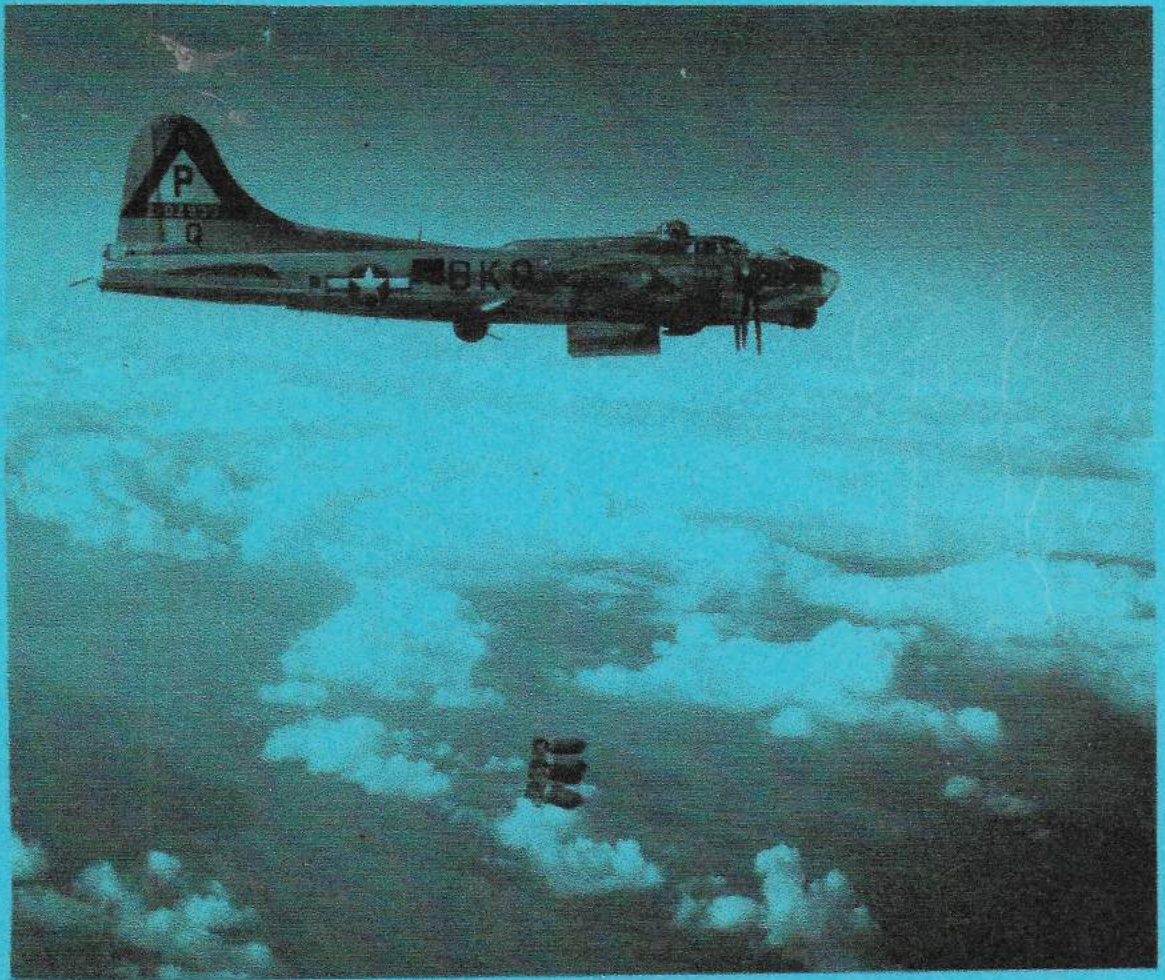


CREW 115



Walbert Storm

CREW 115

First Printing
1998

CREW 115

This book is dedicated to, and in fondest memory of

August F. Wilson, 1916-1990
Edwin B. Frederick, 1923-1992
Garnet E. Foster, 1915-1998

CREW 115

INTRODUCTION

Early in 1944 a group of young men met each other for the first time in a place called Plant Park in Tampa, Florida. The United States had been engaged in fighting World War II since December 7, 1941 and these men had been in various parts of the country, in various occupations, since that date. Some were students, some had already begun their civilian careers, and one had already enlisted in the Army. They came from varied backgrounds and from California and Massachusetts and points in between. Now they were soldiers in the United States Army and the uppermost thought in their minds was to get the war over with and return to normal civilian pursuits. It probably never occurred to any of them that fifty years later they would still be meeting each other and remembering that first meeting and recalling all that had transpired in the intervening years. But, events do take place in ways not planned for nor even dreamed of.

The occasion for that first meeting at Plant Park was to assemble this group of young soldiers into a crew to man and fly a B-17 airplane. Originally only nine persons were involved in this crew composition although the B-17 was a ten-man airplane. These nine flyers had completed their training in their flying specialities prior to the end of 1943, and were awaiting the tenth member - the navigator - who had just completed navigation training. The ten original crew members who came together in February 1944 were:

John Ballenger, Engineer - Top Turret Gunner
Hollis Crowell, Radio Operator Gunner
G. E. Foster - Aerial Gunner
Edwin Frederick - Co-pilot
Robert Miller - Pilot
Alvin Orth - Aerial Gunner
Delbert Storm - Armorer Gunner
William Stockman - Navigator
August Wilson - Tail Gunner
Anthony Zanin - Bombardier

Upon completion of all the necessary formalities at the assembly station, this ten-man team was assigned to Mac Dill Field at the southern tip of Tampa, and officially designated as Crew 115.

Not many weeks after crew 115 began flying together to become a combat-ready team, Pilot Robert (Bob) Miller was removed from the crew and was replaced by Edward A. (Sink) Sienkiewicz. The crew soon became a well-coordinated, functioning unit. Some time in training was lost, however, because of the change in pilots, and crew 115 did not leave Mac Dill Field until June 1944 for further duty in the European Theatre of Operations (ETO).

Hunter Field, Savannah, Georgia, became the next stop for crew 115. Here, a new B-17G was assigned for flight to the ETO, by way of Nashua, New Hampshire, Presque Isle, Maine, and Gander, Newfoundland. After considerable delay for unknown reasons, crew 115 finally took off

in the very late hours on the night of July 3 for a 13 hour, 20 minute flight to Belfast, Ireland. That specific B-17 was not to be assigned to this crew, however. It was designated for assignment to some 8th Air Force heavy bomber group in England. Crew 115 continued on its way by vessel and train from Belfast to Scotland; Stone, England; and Grafton Underwood, near Kettering, England, arriving in the middle of July 1944. Grafton Underwood was the home of the 384th Bomb Group (Heavy), a B-17 group assigned to the 1st Air Division, 8th Air Force. This was to be the home of crew 115 until January 1945, when the last of the ten members returned to the United States.

Although its crew members continued to refer to themselves as crew 115, upon assignment to the 547th Bombardment Squadron, 384th Bomb Group, the official designation of the crew became TT-34. At the beginning of August 1944, crew 115 began flying combat missions over Europe and flew the required 35 missions which constituted a tour of duty for heavy bomber flying personnel in the ETO. The last combat mission by a member of crew 115 was flown on December 28, 1944 over Coblenz, Germany.

This booklet contains remarks and comments by each of the ten members of crew 115, in their own words.

REUNIONS THROUGH THE YEARS

Each of the ten members of Crew 115 was required to fly 35 missions to complete his tour of duty in the European Theatre of Operations. Because of various reasons mission number 35 for each flyer was flown on a different day; therefore, the individual crew members did not finish their flying duties on the same day, nor did they return to the United States at the same time or by the same method of transportation. Some returned by military sea transport, some by air, and one by a commercial ocean vessel.

Once back in the United States, after a short "home" leave for rest and recuperation, it was back to duty. The Army had differing needs for its returning combat veterans so the various members of crew 115 were assigned stateside duty at military stations around the country. Thus crew 115 was no longer a unit. World War II officially ended on September 2, 1945 and demobilization began in earnest. By the end of the year the ten flyers were free to pursue means of livelihood not dependent upon the military.

For a while the members kept in loose contact with one another but after some time, as is usually the case, contacts became fewer and farther between, and the location of each crew member, for the most part, was lost to the others. In 1987, however, John Ballenger and Delbert Storm began an intensive search for their former team members. One lead led to another and as a result a reunion of the former crew 115 was held near Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania in the fall of 1987. At the first reunion, 8 of the 10, and their wives met. Since then annual reunions have been held in the following locations. While it has not been possible for all ten members and their wives to meet at any one reunion, all ten have met each other at least once.

- 1988 - Savannah, Georgia
- 1989 - Windsor, Connecticut
- 1990 - Wichita, Kansas
- 1991 - Nashville, Tennessee
- 1992 - San Antonio, Texas
- 1993 - Ft. Lauderdale, Florida (Cruise to Bahamas)
- 1994 - Baltimore, Maryland
- 1995 - Colorado Springs, Colorado
- 1996 - St. Louis, Missouri
- 1997 - Sault Sainte Marie, Michigan
- 1998 - Springfield, Massachusetts

Hopefully, these reunions will continue for many more years.

1999 - DAYTON, OHIO
2000 - VIRGINIA BEACH, VIRGINIA

CREW 115
ORIGINAL CREW



L-R rear: Gene Foster, Tony Zanin, Ed Frederick, Alvin Orth,
John Ballenger, Bob Miller

front: Fred Wilson, Hollis Crowell, Bill Stockman,
Delbert Storm

Mac Dill Field
Tampa, Florida
March 1944



JOHN BALLENGER

JOHN S. BALLENGER
Engineer - Top Turret Gunner

After the Government started registering eighteen year olds, I persuaded my folks to sign so I could enlist. I went into the Air Corps on November 7, 1942. I was sent to mechanics school at the California Flyers at Inglewood, California. We lived in a hotel on the ocean front at Santa Monica, which was real hard to take. After this school, I was sent to Burbank, California to the Lockheed factory to train on P-38s. Then from there I ended up at Muroc Air Base which was in the Mojave Desert, working on P-38s. While there I volunteered for aerial gunnery school. But then the squadron I was assigned to was transferred to a small strip at Lomita, California. This was a good duty station, and I had about forgotten asking for gunnery school when my orders came. I went to gunnery school at Las Vegas, Nevada, and from there I was assigned to Tampa, Florida. After a few months at Tampa complaining about the food and the midnight curfew, we left Tampa in June 1944 for England and returned to the States in January 1945.

After my leave was up I went to Santa Ana, California for reassignment. I was there about a week and then was sent to Chanute, Illinois for school again. This time on the P-51. While at Chanute I ran into Al Orth who was also going to school. After this school I ended up back at Muroc and living in the same type dallas huts I had lived in the first time.

I was working in a small flight of P-51s which were there to give the B-29 lead crews who were training there experience in fighter attacks. When the war ended I wanted to get out as soon as I could. After I was out I found I really enjoyed the service. So I fooled around for about nine months, then went back into the Air Corps.

After I went back in, my first duty station was at Bolling AFB in Washington, D. C. While there I asked to be assigned to the Caribbean area. I was to report to Greensboro, N. C. ORD and I got a delay in route to the ORD and went home and got married. After reporting to the ORD I was made permanent. I was assigned to a small base flight of aircraft outside Greensboro that was there so the flyers could stay current. After a few months Greensboro was closed and my next assignment was Newburgh, New York, which was just getting started for the reserves.

There I received orders for the Pacific. I was hoping for Japan, but ended up in the Philippines and assigned to a fighter base. I was there only about six weeks and received orders to report to Manila to work on a general's B-17. I was assigned to the Commanding General of the ground forces in that part of the Pacific. When I went over to Nichols Field to see the bird, I almost gave up. The bird had all the props off. Parts were all over the ground and the crew that had been assigned to the B-17 had started an inspection when the General fired them all and asked for a new crew from the pilot down. There were four maintenance people assigned and none of us had really that much experience on B-17s. So we got the books down and completed the inspection and test flight and then started flying the General on his trips. Most of them to Guam, Okinawa,

or Japan. There were two maintenance people on each trip since we were to do all the work whenever it was needed. This was a real plush aircraft. It looked better inside than most Air Liners. Whenever the General didn't need the bird for trips, he would ask us where we would like to go and then send us on inspection tours all over the Pacific.

The housing for dependents was not very good but they were building more. So I put in for Marge to come over. However, it was a long wait before we could get a house. When Marge received her orders to come over, I cancelled the request since I had only about six months to go before I would rotate back to the States. I would have had to extend my tour after she arrived there.

After a few months in Manila we moved the plane to Clark AFB. Whenever the General wanted to go on a trip, we would fly down to Manila and pick him up. The General told us once that the reason he had fired the other crew was that he could never depend on getting to where he wanted to go on time. We flew with the General about 18 months and never had to miss or abort a flight.

When the Berlin airlift started, a three star General in Japan lost his C-54 to the airlift and as our General was only a two star, he took our plane. So there I was out of a job. I was transferred back into the Air Force and into a Photo Recon outfit flying B-17s. This outfit had detachments all over the Pacific. I asked to be sent out on the first open detachment. I went to Benjarmasin, Borneo. When I was on detachment it was for a period of ninety days or 100 flying hours, then I would go back to Clark for at least one day, then I could go back out. This detachment had a total of ten people counting the maintenance ground crew and the ground radio operator. We operated out of a dirt strip. Our gas came to us in 50 gallon drums. We lived in an old Japanese War Camp. We tried to fly each day about four hours and would take off while it was still dark so that we could get in before the haze drifted in or else we would have to go to Java to land. Once a week there was a KLA C-47 Airliner that would land and this was the highlight of the week for us. There were two flight engineers and we would take turns flying. We had about six natives working, keeping house for us. The navigator didn't want them to have anything to do with the food, so the enlisted men had to take turns cooking. You can guess that was some fun since I had never tried even to boil water. We soon got the cooking down to breakfast only. For our evening meal we went into town, which was about 18 miles away. We had flown about 75 hours when during our inspection we found metal in one of the sumps. We radioed Clark that we had an engine change. They said they would have the equipment we needed down to us in about a week. The day the equipment got to us, Clark had changed its mind and told us to fly it back to Clark with a minimum crew. By this time I was about to rotate back to the States. I was told to fly back as engineer. Our instructions were to take off on all four, then feather the engine after we got to cruise altitude. After we took off that engine ran so well we used it all the way back to Clark.

When I left Clark I was stationed at Topeka, Kansas flying B-17s, C-47s, and C-54s. When Topeka closed, we were sent to Shreveport, Louisiana. I flew until about 1951. Then I quit flying and very shortly was sent to Korea. I think Korea was the coldest place I have ever been.

We had B-26s and the missions were not like the ones we flew in the ETO. In Korea the missions were at night and the planes took off about 20 to 30 minutes apart. While in Korea I was always looking for something that would get me out of Korea for a few days. I guess I spent about two months out of that year in Japan. I also talked myself into a job in supply which was an inside job. The first base I was assigned to we had to live in tents. So when we moved to Pusan, I sent my plane on a mission and when it returned I threw my tools and clothes on board and flew down to Pusan. There we had small barracks to live in. This was better.

After Korea I was stationed at George AFB, California for about a year. They had B-26s, B-29s, and C-54s. There I started working in Quality Control as an inspector. Then I was sent to Foster AFB at Victoria, Texas to cross train on jets. We started on F-86s and I was on a fire power training TDY at Eglin AFB in Florida when I was shot. We changed to F-100s not long after that and I went back into Quality Control. When Foster closed, I went to Roswell, New Mexico. This was a SAC base, flying B-47s. Then the group was transferred to Pease AFB in New Hampshire.

While at Pease I went into what is known as job control and planning. This is a large dark room with three levels of people. I sat on the second level and had about five or six controllers working below me. We were in radio contact with the line chiefs, supply, and the people who took care of the ground equipment, and we would schedule all work or movement on all the aircraft. While at Portsmouth I asked to be transferred to Japan. When we received our orders, on our trip to California we went through part of Canada and had a nice long drive to California. There we flew on a C-121 (Constellation) and it was a long hot trip to Japan of over 24 hours. The air conditioning didn't work until we arrived at Wake Island. Our son was ill and it was a mess.

When we arrived in Japan we were assigned a sponsor. He met our plane and offered to assist us in any way he could. He wanted to know what we wanted to do, so I asked him to take us to the hotel and come back the next day, since we were all exhausted from the long plane trip. As soon as we were checked in and Marge and our daughter, Linda, were resting, I decided to take our son, Patrick, to the hospital to see what was wrong with him. After we returned to the hotel I was unable to rest so I called an old friend who was stationed there. He came by and took me around to look for a house to rent around Tachikawa where I was to be stationed. It took at least two years to get a house on base. This friend took me to some government houses that would be available now. They were about ten to fifteen miles from Tachikawa. The roads were so bad that I didn't think I could put up with that. Then he showed me some private houses. One was a real Japanese house. The others were the Japanese version of an American house. I rented a Japanese version of an American house. It was not insulated. It had the old electric two wire system, and the house and hot water system had to be heated with oil. The stove was bottled gas. I didn't trust these things. I would turn off everything at night before going to bed and then get up early before going to work and light the heat. The house was always cold. We tolerated this for about three months, then decided that I could take those rough roads better than we could freeze. We moved into quarters at a place called Grant Heights. This housing development was located at the intersection of 60th and K Streets of Tokyo, the way the United States had numbered the

streets during the occupation. This housing development had been an old World War II Japanese Fighter Base. This was about 13 miles from Tachikawa, and during the busy part of the day would take about 1 1/2 hours to drive the 13 miles. But the houses were nice. They had steam heat and the NCO Club was about a block away. Everything was within walking distance from the house. This was only a family housing area. We had no young single GIs around. We stayed in Japan for four years doing the same work I had been doing in New Hampshire.

After this I was assigned to McGuire AFB in New Jersey. We were there about two years when I got orders to go to Vietnam to do a job I had not worked in for over 15 years, and didn't even have the MOS for anymore. I fought this since I felt that if I had to go I should go in my own MOS (AFSC). After several months I figured I had lost. So we went into Trenton and rented an apartment for my family to move into until I could get back. Then the Personnel Office called me in and said that I had been taken off that shipment but that I would soon go in my AFSC. By then I was so disgusted that I said "No I won't" and put in my papers to retire.

We decided to retire in Charleston so a few months before I retired I took a leave and went to Charleston to line up a job and bought a house. I had put in for a job with the Postal Service before I retired, but since they had not called me when we moved to Charleston, I started working for Southern Bell Telephone. I found out I did not like climbing poles, so I quit Southern Bell and started working for an Aircraft Engine Overhaul Plant. After I had been working there a few weeks I received a call from the Postal Service. Then I went to work for them. I started out as a clerk in mail processing. I worked about four years, then was promoted to supervisor and worked as a supervisor in mail processing until I retired in February 1986.



HOLLIS CROWELL

HOLLIS H. CROWELL

Radio Operator

On January 18, 1942 I joined the Army Air Force, in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. I was sent to Meridien, Mississippi for basic training. Two weeks later, 30 of us plus 200 Indiana National Guard were sent to New Orleans for coast patrol. My first plane ride was in the O-47; I think top speed was about 200 miles per hour. So that gave me the idea for gunnery school. Two other fellows and I applied for aerial gunnery school but one could not pass the physical exam for flying so only two of us went to Harlingen, Texas for school. We completed that course in the summer of 1942 and were sent right back to New Orleans for coast patrol, only now we were qualified aerial gunners. On patrol we looked mostly for subs.

Some months later we went on maneuvers in Louisiana, Mississippi, and Texas. That was in the summer and fall of 1942. I got tired of the swamps and applied for radio school in Sioux Falls, South Dakota. I was there in the winter, early 1943, where the temperature reached 50 degrees below zero. After four months of South Dakota winter, I was glad to go anywhere but there. The Air Force shipped me to California, which I thought would end up in an overseas assignment - wrong. Back on maneuvers, this time in Oregon. Our Commanding Officer in Oregon was the head of Jantzen bathing suit company. He had an airplane at his disposal and frequently would fly us to Walla Walla, or some other place in Washington, where we could see the bright lights and get a little something to drink. We were in a rural area in Oregon and, at least in that area, it was dry.

After Oregon, I was sent to Tampa, Florida, for what, I didn't know. I first went to Plant Park, where I guess we all checked in and then to MacDill Field, for crew assignment in B-17s. Well, the rest is history; most of us know what happened. There were times when I didn't know if we would make it out of training. On one flight, our first pilot, Bob Miller, had us lost somewhere out in the Atlantic; even our navigator wasn't sure. (The navigator says it was over the Gulf of Mexico). Anyway, Miller called me on the intercom and asked me to get some radio headings. I then found out that we were flying about 400 feet over the water. I told him he'd better get us some altitude so the radio would work. We finally spotted the lights of Havana, Cuba, and made it back to MacDill Field with just enough gas to land but not enough to taxi to a parking spot. That's when I learned that prayers do work. Well, we went on to England with Ed Sienkiewicz now as our pilot. With the blessing of the Lord, we all made it back to the good old USA.

I did not return from England with the rest of the crew. I didn't get to fly back but got put on a Liberty Ship and sailed from England to New Jersey, in January 1945. After home leave, I went to Miami Beach for ten days rest and recuperation. After Miami Beach I didn't like the idea of going to the Pacific, so I went to Reno, Nevada for radar school. After radar school I went to Salinas, Kansas. This was in the summer of 1945 and Salinas was a school for navigators. We flew cross-country for about three months. We could pretty well select where we wanted to fly,

or could usually trade with others if they were going where I wanted to go and vice versa. Kansas at that time was a dry state. When the others learned that my home was only 100 miles from Washington, D. C. and I could get liquid refreshment and take it back to Kansas, I got all the flights to Washington. That way I was able to go home for the weekends.

After Kansas, I was sent to Miami again. Then the war with Japan ended and after a few weeks I was sent to North Carolina for discharge on October 15, 1945. I had a few bucks saved up when I got back to civilian life. First mistake, I went into a trucking business with my uncle. I put up the money and worked long hours but it didn't go. Next I went to Business College in York, Pa. That was great when I worked for an electrical contractor but soon found out I didn't like sitting behind a desk. I ended up working on a production line when I decided to settle down.

Arlene and I met in 1948 and were married on October 2, 1948. Arlene had a four year old daughter named Brenda, who I later adopted. We had two sons together. Rodney was born in 1949 and Ted was born on May 14, 1958. All the children were born in Pennsylvania. Now there are six kids and inlaws, and eight grandchildren and four great grandchildren. We moved to Florida in 1968 and bought a Bait and Tackle place and had a great life. I also spent 12 years in the newspaper business in Fort Pierce, Florida. Arlene and I both retired in 1988.

Now we are living in Okeechobee, Florida, fishing, traveling, playing cards, and enjoying our grandchildren.



GENE FOSTER

G. E. (GENE) FOSTER

Waist Gunner

I graduated from high school in 1935 from Fowler, Kansas high school. In my junior year I was on a mile relay team that one first in the state meet. Our record was not broken for forty years.

After graduation I worked on a farm that consisted of several alfalfa fields. So my summer was spent bailing hay - for nine dollars a week!

In the fall I entered Emporia State Teachers College in Emporia, Kansas. I got a job in the school cafeteria working three hours a day for my meals. I was the only freshman that lettered in track.

The next summer was the same old thing. I worked in the hay fields for nine dollars a week. The year before the bank in Meade, Kansas was kind enough to loan me fifty dollars so I could go to school the last semester. After paying the loan at the bank and buying some clothes for school, I only had fifteen dollars left.

Even though we were all about broke, three of us from Fowler started back to Emporia. I had a brother who lived in Hutchinson, Kansas, so we decided to stay all night with him. We told him our predicament. He told us that he could get us a job and we could save enough money to go the next year. We took his offer and that was the end of our schooling.

Marguerite and I were married on November 12, 1939. Our son, Gary, was born on May 16, 1943.

I was notified by Uncle Sam that he wanted to see me on July 30, 1943, in Fort Leavenworth, Kansas. Sam had also sent a train ticket to Kansas City. So I left on the twenty-ninth and after arriving in Kansas City I was picked up by bus for Fort Leavenworth.

The next morning they gave us all our GI. They told me "You're just the kind of men we need in the army." Next we were called in to a building alphabetically. They called my name and I went in and the sergeant asked what branch do you want in - Army, Navy, or Air Force? I couldn't believe him that I got a choice, so it took me a while to answer. So I thought I would rather fly to war than march. I said Air Force. I was told to return on the 20th of August 1943.

After arriving on the twentieth, the next day they loaded all of us on a train for Lincoln, Nebraska, for our basic training. The train cars must have been built in the nineteen hundreds, with a coal burning engine. It was hot in August, so we opened the windows. The wind was blowing the smoke toward us. We were all black when we got to Lincoln.

Basic training was something that I would never have expected in my wildest dreams. The old sergeant had a voice that you could hear from a block away. And we were restricted to the base.

If the sergeant got mad at any one of us, he would get right in your face and scream and holler and cuss you for ten minutes.

After we were there for about three weeks they put us through several tests to see what schooling we would qualify for. After several tests they told me I qualified for radio school and that is where they would send me.

When our basic training was over they put us on a train with a sergeant in charge. And they never told us where we were going. We were all in one car. It was not like the one we were in from Leavenworth to Lincoln. This one was first class. We stopped at Denver, Colorado and they unhooked our car from the rest of the train. We were left on a siding. It was sometime in the afternoon. The sergeant brought us to order and told us we would have a three hour layover. He told us there was a picture show down the street about three blocks and we were going to march down there and "I don't want any mess-ups." I had become a buddy of a private by the name of Bill Schmitt from St. Louis, Missouri. We were both about ten years older than the rest. On the street on the way to the show there was a beer joint. We decided that we would go into the theatre and sit in the back of the rest. And we would then go out and go to the beer joint. We did go out and stayed in the beer joint for about one hour, and then went back into the show. I guess nobody missed us -- at least no one said anything. It was about dark when we left Denver.

To my surprise and everyone else's, we ended up in Las Vegas, Nevada. When we got to the air force base they told us we were in *gunnery* school.

Even though we were restricted to the base, I enjoyed the gunnery school. I had never owned a gun. I knew very little about them. Before I finished school I had to be able to take the gun apart and put it back together with gloves on. Also had to take a gun apart and put it back together blindfolded, which I could do. Also we had a poker game about every night. After pay day four of us older ones would have all the money of those who would play in our barracks. And then the four of us would buck heads. Some of those who had gone broke received money from home, but it was the same old story -- they would go broke. Of course it wasn't much money for any of us four, because the pay was only twenty-one dollars a month. What it did was make the time go faster. One of the four that I became buddies with was Doc Phillips from Kansas City, Missouri. He was thirty-five years old. I wonder at his age whether he ever got overseas.

On Christmas Day those of us in my barracks were taken to a gambling place for Christmas dinner. At that time there was no strip and the gambling places were all downtown. Except where we ate. One had built a big place just outside of town. I do believe the army would have given us a better meal than we got there.

In January forty-four I was given my first leave. I called it a delay enroute leave from Las Vegas to Tampa, Florida. When we were loaded on the train I was put in a different car from the rest. I asked the conductor why and he stated because I was going to get off at Salina, Kansas. I said I

was going to Hutchinson, not Salina. He stated that my ticket said Salina. I got to Salina about daybreak. I had to lug my duffle bag to the highway for Hutchinson. I finally caught a ride. He let me off at Fourth and Main. I walked the six blocks home.

My son, Gary, looked at me as though he was thinking "Who is that bald-headed gook with the monkey suit on?" I would pick him up and he would cry for Mamma.

When my leave was up Marguerite and I drove to Salina in our old car. After I boarded the train and the train took off, the conductor asked to see my ticket. After looking at it, he pulled the cord to stop the train. He told me I was on the wrong train. I asked if this damn train was going to Kansas City. He said it was so I paid him the fare and the train started moving again. When we got to Kansas City I was lucky enough to get on the right train to Tampa, Florida. When arriving a bus was there to pick several of us up and take us to what I was told was the New York Yankees' training camp.

After being there for a couple of weeks we were called out to the baseball field and all were formed into crews. Our crew was number 115. The old man (me) looked at the crew and to me some looked as if they weren't even old enough to shave. But after Miller was replaced by Sienkiewicz we became a very, very good crew.

We were then taken by truck to MacDill Field. After being there a while I saw how easy it was to get off the base. I called Marguerite and she said she would come to Tampa. After she arrived we found a small place to live. Marguerite got a job operating an elevator, but the door was not electric so every time someone got on or off she would have to pull the door open and shut. What a sore arm she had!

When I could get off the base sometimes Marguerite and I would go downtown to Tampa and have a few drinks. One night Storms came in with me and Marguerite, Storms, and I went to town. They had a twelve o'clock curfew. We looked at the clock at five minutes to midnight. We had to wait a while for the bus and we had to wait in line to board the bus. The MPs grabbed Storms and me and said we were out after midnight. I said we were just getting on the bus and the MP said, "Come with me." About that time Marguerite hit him with her purse and yelled, "You can't take him, damn it, he's my husband." He just looked at her and walked away with us. They took us to some holding place down town. We were put in a large room with some other soldiers. The MPs called us in one at a time and talked to us. They released Storms and me to go home. I guess it was because we hadn't had too much to drink.

After our training was about over, Marguerite returned to Hutchinson, not knowing that our pilot, Miller, would cause himself to be removed as our pilot.

All the crews were ready to move out except ours because we did not have a pilot. An officer from the base came to our barracks and stated that he wanted to see Sergeant Foster. I identified myself. He came over to my bunk and stated that one crew was short a waist gunner and for me

to be prepared to leave with that crew. I don't remember the crew number, but he caught me with such surprise I was speechless. I finally told the officer that we were trained as a crew and I would go with the crew that I had trained with. He continued talking but I don't remember what else he said, I was so upset. I do remember at the time I said I would not go with any crew except my own. His last response was, "This is an order."

Some time later the pilot of the other crew came in to talk with me. He told me what a good crew he had. I told him, "Sir, I have no doubt that you have a fine crew, but I doubt that anyone of your crew would want to fly with another crew, and I am going to trust my life with the crew that I have been trained with." He left and that is the last I heard. I always wondered what would have happened if I had gone with the other crew.

After training with our new pilot, Sienkiewicz, we went to Savannah, Georgia. We picked up a new B-17 and headed up the coast to New Hampshire. Why we landed there I will never know. It rained every day we were there. From there we went to Bangor, Maine and from there to Newfoundland. The thing I remember about Newfoundland was the beautiful big blue lake near the base. But the thing I remember most was that there was an NCO club for permanent party selling drinks for ten cents and we were in transit and could not get in. And we were there for a week.

Finally the wind was in the right direction (to our rear) so we would have enough gas to get to Ireland. I don't know whether it was night or day when we took off for Ireland because in Newfoundland at that time of year the sun did not set until 10:30pm and would rise at 3:30am. Anyway, we landed safely in Ireland.

I was scared of flying from the first day I stepped on a B-17 in Tampa, Florida. I guess that is why the armed services like to draft them young. They're still full of piss and vinegar and not scared of anything. This fear still stayed with me for many years after World War II. Marguerite loved flying. She would fly to New York, Washington, DC, California, and several other cities, and loved every minute of it.

After landing in Ireland, we took a small vessel to England, then a train to Stone, England, while waiting to be assigned to a permanent base. There was a day when it was clear with no clouds. I saw B-17s flying toward Germany to bomb. I saw group after group -- it seemed they would never stop. They were flying so close together it looked as though the wing tips would touch the wings of the plane next to it. What a beautiful sight.

From Stone we went by train to Kettering and from there by truck to Grafton-Underwood. This was the home of the 384th Bomb Group and we were assigned to the 547th squadron.

My first mission (I don't remember the date) was a milk run over to France and back. It was only four or five hours.

The days you were to fly they would wake us up about four or four-thirty in the morning and we would walk to breakfast. We would get two fried eggs -- never on other days -- and then to briefing, and then to our B-17.

Many times we would wait in the B-17 one, two, three hours for the fog to lift and finally abort the mission because of the fog. What a day wasted. If we did finally fly and then on the road back the pilot would be informed that our base was closed because of the fog, we would have to land at another base. The base would not have enough room to keep us overnight so the pilot, co-pilot, engineer, and navigator would stay to bring back the plane, and the rest of us would be put on an old truck to haul us back to our base. The roads were narrow and winding and it would take most of the night to get back.

One time Storms and I were boarding the B-17 and the wind blew Storm's cap off. That cap was an old cap, had holes in it, and was dirty. Storms said that we had to find that cap. I asked him, "What the hell do you want with that old cap?" He said it was his good luck charm. He had flown with it on every mission we had flown and he was going to finish his missions with it. We had some time before our plane would take off so we looked and looked for the cap, but never did find it. The mission was aborted and by then it was daylight, except for the fog. We looked for that cap for over an hour and never did find it.

On every mission you would see flak and more flak. There was nothing you could do about it; there were no fox-holes to crawl into. Just fly through it and hope for the best. At 60 degrees below zero I had to use a 3# coffee can to take a crap. Try that some time.

After one mission at interrogation I had to testify that the plane next to ours was blown up and that I saw no parachutes open. I assume that after others told the same thing, they were considered a casualty of war.

The worst mission flown by our crew was our number seven. After we dropped our bombs, flak hit one engine. The pilot had to feather it. Then another motor was hit. And it had to be feathered. Ballenger then stated, "I think there is a fire." A few seconds later, he informed the pilot it was brake fluid. The flak had damaged the plane's brakes. Pilot Sienkiewicz lowered our altitude to avoid fighter attack. Of course, we fell way behind the rest of the group. When we reached our base, the plane had to land with two motors and no brakes. After a safe landing I knew Pilot Sienkiewicz and Co-pilot Frederick were the best. There were none better.

At interrogation the scotch was very much welcomed. Some times some of the crew members would not drink their scotch. Now you know very well it's a big, very big sin to let scotch go to waste. And now you know very well that Storms and I just did not let that sin happen.

Storms and I would go to the NCO club and drink hot beer and eat whatever they had to eat. It would be dark when we headed to our barracks. Sometimes, for some reason, my bicycle would

kind of glide off in the ditch. I wasn't hurt except my pride, and that damn Storms sitting on his bicycle laughing at me. Because that bicycle would not guide very well, I finally sold it.

Storms and I had to fly our 35th and last mission with another crew. And that experience affirmed our belief that crew 115 was the best.

After landing on my last mission I had no emotions what so ever. I thought I would jump up and down and laugh with joy. To this day I am lost to know why.

From Grafton-Underwood we went to Liverpool and boarded a boat to Boston, Mass. This was in early January forty-five. I was put on a door to guard it, to keep anyone from coming up the stairs through the door -- why, I do not know. It turned out to be good, though. Right next to it was the Officers' Club. One time the door was open, an officer saw me and said "Come in and have some fried chicken." And it was good. Other times I would go in. There was a toaster there and I would make me a slice of toast and put on some butter. That way I got something decent to eat. At least I got something good to eat while on the ship to the USA.

After I arrived in Boston I boarded a train for Fort Leavenworth, Kansas. When I arrived I received a two-week leave, and I was to report to Miami Beach, Florida, with my spouse.

I had to get re-acquainted with my son, Gary. One day Marguerite had to go downtown. When she started out the door, Gary started screaming and Marguerite hesitated at the door. I told her to go on as I might just as well get acquainted with my son now. I started to talk with him and finally asked him if he would like to have an ice cream cone. He finally quieted down. The drug store was one half block from our home. So we went to the drug store and I sat him on a stool and we both ate a vanilla ice cream cone. He then started to call me da-da.

Marguerite and I left Hutchinson, by train, for Miami. The government had taken over several of the Miami Beach hotels. I don't remember the name of the hotel we stayed in. I had to pay ninety cents a day for Marguerite. What a wonderful three weeks.

Marguerite left Miami for Hutchinson, and myself for Laredo, Texas, by train, for a school to train to be a B-29 instructor. What a hell of a place that was. After finishing I could go to Ft. Myers, Florida, or Las Vegas. Storms and I, after a long debate, agreed to go to Vegas.

After being in Vegas for a while, I called Marguerite and told her I would be in Vegas for the duration of the war. We decided to sell the old car, store what furniture we had, and give possession of the house back to the two old maids who owned it. That sure made them happy because we were paying fifteen dollars rent per month and they could not raise our rent during the war. After they were given possession they could get as much as forty dollars per month. The only furniture we had that was of much value was a console radio and a refrigerator made by General Motors. The way we paid for it was they put a coin meter on top of the refrigerator. The only way it would work we had to insert a quarter in the box every twenty-four hours or it

would not run. At the time I was working for a coin machine company. Sometimes I would get slugs in the juke boxes. So if we did not have a quarter we would put in a slug. Marguerite was home alone when the man came to get the money out of the box. He saw all the slugs; he turned and looked at Marguerite but before he could say anything, Marguerite said "Oh, I have the money to pay for the slugs." So every month he would expect to see slugs in the box. You know, we still have that Frigidare. It's in my shop back of the house. And it still works. We bought it in 1940 and never have spent a penny for repairs. We store beverages in it, and vegetables from my neighbor's garden.

After Marguerite arrived in Vegas, the only place we could find to live was a motel a few miles from Vegas. It wasn't long until I found a job in a defense plant in Henderson, working from six to ten PM. And then we were able to get a government house to live in. Those of us who were living in Henderson would all go to the highway and it wasn't long until we were picked up on our way to Vegas. Wherever the driver would let us off we would have to walk to the highway to our base, but it wasn't long until we were picked up.

My job at the base was a soft job. There were five of us in a big building with several turrets in it. When those in the B-17 school had finished the turret part of their training, we would have them get in the turrets and have them operate them and ask about ten oral questions about the turret. Needless to say, we never failed anyone, even if they did not do their job right. We would tell them what they did wrong and make them do it over again. Sometimes some of the young soldiers would ask me if I had lost my hair while in the service. Of course, they all knew that I had flown 35 missions over Germany. I never thought I would be asked such a question. Finally I said I had a full head of hair when I entered the service. Now that wasn't very nice of me, was it?

I had a two-week furlough, we had no place to go, so I worked at the defense plant from 6PM to 6AM. With the money I bought an old Ford car. It had a good motor but the upholstery was bad. Marguerite and I used some Air Force throw-away canvas to upholster the car front and back. The government housing where we lived, the streets were all cement paved. They had curved the cement by the sidewalk. There was cold water running down it all the time. And it was really hot there. Our son Gary would spend part of the day in the water to keep cool.

In September 1945 I was given travel pay and two weeks to arrive in Fort Leavenworth to be discharged. Marguerite, Gary, and I loaded the old Ford and headed home. We stopped at my folks' home in Fowler, Kansas. We went from there to Hutchinson and found a furnished apartment. I then went to Leavenworth and on 26 September 1945 I was discharged.

After returning to Hutchinson I went to the veterans employment office. I applied for a job at the Post Office, fire department, and the central bank. I was also put on unemployment and received fifteen dollars per week.

After about a month I went to Lamar, Colorado to see the person I had worked for in Hutchinson before the war. I had operated a coin machine route, such as juke boxes, pinball machines, and cigarette machines. He and a partner had established the same business in eastern Colorado. He had also bought lots of \$2.00 land which finally made him rich.

The Post Office job was paying \$1.40 per hour. He offered twice that much so I took the job, to Marguerite's dismay.

We moved to Lamar in November 1945 where I established a new route from Burlington to Limon to Cheyenne Wells. We moved to Hugo in March 1946, to a nice two-story brick house one mile out of town. We moved to town in June 1947. The house in the country did not have the conveniences of the house in town. In December 1946 the business was sold with a guarantee that I would stay with the new owner for six months. I received five hundred from the seller for my promise to stay. His name was Mr. Deaton from Wyoming.

After six months I quit. Why? Because the new owner knew nothing about fixing a machine if one would break down. So I would always get a call if a machine was broken down. One time I got a call that a machine in Boise City, Oklahoma was broken down. That was two hundred miles from Hugo. So I went back to the old job baling hay fifteen miles north of Hugo.

About two months after I quit, Mr. Deaton came to see me where I was helping bailing wheat straw (man, was it dirty!). He waved me over to his car and said "Why would I want to work at a job like this?" He offered me more money than I was originally getting. I told him "No, I love the work I am doing."

Two months later Mr. Deaton came to Hugo. He told me he had sold the part of the business around Lamar, and asked if I wanted to buy this part up here. I told him I had no money to buy the business. He asked if I could pay any down payment. I told him five hundred dollars was all I had. He said he would take it and I could make monthly payments on the balance. After signing the papers, he handed me the keys and I owned a business, in November nineteen forty seven.

It took only two days a week in my business so I worked for a carpenter the rest of the week. All the money from the business went toward paying the loan and buying more machines to expand my business.

I had an old 1939 Plymouth coupe. I put my name on the list with a Chrysler, Plymouth dealer in Hugo to buy a new car. I went back six months later and my name was higher on the list than when I first signed up. I asked why. He stated that he had to take care of the natives first. I said good-bye and went to the Chevrolet dealer. He told me he could get me a new pickup quicker than a car. I had a new pickup in late '48 and a new car in late '49.

By 1952 I had expanded my business to cover parts of five counties. My farthest location was eighty miles. I was putting about 80,000 miles a year on my car. I started trading cars every year.

In 1956 I changed to Oldsmobile, but from the same dealer. I bet the Chrysler car dealer wished he had sold me one.

In 1959 we sold our home in the south part of town and took over the VA loan of a veteran's home in the north part of town, who had to move because of his job. Only 4 percent interest on the home loan.

In 1963 I sold my business. The County Commissioners contacted me and asked if I would take the Lincoln County Veteran Service Officer's job, which was part time. It consisted of filling out forms for veterans and widows of veterans, and veterans' children, and processing a claim with the Veterans Administration. I took the job.

I have forgotten to mention that Marguerite was on a damn good Hugo girls softball team. They played towns all over eastern Colorado and they lost very few games. Anyway, she had to take time off and go to Denver to give birth to our daughter, Jeannie, on June 22, 1950.

In 1963, during school Christmas leave, we went to LA, California. Marguerite wanted to fly, I said we drive. Marguerite had three sisters in that area. We stayed with one of Marguerite's sisters at her home. Our car stayed there all the time we were in LA. I guess we could have flown. We took the kids to Disneyland, Knotts Berry Farm, and deep sea fishing. I finally flew some in 1970. A bridge club was started with six couples. It was a Saturday night dinner bridge. We would alternate playing on the first Saturday of the month in each home. Each man would put \$25.00 in a kitty that would be put in savings. Four years later they all voted to fly to Las Vegas. I could fly or stay home. I flew.

In 1964 the County Chairman of the Republican party asked if I would run for County Judge. I said yes and ran against a Democrat and I won easily. It was a half-time job.

I finally bought a toupee. It was so damn hot I wanted to tear it off my head. I never wore it after I was elected judge. Later on my daughter sent me a sign that says BALD IS BEAUTIFUL. God only made so many perfect heads; the rest He covered with hair.

After I was elected judge I had to go to a school. Also I received a book on procedures and one on evidence, before I took office on January 12 of '65. I also had to take 45 hours of schooling over three years or I would be removed from office. There are several counties in Colorado that have non-attorney judges. The judge before me had run in the primary against a lawyer and beat him bad. The judge that replaced me was a non-lawyer. Three names were sent to the Governor - a graduate of the School of Mines, an attorney, and a graduate of ministry school. The Governor chose the preacher.

In 1966 the School Board approached me and said they were having a hard time finding school bus drivers. They knew that my judge's job was part time, and they asked if there was a way I could work my schedule to drive a bus. I told them that mornings would be no problem but that

afternoons might, because if I had a jury trial it would last all day and part of the night. They told me all I would have to do was to call them and they would get a teacher to drive. I told them I would until they found someone. I would get up at 6AM to get to the bus garage at 6:45AM, and would be back by 7:50AM. Twenty years later they found someone to take my place.

During my term as County Judge, Marguerite and I met many court judges, Supreme Court Justices, and their spouses, at the many conferences that were held twice a year. I retired from all my jobs May 30, 1987.

Our son Gary graduated from the University of Northern Colorado in 1968. He married Guyla Lester in June the same year. He owns Blackjack Oil and Gas in Enid, Oklahoma, and lives in Hennessey, Oklahoma. He owns several oil and gas wells in Oklahoma and Texas. He has several investors in the US and Germany. Marguerite and I have some stock in his company. His wife, Guyla, is a dental hygienist. They have three children, two boys, one girl. One son is in college in Missoula, Montana, enrolled in pre-med school. The other two are still in high school.

Our daughter Jeannie graduated from high school in 1968. She worked for Ma Bell telephone in Limon, Colorado, where she met and married Daryl Engel. He owns Engel Millwright in Levant, Kansas. Jeannie helped set up a Wal-Mart store in Colby, Kansas. She is now in charge of the sports and auto of the store. She also helped set up a store in Oklahoma. They have one daughter, Shawna, in college in Hays, Kansas, and one son, Jim, in college at Trinidad, Colorado.

Marguerite helped form a Ladies Auxiliary to the Veterans of Foreign Wars in Hugo, Colorado, in 1950. She then went on to serve in all the offices on the local, district, and state levels. In 1961-62, while serving as state president, she had the privilege of being sent to Washington, DC, to confer with senators and representatives. She also held three national offices. For the past 20 years she has been with the Avon Co. She just retired in January 1993.

I have been commander of the VFW in Hugo two different times. I also have been commander of our district twice, including this year. I took it before my operation. I thought about giving it up, but with Marguerite's help in some of the driving, I kept it. At this time my District is leading the nation in membership.

To my surprise there are only about 20 percent of the veterans that belong to any veteran's organizations. The veterans had many benefits after World War II. Every year we lose some benefits. And now the legislators want to make the VA hospitals eligible for welfare patients. You would be surprised how many legislators think that veterans drawing service-connected disability pensions are welfare.

Why should veterans join veterans' organization if they only are a card carrying member? Because when we go to a congressman in regards to veterans' benefits, we are told that "You only represent 20 percent of the veterans and only half of them are registered to vote, so I don't think that you had anything to do with my being elected."

I guess it is like Andy Rooney, who is on 60 Minutes, said not long ago. Andy Rooney was drafted in World War II. He was a reporter for *Stars and Stripes* and flew on the first bombing mission over Europe. I quote, "I spent four years in the Army but do not belong to any veterans' organizations. As a way of getting together socially with people your own age and background, veterans' groups are fine, but I disapprove of them as a pressure group. I am suspicious of professional veterans who wear overseas caps at conventions. Except for the men who were disabled to whom it owes everything it can give, our country owes veterans nothing. We got what is coming to us, a free country." Maybe he is right.



ED FREDERICK

EDWIN B. (FRED) FREDERICK

Co-Pilot

I entered the U. S. Army on January 22, 1943 and applied for the Aviation Cadet Program. After completing pre-flight school I was sent to Ladwick School of Aeronautics at Lakeland, Florida for primary pilot training. We flew PT-17s there in July and August of 1943, and then went on to basic pilot training at Bainbridge Army Air Field, Bainbridge, Georgia. At Bainbridge I trained in the BT-13A and BT-15 aircraft. That took care of September and October 1943. I was then transferred to Moody Field, Valdosta, Georgia for twin-engine advanced flying school in the AT-10. Happily, on January 7, 1944 I graduated and received my wings as a pilot in the Army Air Force, and a commission as a second lieutenant.

After a short period of leave I reported to the 3rd Air Force Replacement Depot at Plant Park, Tampa, Florida, for assignment to flying duties. I had hoped to be assigned to a B-26 unit but, instead, was assigned as the co-pilot of a B-17 crew. I met the other nine members of the crew at Plant Park and then went to McDill Field, where we began training as a crew. We were assigned to the 488th Bomb Group flying B-17F and G aircraft. What with ground school, link trainer, and day and night flying, we didn't have a great deal of free time. Then, about half-way through our training at McDill, the first pilot, R. C. Miller, was re-assigned from our crew and a new first pilot, Ed Sienkiewicz, came on board. This delayed the completion of our training to the extent that we didn't leave Tampa until June 18, 1944 bound for Hunter Field, Savannah, Georgia. At Hunter we picked up a new B-17G and took off for Grenier Field, New Hampshire. After a few days there we flew to Presque Isle, Maine, and then on to Gander, Newfoundland. Gander is not the most picturesque place in Canada but we there only four or five days. We departed Gander in the early evening of July 3 and headed out over the Atlantic Ocean - destination Northern Ireland. Our flight was a night flight with clouds above and below us for the major part of the journey but the plane performed well and the flight was smooth. Shortly after daybreak we arrived over the western part of North Ireland but had to circle before we were given landing clearance into Belfast. While circling the clouds parted and the emerald beauty of Ireland appeared below us. It was a beautiful sight. Finally, 13 hours and 20 minutes after takeoff from Gander, we were on the ground in Ireland.

We left the aircraft in Ireland, got on a vessel of some kind and crossed the Irish Sea into England. A train ride later we arrived in Stone, England, a replacement depot for assignment to our permanent duty station. Another train ride and we were in Kettering, England, awaiting transportation to Grafton Underwood, a former temporary RAF base, in Northhamptonshire. Grafton Underwood was home to the 384th Bomb Group, and we were assigned to the 547th Squadron of that group. Later we were to find out that the first USAAF bombing raids over Europe (although not 384th aircraft) departed from this base. Of course, we could not know it at

this time, but history was to show that the last USAAF bombing raid over Europe from England also departed from Grafton Underwood, this time flown by the 384th.

Our first bombing mission over Europe as a crew came on August 4. We hit a target in occupied France. That was the first of 35 missions which I completed. In December 1944 I finished my tour of duty in the 8th Air Force and prepared to return to the United States, which I did in January 1945. On November 20, 1944, while still with the 384th, I had been promoted to 1st Lieutenant.

Upon returning to the United States, after two weeks rest and recuperation leave, I was assigned to Moore Field, Mission, Texas, and then to Lubbock, Texas, flying AT-6s at both installations. Those assignments lasted through May 1945 at which time I was transferred to Long Beach, California. Here I was back in B-17s, flying F and G models, and also the C-47A aircraft, the workhorse of the AAF. That assignment lasted during the months of June and July, and then it was back across the United States to a new duty station at Greenwood, Mississippi through September 1945, flying C-47Bs. It was at Greenwood that Mary Coburn and I were married on the 21st of August. We lived in Greenwood until I was released from active duty on October 4, 1945, at Fort George Meade, Maryland.

Upon reverting to inactive status I did remain in the Air Force Reserve assigned to the 450th Bombardment Squadron, at Phillips Field, Aberdeen, Maryland. I remained on flying status flying AT-6s and AT-11s, with two or three two-week active-duty- for-training tours at Stewart Field, Newburgh, New York. This assignment lasted until June 1949, at which time Phillips Field was closed. I then reverted to full-time civilian status.

I did get permission to take Mary for a flight in an AT-6. Permission was granted with the understanding that if she got sick during the flight there was only one person who would clean the plane, and you all know who that would be. Thank goodness, Mary was a good flyer and we landed with no adverse problems.

After leaving the service, I returned to work with the Glen L. Martin Company, for whom I had worked prior to entering the army. I continued with the Martin Company for several years until I decided to enter apprenticeship as a bricklayer. I really enjoyed bricklaying but after 20 years was moved into the main office to do estimating work, determining the cost of materials and labor involved in the construction of buildings.

Mary and I were very happy together. We were blessed with three children - Bruce, born in 1946, Carol, born in 1948, and Jane, born in 1950. Bruce also served in the army - for 3 years and 9 months, of which 2 years, 9 months were in Vietnam. He worked as a draftsman, mason tender, and forklift operator until he passed away on February 17, 1990. Carol was married and has two children. She is now divorced and works for the Department of Defense at Ft. Meade. Jane was married and has two children, also. She, too, is divorced and is employed as a sergeant on the U. S. Capitol Police Force, Washington, D. C. Jane has three grandsons.

Mary and I enjoyed travelling and had many wonderful vacations. We visited Hawaii twice, Mexico, Canada, New England, Florida, California, the Grand Canyon, Bermuda, and the Bahamas, and also cruised the Caribbean. One highlight of our recent years has been the annual reunion with the B-17 crew. It's a great group.

I do have several hobbies among which are model trains, stamp collection, and collecting cameras and camera equipment. I have transferred all our Super 8 movie films onto video tapes.

(The above information was provided by Mary. Ed was operated on at Johns Hopkins Hospital in June 1988 for cancer. He went through many severe treatments and many visits back to the doctor's. He had several good years after surgery. He died on May 26, 1992. Fred participated in four of the six reunions we have had so far, so, fortunately, each of us had the pleasure of his company at least once in the last few years.)



ALVIN ORTH

ALVIN W. ORTH
Assistant Engineer - Waist Gunner

On March 20, 1943, one day past my 20th birthday, I was drafted into the Army. Seven days later I reported to Fort Meade, Maryland, for induction into active service. It was here that I chose the Air Corps branch of the Army, since I had a deep interest in airplanes at that time. After about ten days, I reported to Atlantic City, New Jersey, for basic training.

Basic training was a fun time. After being improperly fitted with GI shoes, we were treated to five mile hikes with full pack and rifle. My feet were so blistered and sore that I had to go on "sick call" to get properly fitted shoes. Basic training lasted about four months. Then I was assigned to report to Seymour Johnson Field, North Carolina, for an Airplane Mechanics Course.

Seymour Johnson Field is near Goldsborough, a famous tobacco auctioneering town. Louise and her mother visited me here for a short while, and I remember us going to Raleigh, a very nice clean city. After completing this course, I made private first class (around October 23, 1943.) This preceded my assignment for Gunnery School at Buckingham Field, Fort Myers, Florida. Gunnery School ran about two months. I can remember shooting skeet and firing a shot gun for the first time. Part of this training was to simulate air-to-air firing. This part was achieved by shooting at a moving target, the clay pigeon, while riding in the back of a truck. The truck was specially equipped with a metal ring that allowed you to stand inside for support. Later we got to fire a 30 caliber machine gun. As far as I can recall, I don't remember firing a 50 caliber machine gun even though our B-17 bombers were to be armed with this gun. I do remember having to learn all about this larger gun and how to field strip it, blindfolded. In completing Gunnery School, I made corporal and was assigned to report to MacDill Field, near Tampa, Florida.

A ten day delay enroute furlough was my reward for completing the gunnery training. I arrived home on New Year's day and on January 3, 1944, Louise and I were married. It was a simple wedding because of the time. However, Sacred Heart of Jesus Church where we were married was decorated beautifully for the Christmas holiday. Father Mark Knoll, a Redemptorist Missionary Priest, married us. He remarried us just recently on our 50th anniversary. Mr. Dorney, Louise's boss at the Western Electric Company, gave Louise away. Her father, unfortunately, was in the hospital at the time. My brother, Louis, was the only male in the wedding party. (There was a shortage of male types at this time.) Louise's sister, Caroline, was our maid of honor, and there were four bride's maids.

On or about January 10, 1944, I was assigned to heavy bomber crew at MacDill Field. My job would be assistant engineer and waist gunner. Our entire stay here would be quite an experience and I'm sure some of the incidents were reported by some of the other crew members. One item of interest I would like to inject involved going into town on a doctored-up pass. Whenever we needed to get off the base, unofficially, we would use an old, outdated pass. We would use ink

eradicator to remove the old date and add the current date. On this one occasion, I really made a mess.

Louise and her mother had visited me near the end of my training. Louise's father had died shortly after the wedding and the stay in Florida would be good therapy for her mother. Louise had a studio picture taken but had to leave before it was ready. Since I had to go into town to pick up the picture, I doctored up a pass to get into town. It was a terrible job. On the way back to the base, I had to use a public rest station. Well, lo and behold, in came the MPs while I'm parked on the throne. When the MPs checked my pass, they were very suspicious. As a result, I was charged with being AWOL and given a court martial. The court officer introduced himself as the judge, jury, and prosecutor, and I knew my goose was cooked. I had just made buck sergeant and this little incident cost me those stripes. However, it was short-lived since I got them back just after we left MacDill.

On June 23, 1944, we left for England. First, we picked up a new B-17 in Georgia and took off to Maine and then to Newfoundland. After a short stay here where it was still daylight at 12 midnight, we took off again. About eleven hours later, we landed in Scotland. (Scotland was so clean, you could eat off the streets.) We got to see a little bit of Ireland before arriving in England on July 6, 1944.

Our stay in England was to be for 25 missions. However, the number was increased to 30 and again to 35. About halfway through our tour, we had a reprieve which took us to a lovely old English estate, then owned by an American. While there, I remember attempting horseback riding. Incidentally, I had never even been on a horse before. So what happens, they assign me this huge horse. I had to use a stepladder to mount it. John Ballenger, with his long, lanky legs, was next to me on this tiny quarter horse. All of the sudden, he took off across the field and almost at the same instant my horse decided to follow. Thank heaven, the ground was soft since that is where I ended.

On January 10, 1945, I left England along with some of the crew. We boarded an Army troop carrier and joined a convoy which would take us eleven days to return to the States. We landed in New York on January 21, where we pretty much separated. I eventually ended up at Chanute Field, Illinois, via Miami, Florida. I spent a week home with Louise and then the two of us spent a week in Miami.

Louise joined me later at Chanute where we lived off the base. She was able to get a job on the base while I took a course in basic electricity. At the end of the course, I was able to stay on as an instructor, teaching the same course. We stayed here to the end of the war where I was discharged September 27, 1945. We couldn't wait to get home, but we did stop in Chicago on the way. We had visited Chicago before, staying at the Congress Hotel, a grand hotel which had been stripped down for the USO to provide lodging for servicemen and their families. It was our intention to visit the Congress Hotel again, and we did. Boy, were we surprised when a bell-hop met us at the door. The hotel had been completely restored to its peace-time status with the long

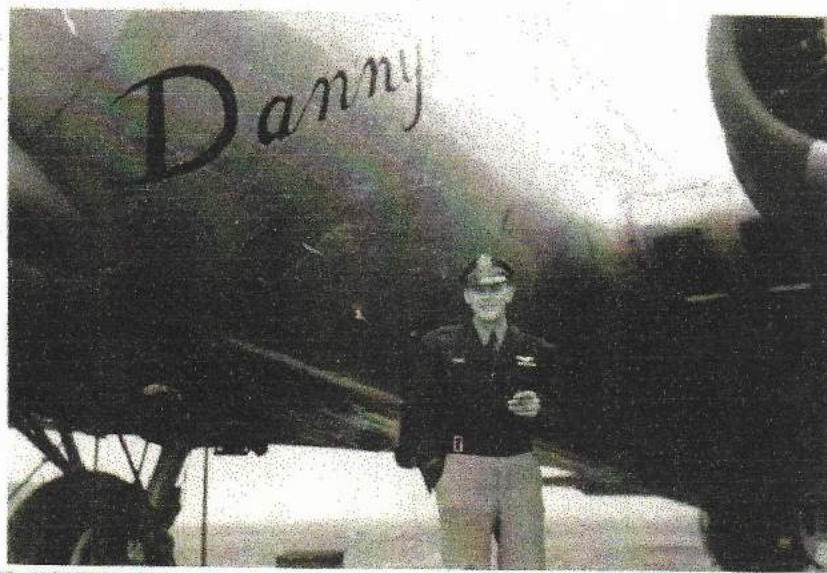
red carpet and the overhead chandeliers. Needless to say, we made a turnaround and left. We found lodging elsewhere, but not for free. Nonetheless, we found Chicago to be a great servicemen's town.

When we got home, I applied for my old job with the Western Electric Company where I was on military leave. During the first two years back, we stayed at Louise's mother's house. Both of Louise's brothers were still away which allowed us the room. However, with them eventually coming home and the imminent arrival of our first child, we started looking to buy a house. Eugene was born on March 24, 1946. By the time we moved into our house, our second son, Paul, had been born on December 6, 1947. Eventually, we had three more children, all girls; first Mary Louise, then Jacqueline, and finally, Joan.

Times were not easy but we made it. In the beginning, we didn't own an automobile, but we managed. Before the war, conditions forced me to drop out of high school in my senior year. It was important to me that I earn my diploma. So, I started night school at the Polytechnical Institution where I had previously attended. It took me two years to earn the necessary credits to get my diploma. While I never pursued a college degree, I did take a number of evening classes at Johns Hopkins University. This was very helpful in my securing a job with the Bell Telephone Laboratories at their branch lab at the Western Electric plant where I was already employed. My work was in design engineering and quality control. I had been with the Bell Labs for about 15 years when they decided to move the branch lab to new quarters in Atlanta, Georgia. A transfer to Atlanta was impossible for me at this time.

Two of our daughters were attending a local college which allowed them to commute, while our youngest attended a business college. Also, Louise was employed at the time and we couldn't afford to give up her salary. So, I was able to transfer back to the Western Electric Company where I continued doing the same work as I had been doing with Bell Labs. After forty years of service with the Bell System, I was offered early retirement with sufficient benefits that made it possible. I was only 58 at the time which was four years away from being eligible for Social Security. I received a supplemental pay for those four years which bridged me over to when I could collect Social Security.

Well, here we are, more than 13 years into retirement (actually 17 years for Louise since she retired in 1978) and not too badly set, financially. My health has been pretty good, whereas Louise has had some problems, mostly with her diabetes. But with God's blessings, we're making it. As you know, we celebrated our 50th wedding anniversary this past January 3rd. We had all of our wedding party who were available including the Priest who married us. At that time, he was 86 and living in Florida. He agreed to come up while we paid for all his expenses. It was really enjoyable. So, I'll close it here before I am accused of having diarrhea of the pen.



ED SIENKIEWICZ

EDWARD A. (SINK) SIENKIEWICZ

Pilot

On a cold, windy, wintry day I hitch-hiked to East Hartford, Connecticut, to apply for a job at Pratt & Whitney Aircraft. I got a job as an engine lathe hand making fussy precision aircraft parts. After a few years, I told Mac, my Scottish foreman, a great guy, "I'm going to join the service." "No way, you're needed here for the war effort." We all had defense deferments and couldn't be drafted. So I went to the library and started studying subjects I thought would be in the tests for aviation cadet training. After passing the physical and test in Springfield, Massachusetts, I was sworn into the enlisted reserve, so I couldn't be drafted.

The foreman took me to the superintendent's office and told him, "This guy wants to leave." He said, "No way, you have a defense deferment. We need you." Ha-ha! I said, "Sorry, you'll have to talk to the major in Springfield who swore me in."

We shipped to Fort Devens, near Boston, were put on a dirty cattle train, and finally got to Nashville, Tennessee, classification center. Physicals, tests of all kinds, then off to Maxwell Field, Alabama, for pre-flight training. Tough physical program -- study, study, study, all kinds of subjects. The best teachers I've ever known taught us. Not like reserve correspondence courses -- they withhold information. Then on to primary flight training at Carlstrom Field at Arcadia, Florida. Great civilian instructors, just a great time in the open cockpit of the PT-17, buzzing boats, railroad engines, etc.

Then on to basic flight school flying BT-13s and BT-15s. Now all the instructors were military pilots. We had some cross-country flights, instrument flying, and lots of Link training. Basic training was at Bainbridge, Georgia. The cadet training bases had the lousiest food I have ever eaten, the sulphur water in Florida was terrible. We drank cokes all the time; I am sick of cokes to this day. I had better food in the CCCs when I spent a winter in the Berkshires, cutting roads through the hills.

After basic, to Albany, Georgia, Turner Field, for advanced flight training, and, finally, 2nd Lieutenant bars and pilot wings.

Upon graduation I went home and Gen and I got married on December 8, 1943. If we make it to December 8, 1993 it will be 50 years of marriage. Dan was born October 31, 1944, Halloween, five weeks premature. We had hoped for his birth December 8, but no luck.

After I returned from leave, I reported for transition training in the B-17 at Henderson Field, Sebring, Florida. I think there are race cars there now. Combat and crew training at MacDill Field as you all know. I don't recall anyone mentioning the icebergs we saw as we took off from

Gander. Before we got to the 384th we saw a number of V-1s put-putting across the sky. Then, when the engine quit, count to ten and WHAMO!

Surviving 35 missions is real luck. Got stuck on a boat getting back to the USA. Spent a month at Atlantic City, sort of a flak leave, then to Columbus, Ohio for some B-17 flying. After that, it was off to Romulus, Michigan, The Ferry Command. Got checked out in B-24s, B-25s, and C-46s. Out to Palm Springs, California, for C-47 checkout. What a paradise, what a nine week vacation. Great food, swimming! I had to take 150 Flight Officers and 2nd Lieutenants from Chicago to Palm Springs. After this vacation, I came back to Romulus, and all the others, I was told, were going to the China-Burma Theatre flying the hump. We ferried C-47s from Oklahoma to Montana and other pilots flew them to Alaska where Russian pilots flew them to Russia.

On one occasion we flew a B-24 from Honeywell-Minneapolis to Salinas, California and the Follow Me said to report to the Colonel of the base. We presented the papers for the ship and he says, "Keep the papers. Tomorrow morning we'll wake you guys up early, give you a lunch to take with you, and take the ship and yourselves and get the Hell out of here." So we called the home base. We had to RON. Took the craft to Boca Chica and had to take a civilian flight back to Detroit. Romulus is now, I believe, Detroit International.

I was slated to go to Columbia, South Carolina, for C-54 training, and then overseas. Would have had hops from Florida or Westover Field, Chicopee, not far from home, but I had to leave to take care of problems. I left active duty in October 1945.

Some After Thoughts:

A sergeant came to my home one night and asked if I would start a flight in Westfield. Sure; once we got started I asked him to show me how to get everyone promoted. So, of course, I also got promoted to Captain. Then we were merged with the Springfield Air Reserve. We had paid drills, two week tours, visited the test houses at Pratt & Whitney (when I worked there, no way. We had badges that limited us to our departments and the cafeteria. Period. Guards all over the place). At Hamilton Standard we saw how propellers were tested, balanced, etc. At Westover AFB we saw the radar setup and could see the aircraft out the window while watching their progress visually and on the radar scopes. Very interesting talks by B-47 and B-52 pilots. Alas, the program ended.

I used to go out into the pitch dark night to look at the sparkling stars. On a trip I took on a bear and deer hunt, on the Miramachi River (noted for salmon fishing in season) in New Brunswick, Canada, I noticed aircraft heading roughly north-northeast every night for the ten days we hunted. Just a few years later we flew over the area on the way to Gander. Amazing!

While our crew traveled extensively, I'm a homebody. Being an avid fly fisherman, for trout, my pals and I fished the Catskills and the Adirondacks, Vermont, and the New Hampshire streams. We also fished Lake Champlain for over 30 years. Walleye, northern pike and catfish, and yellow

perch. Catfish went as high as 27 lbs. Dressed. Now all I fish is western Massachusetts for trout. Getting old and senile. Hooda thunk it!



BILL STOCKMAN

WILLIAM A. (BILL) STOCKMAN

Navigator

My first personal experience with the Army came in July 1938 when I signed up with the Citizens Military Training Corps (CMTC). Although I had lived on Army posts since I was ten years old, that was as a dependent and this was now as an enlistee.

CMTC was something that was devised during the days of the great depression, I guess, to afford young men (for the most part teenagers) a chance to get three square meals a day for one month each summer. The first summer was the equivalent of basic training, the second summer you advanced to corporal, the third summer to sergeant, and the fourth and last summer to lieutenant. There was no pay involved; it was sort of like ROTC, but successful completion of the four summers plus a two week active duty tour at a regular Army post could lead to a reserve officer commission as a second lieutenant. My training that July was in the Infantry. It took only that one month for me to decide that life as an Infantryman was not to my liking.

Anyway, after graduating from South High School in Denver, Colorado, I enrolled in what is now Southwest Missouri State University in September 1941. With the United States involvement in the war beginning on December 7, 1941, I finished my freshman year and enlisted at Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri for the Army aviation cadet program on May 26, 1942, and received orders to report to the San Antonio Aviation Cadet Center in November 1942. One thing I had learned in CMTC was the manual of arms and close order drill so at the cadet center my one claim to fame was that I knew how to toss a rifle about.

Life at the cadet center was not the most thrilling time of my life. My first Christmas on active duty was spent on guard duty. Because the Army was trying to get us trained as fast as possible, we were on an eight-day-a-week schedule. After the first week we never knew what day of the week it was. Sunday was exactly like every other day. That was the only time in my military career that church services were not readily available. I guess if one pushed it, you could get permission to attend church, but, like I said, we didn't always know whether it was Sunday or some other day of the week.

After completing all the basics at the cadet center, it was on to Hatbox Field, Muskogee, Oklahoma; Ellington Field near Houston, Texas; aerial gunnery school at Harlingen, Texas; and advanced navigation school at Hondo, Texas.

Finally on February 5, 1944 that great day came. Graduation! Commissioning as a second lieutenant, Army of the United States, and official orders showing flying status as a navigator. Then, ten days leave. The first time off since reporting to the cadet center many months ago. Next, a train ride to Tampa, Florida, to report in at Plant Park. Here, the crew which was to become crew 115 met each other. When they saw these new shavetails, I'll bet the rest of the crew thought, "Boy, what have I gotten myself into?" After a while, though, we got to know each other and became what I think was a pretty darn good crew.

We were assigned from Plant Park to Mac Dill Field to become a B-17 crew. We lost a little time when Miller, our first first pilot was reassigned off the crew and Ed Sienkiewicz took over. I

remember well the day we left Tampa by train and went to Hunter Field, Savannah, Georgia, to pick up a B-17 and fly it to our overseas duty station. I remember the day but I don't remember the date. Erma had come down to Tampa in March and we were married on March 18 at the home of County Judge George H. Cornelius. That came about because Erma and I were about to room in the home of one Mr. Fred Thomas and his wife. Fred Thomas was a former chief of detectives on the Tampa police force, a former private investigator, and a good friend of Judge Cornelius. Fred was also a friend of George McManus, the man who originated and drew the Moon Mullins comic strip. In that strip, every time Lady Plushbottom hired a detective to trail Lord Plushbottom, the detective looked just like Fred Thomas. Fred Thomas is another story all to himself.

Anyway, we picked up a B-17 at Hunter, flew it to Grenier Field, New Hampshire; Presque Isle, Maine; and Gander, Newfoundland. We had to wait around Gander for a few days but finally took off at night bound for Northern Ireland. The flight over the Atlantic was smooth and, if I remember correctly, flown between two cloud layers, with the sky breaking out just once in a while.

In looking over my Forms 5 (flight record) we must have left Gander on July 3. We logged 13 hours and 20 minutes on that flight and as we were circling to land the clouds broke away and Ireland was revealed in its beautiful greenery beneath us. It is no wonder that it is called the Emerald Isle. We didn't keep the B-17 we flew over, though. It stayed in Northern Ireland for preparation for assignment to some 8th Air Force Group. After a night or two we were put on a boat and sent across the channel to England, by way of Scotland. We took a train and went to Stone, England, a replacement depot. About all I remember about that train trip was that we got off the train for a noon meal at some British army station. I remember thinking that if that was what the British soldier had to look forward to in the way of meals, he sure had a rough row to hoe.

After Stone we went by train to Kettering for assignment to the 547th Squadron, 384th Bomb Group, 8th Air Force, at Grafton Underwood. Our first combat mission as a crew was on August 4, 1944 to a target in France. That first combat flight lasted a total of 5 hours, 20 minutes.

In looking over the old Forms 5, I find that there is a lot I don't remember about each mission. But, since that was more than 50 years ago, I guess it is to be expected. My record shows that we flew 7 combat missions in August, eight in September, nine in October, and six in November. Somewhere between the 8th and the 23rd of November we went on R&R to southern England.

After returning from R & R, I was taken off Sienkiewicz' crew and assigned to a crew headed by a 1st Lieutenant Owens. Owens was a big, sort of reddish-haired fellow from Seattle. He had a good crew but I can't remember who his original navigator had been. We were assigned ostensibly to be a lead crew, but shortly thereafter the Battle of the Bulge began and we never did get to fly lead. We flew five missions in a few days during that major ground campaign, and since that added up to 35 missions for me, I was removed from the crew and scheduled to return to the good old USA.

Before leaving Grafton Underwood, I did get the opportunity to make one more flight. One of the crew members in the 547th had written home to ask that cookies, candy, and similar items be sent so he could distribute them to the children living in the vicinity. That request mushroomed to the extent that soon enough supplies of that type, plus small toys and other foodstuff, received in the group was enough to fill 3 B-17s. The ground troops on the continent had pushed the Germans back far enough into France that we could land near the coast. There was an orphanage at Nantes, on the Loire River. Somewhere in the hierarchy it was suggested that we load up three aircraft and fly the items to Nantes for distribution in the orphanage. That is what happened and Owens' crew was selected to fly one of the planes. So we flew to Nantes, France, and spent the better part of two days there. We were billeted in a hotel, at no cost to us or the US, were treated like royalty by the French people, had a real good time, and returned to Grafton Underwood. Dick Buswell, the co-pilot on the crew, had a fairly good command of the French language and acted as translator for our crew. He was told that we were the first military people they had seen since the Germans were pushed back. He wanted to buy a bottle of champagne to take back with him but none seemed to be available. A lady in one bistro, however, told us to wait, went down into her cellar, and dug up three bottles for us. She said they had been hidden from the Germans but she wanted us to have them. I was able to hang on to my bottle until I returned to the States.

Early in January 1945 I left Kettering by train and went to Prestwick, Scotland. Two or three days later I was on board a C-54 (actually a DC-4; it was a plush job) headed for Newfoundland. The aircraft was a commercial carrier under contract to the government and was flown by the carrier's crew. Needless to say, it was a delightful flight. We landed in Gander on a snow-packed runway, had dinner, and then flew to Washington, D. C. Then on to Springfield, Missouri where Erma had been living since we left Tampa. After some home leave there, it was off to Miami Beach, Florida for two weeks on the beach. What a rough life!

All good things must come to an end, though, so after 15 days it was on to Ellington Field, Texas, for refresher navigation. Erma, of course, had been with me in Miami Beach so we traveled together to Houston. Housing was scarce and the closest we could find was in Texas City, down the coast a few miles. Quite a few other navigators, recently returned from overseas, lived there so car pooling was readily available. (Remember, this was still wartime with gasoline rationing.)

Training at Ellington didn't consist of a great deal -- mostly refresher. Most people were just waiting for assignment to a permanent duty station. I soon received orders to go to Nashville, Tennessee, for duty with an Air Transport Command Ferry Command group. Housing was very tight in Nashville and there was nothing on base for married personnel. We finally found an apartment (??) in what had been the attic of a house built in the early 1920s. We existed there for a while until I got a flight navigating a C-46 to the Chinese National Air Corps. Our crew consisted of a pilot, co-pilot, engineer, radio operator, and me. We also had on board two Americans who were flying for CNAC. They were returning to their duty stations after home leave. We flew from Nashville to Miami to Puerto Rico; British Guiana; Natal, Brazil; Ascension Island; Liberia; and on to Dakar, French West Africa. There the flight ended abruptly. The pilot came in too short, hit the end of the runway, knocked the left landing gear askew, and skidded down the runway. That was one C-46 the CNAC never received. The pilot and co-pilot, who were both new flight officers, and the two CNAC pilots, were sent on to their duty stations in

China. The crew chief and radio operator claimed to be too shook up to return immediately to flying duties and were put on the next plane headed back to the States (they were PCS at Nashville). I wasn't given a choice. An A-26 group from France was being assigned to the Pacific Theatre and I was directed to navigate them across the Atlantic to Hunter Field. So I led a flight of A-26s from Dakar to Fortaleza, Brazil; British Guiana; Puerto Rico; and back to Hunter from whence I had left in a B-17 about 14 months previously.

When I got back to Nashville I found that I was about to be transferred to the West Coast Division, Air Transport Command. So, on September 2, 1945 I found myself in flight on an American Airlines DC-3 bound for Sacramento, California. That was the official ending date of the war with Japan. In California I was stationed at Fairfield-Suisun (now Travis AFB) Field, flying C-54s across the Pacific from Hamilton Field, north of San Francisco. That was interesting duty - the 54 was a fine aircraft - and you can imagine how rough it was having to fly to Hawaii, Guam, Midway, the Philippines, and Japan. Erma and I were living in Richmond, across the bay from San Francisco, and all I had to do was call Base Operations each evening to see if I was scheduled to fly the next day. At the end of each complete round trip we automatically got three days off. The only thing I regret was that I missed a trip to Australia from Hawaii. We were second in line to take the flight (there were very few flights to Australia at that time) and the crew ahead of us took it. I had one real interesting flight while flying the Pacific. Right after the Philippines had gotten its independence from the U. S., President Harry Truman sent a team of twelve senior experts in their fields - economics, finance, taxation, etc. - to the Philippines to advise the Philippine government. These were all well-respected men high up in civilian companies, asked to go for this one-time project. They were all 60 years of age or older. Our crew took the first leg of the flight from Hamilton Field, California to Hickam Field, Hawaii. It was a night flight. We took off from Hamilton at 12:00 midnight for a scheduled 12 hour flight. Because of the VIP status of our 12 passengers (they were the only passengers we had), our C-54 was a plush job. Not only did it have first-class style passenger seats, it also had 12 bunks for the passengers to bed down in. We had two navigators on board that night so I took the first leg from Hamilton to about half-way to Hickam. Then the other navigator took over and I went back to the passenger area to sit in one of the plush seats for the rest of the flight. Our VIP passengers would all be asleep in their bunks by now, of course. Boy, was I wrong! After I tried to sit in one of their laps in the dark, I found out that none of them liked the idea of flying over the ocean, especially at night, so all 12 of them sat up all night long. Needless to say, I spent the rest of the night sleeping in one of the bunks.

Flying the Pacific during winter became a little tricky, clothes-wise. When we left California we would figure on legs to Hawaii, Kwajalein, Guam, and the Philippines -- all points close enough to the equator to be assured of summer-like weather no matter what time of year it was. However, sometimes when we got to Guam we'd discover that our next leg was to Japan. In Japan during wintertime it was really winter so a khaki uniform there was no good at all. On Christmas day 1945 we arrived in Guam just in time for an excellent Christmas dinner at noon in the consolidated mess. Then we discovered that our flight had been changed and we were to leave immediately for Japan. So off we went, arriving in Japan in the early evening. It was like stepping off the airplane into a deep-freeze. Operations told us to report to the mess hall. There we found that the kitchen staff had saved Christmas dinner for all five of us (we had no

passengers that flight), even though they weren't sure just when we'd arrive. We were overwhelmed by their consideration and thankful for another excellent meal -- two Christmas dinners on one day. Before we left Guam I ran into a friend in operations who had just gotten in from Japan. He gave me his summer weight flight jacket to wear and warned that the weather in Japan was bitterly cold. We were billeted in a Japanese barracks with tar paper for walls and the wind whistling in every crack. I have never been so cold in my life -- much colder than the English winter. We each got one GI blanket to sleep under. I spent all night with that light weight flight jacket wrapped first around my feet and then, when my head and shoulders got so cold I couldn't stand it, wrapped around my head. That went on all night long. I don't know how the other fellows survived. We left early the next morning in an extremely cold C-54 headed for the sunny climes of Midway and Wake, and not a moment too soon.

At the time the war in Japan ended I had more than enough points to get out of the service except that ATC navigators were frozen in their positions. So I stayed on active duty. In January 1946 it was decided that flying personnel would also have to have a secondary MOS, so I was assigned to supply services. Flying was becoming secondary so in April I was sent to school at Fort Oglethorpe, Georgia. After school I returned to Fairfield-Suisun and got an occasional flight to Hawaii. On June 8, 1947 our daughter, Barbara, was born at Bunney Hospital, Fairfield, California. Soon after that Doctor Bunney sold his hospital and practice and went to London to become a brain surgeon. He said he was becoming a mid-wife and he wanted to get into real medicine.

In September 1947 I was transferred to the Caribbean Air Command, Albrook Field, Canal Zone. For a period of time I was assigned to the 1st Air Rescue Squadron. We flew B-17s converted to cargo and rescue aircraft, OA-10s (PBYS), C-47s and H-5 helicopters. I also served as Base Exchange Officer with retail operations in Guatemala, Nicaragua, and the Galapagos Islands. So I used to get flying time flying to those operations. In addition, the Caribbean Air Command serviced Air Attaché offices in various countries in Central and South America. I was able to get a few trips to Argentina, Chile, Peru, Ecuador, Colombia, Jamaica, Haiti, and some of the Caribbean islands. General Matthew Ridgway was Theatre commander part of the time I was there and I got the opportunity to fly with him and the US Ambassador to Panama on a survey flight once, exploring the possibility of a new canal connecting the Pacific with the Caribbean. All in all, it was quite pleasant duty. We had nice quarters on the base so Erma and Barbara were secure while I was off gallivanting around. But it was becoming increasingly obvious that without a college education, an Air Force officer, especially a non-pilot, was not going to progress very far, so in February 1950 we returned to the States so I could re-enter college.

I must mention one trip I made while stationed in the Canal Zone. To practice radio navigation aids, pilots had to return to the US mainland for adequate equipment. These flights were always tied in with some kind of mission. One time some equipment had to be returned to Bolling AFB (by now we were Air Force) so a pilot friend of mine and I took a C-47 loaded with the equipment via Jamaica and Miami to Washington, D.C. There we were given something or other to deliver to Kansas City, Missouri, where we picked up something else that had to go to Stockton, California. We headed back east, stopped at Dallas, and then went to Forbes AFB, Topeka, Kansas for something or other. There I ran into, of all people, John Ballenger. John was

the only person I had previously been associated with on active duty whom I ever saw in my travels or duty stations. Needless to say, it was a very pleasant surprise to see him again.

I reverted to inactive status at Scott AFB, Illinois on March 30, 1950 but remained with the Air Force Reserve. In 1947 I had been promoted to Captain in the Reserve Corps. I returned to college at Southwest Missouri State in May 1950 and graduated in May 1952. The university had an Army ROTC unit but since I already had a commission, there was no sense in my attending ROTC. In June 1952 I enrolled in graduate school at the University of Denver and received an MBA degree in July 1953, and immediately moved to Wichita, Kansas where I had been offered a job with the Boeing Company. After 35 combat missions in Boeing aircraft and flying Boeing aircraft in other parts of the world, I was pretty sure Boeing built a good plane and took pride in its workmanship. Nothing I saw while working at Boeing changed my opinion. We stayed in Wichita until June 1960. Our second daughter, Beverly, was born in Wichita on November 19, 1958. We moved to Denver where I went to work for the Martin Company until I received a foreign service appointment with an agency of the State Department. That was in June 1961; in July 1961 we were in Saigon, South Vietnam.

During our time in Saigon we took one vacation, a "Circle Tour." It was an interesting trip. We flew from Saigon to Manila and spent three days there. Because of the war in Vietnam, Americans were restricted on the ground to the city of Saigon or the other few cities not controlled by the Viet Cong, to which we could fly. Auto travel out of Saigon was impossible. When we got to Manila our older daughter, Barbara, who was then 15 years old, asked if it was possible to drive out into the countryside. She was so tired of being cooped up in the city that she wanted some fresh country air. So we hired a car and driver and spent one day touring the countryside. It was very pleasant. After Manila, we flew to Hong Kong for another three days, then on to Penang and Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, and to Singapore. We had reservations for Djakarta, Indonesia, but at the time Americans were not in favor in Indonesia so we were advised not to make the trip. If it had been just Erma and me, we would have gone, but with two daughters it just didn't seem the most prudent thing to do. So we returned to Saigon.

When we returned to the States in 1963, I accepted employment with the Army Audit Agency, auditing military contracts, until all three services' contract auditors were transferred to a new agency, the Defense Contract Audit Agency. I soon transferred to the Defense Supply Agency as a Contracting Officer administering defense contracts. The audit job was in Richmond, Indiana, and the position with DSA started in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, then on to St. Paul, Minnesota, and next to St. Louis, Missouri. In 1969 I left the Defense Department for employment in civilian agencies of the Federal government, first in Austin, Texas and then in Dallas. The whole agency was transferred from Austin to Dallas in 1971. In 1976 I was again transferred, this time to Washington, D. C. While there we lived in Damascus, Maryland, and I stayed employed until I retired in 1980. That year I retired from both the Air Force and Federal Government. In 1982 we returned to Texas and settled in Denton.

As I look back, I think the pleasures outweighed the discomforts by a large margin. We certainly got to travel a lot and see a great deal of the world. I regret, though, that when we lived in Maryland I didn't take the time to try to look up the Fredericks and Orths. If I had, I believe we

would have started our reunions a few years sooner. I am certainly grateful that John and Delbert determined to try to locate us all and get us all together. These reunions have been a highlight of recent years.

This is probably much too long but I am looking forward to seeing the write-ups from the rest of the crew. I think we will each treasure them when we get them all finished and all together in one volume.



DELBERT STORM

DELBERT STORM
Armorer - Ball Turret Gunner

In August of 1940 I was working in the oil fields of the Centralia, Illinois area. My best friend was in the process of being discharged from the C.C.C. in Malvern, Iowa. We got together and returned to our hometown, McPherson, Kansas, and decided to join the Army.

In 1940 you walked into a recruiting office and asked the man to show you the vacancies he had available in the various branches of service and you selected the one that struck you, right down to the outfit.

We both enlisted in C Battery of the 6th Coast Artillery located at Fort Winfield Scott in San Francisco, California. We were sworn into the Army on August 27, at Fort Riley, Kansas.

C Battery was a two gun 16" at Fort Funston and part of the harbor defenses of San Francisco. My friend and I were two of sixteen replacements. The Battery was made up of old soldiers until we arrived. The youngest member of the Battery, in point of service, had nine years and some members ran up to twenty-eight years. Needless to say, we were dirt under everyone's feet. We were given twenty weeks of basic training by an old Staff Sergeant Brower from Pennsylvania. He was half ignorant, a classic example of the depression army soldier, but he knew "how to take youse guys who are individuals and take you apart and put you back together as soldiers." I'll never forget him. He put us through hell. We were restricted to the fort until completion of basic training, allowed 15 minutes in the PX once a week to buy soap, toilet articles, and most important BULL DURHAM smoking tobacco. All this for \$21 a month.

The lights of the Worlds Fair on Treasure Island twinkled at us at night and they were scheduled to be turned off in September, but we were not allowed to leave the post to visit it. You could go over Sgt. Brower's head and see the old man (the Battery Commander) but he said he would make us wish we hadn't. One guy did it and he wished he hadn't.

Soon after we were turned to duty, we moved to Fort Funston and closer to our gun battery. I was assigned to the range section. It was our job to process the information sent to us from our observation stations and give the gun section the range and azimuth to the target. We had a huge plotting board with arms to represent the lines of sight of the observation stations, and by triangulation we could give the gun section the information they needed. I started out as armsetter and eventually became the plotter. I was promoted to the rank of Corporal in May of 1941. I held this rank and job until I transferred to the Air Corps on December 6, 1941.

The draft started in September of 1941 and all but the NCOs and Officers of Battery C were shipped to Camp Callan, California, and Battery C was brought back to strength with inductees who weren't happy at all being in the service. I became a 19 year old Corporal telling a bunch of accountants, CPAs, radio announcers, and a hodge-podge of people who were very near the age

limit of 45, what to do and when to do it. I hated it and started the intricate business of transferring to the Air Corps.

My friend was one of the people sent to Callan. He wound up in Anti-Aircraft and spent the entire war in Alaska on Attu. He was one bitter dude when we met back in McPherson after the war.

I was granted my transfer to the Air Corps in December of 1941. I left Oakland on December 6 and was on the train headed for Jefferson Barracks in St. Louis when we got the word of Pearl Harbor in Needles, California. All hell broke loose, military personnel on leave were taken from the train and turned around to return to their stations. I continued on to JB and it was chaos there as well. I was given a whole battery of tests and then I was given a choice of schools to attend. I chose armorer school at Lowry Field, Colorado. I was back to being a private as we were not allowed to transfer in grade, but I was really glad to be where I was as I had such a terrible time arranging the transfer. At Lowry we learned all about aircraft machine guns, bomb racks, and chemical warfare.

I finished school on March 21, 1942 and watched almost all my class take off for assignments in the States, and about 20 of us began an extended period of KP and wondering what was going to happen to us.

We were finally put on a train and headed off for who knew where. We wound up in Oakland and loaded into a boat and headed off for who knew where again. After a seven day boat ride, we wound up in Honolulu, Hawaii. We were the first Air Corps replacements to arrive since the 7th. We were put in quarantine for 30 days at Hickam Field and then assigned to the 72nd Fighter Squadron at Wheeler Field. The 72nd had suffered several casualties on the 7th and was under strength. It was a P40 squadron and was in pretty bad shape due to the lack of replacement of planes and parts. We eventually got all the modifications on the P40s to the K model. We moved around quite a bit. We were stationed at Wheeler, Bellows, on a steel mat laid down on the golf course at Schofield Barracks, at Barbers Point with the Navy, and at Hilo on the big island. During the time I was a member of the 72nd, I was promoted periodically through the ranks to the rank of Staff Sergeant. I was promoted to Staff Sergeant on May 21, 1943 and I held this rank until I was discharged on July 27, 1945. I have never checked this out, but it seemed to me that I held that rank longer than any other man in the service.

At Hilo the squadron received new P39s and encountered all kinds of problems trying to keep them in the air with guns firing.

I put in for and was accepted into the Aviation Student program. I left Hawaii and returned to the States in August of 1943.

The 72nd eventually was converted to a P51 squadron and wound up in Saipan. I have lost track of all members of that outfit, much to my regret. If I live long enough I may try to re-establish contact with them. I know I have certainly enjoyed reuniting with crew 115.

In the Aviation Student program, I was allowed to hold my Staff Sergeant rating but was not allowed to wear the chevrons. In the program I was assigned to CTD at Utah State in Logan, Utah. I left the program in October, 1943 and went to Las Vegas, Nevada for gunnery school.

I finished gunnery school in January, 1944 and was given my first leave since joining the Army, a little over three years. Betty and I became engaged while on this leave. I was in love and ready to take on the world. I hadn't been to MacDill Field and the third Air Force as yet.

From leave at home, I reported to Plant Park, in Tampa, the spring training grounds of the Cincinnati Reds. This was an old race track for horses and we were billeted in the stables they left behind. I have two vivid memories of Plant Park. One, some damned guy who would blow a whistle in the morning to wake us up. I'm sure that if he is still alive, he has a whistle up there where the sun doesn't shine. Two, that awesome ceremony out there between first and second base where we lined up in ten lines and had our names called out, one from each line, and carried all our possessions out to right field to become crew 115. I remember wondering, what in the hell have I gotten into now?

We boarded a truck and found out real quick what we had gotten into, MacDill Field, the asshole of creation. I firmly believe that it was designed to really get under your skin and cause you to look around and make life long friends of perfect strangers. Anyhow, crew 115 jelled and became the best damn crew in the Air Force in spite of Miller's attempts to destroy us all. MacDill needs another book to cover all those exciting events. We let the air out of the chicken Major's car tires and grabbed a train bound for Hunter Field in Savannah, Georgia.

Betty came to Florida to visit and resisted all my efforts to get married. Too many girls back home were too young widows. I could never convince her that nothing bad was going to happen to me. It might have been that I wasn't sure of that myself. Anyhow, that is a vivid image of Florida burnt into my mind.

We picked up a brand new B17 at Hunter Field and headed up the east coast to Grenier Field, New Hampshire, Presque Isle, Maine, and on to Gander, Newfoundland and ten cents a shot whiskey. I have fond memories of Gander. We paddled canoes all over the place and were amazed at the scarcity of women and the unreasonable penalty for messing with the few that were there. Our new B17 needed some bolts tightened up and we were up and away for North Ireland on a trip that was longer than I thought a B17 could sustain flight. Needless to say, Ireland was a beautiful place to see.

We picked up about two weeks' supply of K rations, boarded a mail steamer, and headed across the Irish Sea to Stanraer, Scotland. There we grabbed a train for England. We sat around, processed, cut grass, bitched, and griped and eventually arrived at Grafton Underwood and the 384th.

Everyone who flew missions over Germany would tell his story in a different way with a thread of sameness woven into the narrative, a lot depending on the encounters they experienced. One surprise I encountered was the fact that some members of the crew would fly missions with other crews and that we would not all finish at the same time. I didn't like this as I considered 115 to be the best crew in the world and, therefore, invincible. I'm pretty sure every crew felt the same way.

My first mission was August 4, 1944. We were grabbed up kind of late in the afternoon to go after a V1 flying bomb site just over the channel in France. We had experience on board as Sink had flown a mission ahead of us so we were ready to wage war like a soldier is supposed to do.

There wasn't much flak, but what there was made you do a lot of real serious thinking. Like, that guy down there is really trying to take you out and this is dangerous business. How many of these damned missions do I have left to do? The glamour was gone and the drudgery began.

Life in the 384th was kind of a rut. You read the bulletin board to see if you were flying the next day. If you were not flying you had to figure out how to stay away from Captain Priggins and his stupid fatigue duty. If you were flying you headed for the NCO Club to drink beer and eat doughnuts until they ran you out around midnight. Once outside in the dark you had to face the dangers of guiding your bicycle back to the barracks in the pitch dark. To bed to be awakened at 4:30 am to head for breakfast and briefing.

Briefing was always dramatic, the curtain being pulled back to reveal the target and the route in and out, both important. Some people had to attend special briefings, but all I had to do was to go to our assigned ship, get my guns ready, and wait. Sometimes you went and sometimes you were scrubbed at the last minute. When you were scrubbed you felt a sigh of relief until you realized that you would only have to do the same thing on another day.

If you flew, there were all kinds of things to fret about. Forming up was usually hairy. When you finally headed out you could begin to sweat weather, fighters, flak, and nicotine deficiency until you could get back down to 18,000 feet and coax a cigarette into action.

When you returned to base, you wondered if all the plane's landing equipment was in good enough order to land safely, hoped they hadn't run out of Scotch at interrogation, and what's for late chow. You usually had been gone for 7 - 8 hours and all kinds of things could have happened while you were gone. After chow, it's across the street from the messhall to the NCO Club for beer and doughnuts until midnight. You have gotten through another day and you have one ~~last~~ time to go over there. 1e55

All targets were pretty much the same in that they all had flak and flak was bad. Some targets were better protected than others because of the nature of the activity being carried out in the area. Merseburg with its oil refineries was a bad place to go, as was Cologne. Bombing at 28,000 feet was bad, but bombing at any lower altitude was terrible.

Foster and I finished our 35 on December 11, 1944. We flew with another crew and that experience reenforced our belief that crew 115 was by far the best crew around.

From Grafton Underwood, we were sent to Chorley where we waited until the first of the year when we went to Liverpool and boarded a boat bound for Boston, Mass., USA. During our stay at Chorley, the Battle of the Bulge occurred and we sweated out being sent back for more of the same that we had had enough of.

I went from Boston to Leavenworth where I got a delay enroute to go home for two weeks and then to report to Santa Ana, California for reassignment. Betty and I were married on January 23, 1945. Betty accompanied me to Santa Ana and all other assignments until discharged, July 27, 1945.

From Santa Ana I went to Laredo, Texas for instructors school and to Las Vegas as a gunnery instructor. Foster and I were together during this period. We were involved in training B29 crews. I was very happy to be one of the first to be discharged on points from Las Vegas.

In September of 1945, Betty and I moved to Manhattan, Kansas where I enrolled at Kansas State in Electrical Engineering. I switched my major to Geology my first semester sophomore year. I graduated in January 1950. Betty worked at Woolworths while the school year was on and then we would go back to McPherson during the summer where I worked in the oil fields and for a contractor doing cement work.

In 1950 there was a pretty bad recession going on and oil companies were laying off geologists by the dozens. I walked right into this glutted labor market and I had a terrible time finding a job of any kind. Finally, in May of 1950 I went to work in the oil refinery that was expanding in McPherson.

I worked several jobs the first year, but finally got a job as a pipeline dispatcher. I worked this job until I retired in February 1984.

From 1945 to 1992 things moved pretty smoothly for us. I spent my time at the refinery and Betty kept house, except for a 2 - 3 year stint as a nurses aide in the local hospital. Our refinery was union and at one time or another I held almost every office in our Local and this required quite a bit of time.

Betty and I have two daughters. Marsha was born July 9, 1950 and Vicki was born September 27, 1954.

Marsha lives in Bella Vista with her husband, Bobby Scott. She works for Tyson Foods in Bentonville and Bobby works for a building contractor. They have no children.

Vicki lives in Apple Valley, Minnesota with her husband, Bion Beebe. Vicki works for Northwest Airlines and Bion is an attorney and works for West Publishing Company in St. Paul. They have two daughters--Sara, 13, and Molly, 9. They also have an adopted Korean boy, Adam, who is 5.

We did all the normal expected things, I suppose. We had our kids and all the joys and problems that go along with them. Betty was room mother, chauffeur, and bottle washer whenever a volunteer was needed. I coached a little league baseball team. I scared the hell out of the whole town by running for the school board one year. Everyone was certain that the union was taking over the town. Needless to say, I lost, and I think I would have been a good school board member. I had a lot of ideas.

I have belonged to the VFW ever since getting out of college and I have worked a little in activities they were involved in. All in all, I would have to say we have had the good life and I had always thought it would be great to retire.

Betty and I both like retirement and like it here in Arkansas. We bought our house here in 1980 and we vacationed here until I retired in February 1984. We both like to golf, travel, and fish, so we have a lot in common. We say every year we are not going to commit ourselves to anything, but low and behold, every year we have something going on most of the time. Maybe that is the way to do it. Time will tell.

The highlight of our year is the crew 115 reunions. We really look forward to this occasion. It would have been great if we had started this a lot earlier. I am very happy that we got together before Wilson and Fred passed away.

I have a special place in my mind and memories for my Army experiences. I had a lot of fun, had the hell scared out of me many times, and I met some fine men who went home and married some fine women. It's a great world.



FRED WILSON

AUGUST F. (FRED) WILSON
Assistant Armorer-Tail Gunner

I enlisted in the U. S. Army on November 22, 1942. Swearing in ceremonies took place at 9:30 am and that evening I was on a train headed for Fort George G. Meade, Maryland. We arrived at Ft. Meade the following morning and I was assigned to the 1302nd S. U., Company A. We didn't stay at Ft. Meade very long for on November 28 we left Meade and headed for Miami, Florida, which we reached on November 30.

I was assigned to the the 579th T.S.S., BT #4. On December 7 we left Miami and went to Lowry Field at Denver, Colorado, arriving there on December 10. I was assigned to the 3rd T.S.S. and started school on December 15, 1942. After entering school I spent ten days in the hospital but still managed to graduate on March 20, 1943. I had just recently been assigned to the 25th T. S. S. and when I graduated was assigned to the 22nd T. S. S., S&R, and spent a "pleasant" week on K. P. My last day at Lowry was Friday, March 26, and I spent it doing K. P. in the Officers Mess.

On March 27, at 6:30 pm we departed Denver by train and arrived in Oklahoma City at 6:30 pm the next day. I was assigned to the 497th Air Base and Headquarters Squadron at Tinker Field. This unit was later changed to the 497th Air Base Squadron. After a little over a month working at Tinker, I was on furlough from May 4 through May 14, arriving back at Tinker at 4:00 am on the 14th. My duties were on the alert crew and that lasted until July 29, at which time I was transferred to Peterson Field, Colorado Springs, Colorado.

At Peterson I started in training all over again. The first week was spent doing close order drill. The second week, August 9 through 14, was spent in training. On August 11 and 12 we went to "Black Forest." After training was completed, I was transferred to the 11th Combat Map Squadron on August 28, with orders to leave Peterson Field approximately September 17, 1943.

I did leave Peterson on September 18 by train headed for Fort Myers, Florida, by way of Kansas City and St. Louis, Missouri, and Carbondale, Illinois. In those cities I had about six hours to fool around in and see the sights. Riding a train during wartime can be very boring and tiring. You also get to see the depressing sights of the cities you pass through as well as the freshness of the countryside. So much time is spent waiting between trains. For example, we left Colorado Springs about 5:00 pm and arrived in Kansas City on a Sunday morning at about 10 o'clock. I spent from then until 4:00 pm walking around town, going to a movie, and generally waiting. After leaving Kansas City we arrived in St. Louis at 11:30 at night, but didn't leave there until 6 o'clock the next evening.

When we left St. Louis we left through East St. Louis, Illinois and Lord knows where else. It is odd to ride a train through large towns. All there is to see is dirt and railroad tracks, switches, and the gloomy, dreary side of the station. Along the way can be seen squalor and broken down shanties that are a real part of America.

In the large cities, when an hour or two is spent in layover, a person can enjoy the sights of the town or, rather, see a cross section of the town by sitting and watching and talking to the people who are catching trains, bidding good-bye or waiting for someone, or just at the station looking around. In smaller towns the whole population seems to flock to the station just to see the train. But in every station, large or small, one can see sadness, families bidding sons good-bye, wives their husbands, girls their sweethearts, all with tear-dimmed eyes. Such sights always bring a lump to one's throat, for there is always the memory of having done the same thing, kissing someone good-bye, and trying to smile, and doing fine 'til you're on the train and it starts rolling. If you are lucky enough to have a berth, you can hide your tears in your pillow; if only a seat, you pull out a hanky and curse the soot and cinders but you're not kidding anyone, only maybe yourself.

But through all that, there's the in-bound train that brings someone home. Maybe he's on furlough, or maybe he's home for good, on crutches or such, but coming home is a happy occasion so there are smiles and tears of joy, and you sit and wonder if you'll ever come home yourself to be greeted thusly.

On trains one can see what we're fighting for -- rolling plains, hills, cattle, and way over there, a farmhouse in the dusk with lights and warmth radiating from the windows. Passing through small towns children can be seen hanging on fences or just standing, waving at the soldiers on the trains.

As is often said, man is just a boy grown tall, for no soldier can resist the wave of a man, woman, or child. He waves and smiles back no matter how he feels, but then he mostly feels proud to be in uniform, for the people are waving at him, a soldier. There is a certain pride in that.

Fields of corn, green in the summer but now brown in the autumn sun. Trees turning red and yellow with the coming of winter. Farms with miles between, and on each, old barns and buildings. Cows wandering between and among the rows of corn, or the remains of the corn.

At the beginning of a trip, you are aware of the constant clicking of the wheels on the rail joints but after a while it becomes a rhythm that is only noticeable by its absence when the train stops.

We left Carbondale, Illinois about 6:30 am on September 21 and arrived at Buckingham Field, Fort Myers about 7:00 pm, Wednesday, September 22. I was assigned to the 8th Student Squadron for one week basic training, with time before and after for K. P. and detail. Moved to the 2nd Student Squadron on October 9, class 43-47 (H), and started school on Monday, October 11. My first flight in an Army plane was on Monday, November 8, 1943. It was a Lockheed AT-18. I shot 400 rounds of caliber 30 at a sleeve target and had 32 hits.

My second flight, on Wednesday, was also in an AT-18 and again I got off 400 rounds. The third flight, on November 16, was a "splash mission" in an AT-6 over the Gulf of Mexico. Very interesting!

We had a very unlucky day for Buckingham AAF. Sixteen men were killed in two separate plane crashes. They were two AT-18s within 45 minutes of each other. Ten students were from the 2nd Student Squadron. The first crashed away from the field, but the second crashed on the field, and burned.

The AT-6 mission over the Gulf was to make a visual observation of the effects of the shots.

I graduated from gunnery school and got my silver wings and promotion to sergeant on November 23, 1943, exactly one year to the day that I enlisted.

I left Fort Myers on Saturday, November 27, 1943. After lay overs in Birmingham and Memphis, I finally arrived at Will Rogers Field, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, on December 1, 1943, at 12:45 pm. I spent one month at Will Rogers reporting to Camera Repair but doing nothing but sitting and writing letters. I left Will Rogers at 8:30 am on Sunday, January 2, 1944, headed for Tampa, Florida.

I reported to Plant Park, Tampa, on Tuesday, January 4 and was finally and permanently classified a photo gunner.

In February 1944 I was assigned to a B-17 crew. The first pilot was a Lieutenant Miller and the co-pilot was Lieutenant Edwin Fredericks. I flew with this crew in training until Lt. Miller left the crew and was replaced by Lieutenant Ed. Sienkiewicz. We continued to fly from McDill Field, Florida until June when we left for Hunter Field, Savannah, Georgia, to pick up a B-17 and fly it to the European Theatre of Operations (ETO). We flew from Hunter Field to Grenier Field, New Hampshire, and then to Gander, Newfoundland. At Gander we had to wait around for about a week until we were cleared to fly to Northern Ireland. That was a night flight and when we arrived over Ireland in the early morning daylight, the clouds parted and the beautiful green of Ireland appeared below.

In July we arrived at Grafton Underwood, near Kettering, England, the home of the 384th Bomb Group. Our crew was assigned to the 547th Squadron. Our first mission over Europe was on

August 4. I was awarded the Air Medal on August 30. I flew 7 missions with Lt. Sienkiewicz's crew but because of illness was forced to discontinue flying duties. I then was assigned to the base photo lab and remained in photographic work until I left Europe in November 1945. After the war in Europe ended, I went with the group to France where I remained until returning to the United States.

Eileen and I were married on July 10, 1948. We have two sons, born on October 4, 1950 and September 11, 1952. After returning to the United States, I was employed by US Steel and remained with them until I retired in 1976.

(The above information was developed almost entirely from notes made by Fred during his military career. The last paragraph was provided by Eileen when the material was typed for this booklet. Fred suffered a stroke on November 15, 1982. He was able to join with us in our first three reunions. Fred passed away on May 15, 1990.)



TONY ZANIN

ANTHONY J. (TONY) ZANIN
BOMBARDIER

I was born in Vintondale, a coal mining community in western Pennsylvania, in 1923. In 1930 my family moved to New York State, to the town of Highland Falls, in Orange County. My entire education was in New York State, including my college years at Syracuse University. While in high school, I worked summers for the Post Engineers at the U. S. Military Academy at West Point. I continued here after graduation in a Civil Service job as an engineering aide and draftsman with a salary of \$1,440 per year.

I was drafted into the Armed Services when President Roosevelt passed the teenage draft bill. In October 1942, I had my first troop railroad ride to Camp Upton, Long Island, N. Y. A sixty mile trip that took all day!

Camp Upton was a typical military center, where I had physical and mental examinations and plenty of KP work. The Army gave me a preference of what service I wanted. My choice was aircraft mechanic with the Army Air Force. Not having any experience as an automobile mechanic, I had to make another choice. I heard that flying was available with parental permission. How about that requirement?

I was retested and qualified, armed with an excellent letter of recommendation from the Post Engineer Colonel on U. S. M. A. letter head. I was sent to Mitchel Field, also on Long Island. While waiting for further processing I discovered my lack of knowledge of fighter planes versus bombers, friend or foe, etc. Never-the-less, armed with my reference letter, I proceeded forward. My Aviation Cadet training began.

In November 1942 I was sent to Nashville, Tennessee, for classification. Nashville had its ups and downs. The single story barracks were cold, heated by pot-bellied stoves fueled with soft coal containing a high sulphur content that lingered day and night. We had plenty of cold water for shaving and showering. The weather made me sick and I missed graduating with my class. With another flunky from New York, I joined a new class. Now we were veterans and he became the class squadron commander and my typing ability made me chief clerk. James Herpick was a professional magician performing in night club acts in New York City. His mother sent his equipment to Nashville and we teamed up to entertain the troops. We performed for every officer on that base, at their homes, and the base NCO clubs. We were off base every evening entertaining and visiting the girls at Vanderbilt University. Jim would never show me how the tricks were done but repeated them a million times but I never found out. Our team broke up when he was shipped to Pilot Pre-flight Training and I went to the Bombardier Pre-flight School at Santa Ana, California. The Pullman troop train went to Colorado, the State of Washington, and then south to Santa Ana, taking six boring days with blinds drawn.

Santa Ana was a lovely station with perfect weather and most weekends off. Training was demanding; classrooms and homework, physical training, calisthenics, and marching. My phys-ed instructor was Joe DiMaggio. He played on the post baseball team and I watched most of the home games. His wife, a beautiful woman, attended all the games. The area U.S.O. clubs always

had actors and actresses present. The Andrews Sisters entertained and invited us to their home for a pleasant evening. I visited Balboa Beach and had the opportunity to go through Errol Flynn's docked yacht. (Remember).

My next training station was Flexible Gunnery School at Kingman, Arizona. What a difference from Santa Ana! A one-horse town with desert heat, a railroad station, one main street with a few business establishments. Gunnery school was lots of fun with plenty of ammunition and black and blue shoulder. We were instructed in the various armaments - pistol, Thompson sub-machine guns, shotguns, and .30 caliber guns, and maintenance and firing. Skeet shooting from the back of a pick-up truck, simulated shooting from an aircraft. Air to air practice was performed by firing at a sleeve being towed and the student firing a .30 caliber machine gun from an open rear cockpit of an AT-6 aircraft. I qualified and received my aerial gunner wings on August 30, 1943.

Happy to leave Kingman and go to Bombardier School at Victorville, California. Training consisted of classroom work, physical training, bombardier training, and finally bombing from AT-11 twin engine bombers. My instructor was a great guy from Yonkers, N. Y. One of the thrills, after most bombing training missions, was to fly over Lake Arrowhead and blow the docked sailboats over. Finally graduation - commission and wings on December 3, 1943 followed by a 30-day delay enroute to Drew Field in Tampa, Florida. I headed home for the first time via Chicago. Transportation was delayed by the lack of passenger trains and I was forced to buy a military regulation topcoat - little used for I headed for sunny Florida.

After spending most of December and Christmas Holiday at home enjoying home cooked meals, I reported to Drew Field on January 5, 1944 and transferred to Plant Park on January 21, 1944. The Cincinnati Reds professional National League baseball team's winter training stadium became our station as we were formed into Air Force combat crews. We were known as Crew No. 24. The mess hall and latrines were contained beneath the grandstand. The baseball infield and outfield were covered with tents for lodging - good thing it was Florida's winter - no heat or rain. One thing I learned was never to lend money to your temporary tent bunk mates at a personnel distribution center - the person was gone the next day. Months later, thousands of miles away in London, England, the bunkmate approached me on a street to pay me back. I was overwhelmed by the gentleman's (name unknown) honesty.

At the Third Air Force Replacement Depot, Plant Park on February 7, 1944, in our Special Orders we were identified as Crew No. 24. At Mac Dill Field on February 11, 1944 we were identified as Crew No. 115. One interesting item on the transfer Special Orders to Mac Dill Field, one of our crew members was not listed. Bill Stockman apparently used better transportation to Mac Dill. Bill does appear on Crew No. 115 after February 11, 1944.

Upon completing training at Mac Dill and prior to departure for Hunter Field, all crew members were required to pass a Morse Code test of 10 words per minute - a tough task for non-radio operators. Rumors were out that those not qualifying in code would not ship out with the crew. The test monitor must have been deaf and blind because we all passed.

We arrived by troop train from Mac Dill to the Third Air Force Staging Wing at Hunter Field, Savannah, Georgia on June 15, 1944. At this field, all military records, clothing, and equipment were reviewed and inspected. Baggage was sorted for shipment by air or water. Unfortunately, footlockers had to be shipped by boat. This was a problem. Frederick and I had purchased 90% alcohol "cough medicine" for England's damp and cold weather. The footlocker had to be repacked and the "medicine" had to be distributed among the crew members for delivery to England - very embarrassing with other crews looking on. I received my footlocker one month after my discharge.

We picked up a new B-17 at Hunter Field and headed north for the United Kingdom on or about June 21, 1944. The flight plan north skirted New York City and we flew over the Hudson Valley, my home area. I identified many area points of interest, including the U. S. Military Academy and Hudson River. The Special Orders from Hunter Field directed us to proceed to Dow Field, Bangor, Maine, via Grenier Field, New Hampshire. We landed and remained for a few days before heading to Gander, Newfoundland.

Gander was unique at the time we were there. No transient officer was permitted in the Officers Club. Three quarters of the day it was daylight making too much free time with nothing to do. We departed late evening of July 2, 1944 in daylight. From my vantage point in the nose of the B-17, I observed the phenomenon of sunset and sunrise almost in the same instant. We arrived in Belfast, Ireland on July 3, 1944, and I visited some of the city's business district and observed some surprising views. Our aircraft was left here to supply other combat groups in need of aircraft.

I vaguely remember the boat and train rides to Stone, England, the replacement center and the time spent there. We were assigned to the 384th Bomb Group at Grafton-Underwood, Kettering, England, on July 23, 1944.

All my missions were in August 1944. My records indicate as follows:

8- 4-44	Crepieul, France	Time 5:20
8- 5-44	Langhagen, Germany	" 7:10
8- 7-44	Dugny, France	" 6:15
8-12-44	Etamps/Demonnes, France	" 8:55
8-13-44	Beaumont Le Roger, France	" 5:15
8-18-44	Naastricht, Germany	" 5:30
8-24-44	Merseberg, Germany	" 8:35
*8-15-44	Mission aborted	" 4:15

On September 4, 1944 172 flying personnel from the 384th Bomb Group, including me, departed from Grafton-Underwood for Casual Pool for the purpose of returning to the Zone of the Interior. I arrived at Glasgow, Scotland to board the Queen Mary. The Queen had just returned from the Atlantic crossing with Winston Churchill aboard, who had attended a war conference in Canada. The luxury liner was divided in three sections; red, white, and blue, to keep troops from mingling. The Queen Mary carried 10,000 troops and made the Atlantic crossing unescorted. I

was put in charge of the Blue Section. My duty was to load the sick and wounded troops from the tender to the sick bay on ship. One helluva task after the first round, to round up the men with the litters, to complete the unloading of the tender. We sailed on October 2, 1944 at 11:00 PM. Bing Crosby and a USO group were on board. Bing refused to entertain us when somebody pulled off his toupe as a joke. He was a poor sport. (See the attached officers' menu for Sunday, October 8, 1944).

Our arrival at Pier 90 in New York City was October 8, 1944, at 11:00 AM. We remained docked for a few days unloading the wounded and sending troops to a reception center for further processing. The center was Camp Shanks, halfway between New York City and my home. I remained there a couple of days and then transferred to Fort Dix, N. J., on October 10, 1944. I received a delay enroute to Atlantic City, N. J., arriving on November 2, 1944. Because of the Presidential election, an additional delay was granted to vote, until November 8, 1944.

On November 21, 1944, I went to Midland, Texas to Bombardier Instructor School for nine weeks. After completing Instructor School, I was sent to S.A.A.C.C., San Antonio, Texas, to be examined to determine my fitness for pilot training. More classroom work and a course in parachuting from a tower. Exciting, but a little late to be useful in combat flights.

March 9, 1945 I became a member of Primary Pilot Training Class 45-G at Curtis Field, Brady, Texas. This was a contract pilot school, Primary field. All the instructor pilots were old civilian employees with no heart, patience, or consideration. A total of eleven hours of instruction, five hours in the PT-17 open cockpit, and did not solo - that was the end of the line.

Again on the move, on April 28, 1945, to Childress Army Air Field, Childress, Texas, to instruct aviation cadets in bombardiering. This duty was great, week-ends off and many air trips to Los Angeles, Salt Lake City, New Orleans, and any place with a field. Childress was a "no liquor area" so the excursions were always very profitable.

The final day for Uncle Sam, the caretaker, was December 15, 1945. My separation was from Amarillo, Texas, an eventful day in many ways. Separation was pay-day, including money for transportation and meals to your home destination. The last separation step was to strip to shorts to be weighed. Returning to get dressed, I noticed the left rear pocket of my pants was unbuttoned. The wallet was there, but no money! A Western Union message home said, "Lost \$100, send \$100." My money from home arrived at Oklahoma City where I boarded a Pullman train to Chicago, an enjoyable trip with Phil Spitalny and his all-girl orchestra. Finally arrived home after Christmas for the New Years celebration. Not much happening in my community and work was scarce. My last option was joining the 52-20 club. Boredom made me go back to work at the U. S. M. A. with the Post Engineers.

The colleges were not prepared to accept the large numbers of returning veterans. I was accepted at Syracuse University in the School of Civil Engineering. I graduated in 1951. The economy was slow and engineers were not in demand. My parents decided it was a good time to build their home and keep me out of trouble. In the middle of building my parents' home, I was recalled on October 21, 1951 for reclassification due to the Korean War. They said I qualified for B-29s or

B-26s and was in better health than when I was drafted. I was given 30 days to clean up all personal matters and report back to Camp Kilmer, New Jersey before Thanksgiving 1951. My request for additional time was granted and never recalled, due to government mass-confusion.

During 1952 the Federal Highway Administration started the Interstate Highway construction, requiring civil engineers. Work became plentiful and I worked in the highway construction field for 37 years with the same employer.

Virginia Duffy went to Syracuse University to get her Master's Degree in Education and this is where we met. After graduating from Oneonta State Teachers College in N. Y., she taught on Long Island until we married on July 3, 1954, and we moved to Cornwall, New York. We have three children. Regina was born September 16, 1955 and now lives in Greensboro, North Carolina. She graduated from Boston University, MA, and got her Master's Degree in Social Work at the New York State University in Albany, N. Y. She now does counseling as an associate with Lary Psychological Associates.

Lucille was born August 28, 1957. She graduated from Harriman College, NY, with a degree in merchandising. She lives in Cornwall with her husband Robert Nahow and children, Melissa and Justin.

Our son, John, was born July 31, 1962 and resides in Cornwall with his wife, Sharon, and son, Anthony J. Zanin II. John completed an Associate Degree at Orange County Community College in NY, in Business Administration. He continued at Delhi, New York Technical School and received an Associate in Electrical Skills. He is employed as a union electrician on large projects in this locality.

In 1957 I purchased 1 1/2 acres in Cornwall and began construction on my present home. Now my employer sent me on many jobs away from home and some out-of-state. This left week-ends, vacations, and holidays to complete our home enough to move in March 1963.

It is approximately 50 years since my discharge. I do not regret a moment of time spent in the military. I enjoyed the West Coast including the Pacific Ocean and beaches; the hot Southwest, Texas and Florida (excluding Ybor City). London was interesting, but the buzz-bombs were not welcome. I did have a nice stay in a Southwest England town with Bill Stockman visiting Bill's father and staying in a private home with gas lights.

I am happy that Crew 115 returned to the States safely, enabling us to reunite each Fall.

CREW 115

QUEEN MARY

MENU

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 8, 1944

OFFICERS' MENU

Sunday, October 8, 1944

BREAKFAST

Compote of Prunes
Corn Flakes Rolled Oats All Bran
Fried Fillets of Flounder with Lemon
or
Broiled Breakfast Bacon with Boiled or Fried Egg
or
Saute of Kidney, Madere
Rolls Preserves Scones
Tea Coffee Cocoa

LUNCHEON

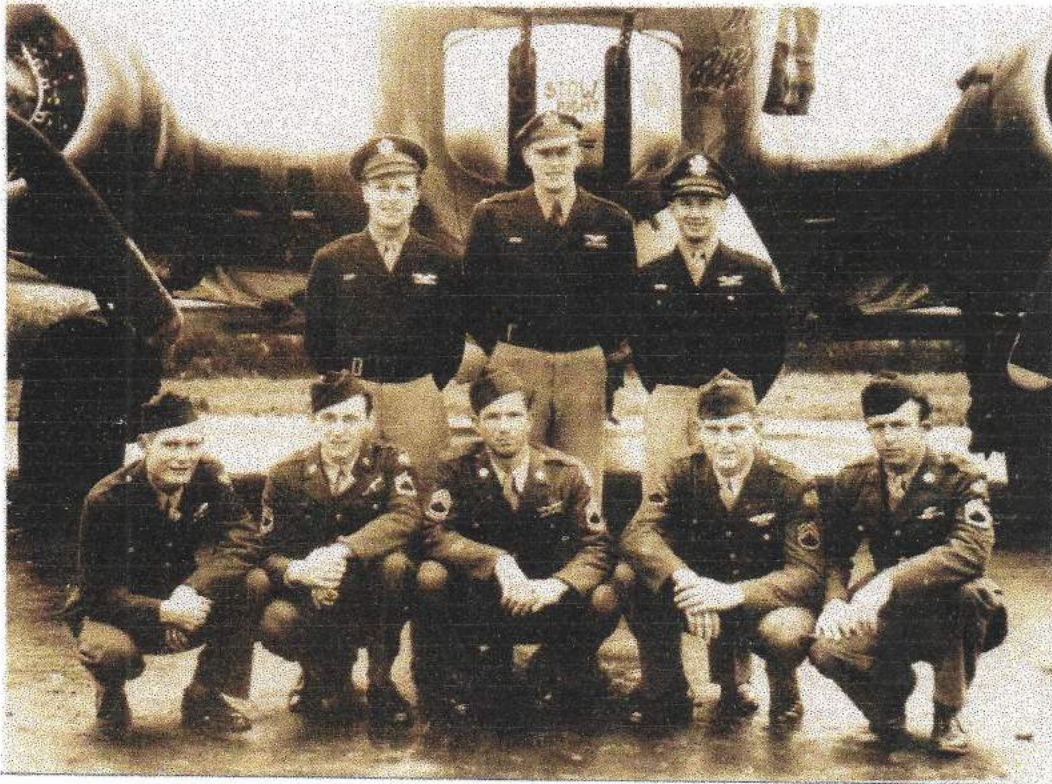
Sheep's Head Broth
Broiled Fillets of Codfish, Sauce Robert
or
Kandahar Curry and Rice
or
Silverside of Corned Beef and Dumplings
Brussels Sprouts Mashed Swedes
Baked Jacket and Puree Potatoes
or
Cold: Boiled Ham Devon Sausage
Mixed Salad
Compote of Mixed Fruit and Custard
or
Biscuits Cheese Coffee

DINNER

Crepe Americaine
Darne of Salmon, Mousseline
or
Calf's Head, Grand Mere
or
Roast Long Island Duckling, Savoury and Apple Sauce
French Beans Braised Onions
Boiled and Roast Potatoes
Dessert Fedora Pudding Coffee

Provided by Tony Zanin

CREW 115



L-R rear: Ed Frederick, Ed Sienkiewicz, Bill Stockman
front: Gene Foster, Alvin Orth, John Ballenger,
Delbert Storm, Hollis Crowell

Grafton Underwood, England
Autumn, 1944

RESTRICTED

SPECIAL ORDERS)
NUMBER 146)

(EXTRACT)

AAF STATION NO. 106
APO 557, 24 JULY, 1944

4. The foll Off and EM having been asgd to the 384th Bomb Gp fr ACU & atchd to 1st Repl & Tng Sq (B), per SO# 204 par 1, Hq AAF Sta 112, dtd 22 July, 1944, are further asgd to orgns as indicated, eff 23 July, 1944. (*) EM on TD at AAF Sta 172.

CREW TT-34 (FB333DJ/16209DJ-61/61)	547TH BOMBARDMENT SQ	
2d Lt Edward A. Sienkiewicz 0817767 (P)	2d Lt Edwin B. Frederick	0819785
(CP)		
2d Lt William A. Stockman 0709070 (N)	2d Lt Anthony J. Zanin	0761493
(B)		
S/Sgt(757) Hollis H. Crowell 13048201 (AR)	S/Sgt(748) John S. Ballenger	19142283
(AE)*		
S/Sgt(612) Delbert Storm 17002260 (G)	*Sgt(611) Garnet E. Foster	37537004
(G)*		
Pvt(748) Alvin W. Orth 33561806 (AE)	*Sgt(939) August F. Wilson	13167977
(G)		

By order of Colonel SMITH:

HAROLD NELSON, JR.,
Major, Air Corps,
Adjutant

OFFICIAL:

(S) HAROLD NELSON, JR
(T) HAROLD NELSON, JR.,
Major, Air Corps,
Adjutant

AFTER THOUGHTS

No. 1 - August 4, Azincourt, France -- Flying time 5:20
Flak was light, target was clouded over, didn't bomb, dropped bombs in the Wash. A nice raid to start out on.

No. 2 - August 5, Hanover, Germany -- Flying time 7:10
Target was an airfield and factory. Flak was heavy and on the beam. You could see the flak 20 minutes before we got to target. It was H. Crowell's first mission. We got hit pretty bad. Had to feather #1 engine due to oil cooler being hit. The right wing had to be changed before this bird could fly again. Saw four boys bail out of one plane; the plane seemed to be okay.

No. 3 - August 7, Paris, France -- Flying time 6:15
Target was a fuel dump outside of the city. Saw some flak over coast; over target flak was heavy. Hit flak on way out again.

No. 4 - August 12, La Perthe, France -- Flying time 8:55
Target was an airfield. Made two runs over it, then didn't bomb; bombed the second target. Didn't see much flak; just along coast.

No. 5 - August 13, Beaumont, France -- Flying time 5:15
We bombed an intersection of roads. Flak heavy and good. Saw four planes go down; pretty rough.

No. 6 - August 18, Liege, Belgium -- Flying time 5:30
Our target was a railroad bridge. We got light flak over target, but the next group got hell.

No. 7 - August 24, Merseburg, Germany -- Flying time 8:35
Our target was just six miles from Leipzig; an oil factory. Flak was heavy. Fighters hit the wing in front of us. Saw one B-17 go down. There was a big dog fight in front of us; saw two fighters go down. We were in heavy flak for 12 minutes over target. Sink got hit by flak in leg, did not do any damage. Ship was hit quite a few times.

No. 8 - September 8, Ludwigshafen, Germany -- Flying time 8:30
Flak was heavy but low. We flew #5 in the lead.

No. 9 - September 9, Mannheim, Germany -- Flying time 7:40
Target was railroad yards. Just over river from Ludwigshafen. Flak was heavy but low again. Hit flak on way out again.

No. 10 - September 11, Merseburg, Germany -- Flying time 8:00
Our main target was synthetic oil field near Leipzig. We made two runs in heavy flak, then didn't bomb. Flak was just everywhere. We flew at 30,000 feet. A ME-163 made a pass at us. I shot about 200 rounds at him. It looked like my tracers were going in him and his tracers looked like they were coming at us. We flew #3 in high element.

No. 11 - September 19, Hamm, Germany -- Flying time 6:25
Our target was railroad yards. Flak was light at our altitude. Fog and clouds were heavy at target. We had to land at another field on way back. Stayed overnight.

No. 12 - September 25, Frankfurt, Germany -- Flying time 7:20
Railroad yards were the target again. We made two runs over target. This is in the fighter belt, but we didn't see any. Flak was very heavy but low and to our left. Our group lost one plane.

No. 13 - September 27, Cologne, Germany -- Flying time 6:20
Same old target. Boy, do we give the railroads hell. This time the target was in the center of the city. Flak was a little low, but what flak. This place is in the place called "Happy Valley."

No. 14 - September 30, Munster, Germany -- Flying time 6:10
Same kind of target again. Flak not too heavy but it was very good. We picked up a few hits. We had bad weather over target.

No. 15 - October 5, Cologne, Germany -- Flying time 6:10
Our main target was the Ford truck factory a few miles out of town. But we didn't drop there; we went to the railroads again. We had to make three runs over target. Flak was very damn good; we lost two planes. The last run was in heavy fog. My turret was covered with frost.

No. 16 - October 6, Stettin, Germany -- Flying time 9:00
This target was just about 100 miles from Berlin. We hit an airfield. Flak was pretty light.

No. 17 - October 7, Ruhland, Germany -- Flying time 9:30
This was a long mission. We hit a lot of flak. Made two runs at the target. This was tracking flak.

No. 18 - October 17, Cologne, Germany -- Flying time 6:30
Not a bad mission. Flak not too heavy, but tracking. Saw a few bursts of red flak. There were a few jet planes over target, but they didn't hit us. Our #1 engine was hit.

No. 19 - October 18, Cologne, Germany -- Flying time 7:15
Ford's plant again. Flak was light and low. Had to make two runs at target.

No. 20 - October 19, Mannheim, Germany -- Flying time 7:40
Our target was a tank factory. Very bad weather. Flak not too heavy, but ran into heavy fog and lost formation.

No. 21 - October 25, Gelsenkirchen, Germany -- Flying time 7:15
Target was synthetic oil factory. Flak was heavy and good. We got hit quite a few times. Our co-pilot got his pants torn by a piece of flak.

No. 22 - October 30, Hamm, Germany -- Flying time 6:30
Railroad yards again. It was our second target. The main target

was at Gelsenkirchen but it was clouded over. Temperature was minus 38C. Flak was light and low.

No. 23 - November 1, Gelsenkirchen, Germany -- Flying time 7:10
Synthetic oil plant was the target. Flak was heavy. We were first over. Saw one Jerry plane.

No. 24 - November 5, Frankfurt, Germany -- Flying time 7:35
Railroad yards again. Flak was heavy but in front of us. Al got hit but his flak suit saved him. We had to change planes before takeoff and the second one wasn't much good, either.

No. 25 - November 6, Bottrop, Germany -- Flying time 6:00
Synthetic oil refinery was our target again. Flak not too heavy. Temperature minus 48C, altitude 27,800.

No. 26 - November 9, Metz, France -- Flying time 8:00
Our target was some big forts just over the front lines. We didn't see much flak. I flew with Lt. Rowe in Dep lead of low Sqdn. We bombed at 21,700, temp minus 38.

No. 27 - November 23, Gelsenkirchen, Germany -- Flying time 7:40
Target was a coke plant. Flak was light and low. It was Dunn's last raid. We had just got back from Flak leave and today is Thanksgiving Day.

No. 28 - November 25, Merseburg, Germany -- Flying time 8:50
Synthetic oil refinery again. Flak was heavy over target, but we didn't go into it. Dropped our bombs and got the hell out. Bad weather over home base, landed at another base overnight.

No. 29 - November 27, Offenburg, Germany -- Flying time 7:00
Railroad yards was the target. Flak was light. Our group led the 1st Division in. Minus 45.

No. 30 - November 29, Hanover, Germany -- Flying time 7:00
Synthetic oil refinery. Flak was light and off. The target was the oil refinery at Misburg near Hanover.

No. 31 - November 30, Merseburg, Germany -- Flying time 8:30
Synthetic oil refinery was target. The flak was good and heavy. We had to make two runs over target. We lost one ship and four men on our lead ship. Our target was near a small town of Zeitz still in the Leipzig area.

No. 32 - December 2, Coblenz, Germany -- Flying time 7:00
t was railroads again. We didn't see any flak. A 109 hit a B-24 and got it. On this day our fighters got 28 out of 50 Jerries tht hit the B-24s.

No. 33 - December 4, Svert, Germany -- Flying time 8:00
Railroads again. We saw some flak on the way in and there was some flak over over target before we got there. A nice mission.

No. 34 - December 6, Merseburg, Germany -- Flying time 9:00
Synthetic oil refinery again. There was a lot of flak but we just
hit the edge of it. I was pretty scared. It was too near the end
to get knocked down and this could have been a bad target. We got
one gas tank hit by flak.

No. 35 - December 9, Stuttgart, Germany -- Flying time 8:00
Our last mission. The one you really sweat out. But it wasn't
bad. We saw two B-17s run into each other. The target was an
airfield. Flak was light and to the side. Temp minus 54.

Crowell, Orth, Sink, Bud and myself were on our last raid.

Submitted by John Ballenger

<u>MISSION</u>	<u>DATE</u>	<u>LENGTH</u>	<u>BATTLE DAMAGE</u>
1 Azincourt, France Flying bomb installations	Aug. 4	5 hrs 20 mins	None
2 Hanover, Germany	Aug. 5	7 hrs 10 mins	About 15 flak holes #1 engine shot out
3 Paris, France Luftwaffe oil dump	Aug. 7	6 hrs 15 mins	1 flak hole in left wing
4 La Perth, France Luftwaffe airfield	Aug. 12	8 hrs 55 mins	None
5 Beaumont, France Martialing yards	Aug. 13	5 hrs 15 mins	Whew! the flak but no damage
6 Liege, Belgium Railroad bridge	Aug. 18	5 hrs 30 mins	None
7 Leipzig, Germany Synthetic oil refinery	Aug. 24	8 hrs 25 mins	Wilson, Crowell close shave; Sink just scratched; about 35 flak holes wing, fuselage
8 Ludwigshafen, Gr Chlorine plant	Sep. 8	8 hrs 20 mins	2 flak holes - 1 wing tip, 1 plexi nose
9 Mannheim, G'rmny Martialing yard	Sep. 9	7 hrs 30 mins	1 flak hole in wing
10 Merseburg, Gr. Synthetic oil refinery	Sep. 11	8 hrs	About 10 flak holes in ship Fighter
11 Hamm, Germany Rail martialing yard	Sep. 19	6 hrs 45 mins	Quite a bit of flak, but no damage
12 Frankfurt, Gr Center of city	Sep. 25	6 hrs 45 mins	Lot of flak, but no damage

13	Cologne, Gr Rail martialing yard	Sep. 27	6 hrs 10 mins	Lot of flak but no damage
14	Munster, Gr Center of city	Sep. 30	6 hrs 10 mins	Flak was accurate; 5 flak holes in wings
15	Cologne, Gr Center of city	Oct. 5	7 hrs 15 mins	Wow, the flak About 30 holes in ship
16	Stettin, Gr Airfield east of city	Oct. 6	9 hrs	1 flak hole in wing
17	Ruhland, Gr Oil refinery	Oct. 7	9 hrs 30 mins	About 6 holes #4 super knocked out
18	Cologne, Gr Rail martialing yard	Oct. 17	6 hrs 25 mins	#1 engine knocked out
19	Cologne, Gr Center of city	Oct. 18	7 hrs 15 mins	None
20	Mannheim, Gr Tank factory	Oct. 19	7 hrs 30 mins	Lot of flak; we got 4 or 5 holes
21	Gelsenkirchen, Gr Synthetic oil refinery	Oct. 25	7 hrs 15 mins	Lot of flak, about twenty holes; brakes out; oxygen out; Fred close shave
22	Hamm, Germany Rail martialing yard	Oct. 30	6 hrs 30 mins	Flak not bad; No damage
23	Gelsenkirchen, Gr Synthetic oil refinery	Nov. 1	7 hrs	Lot of flak; about 10 holes
24	Frankfurt, Gr Rail martialing yard	Nov. 5	7 hrs 35 mins	Lot of flak fairly accu- rate; Alvin hit lightly

25	Bottrop, Gr Synthetic oil refinery	Nov. 6	6 hrs 45 mins	Flak meager & inaccurate
26	Gelsenkirchen, Gr Coke plant	Nov. 23	6 hrs 20 mins	No flak, nice mission
27	Merseburg, Gr Synthetic oil refinery	Nov. 25	9 hrs 15 mins	Lot of flak; inaccurate
28	Offenburg, Gr Rail martialing yard	Nov. 27	7 hrs	Meager flak; no damage
29	Merseburg, Gr Synthetic oil refinery	Nov. 29	7 hrs 15 mins	Moderate flak No damage
30	Zeitz, Gr Synthetic oil refinery	Nov. 30	8 hrs 30 mins	Wow, <u>intense</u> flak; about 12 holes, Alvin close
31	Coblenz, Gr Rail martialing yard	Dec. 2	7 hrs 5 mins	No flak; no damage
32	Soest, Germany Rail martialing yard	Dec. 4	8 hrs 5 mins	No flak; no damage
33	Merseburg, Gr Synthetic oil refinery	Dec. 6	8 hrs 30mins	Intense flak inaccurate, about 3 holes gas tank
34	Stuttgardt, Gr Airfield near city	Dec. 9	8 hrs 30 mins	No flak no damage
35	Rail and road bridge between Mannheim and Ludwigshafen, Gr	Dec. 11	8 hrs 30 mins	Intense flak in area; no damage

#1 - August 4th - Clouds prevented dropping bombs. About 20 bursts of flak came up low and some high.

#2 - August 5th - Flak was accurate as H___. We got several holes in the wings but none in the fuselage. We saw Bremen on the way in and Holland on the way out. We had one engine feathered on the return. I was pretty scared. We hit the target.

#3 - August 7th - Paris should be a big deal. Clouds kept us from seeing much. We were first over the target and the flak was scattered and we got ok. We saw Cherbourg, Caen, and such places. We got one flak hole right at the front lines. I don't know how our bombs hit.

#4 - August 12th - We went in and no flak came up. We hit the target of opportunity and plastered it.

#5 - August 13th - The flak was rough and the group got hit pretty bad. Several B-17s went down from other formations. The first ships we saw go down. It was rough and one I won't forget very soon. We hit that target, too.

#6 - August 18th - We saw a lot of the low lands. The flak wasn't bad at all and we demolished the bridge.

#7 - August 24th - Our first barrage flak. I couldn't see how we were going to go thru it. I prayed quite a bit and we did. Tracking flak picked us up after the "Bombs away" and we had flak for 15 minutes. TOO LONG. A piece of flak just missed Wilson's arm about 6 inches. A piece went over Crowell's head and just missed him. A piece came at Foster and stuck in the skin of the ship and he picked it out when we landed. We hit that target, too. Fighters hit the formation in front of us and our little friends shot two of them down. I saw them go down. I only saw one chute. I like our little friends very much.

#8 - September 8th - We went in at 29,000 feet out of range of the 88s so it wasn't so bad. Several boys were wounded. It was awful cold and the weather bad going in and coming out. The target area was in flames when we left and columns of smoke were rising. I don't think we'll have to go back there for awhile. Zanin went home this morning and Wilson was grounded because of his nerves. We saw Paris on return. It's a big place. I saw the Eiffel Tower and the Arch of Triumph and the Seine. It's very pretty with no flak coming up.

#9 - September 9th - Fairly bad weather all the way. Bombed with instruments. Flak wasn't too bad, but bad enough. Flew right over Luxemburg. There was doubt as to whether the Germans still occupied the town. We found out, but quick. We saw Dunkirk and Ostend on the way out. Alvin flew tail. It was pretty cold. We bombed instruments so I don't know what we did.

#10 - September 11th - Back to the bad country by a new route. We had flak going in and coming out. We were in flak for nearly 30 minutes. We didn't hit the primary target but, rather the last resort target, an airfield. A Jet propelled fighter hit the formation and John really let him have it. I didn't get to see him as they're fast as H___. Sink got his windshield smacked by flak. A piece came thru the ship about a foot from me and Foster said it raised H___ in the waist. I got the piece. The mission was long

and rough. We hit some pretty hot flak over the Rhine. I felt like strafing them from 30,000 feet.

#11 - September 19th - A good route in and out. The Ruhr is known for its flak. It was bad but we had clouds at bombing altitude. Weather was good for flak, but bad for bombing and fighters. All missions are deep now and the flak is worse as the guns that were dispersed are being moved back and being consolidated. I'm going nuts slow but sure. My memory is all but gone. I can't write, spell, or anything. It seems you're in a constant nervous strain with no time to relax. Betty worries me. We missed the target at Hamm so I guess we'll go back ere long.

#12 - September 25th - We had a real important rail martialing yard to hit and we were told the importance of hitting it by Col. Smith. We were attempting to disrupt transportation to troops resisting our airborne troops at Arnhiem, Holland. We had to bomb P. F. F. and we hit the center of the city of Frankfurt. The flak was intense but fairly inaccurate. The 546th lost one ship. It went down with tail shot clear off. There were no chutes seen. We had to bomb thru cloud so I don't know how the bombs hit. We finished Joe up and Sink flew 12-B. At pre-flight I went slow so not to forget anything. I still can't remember nothing.

#13 - September 27th - When they told us Cologne I almost quit right there. I'm superstitious and I wasn't too happy about #13. We were first over the target and flak didn't come up until we were right over the target, but when it did, whew. Thelow and lead caught H__. One navigator got it and two tail gunners. I guess the wings behind got it. Several fighters hit wings behind us but let us alone. I don't know if we hit the target as clouds covered the city and we bombed P. F. F. We got flak over the Rhine again and they made it hot for awhile.

#14 - September 30th - Munster was supposed to be soft and short as targets go today. Fighters hit the wing behind us and 17s were seen going down. Flak was moderate over the target but accurate. When you hear the stuff go off it's too close. Battle damage was light. I really forgot something today. The gun acces window. I like to have froze. Temperature was minus 38 degrees. I saw the target and I guess they're still fighting fire in Munster. Hollis is sweating as aren't we all.

#15 - October 5th - We went after the Ford truck factory 5 miles north of Cologne, but it was clouded over so we hit the city with instruments. We made two runs on the factory and boy the flak. We were in the low squadron and they really threw the stuff up. It was the kind that fire jumps out of and it's no good at all. Too close. Target was clouded over so I don't know what we did. Two ships (B-17s) were seen going down in our area.

#16 - October 6th - We went after an oil refinery but bombed secondary, an airfield. Flak was light on way in and none at the

target. We really hit the target. Saw Denmark on mission. I wish they were all that way.

#17 - October 7th - Wow, was I tired? Third day in a row. This one was really deep. The 8th put up everything. Airplanes were everywhere. We had lots of flak going in and were late coming out so no escort. I was sweating fighters. We got hit by flak coming out at Osnabruck. I watched the guns firing on the ground. They were really firing fast. We had a good bomb pattern but it looked like we missed but I guess we didn't. We had lots of flak over one target, but none over the one we dropped on. The escort was beautiful on the way in.

#18 - October 17th - Cologne again. That place must be beat to pieces. The flak was moderate at the target but we still got scared to pieces when the engine was shot out. Oil came out all over everything. We were sweating out feathering some more engines. I really sweat. Saw a couple of ME163s fooling around, but didn't hit us. We bombed thru clouds so I don't know what we hit. I saw one B-17 go down in flames after we left the target.

#19 - October 18th - Cologne again. Several wings criss-crossing over the target kept the flak goofed up. They have lots of flak. We made two runs and flak was fairly inaccurate both runs. Some ME163s were seen around but they kept away. We bombed thru clouds so I don't know how we made out. We dropped low over Belgium. It's pretty.

#20 - October 19th - Mannheim again. Crowell's friend went down there the last time we were sweating. Col. Thacker said we needn't sweat fighters as only the 8th were the only people dumb enough to fly in this weather and it was rough. The flak was fairly accurate, but the ships in the low squadron got it. We bombed by instruments so I don't know how we made out. Mumper like to have slid into us in the propwash. Kinda scared the old man.

#21 - October 25th - "Happy Valley" again. The north end this time. 975 guns they have in this area and I think they were all shooting. We were well down the bomb run when the first burst came up and it burst right at our left wing tip. A piece came right in over Bill's table and went up thru the cockpit and ripped Fred's pants. It knocked out the hydraulic system and Fred, Alvin, and my oxygen went out. We had to land on the grass and Sink really made a nice landing. We bombed thru clouds so I don't know how we made out. We passed under another formation when we came off the target and they bombed right behind us. Close, whew. We hit it G. H.

#22 - October 30th - We were headed for Gelsenkirchen again but it was clouded over so we went to Hamm and bombed P. F. F. The flak was scattered all over everything. The fighters were hitting the stragglers. I don't know how we made out bombing as the target was clouded. It was pretty cold and the weather was bad even at our altitude.

#23 - November 1st - Gelsenkirchen again. This time north of the city, but just as rough to us. The flak was accurate and a lot of it. Some came pretty close to Dunn. One ME410 was seen flying over the formation. The 51s ran him off, but quit. We bombed instruments so I don't know how we made out.

#24 - November 5th - SNAFU Frankfurt. We went up in 208 and had to abort. We came back and got another ship on the run and were things screwed up, but right. I couldn't get in the ball so I flew waist. The flak was intense and fairly accurate. Alvin got a piece thru the nose and it hit him in the chest and dropped on the floor. We hit the target by instruments and hit it so they say. The old man saw one 17 go down in flames and blow up.

#25 - November 6th - I thought this would be a lot rougher than it turned out. The flak was scattered and not very accurate. We bombed G. H. and I don't know how we made out bombing. It still wasn't a milk run.

#26 - November 23rd - Weather was bad. The flak didn't come up. It was a small force and the wing ahead got meager flak. We finished Dunn up today. Kinda nice to be flying again, if they weren't shooting at us. Clouds covered the target so I don't know if we hit it. We bombed G. H. Cold - minus 40 degrees.

#27 - November 25th - Merseburg -- rrrrough. It's too long in the first place and it was cold -45. It was 10/10ths at the target but whew the flak. About a 5 mile square of solid black. It was all low and didn't do much damage. The escort was good and we saw no bandits. We usually get them there. Base weather closed in and we landed at another field. We bombed instruments so I don't know how we made out.

#28 - November 27th - Nice mission. Just short behind the lines. We were first over the target and only about 6 - 12 bursts of flak came up. We saw the Alps and were just 20 miles from Swiss border. We bombed visual and plastered the target. Cold -45 degrees.

#29 - November 29th - Close to Hanover and that place is rough. It was cloudy and so the flak wasn't very accurate. We bombed instruments. The escort was very good. Cold, around -42 degrees. I don't know how we made out as clouds covered the target.

#30 - November 30th - MERSEBURG AREA - Zeitz was the target. I've never seen so much flak. 1250 bombers out. Good escort. We made two runs and they really let us have it on the second run. 46th ship blew up below the formation. Four guys bailed out of Goodrich's ship. He brought the ship back ok. The 8th lost 56 ships (bombers) 30 fighters. I saw one German fighter go down and blow up. I don't know how we made out. I don't know but I think we missed it. Kohne has rocks in his head. Cold -42 degrees. I hope we stay away from that place.

#31 - December 2nd - The weather was bad today over the target. We bombed P. F. F. and I don't know how we made out. I saw 4 ME109s attacking and shoot down a B-24 right below us. It was terrible to be so helpless but they were too far away for me to fire.

#32 - December 4th - We were sweating fighters today but I didn't see any. I don't want to, either. The escort is good nowadays. It was clouded over so we bombed instruments so I don't know how the bombs hit. No flak came up and that didn't make me mad at all as we had one engine out before we got into the target. It was fairly warm today, only -36 degrees.

#33 - December 6th - Merseburg again. We were sweating visual weather but it was instruments so the flak wasn't so bad. I don't know how we made out in bombing. It was awful cold -48 degrees. The flak was still intense.

#34 - December 9th - This was a long mission and very cold -54 degrees. The weather was bad and snow covered most of Germany. We passed close to Paris and 2 B-17s crashed just east of Paris. We bombed G. H. and visual and smeared the target. Sink, Geronimo, John, Hollis, and Dufus finished today.

#35 - December 11th - Finished up. The Old Man and I flew waist with Klatt. The weather was cruddy as all get out. One group hitting the martialing yard at Mannheim caught lots of flak. One ship went down in the area. I really sweat it out. I like flying with my own crew. The old man, Fred and I finished up today. That leaves Bill to finish; he still has four. We'll have to sweat him out.

Submitted by Delbert Storm

I did not have the foresight to keep a log like the ones kept by John Ballenger and Delbert Storm so I have had to resort to the Form 5 and official target designations in my records. According to those records, these are the combat missions I flew. The first thirty were all flown as a member of Crew 115 with Ed Sinkiewicz as the Command Pilot through November 27, 1944. The last five were flown with the crew commanded by Lt. Robert Owens from Seattle, Washington. It was a good crew but it wasn't Crew 115 and there is a difference. We were "stood down" to begin flying as a lead crew until the Battle of the Bulge began on December 16 and the US threw everything it could at the Germans to stop their advance. We flew five missions in eleven days - my last five.

	<u>DATE</u>	<u>TARGET</u>	<u>TIME</u>
1.	Aug. 4, 1944	- Crepieul, France	5:20
2.	Aug. 5, 1944	- Langenhagen, Germany	7:10
3.	Aug. 7, 1944	- Dugny, France	6:15
4.	Aug. 12, 1944	- Etampes/Demonnes, France	8:55
5.	Aug. 13, 1944	- Beaumont Le Roger, France	5:15
6.	Aug. 18, 1944	- Maastricht, Germany	5:30
7.	Aug. 24, 1944	- Merseburg, Germany	8:35
8.	Sep. 8, 1944	- Ludwigshafen, Germany	8:30
9.	Sep. 9, 1944	- Ludwigshafen, Germany	7:45
10.	Sep. 11, 1944	- Eisnach, Germany	8:00
11.	Sep. 19, 1944	- Hamm, Germany	7:00
12.	Sep. 25, 1944	- Frankfurt, Germany	7:20
13.	Sep. 26, 1944	- Osnabruck, Germany	6:30
14.	Sep. 27, 1944	- Cologne, Germany	6:20
15.	Sep. 30, 1944	- Munster, Germany	6:10
16.	Oct. 2, 1944	- Cologne, Germany	8:10
17.	Oct. 5, 1944	- Cologne & Mannheim, Germany	7:40
18.	Oct. 6, 1944	- Stettin, Germany	9:00
19.	Oct. 7, 1944	- Ruchland, Germany	9:30
20.	Oct. 17, 1944	- Cologne, Germany	7:00
21.	Oct. 18, 1944	- Cologne, Germany	7:50
22.	Oct. 19, 1944	- Mannheim, Germany	7:30
23.	Oct. 25, 1944	- Hamm, Germany	7:15
24.	Oct. 30, 1944	- Hamm, Germany	6:30
25.	Nov. 1, 1944	- Hamm & Gelsenkirchen, Germany	6:30
26.	Nov. 5, 1944	- Frankfurt, Germany	5:50
27.	Nov. 6, 1944	- Bottrop, Germany	6:00
28.	Nov. 23, 1944	- Gelsenkirchen, Germany	6:00
29.	Nov. 25, 1944	- Merseburg, Germany	9:45
30.	Nov. 27, 1944	- Offenburg, Germany	7:00
31.	Dec. 18, 1944	- Coblenz, Germany	7:10
32.	Dec. 19, 1944	- Glaadt, Germany	7:20
33.	Dec. 24, 1944	- Kirch Gons, Germany	7:00
34.	Dec. 27, 1944	- Coblenz, Germany	7:15
35.	Dec. 28, 1944	- Coblenz, Germany	6:35
*	Dec. 30, 1944	- Nantes, France	2:50
	Dec. 31, 1944	- Return from Nantes	2:55

*A non-combat mission - a mercy mission - to fly three B17s loaded with toys, cookies, and candy, collected by members of the 547th Squadron, to an orphanage in Nantes. Nantes is a city on the Loire River which had just been liberated by Allied ground forces. We were the first Allied military personnel able to spend any time at all talking with the inhabitants of the city - the ground troops had gone through so fast they didn't have time to stop and fraternize - since the German occupation in 1940, and the people treated us like royalty.

Submitted by Bill Stockman

R E S T R I C T E D

HEADQUARTERS THIRD AIR FORCE REPLACEMENT DEPOT

SPECIAL ORDERS)
 NUMBER 38)

Plant Park,
 Tampa, Florida,
 7 February 1944.

E X T R A C T

* * *

2. The fol-named AC O and EM PP Repl Depot Det are organized into crews as indicated, are asgd and WP 488th Bomb Gp MacDill Fld Tampa Fla in govt-owned vehicle on 11 February 1944 ROA to the CO thereof for dy:

<u>RANK</u>	<u>SSN</u>	<u>NAME</u>	<u>ASN</u>	<u>DET</u>	<u>PRIMARY POSITION</u>
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CREW NO. 1

CAPT	1091	WHITE, RICHARD B	0374102	(7th)	P
CAPT	1051	REEDER, WILLIAM G JR	0374008	(1st)	CP
1ST LT	1035	LYONS, EARL K	0445105	(7th)	B
Cpl	748	Nieman, Marvin W	35577015	(6th)	AMG
Cpl	612	Comegys, Homer C	17067450	(6th)	AG
Cpl	757	Fitzwater, Harry E	20849275	(6th)	ROG
Pfc	611	Canter, Samuel L	35629179	(6th)	AROG
Cpl	611	Lord, William R Jr	35021798	(6th)	AAMG
Cpl	748	Mc Pherson, Robert P	37496515	(6th)	AAG

CREW NO. 2

1ST LT	1091	DUCKWORTH, ROBERT O	0392990	(7th)	P
2D LT	1051	MORROW, RUSSELL E	0820806	(7th)	CP
2D LT	1035	VUCHA, ROBERT W	0706326	(1st)	B
Cpl	746	Comer, Roy C	14137814	(6th)	AMG
Sgt	612	Cook, Clayton W	35424089	(6th)	AG
Cpl	757	Halderman, Lyle K	39274132	(6th)	ROG
Sgt	748	Mc Keon, George T	32740522	(4th)	AROG
Sgt	611	Tarr, Clyde M	11068256	(4th)	AAMG
Sgt	748	Miro, Edward O	11102161	(4th)	AAG

CREW NO. 3

2D LT	1091	CORMAN, EDWARD M	0815845	(7TH)	P
FLT O	1051	WEAVER, PAUL H	T62090	(1ST)	CP
2D LT	1035	WYATT, FREDERICK B JR	0761491	(1ST)	B
Cpl	748	Jensen, Earl L	37663764	(4th)	AMG
Cpl	612	Hale, Nathan B	15115222	(6th)	AG
Sgt	757	MacArthur, Charles R	39451396	(6th)	ROG
Cpl	748	Biddle, Hopper E	33596467	(6th)	AROG
T Sgt	611	Vandel, George M Jr	37038675	(6th)	AAMG
Sgt	748	Morton, Clifford E	33204211	(6th)	AAG

- 1 -

R E S T R I C T E D

(Pages 2 through 6, and pages following page 7, are not reproduced here)

R E S T R I C T E D

Par 2 SO #38 Hq 3AFRD PP Tampa Fla 7 February 1944 contd.

<u>RANK</u>	<u>SSN</u>	<u>NAME</u>	<u>ASN</u>	<u>DET</u>	<u>PRIMARY POSITION</u>
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CREW NO. 24

2D LT	1091	MILLER, ROBERT C	0815198	(7th)	P
2D LT	1051	FREDERICK, EDWIN B	0819785	(1st)	CP
2D LT	1035	ZANIN, ANTHONY J	0761493	(7th)	B
Cpl	748	Ballenger, John S	19142283	(4th)	AMG
S Sgt	612	Storm, Delbert	17002260	(6th)	AG
Sgt	757	Crowell, Hollis H	13048201	(6th)	ROG
Pfc	611	Foster, Garnet E	37537004	(4th)	AROG
Cpl	748	Orth, Alvin W	33561806	(6th)	AAMG
Sgt	611	Wilson, August F	13167977	(4th)	AAG

CREW NO. 25

2D LT	1091	MIKONIS, PETER (NMI)	0814519	(7th)	P
2D LT	1051	PEPPER, FRANK E JR	0819862	(1st)	CP
2D LT	1035	STEVENS, WILL H	0706650	(7th)	B
Sgt	748	Mehlberg, Richard A	36277657	(4th)	AMG
Sgt	612	Stein, Ralph	34685837	(6th)	AG
Sgt	757	Zabolotsky, Milton	12185728	(2nd)	ROG
Pfc	611	Eagan, Lyle B	37537407	(4th)	AROG
Cpl	748	Anderson, Roy C	39410287	(4th)	AAMG
Pvt	611	Phillips, Phillip W	38447705	(4th)	AAG

CREW NO. 26

2D LT	1091	MACHOSKY, JOHN F	0815375	(7th)	P
2D LT	1051	PHILLIPS, JAMES L	0819864	(1st)	CP
2D LT	1033	ROBERTS, WILLIAM N JR	0708056	(7th)	B
Sgt	748	Lanich, Edward R	16115510	(4th)	AMG
Cpl	612	Stanley, William D	33634630	(4th)	AG
Sgt	757	Wiggans, Earl E	35374404	(6th)	ROG
Cpl	748	Dykeman, George S	36477163	(4th)	AROG
Cpl	748	Garber, Willie H	33530174	(6th)	AAMG
S Sgt	611	Dolvacky, Andy J	35275390	(6th)	AAG

CREW NO. 27

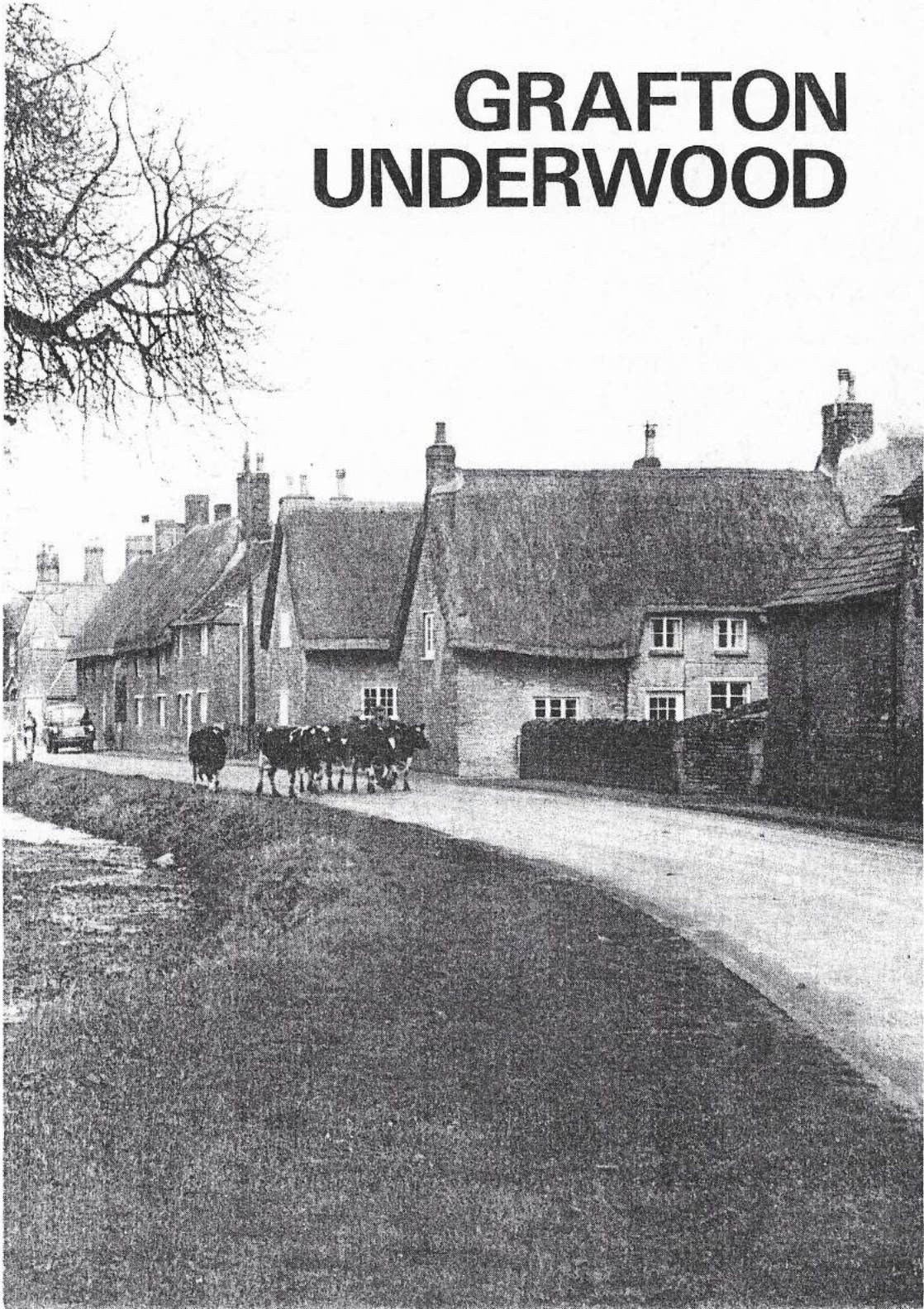
2D LT	1091	D'ORTONA, VICTOR (NMI)	0815817	(7th)	P
2D LT	1051	PRIESTLEY, JOHN W JR	0819868	(1st)	CP
2D LT	1035	MANZI, CHARLES C	0744168	(7th)	B
Cpl	748	Duranceau, Donald R	11122075	(4th)	AMG
Cpl	612	Siliznoff, John	19052792	(6th)	AG
S Sgt	757	Seaward, Robert D	14081754	(6th)	ROG
Sgt	611	Dixon, William J Jr	32106270	(4th)	AROG
Sgt	611	Cottrell, Gerald R	35746203	(6th)	AAMG
Pvt	748	Cody, James J	32426219	(4th)	AAG

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R E S T R I C T E D

Note: None of these crews have navigators assigned. The navigators reported directly to the Replacement Depot at Plant Park, by-passing the stop at Drew Field, and were assigned to crews prior to the crew departures for Mac Dill field.

GRAFTON UNDERWOOD



GRAFTON UNDERWOOD

The village of Grafton Underwood is located about four miles east of Kettering in Northamptonshire. It is an attractive village with a stream with green verges running beside the curving main street. Several small bridges cross the stream to a village green. The houses are built mostly of stone with thatched roofs. On the east side of the stream the houses are built close to the road while on the opposite side the village is more sparsely settled.

The name of the village has varied over time, being referred to in Domesday as Graftone and Griftone. The suffix Underwood was not added until the 18th Century. The origins of the name Grafton are old English - "grafa" meaning grove, and "tun" meaning farm. It is believed that a settlement was well established on the site by the time of the Domesday Survey in 1086, when the village had forty families, including 12 villanes, a priest, and six cottagers.

There are no census records as such, until the first census in 1801. The militia lists of 1777, however, reveal 17 different surnames of able-bodied men between the ages of 18 and 45 eligible for military service. By 1801 the population was 227. That count rose steadily during the early part of the 19th Century until it reached 306 in 1851. For a century thereafter it fluctuated with notable post-war increases in 1921 and 1951. In 1951 the census counted 340 residents, but since then there has been a steady decline.

The economy of the village has always been founded on agriculture, but it is interesting that in 1777, the year in which the parish was enclosed by Private Act of Parliament, there were recorded two farmers, a coppice keeper, a "graser," a "shepherd," five weavers, five servants (of whom one was a joiner), and three laborers, in addition to the village constable.

The earliest building in the village is the Parish Church of St. James the Apostle, parts of which date from the 12th Century. The majority of the buildings were constructed in the 17th, 18th, and 19th Centuries, with a few in the 20th Century. The former Duke Arms Inn is dated 1645 and a gabled house in the main street dates from 1653. The Old Rectory is Victorian in the Jacobean style.

A permanent reminder of the presence of the United States Military, and particularly, the 384th Bomb Group, during World War II, is contained in the Parish Church of St. James the Apostle. It is a stained glass window with an etching of a B-17 in lead (triangle P on the tail) and dedicated to the members of the 8th Air Force. A copy of the window is in a chapel at Hill Air Force Base, Utah.

USAAF STATION 106
GRAFTON UNDERWOOD
NORTHAMPTONSHIRE, ENGLAND

After the United States became involved in World War II, the governments of Great Britain and the United States agreed that the British would provide port and airfield facilities in return for arms supplied by the Americans.

An airfield had been constructed on the north edge of the village of Grafton Underwood in Northamptonshire, originally as a satellite airfield to the nearby Polebrook airfield, for use in the event Polebrook became unserviceable due to enemy action. The Grafton Underwood airfield had been built by George Wimpey & Co., Ltd in 1941, with improvements being made throughout the period of World War II. The airfield covered approximately 500 acres and during its construction two avenues of trees were destroyed along with many hedgerows and the houses and buildings of Rectory Farm and Grafton Lodge Farm.

The Grafton to Brigstock Road bisects the airfield and as you enter the station, travelling north, the airstrip itself is to the left and the living areas to the right. Full use was made of the natural woodland for camouflage. The living area consisted mainly of wood, canvas, and metal hut-type construction, with the more permanent buildings being brick built mess halls and clubs. The whole site accommodated up to 3,000 personnel and had all the facilities needed including a hospital, cinema, and chapel.

At the time the United States became involved in the war, Grafton Underwood happened to be the first airfield available and for the remainder of the war was known as Station 106, an integral part of the U. S. 8th Air Force. The first unit moved in on May 12, 1942, almost before the U. S. had any airpower in existence in the United Kingdom. This first unit was the 15th Bomb Squadron, flying American built Douglas twin engine bombers borrowed from the Royal Air Force.

The 15th moved to Molesworth on June 15, 1942 and was followed by the 97th Bomb Group (H) on July 6, 1942 flying Boeing B-17s. On August 17, 1942 the 97th Group, flying out of Grafton Underwood, dropped the first bombs carried by the 8th Air Force on marshalling yards at Rouen, France. Thus the United States Army Air Force became engaged in the war in Europe. The 97th was transferred to North Africa on September 8, 1942 and four days later the 305th Bomb Group (H) moved onto Grafton Underwood temporarily while awaiting assignment to its permanent base at Chelveston on December 11, 1942. The airfield was briefly occupied between April 16 and May 2, 1943 by the 96th Bomb Group (H) while waiting to move to Andrews Field in Essex.

On May 25, 1943 the 384th Bomb Group (H) became the permanent U. S. occupant of Station 106. It was to remain at Grafton Underwood until the cessation of hostilities in Europe. During the two years the 384th flew out of Grafton Underwood it built an enviable reputation. Two Divisional Unit Citations for Heroism and Dedication to Duty against Extreme Odds, more than 1,000 Distinguished Flying Crosses awarded to personnel, and 9,348 credited sorties flown over German-occupied Europe, were achieved by the 384th. The group lost 159 B-17s and 1,579

personnel to enemy action, but claimed destruction of 165 enemy aircraft. The 384th also had the distinction of dropping the last bombs carried by the 8th Air Force when it bombed the Skoda works at Pilsen, Czechoslovakia. Thus, both the first and the last bomb raids over Europe by the 8th Air Force originated at Grafton Underwood.

GRAFTON UNDERWOOD, ENGLAND

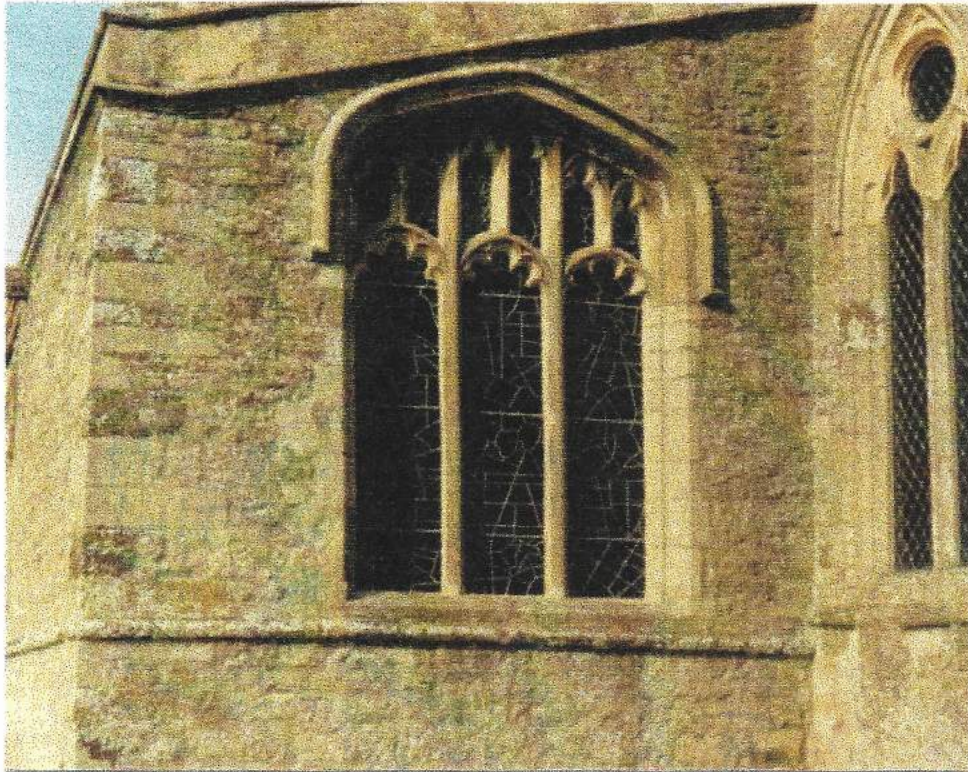
The Village



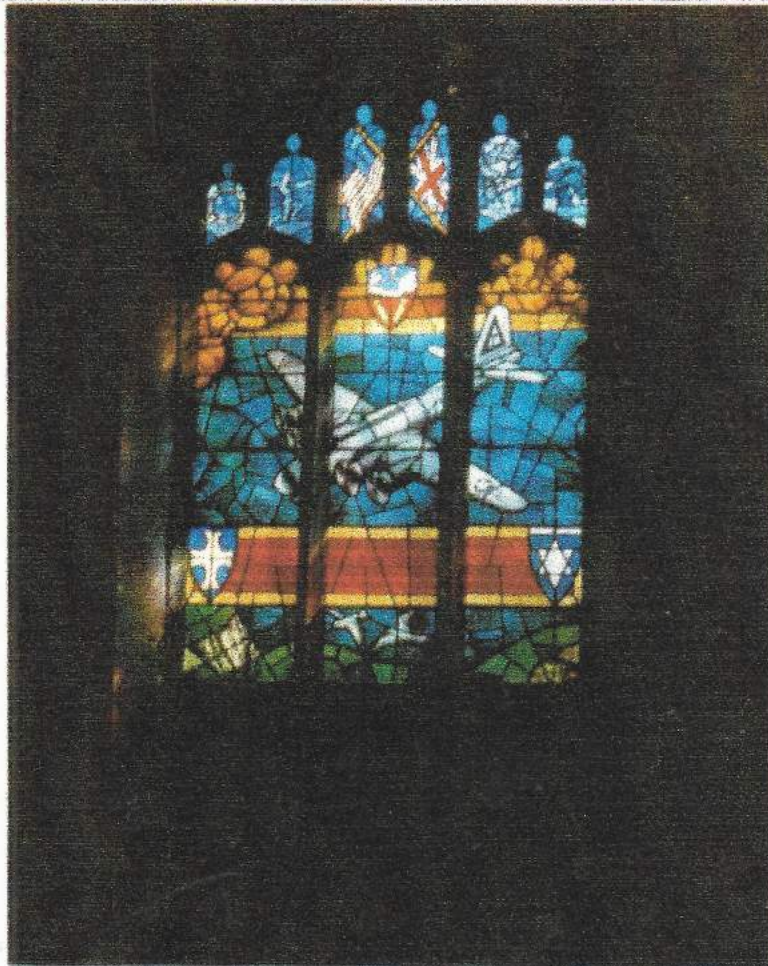
Memorial to
384th Bomb Gp
on airfield
site



GRAFTON UNDERWOOD, ENGLAND



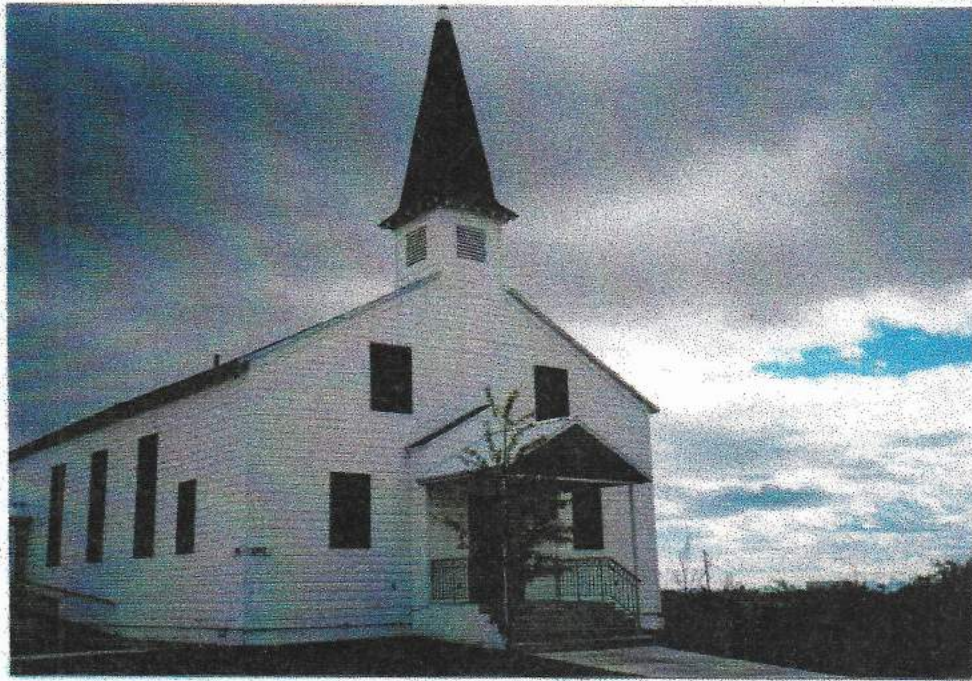
The Parish
Church of
St. James
the Apostle



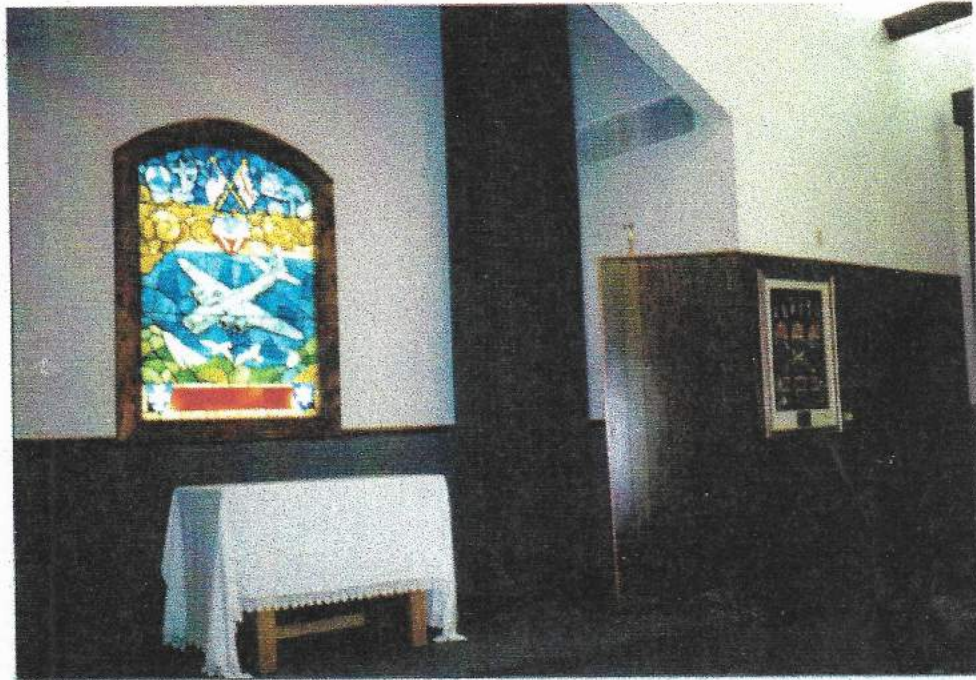
Stained glass
window in
honor of the
384th Bomb Gp

Interior view

CREW 115



World War II Chapel
Hill Air Force Base, Utah



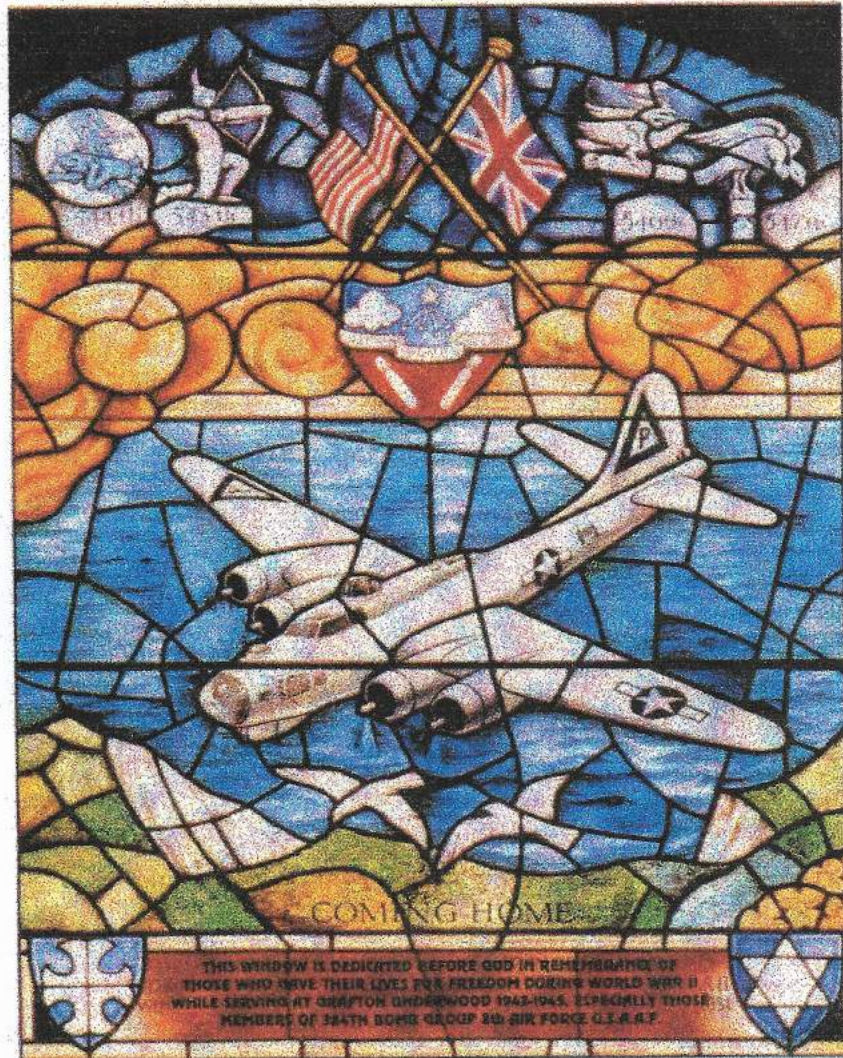
Copy of the Commemorative Window
in the Church of St. James the Apostle

“Windows Across The Seas”

*Grafton-Underwood,
England*

*Hill Aerospace Museum
Roy, Utah*

Dedicated: Friday, September 8, 1989



**Memorial Stained Glass Window
World War II Chapel
Hill Aerospace Museum
Roy, Utah**

“WE FLEW THE MISSION AS BRIEFED”

MEMORIAL STAINED GLASS WINDOW
WORLD WAR II CHAPEL
Hill Aerospace Museum
Roy, Utah

The inscription in the red strip at the bottom of the window reads as follows:

This window is dedicated before God in remembrance of those who gave their lives for freedom during World War II while serving at Grafton Underwood 1942-1945, especially those members of 384th Bomb Group 8th Air Force U.S.A.A.F.

The original window was placed in the Parish Church of St. James the Apostle, Grafton Underwood, Northamptonshire, England on May 21, 1983. It is a permanent reminder of the efforts of the members of the 384th Bomb Group in World War II.

The duplicate window is on permanent display and stands as a permanent work of Military Aviation Art at the Historical World War II Chapel, United States Air Force, Hill Aerospace Museum, Roy, Utah.

CREW 115



Tony Zanin and Ed Frederick

Mac Dill Field
1944

CREW 115

Foster & Friend

Combat Air Crew
Barracks,
547th Sqdn



Frederick and
Foster



Orth, Storm,
Crowell, and
Taylor (from
Crew 113)



CREW 115



Orderly Room,
547th Squadron



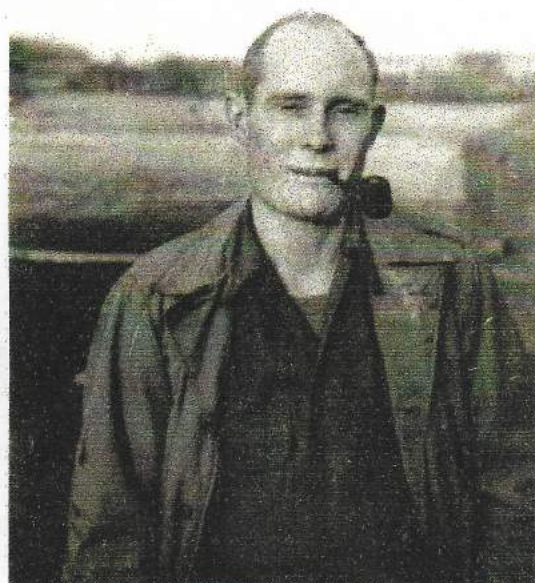
"Living" quarters,
547th Squadron



Ground
Transportation



Storm
35 missions completed



Foster



Wilson



Sienkiewicz, Frederick
Stockman

CREW 115



ALVIN ORTH



FRED WILSON

BOEING B-17 FLYING FORTRESS

When crew 115 reported for duty at Mac Dill Field, Florida, in February 1944, that station was a training facility for the B-17 built by the Boeing Company, headquartered in Seattle, Washington. The aircraft at Mac Dill were primarily the E and F models. The aircraft crew 115 flew to Belfast, Ireland, and the model in which virtually all the crew's missions were flown, was the B-17G. A short history of the B-17 and the specifications for the G model follow.

The Boeing B-17 was perhaps the most famous of World War II combat aircraft. A total of 12,731 Fortresses was built and these aircraft saw service in every combat theater.

On 8 July 1941 the Fortress first performed the job for which it was built - precision bombing of enemy installations. On that day an RAF squadron launched a high-altitude (30,000 feet) attack on Wilhelmshaven, Germany. In December of the same year 17 Fortresses flew the first U. S. missions in the Pacific, and in August 1942 twelve B-17s made the first U.S. raid from England, bombed Rouen, shot down their first German aircraft, and returned with no casualties.

During the war B-17s dropped a total of 640,036 tons of bombs on European targets in daylight raids. This compares with 452,508 tons dropped by Liberators and 463,544 tons dropped by all other U. S. aircraft. The B-17s downed 23 enemy planes per 1000-plane raid as compared with 11 by Liberators, 11 by fighters, and three by all U.S. medium and light bombers.

For some years after World War II the B-17 played a significant role in the defense of the nation. B-17s fitted with underslung lifeboats carried out search and rescue missions both for the Air Force and the Coast Guard and many specially modified Fortresses were in almost everyday use flight testing new radar devices, new powerplants, or new armament.

Following 1935 when the first B-17 was built by Boeing, constant design improvements saw the 32,000-pound Flying Fortress grow a decade later to a 66,000-pound giant of its day. During the later stages of the war they were built also, to Boeing design, by the Douglas and Lockheed aircraft companies.

SPECIFICATIONS: B-17G

Wing span - 104 ft...Length - 75 ft...Height - 19 ft.
Gross weight - 65,000 pounds.
Power - 4 Wright Cyclone engines, 1200-hp each.
Speeds - Maximum - 350 mph...Cruising - over 250 mph.
Ceiling - 38,000 ft.
Crew (wartime) - 10 men.
Operating range - 2,250 miles.

Information courtesy The Boeing Company 1959

CREW 115



BOEING B-17G FLYING FORTRESS

384TH BOMB GROUP (H)

1ST AIR DIVISION

8TH AIR FORCE

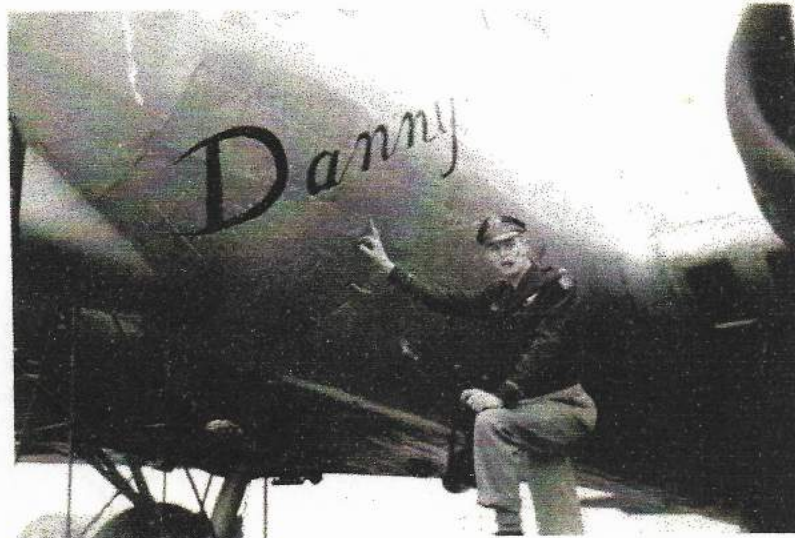
Over Europe, 1944

B-17 FLYING FORTRESS



Lilly Belle
384th Bomb Group

B-17 FLYING FORTRESS

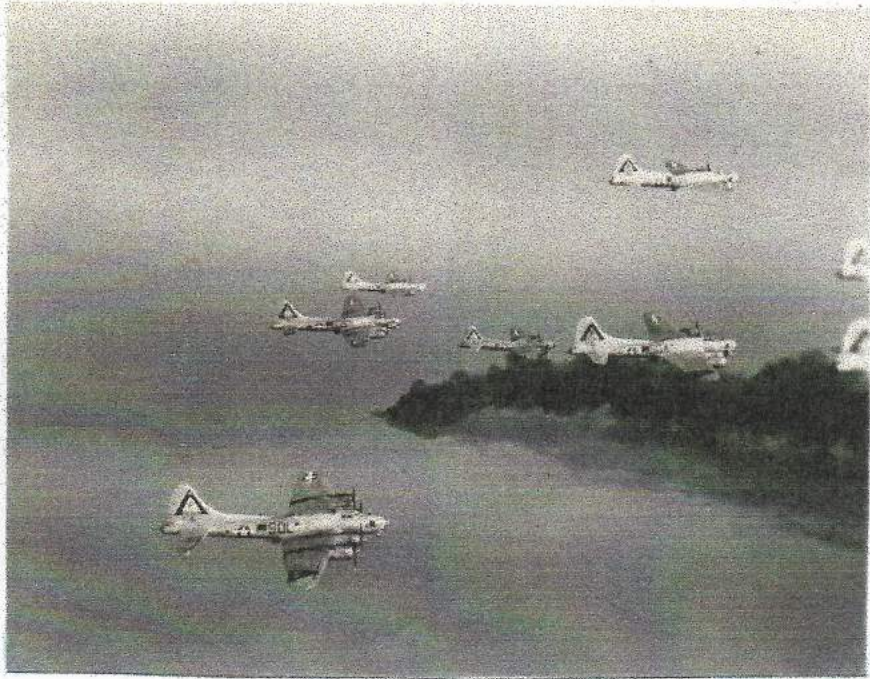


Sink Sienkiewicz and "Danny"



Ed Frederick and "Lilly Belle"

B-17 FLYING FORTRESS

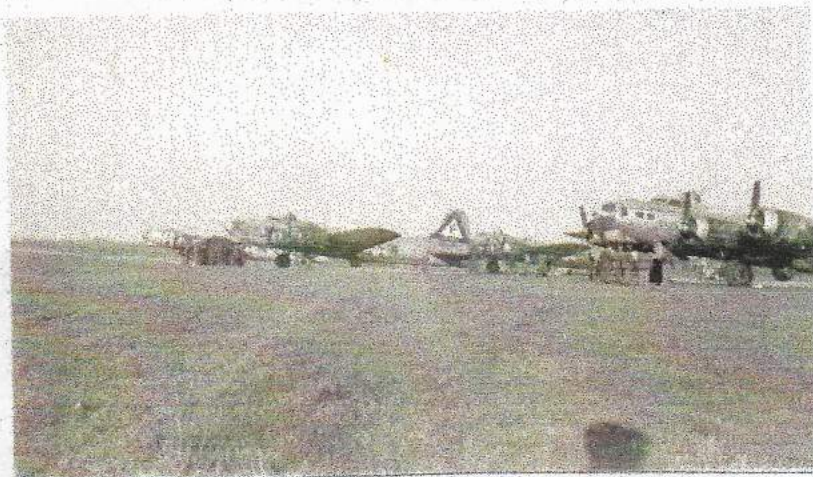


384th Bomb Group On Mission, 1944



"Nevada Avenger," 547th Squadron,
384th Bomb Group

B-17 FLYING FORTRESS



On the ground at Nantes, France
December 1944



French Maqui Guards, Nantes
December 1944

CREW 115
BOMB DAMAGE



Cologne,
Germany



Nantes,
France



Loire
River,
Nantes,
France

CREW 115
BOMB DAMAGE



CREW 115

BOMB DAMAGE



CREW 115



Pennsylvania, 1987

L-R rear: Gene Foster, Ed Frederick, Alvin Orth
John Ballenger

front: Fred Wilson, Hollis Crowell, Bill Stockman,
Delbert Storm



Connecticut, 1989

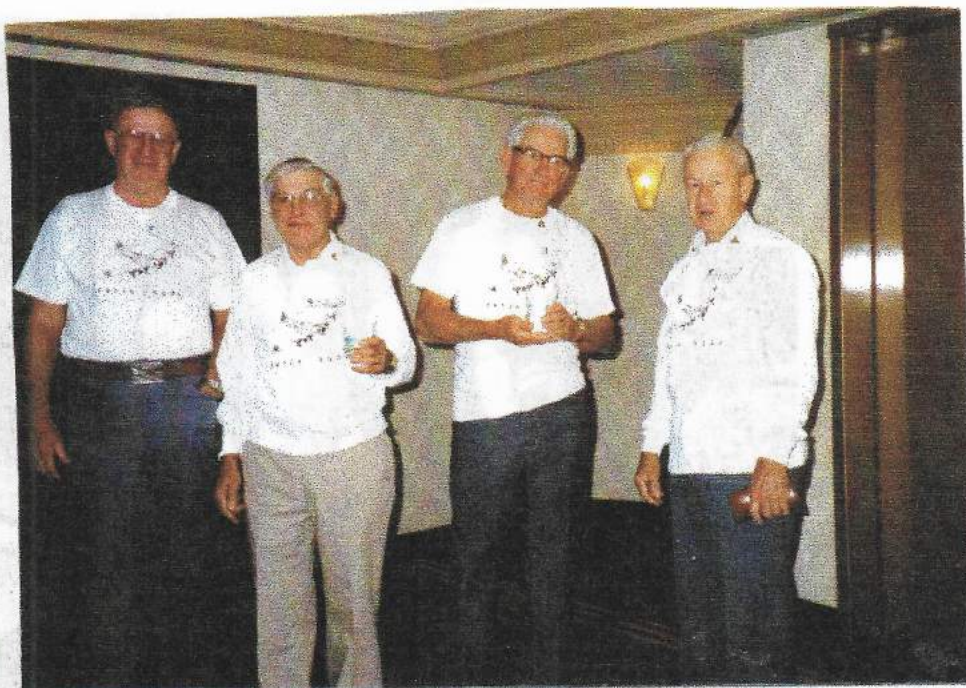
L-R rear: Tony Zanin, Ed Frederick, Alvin Orth,
Ed Sienkiewicz

front: Fred Wilson, Hollis Crowell, Bill Stockman,
Delbert Storm

CREW 115



Georgia, 1988
L-R - Hollis Crowell, Gene Foster, Bill Stockman
Delbert Storm, Tony Zanin, Alvin Orth, John Ballenger
Fred Wilson (in front)



Kansas, 1990
L-R - John Ballenger, Tony Zanin, Delbert Storm, Bill
Stockman

CREW 115



Tennessee 1991
L-R - Alvin Orth, Ed Frederick, Gene Foster, Bill
Stockman, Hollis Crowell, Tony Zanin,
Delbert Storm



Colorado 1995
L-R rear: John Ballenger, Alvin Orth, Delbert Storm
front: Bill Stockman, Tony Zanin, Hollis Crowell

PROCLAMATION

of

The City of WICHITA, KANSAS

Founded in 1870

Whereas , Wichita is the host city for the Twelfth Reunion of the 384th Bombardment Group (Heavy - B-17) 8th Air Force, European Theater of Operations, during World War II; and

WHEREAS, this historic Bomb Group, flying combat missions from Grafton-Underwood, North Hamptomshire, England from June 1943 to May 1945, flew 316 combat missions; and

WHEREAS, this Group, suffered the loss of 159 B-17 aircraft and 1,625 airmen and received Distinguished Unit Citations for two missions; and

WHEREAS, the airmen received thousands of individual awards, such as the Distinguished Service Cross, Legion of Merit, Bronze Star, Purple Heart and the Air Medal; and

WHEREAS, the proud heritage of the group is now being carried forward by the 384th Bombardment Wing, B-1B, now stationed at McConnell AFB, as they continue to meet the objectives of the World War II Group motto, to "KEEP THE SHOW ON THE ROAD";

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that I, Bob Knight, Mayor of the City of Wichita, Kansas, do hereby proclaim October 8-14, 1990, as

HERITAGE WEEK OF THE 384TH BOMBARDMENT WING

and call upon the people of Wichita to welcome the World War II Airmen.

October 8, 1990
Date



Bob Knight

Mayor, City of Wichita

