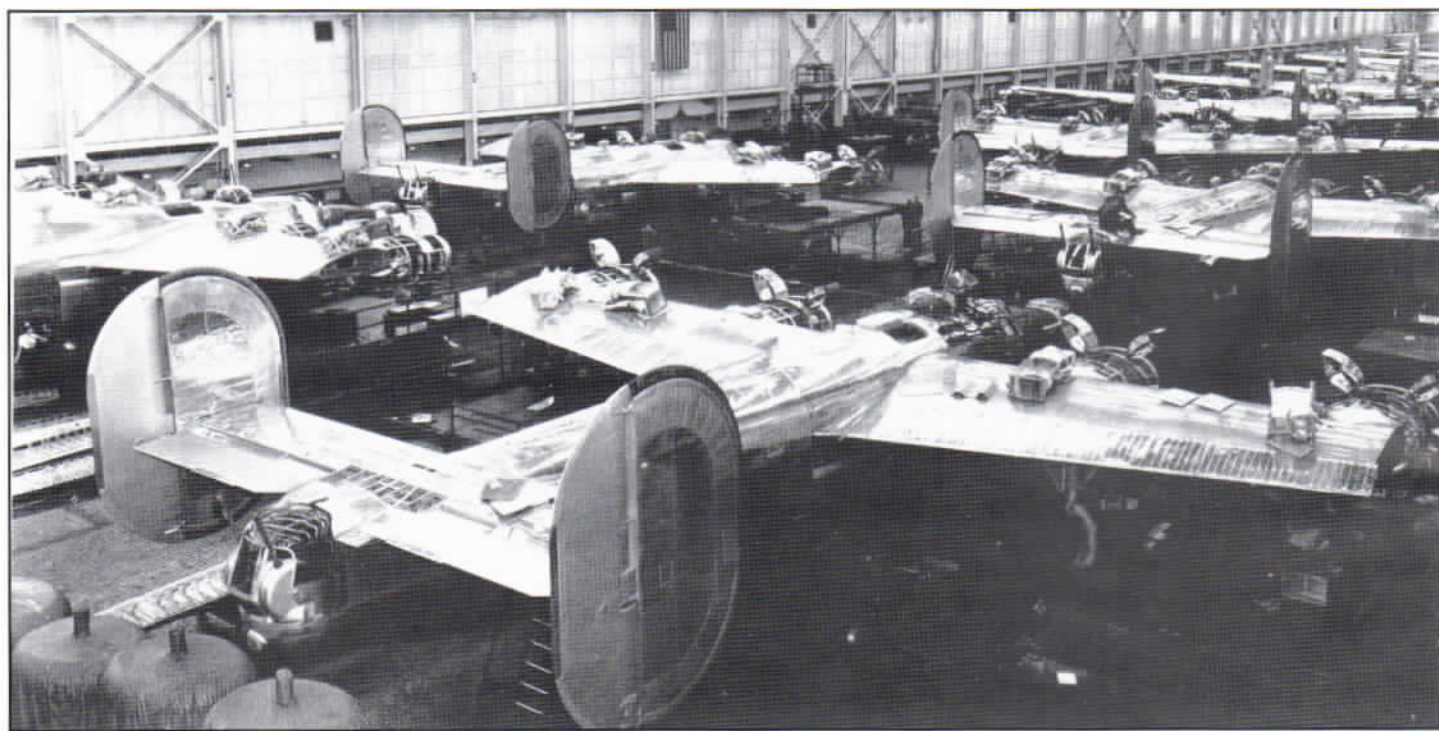
(From "Willow Run--Colossus of American Industry" by Warren Benjamin Kidder)

(See Book Review, page 27)



Willow Run is where Henry Ford manufactured the B-24 "Liberator" bomber flown and serviced by many members of the 8th Air Force in World War II. The story of Willow Run, however, describes how Charles E. Sorenson, Ford's Director of Production during WWII conceived the wild idea of manufacturing the 20-ton four-engine bomber at the unbelievable rate of one an hour, and how the men and women, challenged by the opportunity, made his vision come true.

For the author of this recently published book, the story of the B-24 started long before there was a factory in which to build them. As a small boy, he lived on a farm near the banks



of a small stream called Willow Run in southeast Michigan where he roamed and hunted the same fields as the Potawatomi Indians who lived there before him. Then in February 1941, he saw his family evicted from their home under the rights of eminent domain to make room for the huge bomber plant. He saw the bulldozers rip through the countryside destroying the family homestead, and felt the trauma of the war, months before Japan bombed Pearl Harbor. When the first structural steel for the factory rose above the horizon, he was there to see it looking westward from where he was living on the perimeter of the airport before his grandparent's house was moved. The first airplane to use the unfinished runways of the Willow Run Airport came low over his head and stopped within a hundred yards from where he was standing, and when Major Jimmy Doolittle made the first official landing at the Willow Run Airport on October 22, 1941, he was there to see him.

Willow Run was the world's largest industrial factory--Its two B-24 assembly lines shown below were more than a mile long. The peak monthly output was 462 airplanes reached in March of 1944. That was 62 more than Ford's original proposal, one every 63 minutes. In April, even that time record was broken.

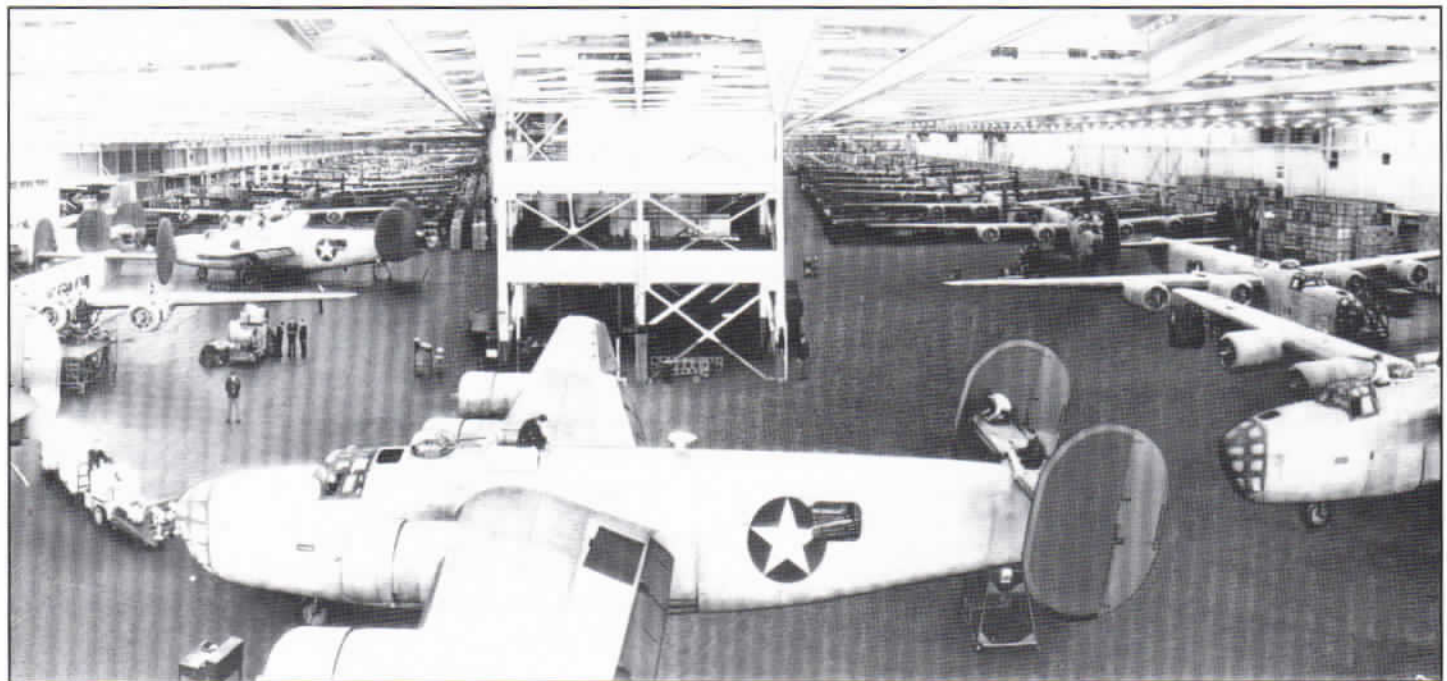
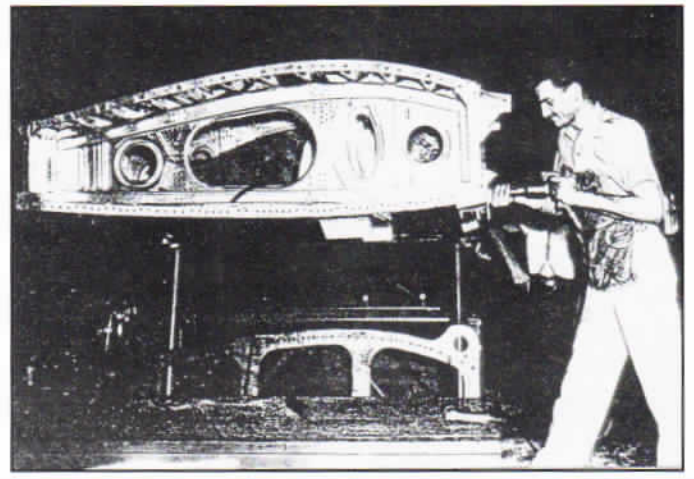
The week before Christmas, 1940, Dr. George J. Mead, Director of Procurement for the Aeronautical

## The Little People of Willow Run

Somewhere, hidden throughout the roar of the rivets and the hammering of presses, were ten of the biggest "little people" working at Willow Run. You could find them in a tight narrow space on the inside of a wing tip bucking rivets or insulating a fuel cell against the bullets of enemy fire; or, they might be making an inspection in a space so tight that no other inspector could put a gauge on the part.

They were a highly specialized group of employees, respected by other employees, not just for their size, or lack of it, but for the dangerous work they performed while crawling inside a wing or fuel tank where only the midget could fit. At shift time, because of Ford's rule that everyone must punch his own time card, you could see the little people being lifted up to the time clock by their larger buddies.

They came from the entertainment world and the fringes of American industry, but at Willow Run they were in the center ring of the world's largest industrial operation.



Section of the Advisory Council for National Defense, and Major Jimmy Doolittle visited Henry Ford in Dearborn, Michigan. They decided that Sorensen and Doctor Mead should visit Consolidated Aircraft, who had developed the B-24 bomber in San Diego to determine the possibility of increasing their production.

On January 8, 1941, Sorensen and his group of "automobile experts" spent the day analyzing Consolidated's factory and methods of production. At the end of the day, Sorensen said, "I liked neither what I saw or what I heard. I told Dr. Mead and Major Reuben H. Fleet, President of Consolidated Aircraft, that my evaluation of the plant's production capacity was very discouraging, and that I would have something for them in the morning." In Sorensen's own words, "To compare a Ford V-8 with a four-engine Liberator bomber was like matching a garage with a skyscraper, but despite their great differences I knew the same fundamentals applied to high volume production of both..."

As I look back now upon that night, this was the biggest challenge of my production career. Throughout the night I set down figures and revised them. Along towards four o'clock, I was satisfied that I could prove a construction rate of one big bomber an hour. Now I had something to talk about. I knew I had the solution, and I was elated by the certainty that the Germans had neither the facilities nor the conception for greater bomber mass production. But who would accept such a wild notion?"

In the morning Sorensen told Dr. Mead, "If the Air Force will give Ford Motor Company a contract and will spend up to two hundred million dollars, we will build and equip a plant capable of turning out one Liberator bomber an hour. With that I tossed them the sketch of the proposed factory that I had made the night before."

Twenty-six days later, the government announced approval of the plan, and on March 28 clearing started on five square miles of farm land by hundreds of workmen and countless pieces of equipment. On December 4, 1941 the last concrete was poured in an airport which contained 75 miles of drain tile, some seven feet in diameter. Ground breaking for the factory was April 18; hiring of production workers began December 1, 1941; and the first part was produced in the still unfinished building on December 8, 1941. On April 16, 1942, two

days short of a year from ground breaking, the first center wing subassembly was completed.

The challenge to Ford was to build the airplane by using the reservoir of production experience they had accumulated over the years in the automobile industry. Their starting point was the concepts and ideas they could create in their own minds, because there was no other aircraft assembly line in the world they could use as a model. They were looked upon as dreamers throughout the aircraft industry and their goal of building a bomber an hour was ridiculed as preposterous by companies building only a few large aircraft a month.

In April of 1944, after overcoming all of the many obstacles, the men and women from Willow Run manufactured 455 planes in 450 hours--a four-engine bomber every 59.34 minutes.

Overcoming production inertia was a big job, but before the plant and assembly lines were all completed, Sorensen was manufacturing parts and sub-assemblies for shipment to Consolidated and Douglas Aircraft where they were assembled into completed bombers. They made possible Consolidated's production to increase to 1,140 B-24s during 1942.

In May 1942 Sir Oliver Lyttleton, Britain's Production Chief, issued a propaganda statement claiming that Willow Run was then producing a bomber an hour. That may have provided hope for the people of England and Europe, but in the USA it produced skepticism and humorous parodies such as "Will It Run."

After over a year of manufacturing parts and subassemblies for B-24s assembled elsewhere, in August 1942 Willow Run was given the go-ahead to build its first lot of 15 full airplanes. In 1943 Consolidated manufactured 2,960 B-24s while Willow Run's output was 2,184. In 1944 Consolidated's yearly output was 3,817 bombers. Willow run's output in 1944, even after the government's cutback in production, was 4,611, with production capacity set at 9,000 bombers a year.

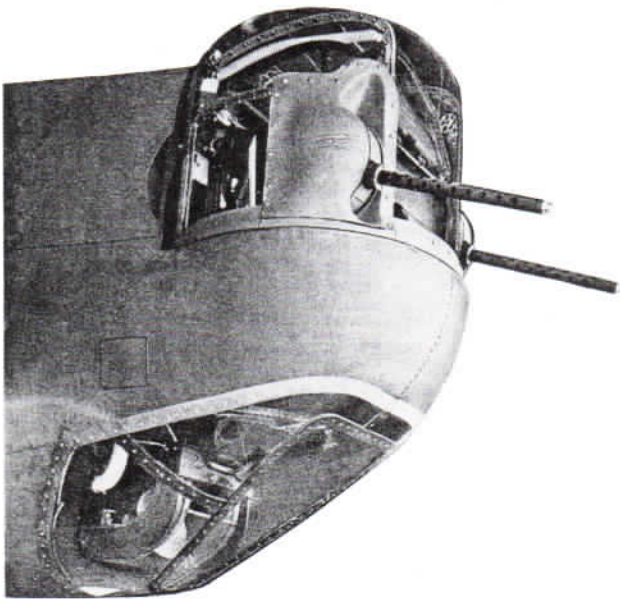
Lack of experienced personnel was Sorensen's most troublesome problem in getting production started at Willow Run, and it was forced to establish a school to train tens of thousands of unskilled laborers. Large numbers of engineering changes also created massive production problems. For instance, the modifications for the installation of the Emerson nose turret, completed in June 1943,

involved 47 master changes, 53,456 engineering hours, and 208,271 tooling hours was greater in proportion than that required to make a normal yearly model change in an automobile. It took just 79 days from telephone order to completion of the modification.

The story of Willow Run reaches far beyond the quiet stream where the Indians camped and hunted and where people gathered in a peaceful chapel by its side. The story reaches to the thunderous rain of bombs that helped liberate Europe from the Gestapo claws of Hitler and return the South Pacific to the peaceful tranquility of its name. And it continues to reach deep into the lives and memories of all who flew and loved the "Liberator."

## Willow Run in a Nutshell

Area of entire project	1,878 acres
Airport size	1,434 acres
Factory floor	3,503,016 sq ft
Including hangars	4,734,617 sq ft
Factory length	3,200 ft
Factory width	1,277 ft
Assembly line length	5,450 ft
Longest runway	7,366 ft
Shortest runway	6,510 ft
Project cost	\$103,000
B-24 wt on delivery	49,900 lb
B-24 Number of rivets	313,237
Dies made as of 12/44	29,124
Fixtures in production	10,915
No. wooden floor blocks	16,000,000
Fluorescent tubes	152,000
Number of windows	28,855
Number of conveyors	136
Number of Craneways	29
Monorails (all bldgs)	18 miles
Power requirements	13,200 KWH
Students trained in school	50,000
Daily water use	5,000,000 gallons
Daily parking lot capacity	15,300 cars



# Additional Notes on Mission of Dec. 24, 1944

The following details have been provided in relation to Pete Gray's article in 95-4.

by **Phillip Myers, tail gunner, 487BG**, Fishers, IN--Our B-17 was on the wing of Gen. Castle's plane when it went down, and our pilot, Lt. James Roberts took over the lead of the squadron. ME-109s attacked us head-on, then in stacks of three fired at us from behind. The airfield was in dense fog when we returned to base, but the pilot got us in safely. Other groups that couldn't land at their bases landed at ours and shared our Christmas dinner.

by **John A. Clark, copilot, 100BG**, Ann Arbor, MI.--After two weeks of bad weather the 8th was finally able to help our troops at the Battle of the Bulge. The 100th fielded five squadrons where normally we would have flown three. Our readiness lights went from Stand down (green) to Standby (yellow) to Alert (red) in just a few minutes at about 0100! Most of the flight crews got about two hours rest before early briefing. We formed up in a composite group with elements of the 390th BG.

As we crossed the front lines we suddenly encountered heavy and accurate 88mm flak. The 390th lead ship was hit in the outer left wing and No. 1 engine and went into an uncontrolled steep left bank burning furiously and went to crash with no survivors. A second Fortress in that flight was also hit and slid burning off the the right and disappeared. Four other B-17s collided, one with its tail chopped off, all falling away with some chutes seen. Since the flak was unexpected and uncharted, it was thought to come from Tiger tanks. We were all scrambling to put on flak jackets, and to maintain formation while dodging aircraft parts raining down from above.

My diary states that "we left the Belgium coast at Ostend at 1613 and made landfall in England at 1643. Our squadron was fortunate to be the first over the field so we landed first. Night was closing fast as we touched the runway, at 1700. After we landed two ships cracked up on the main runway and traffic had to be diverted to a shorter runway. This caused quite a bit of confusion, as four squadrons were still trying to land. As each squadron passed over the field it looked like a giant Christmas tree sailing across a black sky. Each ship had on its external lights including the landing lights, and as they were stacked in formation they created quite an effect, and especially on Christmas Eve.

I am not so concerned as Pete is about the problem of returning to base. The winter of 1944-45 was very severe

in East Anglia, so we often landed in very marginal weather conditions. The 100th had a 6000 by 200-300 ft wide runway with high intensity lights, plus good lead-in lights and an ILS landing system which made instrument approaches quite feasible. We also had excellent training and good approach procedures. Night operations would have been no particular problem. Often we had night takeoffs in filthy weather too, and night time assemblies and early morning assemblies. On one or two occasions I recall the runways so icy that we could only run up the engines and check the mags and superchargers on each of the four engines during takeoff. It may sound scary, but it actually worked out OK.

by **Daniel D. Freitas, radio operator, 3542** Middlefield Lane, Eureka, CA 95501--Sunday morning, Dec. 24, 1944 was bitter cold as we prepared for our sixth mission. Deopham Green airfield was covered with a light freezing mist. The 401st furnished a complete 36-plane group for the 94th "B" formation. The 8th dispatched over 2000 bombers and over 800 fighters on that day, the largest force of bombers and fighters ever dispatched. There was always static on the liaison receiver, so it took my full concentration to monitor and copy the radio code from the assigned frequencies.

As we approached the flak areas I put on my flak vest and helmet. Our intercom was working intermittently but I could hear some talk about engine problems. I was too busy monitoring my frequencies to be aware that two of our engines were running very rough. As we approached the IP the pilot feathered No. 1 engine. We were engaged for about 27 minutes with moderate but accurate flak, and observed six to eight ME-262s circling our formation.

As we reached the IP, I turned on the bomb strike camera and began to discharge chaff. I was pretty scared, hearing the thump of flak bursting around us and I was saying my usual prayers. While opening one of the boxes of chaff I found a piece of chaff paper bearing a handwritten note. The war stopped, and my fear and concerns disappeared as I read the note:

If you've no girl friend to care where you roam;

And if you've no wife waiting at home;

If you'd care for a pen friend, then now is the time,

To sit down and write Joy or Winnie a line.

The note was signed by Miss Win Bevan, 106, Eversly, Barnhurst, Kent and Miss Joy Chaplin, 26, Hurst Road, Barnhurst, Kent

As I resumed my task of sliding the chaff bundles into the special dispensing chute, I wondered if I was going to be able to write to them. We had dropped our bombs, were losing altitude, and lagging behind the formation, losing altitude. The pilot told us to jettison all loose equipment and ammunition. We attempted to salvo the ball turret but could not get it loose. The ball turret gunner scrambled out of his turret frantically when we pounded on it, giving us a laugh that helped reduce the tension. The Gee Box and intercom were both inoperative and we were running on three engines with one running on a prayer. As we approached the English Channel I contacted Air Sea Rescue, which tracked us across the channel. Hundreds of aircraft were in distress as we were, low on gas and searching for a landing field. We finally made an emergency landing at Great Massingham and heaved a huge sigh of relief.

We were met by the RAF ground crew, taken to briefing, assigned billets, and shared meals with our RAF partners. We spent Christmas with the RAF and WAAF, who shared their rations and treated us royally. We had a lot of fun learning about each other's ways over mild-and-bitters and dancing. We learned that the British have a wonderful way of celebrating Christmas.

I marveled at the beauty of the winter landscape as we took a six-hour ride back to East Anglia, huddled together for warmth in the back of an army truck. I thought about Win and Joy, the note, and the letter I was going to write. Back at the base, my mind was full of anticipation as I wrote my letter, and I fantasized about our first meeting. My anticipation turned to disappointment when the letter I received from Win and Joy indicated they thought I was stationed in Italy. My letters were so badly censored that we were never able to arrange a meeting.

I still have my chaff note from Win and Joy, and have looked at it many times over the years. We have never met, but I still have the memory of the time two English girls made the air war temporarily stand still for me one Christmas Eve over the skies of Germany.

## Parts of Letters P.O.W.s Received from Home

Contributed by Robert W. Moore, 306BG

Recd from wife: "Can't send you candy or sweets; don't you know there's a war on?"

Recd sweater from R.C. worker, so he wrote and thanked her. He got an answer: "I'm glad you liked it, but I really meant it for combat men and not cowards in prison camp."

Recd from mother: "Glad you got shot down. I heard Germany is a nice place, and I'm sure you'll like it, so don't try to escape. Do you need money for candy, shows, etc?"

Recd from sweetheart: "I'm being true to you. Met a nice flying instructor and he takes me out all the time. He has a nice new car. He has been trying for months to get overseas, but he is needed here."

Recd letter from wife: "I still love you, even though you are a coward."

Recd letter from girl friend: "How are the German girls? I heard they're nice. Do you go to dances? Have you got your radio with you?"

Recd from sweetheart: "Darling, I hope you are staying true to me."

Recd from girl: "Darling, I was so glad you were shot down before flying became dangerous."

Recd from wife: "Darling, you asked for slippers. What color do you want?"

Recd from fiancée: "Dear Sergeant. You were missing for a month, so I got married."

Recd from fiancée: "I'm sorry John, our engagement is broken. You should have stayed with the ship. I can't marry a prisoner of war."

Recd from mother: "Son, even though you did bail out, we still love you."

Recd from wife by POW for three years: "Darling, I just had a baby, but don't worry. Mother forgives me. The American officer is sending you cigarettes."

Recd from wife: "I'm going to Kent in two more weeks, do you mind? Write and let me know."

Recd from fiancée: "Darling, I married your father. Love, mother."

Recd from mother: "Here's a money order for \$10. If you need more, let me know."

Recd from girl friend: "Darling, come home soon, won't you? Take care of Andy when you are out drinking. Can you buy beer there or do they just sell wine? Are the German girls good dancers?"

Recd from fiancée: "Darling, I'm glad you are true to me, but I want you to go out and have some fun."

Recd from mother: "I'd send you your golf clubs, but the Post Office won't allow it."

Recd from girl friend: "Darling, the words after lousy when you described your new camp were censored."

Recd from mother: "I was at home when the news came that you were missing. That, you will agree, is a blessing."

Recd from mother: "Sorry to learn you disgraced us by surrendering to the enemy. It is our desire that we never see you again."

### Flier Dangling From Bomber Pulls Self Back In With One Hand (From Stars and Stripes)

A "Liberator" Base, May 19 1944 (AP)

Without a parachute, Lt. Edward M. Gibbens, of Mountain Home, Idaho, hung precariously by one hand in the open belly of a bomber high over the Channel for almost five minutes, then pulled himself back to safety.

Gibbens, bombardier on the Liberator named "Sweating It Out," fell out on the way home from a recent raid, after "chopping" bombs off the damaged racks with an axe.

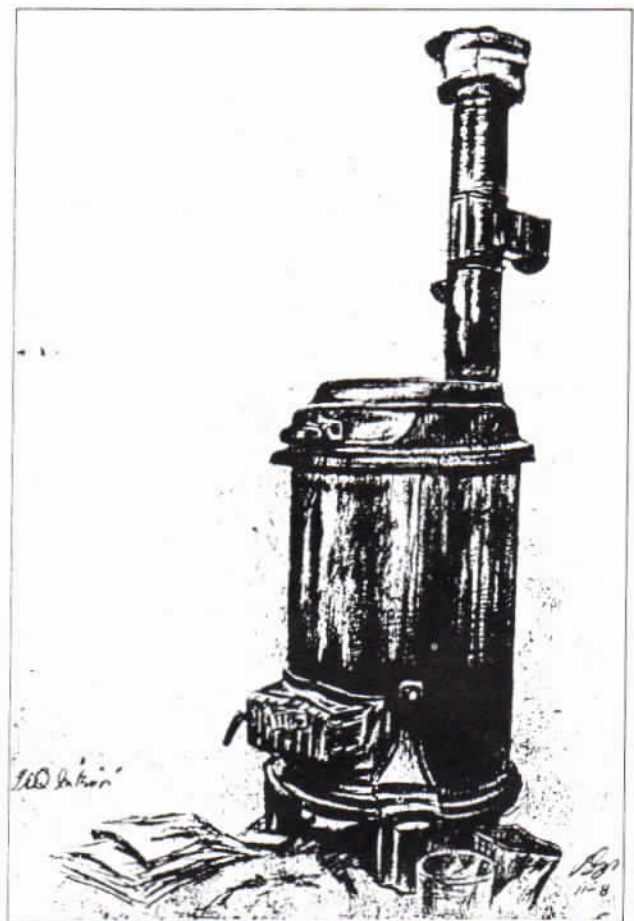
The bomber ran into terrific flak over a French airfield, and was shot up so badly that the bombs wouldn't go down. It had 87 flak holes in the framework, all four engines were damaged, and the hydraulic system was shot out, meaning no brakes and an inevitable explosion in the event of a crash landing.

While the pilot, Lt. Robert T. Hall, of Wayne, IN, struggled to keep the plane up, Gibbens shed his parachute, took the crash axe, and squeezed into the narrow catwalk to knock the bombs loose. The first one burst the bomb bay doors wide.

Bracing himself against a 100-mile gale, Gibbens hacked the rest free one by one. As the last came free, Gibbens slipped on the catwalk, slippery with hydraulic fluid. He grabbed the bomb rack with one hand, holding the axe in the other. One slip of his fingers meant he'd go hurtling thousands of feet to death in the Channel.

Slowly he pulled himself back up where he could regain his footing.

Realizing he'd accomplished the feat with just one hand, Gibben's first words were, "And I didn't lose the axe."



# Fifty Years Later...a Daughter's Perspective

By Elaine Stahlman Jurs, State College, PA

Recently my husband, Peter, and I returned from a trip to England which included a visit to Cambridge. My father, Philip Stahlman, an Eighth Air Force veteran, was stationed near there, at Nuthampstead Air Base, during WWII. He was a Second Lieutenant with the 398th Bomb Group, 601st Squadron. As part of our trip, we arranged to meet members of the "Friends of the Eighth" with whom my parents had stayed during an Air Force Reunion a few years ago. I could not have known how affected I would be by this visit and also by my stop at the American Military Cemetery outside Cambridge.

As Nick and Jane Eve, our kind hosts, drove us around the abandoned air base, I could only imagine what it must have been like for my father and the thousands of other young men who risked their lives far from home for freedom. Dad rarely talked about his wartime experiences, but when we were old enough to ask and to understand, we learned that he very nearly did not return from his last flight.

It was 1944 and he was flying a "make-up" mission, having missed a previously scheduled flight due to illness. Dad was flying copilot with a crew he had never flown with before. Over Germany his B-17 was hit by enemy fire. The tail gunner was killed and the nose of the plane was gone. That the remaining crew members were able to land subsequently (after hours of flying) safely back at Nuthampstead is a tale that still inspires awe and disbelief. Yet here I am, along with seven sisters and brothers, to tell that tale, which I'll wager many of you have heard before. Of course I would not be here if my dad had not made it back. At that time, he was half my present age, and as young as one of our sons now.

Our hosts then took us to the "Woodman" Pub on the edge of Nuthampstead, where the airmen met to relax between flights. It's still very much a working pub, and very much dedicated to the 398th Bomb Group, as the monument outside attests. I was not prepared, however, to see on the wall of the pub a photo of dad's plane with its nose shot off. Another

photo of dad himself, from a recent reunion, smiled back at me from the wall, though my vision was obscured momentarily by tears. He was identified in the photo only as "Second Pilot." As I drank my Pimms, I leafed through the visitor's book and found dad and mom's signatures from their visit a few years ago. Peter and I added ours, and felt we were among excellent company.

Dad later told me a story about the dedication of the pub's monument to the 398th about ten years ago. In the middle of the prayer service, a terrible wind and driving rain suddenly whipped up. The Friends of the Eighth did not move. They were steadfast and remained unflinching (though drenched) until the end of the service. Sandwiches and table service all blew away. When the sun came out, new sandwiches and refreshments appeared magically out of nowhere.

Nick and Jane Eve provided some insight as to this attitude of deep respect and gratitude on the part of the British toward the American military in WWII. "Without their help," Nick said quietly, "England might have been a very different country today. How do we ever repay that?" The Eves, both in their forties, were not even born at the time the first Americans flew from Nuthampstead and hundreds of other air bases in the Cambridge area. Yet here we were, two second-generation couples who had never met before that day, brought together by their love and respect for these airmen, one in particular.

My visit to the American Military Cemetery later that week was similarly moving. One is first struck by the order and tranquility of the place. The pristine grounds, including the beautiful rose garden, are so lovingly attended. White marble crosses and Stars of David, as well as the wall of the names of the missing, bear witness to the sacrifice of those who gave their lives so that others might be free. I was unprepared, however, for the emotions that welled up when I stepped into the Chapel dedicated to the U. S. Airmen. A stunning mosaic of angels, blue sky, and golden airplanes line the chapel

walls and entire ceiling. Windows bear the seals of every State in the Union. This surely is the translation of the emotions of an artist who understood what had happened here. The words of the tribute around the perimeter of the mosaic ceiling say so beautifully and fittingly what is felt by so many. Humbled, I gazed upward and read: "In proud and grateful memory of those men of the U. S. Army Air Force who from these friendly skies flew their final flight and met their God. They knew not the hour, the day, nor the matter of their passing, when far from home they were called to join that heroic band of airmen who had gone before. May they rest in peace."

Since my return to America, I have talked with my father about my trip, which I now feel to have been a pilgrimage. He now shares with me as an adult some of the details about his war experiences that I never would have understood or appreciated before. But there are many details that I'm sure can only be shared with those who have a collective memory of what took place from 1942 to 1945 from air bases all over East Anglia. Part of the great value of the Air Force reunions my parents attend is that they are gathered together with the only people who can ever really understand. Those who flew their missions and worked with them and the spouses and partners who have shared their lives. The British also understand, at least that generation, and to a lesser extent, some of the younger (my) generation.

It must not end there. The British have their "Friends of the Eighth," a wonderful, dedicated group. Who will keep the spirit and the appreciation alive here at home for the work that was done 50 years ago by this outstanding collection of young men and women? It must be us, the "friends and family" of the Eighth Air Force, who continue to educate and remind present and future generations what they did to secure the freedoms we so easily take for granted today.

Thank you, Dad, with gratitude and love.



## ★ ★ TAPS ★ ★

Gene Aenchbacher, 97BG, Wichita, KS  
 J. C. "Cliff" Alsop, 352FG/486FS, Galveston, TX  
 G. William Brooks, 491BG MP, Centre Hall, PA  
 William T. Burt, 445BG, B-24 Bombardier, POW  
 Eugene H. Curtis, 385BG/549BG/385BS Top  
 Gunner, Mitchell, CO  
 Ray "Buss" Edwards, 466BG, B-24  
 Bombardier, Manhattan, KS  
 Charles C. Gattman, 96BG Waist Gunner,  
 Troutdale, OR  
 Carl E. Hitchcock, 466BG, B-24 Pilot, POW,  
 San Antonio, TX  
 Kenneth J. Male, 356FG, Ocala, FL  
 Reese S. Martin, 96BG Pilot, Mercer Island, WA  
 Lee M. McQuiston, 96BG, Pleasant Hills, PA  
 Alvin Francis Monen, 18th WX,  
 Weather Observer, Bottsford, England  
 William A. Morris, 351BG, Engr/Gunner,  
 Boca Raton, FL  
 L. C. Oldham, Jr., 8th AF, Houston, TX  
 Nicholas Sanabria, 390BG, gunner, Buffalo, NY  
 Ralph D. Schmid, Molesworth Bombardier,  
 Bridgeport, CT  
 Clarence Squires, 34BG/18BS, Crew Chief,  
 Carionsville, MO  
 Sylvester Tyner, Jr., 92BG, Monroeville, PA  
 Raymond H. Warns, 92BG Copilot, Swiss  
 Internee/Evader, St. Paul, MN

*"Only guard yourself  
 and guard your soul  
 carefully, lest you  
 forget the things your  
 eyes saw, and lest  
 these things depart  
 your heart all the  
 days of your life.  
 And you shall make  
 them known to your  
 children and to your  
 children's children."  
 --Deuteronomy 4:9*

## Taps for B/G James H. Howard

Brigadier General James H. Howard, who was the US military's only WWII fighter pilot to receive the Congressional Medal of Honor for action in aerial combat over Europe, died last March after a long illness. He was eighty-one.

General Howard earned the Medal for single-handedly protecting a B-17 formation on a long-range mission near Berlin on January 11, 1944. He had become separated from his P-51 unit during an earlier encounter with Luftwaffe aircraft.

According to the citation signed by President Roosevelt, General Howard, rather than wait for help, fended off some thirty enemy aircraft for nearly thirty minutes and shot down at least four of the German fighters. Low on fuel and out of ammunition, he returned to base. His aircraft had been hit only once, and all the bombers survived.

Born in China to missionary parents, Gen. Howard returned to the U.S. to finish high school and Pomona College. He entered naval aviation training in 1938, and two years later joined the "Flying Tigers," where he shot down more than six Japanese aircraft. When the AVG merged with the AAF in 1942 he joined the 8th AF, and by the fall of 1943 he commanded the 354th Fighter Group, the first American unit to receive P-51 Mustangs. After the war he left active duty to form his own systems engineering company. He retired from the Air Force Reserve in 1966.

(From "Air Force Magazine" June 1995)



**Church of St. Mary the Virgin in Podington.**  
 The 92nd BGMA rebuilt the organ in St. Mary's  
 and dedicated it as a memorial in 1985.

## The Final Sob--From an Unhappy Reichsmarschall

(Editor's Note: I copied this from an unknown source several years ago. It consists of statements made during interrogations shortly after the war by Hermann Goering, long-time chief of the Luftwaffe. He poisoned himself in his cell before his death sentence for war crimes could be carried out.)

"I knew first that the Luftwaffe was losing control of the air when the American long-range fighters were able to escort the bombers as far as Hanover. It was not long before they were getting to Berlin. We then knew we must develop the jet planes. Our plan for their early development was unsuccessful only because of our bombing attacks.

"Allied attacks greatly affected our training program, too. For instance, the attacks on oil retarded the training because our new pilots couldn't get sufficient training before they were put into the air.

"I am convinced that the jet planes would have won the war for us if we had had only four or five months more time. Our underground installations were all ready. The factory at Kahla had a capacity of 1,000 to 1,200 jet airplanes a month. Now with 5,000 to 6,000 jets, the outcome would have been quite different.

"We would have trained sufficient pilots for the jet planes despite oil shortage, because we would have had underground factories for oil, producing a sufficient quantity for the jets. The transition to jets was very easy in training. The jet pilot output was always ahead of the jet aircraft production.

"Germany could not have been defeated by air power alone, using England as a base, without invasion--because German industry was going underground, and our countermeasures would have kept pace with our bombing. But the point is, that if Germany were attacked in her weakened condition as now, then the air could do it alone. That is, the land invasion meant that so many workers had to be withdrawn from factory production and even from the Luftwaffe.

"We bombed cities in England instead of concentrating on aircraft and engine factories despite my original intention to attack only military targets and factories, because after the British attacked Hamburg our people were angry and I was ordered to attack indiscriminately.



Hermann Goering

"Allied precision bombing had a greater effect on the defeat of Germany than area bombing, because destroyed cities could be evacuated but destroyed industry was difficult to replace.

"Allied selection of targets was good, particularly in regard to oil. As soon as we started to repair an oil installation, you always bombed it again before we could produce one ton.

"We didn't concentrate on four-engine Focke-Wulf planes as heavy bombers after the Battle of Britain, because we were developing the He-177 and trying to develop the Me-264, which was designed to go to America and return. Because our production capacity was not so great as America's, we could not produce quickly everything we needed. Moreover, our plants were subject to constant bombing.

"If I had to design the Luftwaffe again, the first airplane I would develop would be the jet fighter--then the jet bomber. It is now a question of fuel. The jet fighter takes too much. The Me-264 awaited only the final solution of the fuel consumption problem. According to my view the future airplane is one without fuselage (flying wing) equipped with turbine in combination with the jet and propeller.

"Before D-Day, the Allied attacks in northern France hurt us because we were not able to rebuild in France as quickly as at home. The attacks on marshaling yards were most effective, next came low-level attacks on troops, then attacks on bridges. The low-flying planes had a terror effect and caused great damage to our communications. Also demoralizing were the umbrella fighters, which after escorting the bombers would swoop down and hit everything, including jet planes in the process of landing.

"The Allies owe the success of the invasion to the air forces. They prepared the invasion; they made it possible; they carried it through.

"Without the U.S. Air Force the war would still be going on elsewhere, but certainly not on German soil."

## Relief from Combat By J. Larry Cummings

On Nov. 5, 1944, at 28,000 feet over Kaiserslautern, Germany, we had two engines knocked out from anti-aircraft fire. The pilot, Lt. Carl Estersohn, was able to keep the plane flying and we dropped out of formation. After descending through very thick clouds for several hours, the navigator, Lt. Foster Burba, asked me to get a radio fix, which I did; but the coordinates I got put us over the channel, which couldn't be.

By this time we had thrown away everything we could, and were still losing altitude rapidly. We finally broke out of the clouds at about 500 feet; and we were lost. Then a P-51 flew alongside and told our pilot there was an airfield straight ahead. When we landed at the British fighter airstrip, we discovered that our brakes were shot out and had to run the length of the runway onto the tarmac before we stopped.

The field was about five miles from Ghent, Belgium in friendly territory. Since we didn't have any money on us, we borrowed \$40 each from the finance officer. He said it would catch up to us eventually (mine never did).

We hitched a ride to Ghent and proceeded to drink beer at an inn and got all bombed. We got several rooms for the night, but Lt. Ira Slingsby, copilot, and I had to share the same bed. I had never had a history of wetting the bed, but I did that night--probably because of the Belgium beer or the traumatic experience I had just gone through.

My question is: can any other enlisted man in any branch of the service have the distinction of literally peeing all over an officer?

# Book Reviews

**"Willow Run: Colossus of American Industry: Home of Henry Ford's B-24 'Liberator' Bomber,"** by Warren Benjamin Kidder, Publisher KFT, Lansing, MI, Order Phone 1-800-754-6830, Access code 30, major credit cards, ISBN 0-9647205-3-1. Hardbound, 344 pp., 5-1/2 X 8-1/2", B&W. Fascinating documentary account of the building and operation of the vast "Willow Run" manufacturing complex that produced more than 400 B-24s per month. See excerpts on pp 18-21 this issue. (JWH)

**"The Ragged Irregulars of Bassingbourn: History of the 91st Bomb Group in WWII,"** by Marion H. Havelaar with William N. Hess, Schiffer Publisher, Atglen, PA 19310, ISBN 0-88740-810-9, 1995, \$45.00 + \$2.95 S&H. Hardbound, 8-1/2 X 11". 264 pp. B&W&C.

This an outstanding historical account of the activities of one of the first, pioneer, groups in the 8th Air Force. It may be the best group history published thus far. It is well organized and written and has a number of previously unpublished photos from the group archives. (JWH)

**"Agent For The Resistance: A Belgian Saboteur in World War II,"** by Herman Bodson, Texas A&M University Press, College Station, TX 77843, ISBN 0-89096-607-9. Hardbound, 244 pp., 6 X 9" B&W, Oct 1994, \$24.95. A fascinating first-hand account of the Belgian resistance fighters and Helpers, including operations supplied by the Carpetbaggers and much content relating to the Battle of the Bulge. They used the upper turret of a B-17G mounted on a sled to counter a Nazi attack. (JWH)

**"War in the Blue--A Remembrance,"** by Les Lind, June Lane Publishers. One North June Lane, Hendersonville, NC 28792. Hardbound, 139 pp., 9 X 7", B&W, 1995. An interesting personal account of a 379th Bomb Group ball turret gunner who flew 19 missions at the end of WWII. (JWH)

**"Wings of Morning: The story of the last American bomber shot down over Germany in WWII,"** by Thomas Childers, Addison-Wesley, ISBN 0-201-48310-6. Hardbound, 276 pp., 9-1/4 X 6-1/4", B&W, 1995, \$23.00. A real detective story. Childers, nephew of a crew member who died in the crash, expertly weaves together hundreds of wartime letters, Air Force records, interviews with family members and witnesses of the crash to uncover the mystery of what really happened on this last mission. Did

they die aboard the burning plane, bail out, die in the crash, or were they tortured and beaten by angry German mobs? (JWH)

**"339th Fighter Group: 100 air victories in 100 missions,"** Turner Publishing Co., Paducah, KY, ISBN 1-56311-067-9, 1991. Hardbound, 8-1/4 X 11", B&W, many photos, combat narratives, statistical info.

**"A Domain of Heroes,"** by Carol F. Dillon, Palm Island Press, Sarasota, FL, ISBN 0-9646671-0-X. Hardbound, 6 X 9", B&W, 1995. This review of American Air Force POWs concentrates on the experiences of enlisted men, gives much detail, index. (JWH)

**"Memories of a Miracle/Herinneringen aan een Wonder, Operation Manna /Chowhound,"** by Hans Onderwater, Ad. Donker--Rotterdam, ISBN 90 6100 407 1, 1995. Soft cover, 112 pp., 8-1/4 X 9-3/4", in English and Dutch. Anyone who was connected with Operation Manna/Chowhound will want a copy of this book. It is very well researched on all sides and contains many personal narratives and on-the-spot photographs. It commemorates the 50th Anniversary of this famous mercy mission that saved hundreds of thousands of starving people in German-occupied Holland. This book will be a valuable antique one day. (JWH)

**"Spitfires, Thunderbolts, and Warm Beer: an American fighter pilot over Europe,"** by Philip D. Caine, Brassey's, NY, London, ISBN 0-02-881115-1, 1995. Hardbound, 232 pp., 9-1/4 X 6-1/4, B&W, 1995, \$23.95. The story of LeRoy Gover, who became the most experienced fighter pilot in England, having flown with both the RAF and the U.S. Army Air Corps. (JWH)

**"Return to Sagan,"** by Robert E. O'Bannon, La Mirada Press, POB 804, La Mirada, CA 90637, LC# 94-077442, 1994, \$14.95 + \$2.95 S&H. Soft cover, 690 pp., 5-1/2 X 8-1/2, B&W. This is a novel that is based on a number of themes--mainly the POW experience in WWII, but also involving stolen German diamonds, escape, liberation, and return after 20 years to recover the diamonds behind the iron curtain. It is based on the author's personal experience and the experiences of many others in similar situations. (JWH)

**"Three Gold Stars: The story of the three Lewandowski brothers,"** by R. Joseph Rosamilia, The Laureate Press, Egg Harbor City, NJ, LC # TXU 452-532, 1991, \$19.95. Hardbound, 350 pp., 6 X 9", B&W. The lively story of three American heroes of Polish extraction--an 8th AF copilot, a Marine, and a Navy captain--all of whom were killed in combat. (JWH)

**"Spitfire Diary,"** by E.A.W. Smith, Eakin Press, Sunbelt Media, Austin, TX, ISBN 1-571-68-046-2, 1995, \$16.95. Hardbound, 6 X 9", 238 pp. B&W, photos, index. A factual and entertaining account of a Spitfire pilot's experiences from D-Day to end of war. Based on official Operations Records Books and personal reminiscences. (JWH)

**"Forgotten Victims: The abandonment of Americans in Hitler's Camps,"** by Mitchell G. Bard, Westview Press, Boulder, CO, ISBN 0-8133-2193-X, 1994, \$19.95. Hardbound, 171 pp. B&W, index. This book is a retelling of the story of the Holocaust from the standpoint of American nationals caught in Hitler's web. It includes the experience of American soldiers and airmen, 81 of whom were for a time incarcerated in Buchenwald. (JWH)

**"Despatch on War Operations, 23rd February 1942 to 8th May 1945,"** by Air Chief Marshal Sir Arthur Harris, Frank Cass Publ., London, 1995, ISBN 0-7146-4692 X, #35. Hardback, 211 pp., 8 X 13", B&W, photos. This is one of the most important historical records of the WWII air war. It is Harris' long awaited official testament to his 3-1/2 years at Bomber Command, and gives unique personal insights on his views and comments by eminent historians. This concise, carefully argued report includes technical descriptions of bombing techniques, defensive tactics, and bombing power, and is accompanied by numerous detailed statistical tables and graphs. A must for any air historian! (JWH)

**"Fait Accompli: A historical account of the 457th Bomb Group (H),"** compiled by Homer Briggs and James L. Bass, Ed. by John Welch, J. M. Productions, Brentwood, TN 37024-1911, ISBN 0-9648926-0-2, 1995. A historical account of the operations of the 457th BG (H), the "Fireball Outfit" based at Glatton, England. This group history is very well done. It includes statistics, personal accounts, descriptions of major missions, photos, and acknowledgements to all of the base personnel who contributed to the group's outstanding record. (JWH)

**"WWII War Eagles,"** by Jeffrey L. Ethell, ed. by Warren M. Bodie, Widewing Publications, Hayesville, NC, ISBN 0-9629359-2-1, 1995, \$39.95. Hardback, 224 pp., 11 X 8-1/2", Beautiful full color, index. This is a real "Beauty Book" fit for any coffee table or reference shelf. It uses only original color photos (mostly Kodachromes) from the war years in huge format. No Warbird reconstructions or colorized photos. Ethell's concise, expert descriptions add much. Every theater is represented. (JWH)

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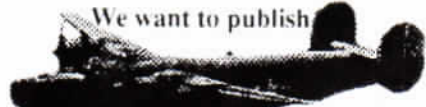
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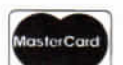
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