



Merry Christmas & Happy Chanukah

from the
384th Bomb Group

1306 Adams Way
Beavercreek, OH 45434



Fall 2012



Arthur Osepchook (Ozzie), Ed Zieba and John Platz at the 1996 St Louis Reunion
Ed with the Two Who Got Out



Silver Dollar Crew
Back Row, L-R: 2Lt Heiss, 2Lt Rininsland, 2Lt Gudyka, 2Lt Reed
Front Row, L-R: TSgt Wellman, SSgt Osepchook, Pvt Johnston,
SSgt Casey, SSgt Platz, Pvt Hardy

I Remember (The Sequel) from the last Newsletter by Ed Zieba through Jean Zieba

You never met Ozzie, but I know that you would have liked him.

Forty-four years later in September of 1988, the 384th Bomb Group held their 11th reunion in Savannah, Georgia. In the memorabilia room was the photo of the B-17 cut in half. (see lower right) Written on the photo were three words, "2 got out." I asked a member, "WHO WROTE THAT?" He pointed to a person at the other end of the room. I went to him to find out what he knew about the two crewmen who got out of the diving B-17. I couldn't believe it. I WAS TALKING TO OZZIE!!! My skin tingled and I broke into a nervous sweat. It was like the dead had come to life. We embraced stuttered and stammered, we reminisced and we probably shed a tear or two. Ozzie never saw Geddington, but who knows, maybe someday!! OZZIE IS BACK!!!!!!

Post Script: In March 1992, I met Ozzie at the Epcot Center in Disney World in Florida. We did a lot of reminiscing about our days at the air-drome.

Post-Post Script (by Jean): In October 1996, at the St Louis reunion, both Ozzie and John Platz were there and Ed was pleased to meet John, and very happy to see Ozzie. I was there for all three of these get-togethers, and I am still in awe! Ozzie is Arthur Osepchook—one of the two who "got out." John A. Platz is the other survivor. The B-17 is the *Silver Dollar*.

But I did meet Ozzie! By Frank Alfter

I attended my very first 384th Bomb Group reunion while stationed at RAF Upper Heyford in England in 1985. My father had passed away in 1982, so I took his copy of *As Briefed* to the reunion in Leicester to get some autographs of the men who flew with my dad.

When I offered my book to one veteran, he immediately turned to page 168, which has the photo at right in it and wrote, "Photo by SSgt Van Gorkum as high group dropped bombs through 546th Squadron in second raid over Berlin. Pilot Reed and all crew members died as plane spun earth-

ward."

Then in 1994 at the reunion in Sarasota, I again had my *As Briefed* and took it to the POW sidebar to see if there would be anyone who knew my dad as a POW at Stalag Luft XVII-B. There I met another vet who turned to that same page 168, and signed below the ball turret, "Arthur J. Osepchook!" I was really pleased and awed to have found a survivor from this horrific event!! And now to find out through Jean Zieba that there were 2 who got out! WOW!! This is what our reunions are all about and I am so fortunate to now be a part of **Keeping the Show on the Road.**



Silver Dollar

"Keep the Show on the Road...."



Farewell from Your President... Bill O'Leary



GREETINGS!

The Bomb Group's October 2012 gathering in San Antonio, Texas turned out to be one that will be rated among the best in recent years considering: the hotel accommodations, convenient location to restaurants and activities, and, of course, meeting once again with comrades and friends. And for all of this--a big thank you to Carol Alfter for the selection of the hotel and the reasonable room rate that was negotiated with hotel management and registration fee.

This gathering will also be one for me to remember in that it concluded my tenure as president of the 384th Bomb Group, a position that I felt very honored to hold for approximately two years. During that time, as well as the several years that I spent as a member of the Group's Board of Directors, I observed the professionalism displayed by Carol and Frank Alfter, and NexGen officers Fred Preller and Chris Wilkinson in the conduct of Group business, and as a result I can assure all members that the Group is in very capable hands now and will continue to be in the future, with primary guidance provided by Carol and Frank. NexGen replacements for Fred and Chris, who are stepping down, will be announced soon. I'm happy to confirm that a veteran, Len Estrin, will replace me as president of the Group. I wish Len all the best, and I can assure him he will have the help and cooperation of all Board members. To this end, I would like to suggest that in the future every effort be made to have a veteran selected for the office of president for as long as veterans are capable of traveling. And to the NexGen members: please know that we, the veterans, will rest assured knowing that the future of the 384th Bomb Group and its proud heritage is secure in the hands of such a responsible and highly dedicated group of young people. You have demonstrated your genuine desire to KEEP THE SHOW ON THE ROAD.

On the last night of the gathering in San Antonio I was presented with a curved glass plaque that was etched with the U.S. Army Air Force Insignia, the 384th Group Insignia, a 384th B-17 and the dates of my service as President of the 384th. It is beautiful! Thank you so much. I also received a hand-crafted memorabilia box from Keith Ellefson, that has the Triangle P inlaid in the cover, and an engraved bronze plaque with a dedication to me, and the famous poem written by Col. Budd Peaslee, the Group's first Commanding Officer, on the inside of the hinged cover. Thank you Keith, you are indeed a craftsman. A card signed by all the attendees came along with the gifts. The plaque, box and card are and will continue to be prominently displayed in (as Elsie calls it) our B-17 room.

We, Elsie and I, thank all of you for a wonderful evening. We are going to miss all our 384th friends. Hopefully, we will meet again should the Show happen to come along on a Road within easy driving distance from home.

Sincerely,
Bill O'Leary



An Auspicious Beginning... Bill "Big Dog" Harvey

I have never forgotten the green. "Farty shades of green," the Irish would say. After months of training in the western deserts, I couldn't believe how beautiful Ireland looked and then England equally as beautiful.

We flew our own plane over from the States, landing in Gander, Newfoundland, to refuel and spend the night. We ended up staying there for almost a month because of engine problems and because we needed a thirty mile tailwind to make the big hop non-stop to the United Kingdom. We finally got the tailwind and headed east.

Problems started developing about halfway over. Firstly, we lost our tailwind, although we really didn't know it. Secondly, when we started to look for the Irish coast, it wasn't where it was sup-

posed to be. Thirdly, when we thought we could see it, it turned out to be just more clouds on the horizon. Those low clouds really had us more confused and, so naturally, having no tailwind, we weren't even close to the coast.

Suddenly our bombardier, Tom Carrigan, who was riding up in the nose, shouted that there was a ship crossing our flight path. We all saw it and at first thought it might be a small aircraft carrier, but as we got closer we realized that it was a submarine. "Is it ours or theirs?" someone asked. We hadn't a clue. We decided to radio our position and at least alert the English, if the sub was German.

Then, at last, we really did see the Irish coast and what a beautiful sight. Didn't take us long to cross over Ireland and shortly thereafter we



December 1943
Big Dog with Mike Mazer, who is wearing the A-2 Jacket I borrowed and had to bury in France

We Need Your Stories and Photos!!!!

I know you all have a wealth of experiences that we would like to publish so others can enjoy and learn, so PLEASE send us your stories!!!! We are getting some traction with stories and we hope to print as many as we can. Let's share the legacy in stories that will keep forever. This issue includes the Gathering in wonderful San Antonio in pictures, and the continuation of the intriguing story by Ed Zieba, through others, about *Silver Dollar's* survivors.

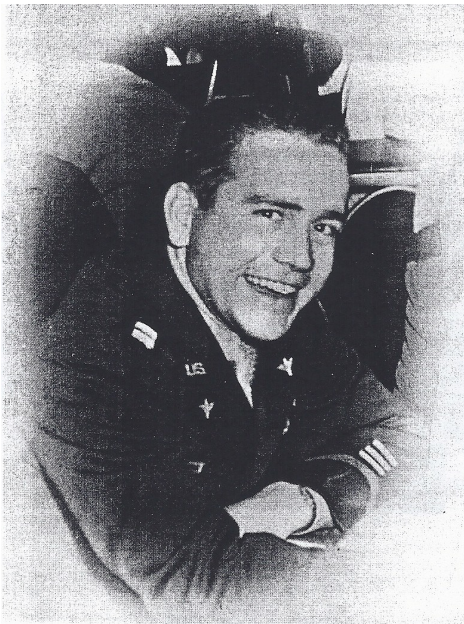
landed at Prestwick, Scotland. Upon landing, a British staff car raced along side and followed us to the parking area. They asked for two officers to come with them to explain the sub. Upon reaching their headquarters, they showed us a chart and laughingly pointed out the position we gave them for the sub. The coordinates were in a lake in the middle of Ireland. The navigator was forgiven by the English telling him anybody can make a mistake. Of course, the submarine was German. As they explained, what would an English or American sub be doing out in the Atlantic. They would have had nothing to shoot at but Allied ships. Then it occurred to us the sub could have shot us out of the sky if they had wanted to. You've got to be lucky.

The next day we left Prestwick and flew to Grafton Underwood which was to become my home away from home for the next year and a half.

We arrived at Grafton Underwood on a beautiful Saturday morning in early June, 1943, two to three weeks after the rest of the crews. By this time they were old hands with a mission or two under their belts. The next day, Sunday, was another beautiful day so my navigator, Dick Sherer and I decided to go to Kettering, the closest town of any size, then take the train to Leicester, a nearby city, and be tourists for a day. At the Kettering station, I read the schedule and there was a train returning at six that night, which was perfect, getting us back to the base before dark. After a look-see at downtown Leicester we stopped in a hotel and they were having a tea dance. This turned out to be our first chance to see English girls. They were pretty and friendly and we had a great time. Five-thirty came all too soon and we had to leave for the station. I checked at the ticket window to see if the six-o'clock train was on time and was advised that this being Sunday there was no six o'clock train and the next one was at midnight. I never could read a train schedule! Oh well, back to the dance. Took two of the pretty girls to dinner and the movies, arriving back at the station in time for the midnight train. Our only thought was, we'll never get a taxi so late at night, so we'll have to walk out to the base — which we did. As we got near, we could hear the roar of many engines. Deciding there must be a mission, we walked down to the flightline to watch the planes take off. We had only been there a couple of minutes when our Squadron Operations Officer, a fellow know later as "Combat Brown" saw us and said, "Where the hell have you fellows been? We've been looking all

over for you. Your plane and crew are on this mission and we've had to find a replacement co-pilot and navigator to go in your place." We couldn't believe it! We had only arrived yesterday. We hadn't even had an orientation flight. How could they send our crew? We weren't ready. Not even one practice mission. This is crazy. Crazy or not, there was our plane just taking off and we were sick. "Combat" told us to go to our quarters until the Squadron Commander could see us. It wasn't long before we were standing at attention in his office. We felt terrible. We knew we hadn't done anything wrong, but he told us that the Group C.O. was really upset. After hearing our explanation, he said, "I'll do my best to save your asses." We were sent back to our quarters and told to stay there until the Colonel could see us.

Hours later the mission was due to return and we said, "To hell with it, let's go down to the flightline and watch the planes land." One after another the Forts came in and landed. Two didn't make it — one of them was ours. God, then we really felt terrible, thinking that, if we had been along, maybe we could have done something to bring the plane back. Just then the Colonel spotted us and called us over. He said, "I was all for court marshalling you two, but I can't because you really haven't broken any rules and I know how bad you feel. Anyhow your Squadron C.O. was the one who really saved your ass because I wanted to make an example out of you." What a way to start a tour of duty! As badly as we felt, we also knew that we were damned lucky to be alive, but I'll let someone else read the train schedules from now on.



Pint Glasses with 384th Logo

These glasses were shown at the Gathering in San Antonio this past October. If you are interested in obtaining them, please contact the address below and tell them my name and the 384th Bomb Group so they can get them in the mail to you soonest. I love my two glasses!

Frank

Glass Etch Studio

1606 Old Mill Rd

Springfield, OH 45502

937-322-5907

glasetcher@cfanet.com



Front: 384th Patch..... Back: USAAF emblem







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EIGHTH AIR FORCE
1306 Adams Way
Beavercreek, OH 45434



"Keep the Show on the Road...."

We're on the Web at: www.384thbombgroup.com

Treasurer Tidbits by Carol

Plans are well under way for the next two reunions. The Board initially considered Baltimore and Washington DC, but upon getting hotel information for those two areas we re-evaluated and decided on Norfolk, VA. Our main goal was to be somewhere on the east coast and, based on price, Norfolk fits the bill. Frank and I will be going to do a hotel site survey in January 2013 to check out 3 hotels under consideration but are pretty sure we will select the Sheraton in Norfolk, which is on the beach. So far plans include a trip to a local museum which houses a B-17, a welcome reception, a dinner at a local seafood restaurant, the banquet and possibly a trip to Langley AFB to see the F-22 with the possibility of lunch at the Officer's Club. The last two are wishes right now and have yet to be formalized. We are using a reunion planner for this reunion so please plan accordingly. They will be collecting all reunion fees and will set all of the deadlines.

2014 will find us back in Dayton. We have already secured the AF Museum for a dinner and the Honor Guard and Band of Flight paperwork is in the works. We have also reserved times for a tour of the restoration facility at the museum. We will use the Holiday Inn in Fairborn and I am sure they will do a fantastic job again. We hope to get the group out to the museum in Urbana to view the B-17, Champaign Lady, which is being built from the ground up. We have mentioned this airplane is a couple of newsletters and it is really something to see.

Carol Alfter



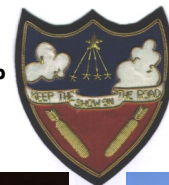
NEXGEN: Take an active role in 384th NexGen planning for the future. Contact Fred Preller at f3red@preller.us or call 469-338-1397 to participate.

TAPS as of Fall 2012

Arsdel Fluesmeier

Coupeville, WA

384th Bomb Group



Grafton Underwood



Bill Harvey... Just celebrated his 93rd birthday in Nov. He is weak but very aware of all around. I am sure he would love to have a card from any and all who would like to send their best wishes to him. Mail cards to: Bill Harvey, 665 Forest Park Bend, St. Augustine, FL 32092