

NEWS LETTER

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SECOND AIR DIVISION ASSOCIATION

December 1973

BLAKESLEEWAFFE — The 4th Fighter Group



Don Blakeslee and Gen. Kepner

The Fabulous Fourth. One of the most famous air fighting units of all time. The following extracts from Roger Freeman's **THE MIGHTY EIGHTH** gives us an insight into the character of the 4th Fighter Group which was formed in England from the three volunteer fighter squadrons of the RAF, better known as the "Eagle" Squadrons.

"The 4th was still very much the "Eagle Squadrons" in spite of American uniforms and the star insignia on their aircraft. RAF personnel still remained at Debden, chiefly to help the American ground crews become proficient in maintaining the Spitfires. The gradual, but inevitable, replacement of RAF trained pilots by those from the States would tend to mellow the British influence in the 4th, but never entirely eliminate it.

The Group was tenaciously proud of its early associations and throughout the war, long after the original members had departed for home or been lost in action, it clung to things that would mark its genesis and distinguish it from the Eighth's other fighter groups. There was no modesty with the 4th, and there shouldn't have been. They were the first of the Americans to fly against the Luftwaffe and they did not let VIII Fighter Command ever forget it. They objected loudly to many of the moves that threatened their heritage with an impertinence that did not endear them to some of the regular Army officers faced with the task of administration.

Eventually their RAF Spitfires were replaced by P-47 Thunderbolts, but the 4th's pilots did not take too kindly to the large fighters. They would admit to its diving ability but questioned every other aspect of the plane, including its heritage.

New groups arrived and one, the 56th "Wolfpack" — also a 2nd Division unit — had great success with the P-47 in combat. But this did not deter the 4th pilots from clinging to their original estimation of the plane, which was that every piece of metal on the monster should have remained in its original state — as ore in the ground.

The 4th had condemned the Thunderbolt while the "Wolfpack" proved its worth and deprived the 4th of some of their prestige as the Command's oldest unit. With determination tinged by jealousy and contempt, the 4th looked around for a means to prove that the heirs of the Eagle Squadrons were still the finest fighter pilots in the ETO. They settled on the Mustang.

Command of the 4th passed to Don Blakeslee on January 1st 1944, when Col. Chesley Peterson went reluctantly to a desk job in the 9th Air Force.

With 9 victories he was at the time the highest scoring pilot produced by the Group. Blakeslee had led a few Mustang missions... (breaking in the first outfit to fly them, a 9th AF group)... and as far as he was concerned the Mustang was THE aircraft for the 4th. In this there was also unanimous agreement at Debden where Blakeslee had, on occasion, displayed an example borrowed from a group he was tutoring.

Command was already going ahead with plans to convert P-47 and P-38 groups to this type and impatiently the 4th clamored to be the first with Blakeslee pressing Gen. Kepner for priority in obtaining the Mustang. He pointed out that many of his pilots had flown Spitfires and were, therefore, familiar with the idiosyncrasies of the liquid-cooled Merlin engine. The General found Blakeslee a likeable, if somewhat irreverent,

character and recognized his qualities of leadership. He is quoted as having been swayed by the promise, "General, I give you my word I'll have them on operations in 24 hours". No Commander, at that time in the war, could afford the luxury of letting such a statement go by-the-board. Commanders are expected to take calculated risks, and General Kepner did.

A training P-51B was sent to Debden on February 22nd and for the next five days most of the combat pilots in the group took a turn in flying it. All told each man averaged about 40 minutes flying time apiece when the first of their operational Mustangs arrived. To enable the 4th to have sufficient aircraft a number of them scheduled for another group were hurriedly transferred to the 4th. This allowed Blakeslee to keep his promise to General Kepner, and within 24 hours of that promise he was leading 22 P-51s on a sweep over France. Spirits were high at Debden that night with much talk of what the 4th and the Mustang would do.

"Kid" Hofer, 'Cowboy' Magura, Gentile, Godfrey, Goodson and others could be seen that night walking around their metal steeds, stroking them and probably envisioning the days ahead when they would ride their wild Mustangs over and through the airspace that Hitler thought he owned.

Over the ensuing months they were to prove that the P-51 was in a class by itself. When the smoke of battle finally

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Ralph 'Kid' Hofer and friend.

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BLAKESLEEWAFFE

(Continued from Page 1)



Duane Beeson, who very easily could have led the 4th in enemy planes destroyed had he not been shot down.

cleared the 4th Fighter Pilots had destroyed over 1000 enemy aircraft in the air and on the ground, had shot up innumerable enemy airfields, made a shambles of German train schedules and turned thousands of German ground troops in jibbering idiots with their strafing tactics.

Bomber boys might have been expected to resent the hot rock pilots in the fighters. But this was far from the truth. The struggle for survival in a bomber was so intense that bomb crews had a fond affection for anybody who aided them. To a man they loved the fighter pilots and particularly those of the 4th."

THE NISSEN HUT IS GOING TO A MUSEUM

by Roger A. Freeman

(ed. note: That's odd. A museum is where I thought it came from!)



THE HANDOVER of Building 210, complete with pot-bellied coke burning stove and original tulip lampshades, took place at RAF Debden, Essex, yesterday. Major-General James Hill (right), USAFE, accepted the gift of the last Nissen hut at Debden. The hut was used by the Fourth Fighter Group, USAFE, as a beer hall during the Second World War. It will be reassembled at the Wright-Patterson Base in Ohio.

Memories may dim on many facets of our wartime service in England but none of us are every likely to forget the dubious comforts of the Nissen Hut. Made of curved corrugated steel sheet and looking like half-buried giant Coke cans, these huts were the standard living accommodation provided for officers and enlisted men alike on the wartime built airfields of East Anglia. Draughty, damp and cold when the 'pot-bellied' stove installed for heating refused to function, or smokey, stuffy and roasting when it did, the basic Nissen was probably one step better than a tent. Nevertheless, the basic structure was often improved on by the GI tenant and some Nissens became quite snug.

These utility buildings were not designed to endure many years although thirty years on many still stand on the sites of former airfields, usually providing shelter for pigs, chickens, or farm implements. However, you won't have to cross the Atlantic if you want to show the

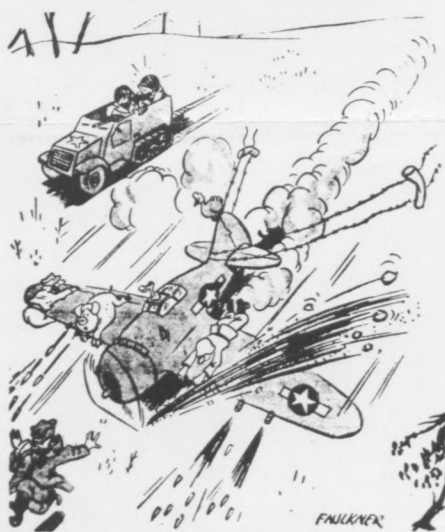
grandchildren where you hit the sack back in '44. Soon the Air Force Museum at Dayton, Ohio will have a genuine Nissen removed from England and erected as a permanent exhibit.

The idea originated with Royal Frey, the energetic Museum Curator, who was an Eighth Air Force P-38 pilot prior to becoming a guest of a Stalag Luft. Two years ago he asked contacts in the UK to try and locate a suitable building, preferably with some signs of American occupation. Roger Freeman advertised in East Anglian newspapers for information on deserted Nissens with murals. Replies led him to several old airfields, including some 2nd Division fields but in all cases either the huts were too badly rusted or were of the large size which would prove too difficult to move. Some beautiful murals were seen but unfortunately all were on the brick-built ends of the Nissens, and the cost of moving these intact would have been prohibitive.

The Royal Air Force finally came up with an offer of a hut on Debden airfield some miles south of Cambridge. This was the field occupied by one of the Eighth's — and the Second Division's — most elite units, the 4th Fighter Group which had the highest overall claims of enemy aircraft destroyed. The 4th was formed from the three American volunteer squadrons in the RAF, known as the Eagle Squadrons.

As Debden has remained in military use up to the present time — although it is now the home of guard dog training facilities — the buildings have been well maintained and the hut selected for shipment has little signs of corrosion. Debden was a pre-war station and has largely centrally heated brick built barracks but a number of Nissens were erected during hostilities. The particular building going to the AFM is one of the larger types of Nissens and not the small version which was the type most commonly assigned as living quarters.

British interest has been so aroused in this unusual request that the event was recently given a ten minute piece on the local TV network in East Anglia.



"I think these Air Corps chaps sometimes overdo this ground support stuff!"

(ed. note: The 2nd Air Division Association is proud to number the 4th Fighter Group among those Groups which were part of the Second Air Division.)

THE MIGHTY EIGHTH



Author Roger A. Freeman

Told in terms of the units, men and aircraft, this is the story of an air force that first went to war with a single Boston bomber borrowed from the RAF and grew to embrace 60 operational stations in eastern England that could – and did – launch over 3,000 bombers and fighters on a single mission.

It is the story of the Liberators, the Fortresses, the Mauders, Lightnings, Thunderbolts and Mustangs ... of Suzy Q, Tinkertoy, Ol' Gappy, Witchcraft, Jamaica Ginger, Bomerang and many other aircraft that became more famous than the men who flew them.

It is also the story of sixty odd combat stations whose occupants each claimed to be "the best damn outfit in the ETO" – nearly half a million men who wore the Winged Eight shoulder patch: men like General Castle who went down with his bomber while leading the largest raid of all; Sgt. Hewitt Dunn who chanced his

luck against German flak and fighters on 104 occasions when other men considered themselves lucky to survive 30; Blakeslee and Zemke, two of the greatest fighter leaders of the war, and several hundred other combatants mentioned by name.

Among the many fascinating facts revealed are the identities of the Groups that suffered the heaviest losses, delivered the most bombs, flew the most missions, etc.

This unique book includes a reference section giving brief statistical histories of every Group assigned or attached to the Eighth Air Force.

For years now, the unbelievable achievements and sacrifices of the 8th Air Force of WWII have been dramatized in famous movies, a well known television series and several popular books highlighting particular events. But never has the whole story – in detail – been told from its beginning to end; from the first unsure, untested theories of daylight precision bombing to the final thunderous onslaught of bomber/fighter might that brought the third Reich tumbling down in ruin. Now, in what has got to be one of the most exciting and authoritative air power histories ever published, Roger Freeman brings to life the brutal and unforgettable saga of the MIGHTY EIGHTH.

(ed. note: Don't forget that you can purchase this book through the Association for \$11.50, a huge saving over the \$14.95 bookstore price. Just send check or money order to William G. Robertie, P.O. Drawer B, Ipswich, Mass. 01938.)

BOARD OF GOVERNORS



Lady Beryl Mayhew

Lady Mayhew is a daughter of the late Russell J. Colman, one time Chairman of the Norfolk County Council and her Majesty's Lieutenant for the County of Norfolk. Her Grandfather, Sir Jeremiah James Colman, represented Norwich in Parliament and was really the founder of the business of J. & J. Colman Ltd. now part of the Reckitt & Colman Group, manufacturers of mustard, soft drinks, starch and other foodstuffs.

Lady Mayhew has been keen on yachting all her life and she is an expert and very accomplished in her own field. She is indeed a true daughter of Norfolk. She has been associated with the Memorial Trust since its inception.

Lady Mayhew is a charming woman and delights in meeting members of the 2nd Air Division Association.

NOTICE

In this issue of the Newsletter you will also be receiving a hotel reservation form for Wilmington. I urge everyone to mail this back to the hotel as soon as possible – like right away. This simply guarantees that you will have some place to lay your weary head between activities. To aid you in deciding your dates the mini-reunion banquets will be held Friday, July 26 and the 2nd AD Banquet Saturday July 27. Festivities will commence, as reported earlier, on the 24th and much has already been planned to make this reunion the most enjoyable one yet. Plan on a 2nd Air Division Ball following the banquet on Saturday night. Complete details with Registration Form will be in the March Newsletter.

THIRD STRATEGIC AIR DEPOT HOLDS FIRST REUNION

On July 20 - 22 this past summer the newly formed 3rd Strategic Air Depot held their first reunion since the war in St. Louis, Missouri. Over 270 attended and from what we can learn they really had a ball. Wiley S. Noble, 2nd Air Division Association member, was the magician who made it all possible.

The 3rd Strategic Air Depot was attached to the 2nd Air Division and were the boys who put those battered hulks back together again. We are hoping that all their members will eventually join the 2nd AD as Wiley did and join with us at our annual reunion.

RESPONSE TO 1975 REUNION IN NORWICH LAGGING A BIT

I know it seems a bit early to be talking about 1975 but we DO need to know by May of this year exactly how many will be going. The Airline has to know a year in advance and the commitment by us has to be firm.

This promises to be a gala affair and plans are already under way on the Norwich end. If you haven't been back to England since the war you owe yourself this trip. If you have then you know about the hospitality of our English friends.

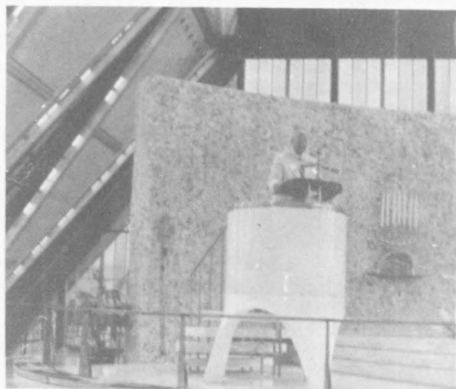
So please take a minute and send your \$25.00 deposit to Charles (Joe) Warth, 5709 Walkerton Drive, Cincinnati, Ohio 45238.

NOTICE

I want to thank everybody who responded to my appeal for copies of the Stars and Stripes and WWII magazines such as 'YANK'. As it has become quite expensive in mailing the material back to the owners I urge everyone who has material of this nature to write me first describing what you have. If it is a duplication I will advise you and in this way we can save mailing costs. Once again, many thanks to the 126 who responded.

SECOND AIR DIVISION MEMORIAL SERVICE AIR FORCE ACADEMY CHAPEL—July 21, 1973

Written by Harold McCormick and Jordan Uttal
Presented by Jordan Uttal



In words of Holy Scripture from II Samuel, we have heard these words — “They were swifter than eagles — they were stronger than lions.” And this biblical classic closes with the sad admonition — “How are the mighty fallen — and the weapons of war perished.”

This morning we gather again, just 28 years after the Second Air Division returned from its years of combat in the ETO. Returned from combat against an enemy that sought to end freedom as we had come to know it, and to love it, in a free world.

Those of us who live —those of us who remember —are here to pay solemn tribute to our fallen comrades. Those brave men of the Second Air Division’s 14 bomb groups and 5 fighter groups constituted one of the most powerful combat machines ever to go to the defense of an embattled nation and a beleaguered continent.

They fought their battles in the sky a day at a time. Those who fell in battle died a day at a time. We who buried them, then wept a day at a time and carried on the war.

The gigantic scope of the Second Air Division’s operations really emerged in those first days of peace in the summer of 1945. Then, as the final totals were assembled, did we realize that these fallen eagles and lions from the Second Air Division would total that awful number of 6,032 —swift eagles who would fly no more —strong lions whose days of battle were done.

In our hearts and minds, those youthful faces, those carefree young men who fought hard and played hard still live.

In letters of gold carved in Colorado white marble in the cemetery at Arlington is this inscription —“When we took the soldier, we did not forget the citizen.” So today, do we of the Second Air Division Association not forget our airmen.

In four calendar years of combat —from North Africa to Norway —from Omaha Beach to Gdynia —from the war factories in the heart of the Rhineland to the oil fields of Ploesti — they fought a war to a glorious victory with a promise of peace.

As we gather today in this beautiful shrine dedicated to the Lord we all worship, we take new strength from ancient words in the fourth chapter of Micah. “And he shall judge among many people, and rebuke strong nations afar off, and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks, nation shall not lift up a sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore.”

A SOLDIER BOY’S LETTER (Circa. 1942)

Dear Mom:

I am very enthusiastic about army camp life. We lounge around in bed every morning until 5 O’clock. This, of course, gives us plenty of time to get washed, shaved and dressed, make our bunks, shine our shoes, etc. By 5:10 we stand outside and shiver until someone blows a bugle. After we are thoroughly chilled we grope our way through the darkness to the mess hall where we have plenty of breakfast consisting of an unidentified liquid, scrambled eggs and a choice of plain or burnt bread.

After gorging ourselves on this delicious meal we waddle our way back to the barracks. We have nothing to do until 7:30 so we just sit around and scrub toilets, wash windows, mop floors, and scour the area around the barracks for cigarette butts, match sticks and all the paper and trash we can find.

Soon the sergeant comes in and in a very kind voice says “come out into the sunshine kids”. So we go out and bask in the sunshine. Of course we are standing in six inches of mud and water but that’s only because it has been raining for the past five weeks. To limber up before the day’s work we do a few simple calisthenics, like touching your toes with both feet off the ground and grabbing yourself by the hair and holding yourself out at arms length.

At eight o’clock we put on a light pack and start walking to the swamp. The light pack is not to be confused with the heavy pack. The light pack consists of several interesting gadgets including a gun, bay-

onet, canteen, mess kit, coat, cartridge belt, first aid kit, pup tent, tent pegs, collapsible shovel, tent pole, cartridge clip holder and rope. A few other negligible items are included but are of no major importance. The heavy pack contains quite a few other articles too numerous to mention. Carrying my pack I weigh 249 pounds. When I left I weighed 175. So you can see what fun we have romping and playing in the swamps with a pack on our back all the while.

An observation car follows, or should I say “meat wagon”? Anyhow it’s duty is to pick up all the men who fall out. All those who faint are treated very well indeed. They are given six months in the guard house. However they don’t have to face a court martial and explain why they fell out.

At 12 o’clock, those who can, stumble over to the hospital. Here they are divided into two distinct groups: (1) those who have athlete’s foot, and (2) those who have a cold. If you have athlete’s foot your throat is swabbed with iodine. If you have a cold your feet are saturated with iodine. If you have neither a cold or athlete’s foot you’re sent to the guard house for refusing to work, or for playing sick.

I am very popular at the hospital. I told them that I had both athlete’s foot AND a cold. What I really have is gastric ulcers, but I know when to keep my mouth shut.

Well, that’s about all I have to write tonight. I’ve got to rush over to the mess hall. We’re having hominy tonight. Oh Boy!!!!

LETTERS

Steve Birdsall's recently published book "Log of the Liberators" has drawn enthusiastic rave notices from book clubs and those who have purchased a copy. A sampling from 2nd Air Division members follows:

"... Flying was once described as hours of boredom interrupted by brief moments of stark terror. I relived a few of those moments as I read the Log of the Liberators." Lt. Col. Richard (Dick) Smith.

"... Just finished reading Log of the Liberators and I saw a 458th B-24 in its final plunge to earth. I remember the plane well (Final Approach) as it was one of the original planes of the Group." H. E. Armstrong.

"... I've read the Log of the Liberators and I believe I enjoyed it more than any book I have read about WW II." Lowell Minich.

"... Received Log of the Liberators the other day and can't put it down. An excellent book." Earl Zimmerman.

"... Thanks for sending my copy of Log of the Liberators. It came a couple of days ago and I already have a good start on it. The book brings back memories of some grim times, but also memories of some wonderful experiences." Ed Wilson.

"... Thanks for the copy of the Log of the Liberators. I haven't read the whole book yet but what I have read seems to give the full story of the old Liberator. Steve Birdsall has done an excellent job presenting the story." Ken Darney.

"... I am very pleased with the book (Log of the Liberators) and am sure it will give me many hours of reading pleasure. Thank you again for arranging to be able to purchase such a fine quality book at such a good price."

"... Thanks. The book is great!" Gordon D. Bishop.

"... Thanks very much for sending the book Log of the Liberators. It's well written and I am enjoying it more than any other similar book. I shall notify all of my ex crew members and invite them to purchase a copy." 'Chuck' Grace, Lt. Col. USAF Ret.

"... Log of the Liberators is certainly a wonderful book." John Bratnick.

"Enclosed is my check (8.50) for the book Log of the Liberators. I'm real happy to know such a book has been written. It's about time! I flew B-24s in the 446th BG and I was also checked out in the 17s and loved both very much, but have always felt the 24s were neglected by the press etc. I believe it was because the 17s were based closer to the 'bars' of London." George O. Gigstad.

(ed. note: The above is only a sampling. If you haven't purchased a copy yet don't be left out in the cold. Send your check or money order now to William G. Robertie, P.O. Drawer B, Ipswich, Mass. 01938. A signed bookplate by Steve Birdsall goes with every copy sold through the 2nd Air Division Association.)

Dear Evelyn and Hathy:

I just have to write to you and tell you that I deeply appreciated your very difficult task of keeping our 2nd AD Reunion together again. You are "Supers"; not forgetting Dean Moyer and Bill Robertie and Jordan Uttal. I hope that each of you knew you only had to call on me if I could have been of some relief and help.

The Espri de Corps so evident there made my much needed vacation and change worth a great deal. Our precious dedication to the 6034

in the beautiful chapel; the Wine and Cheese brunch; the Flying W. Ranch dinner; the mini-banquets and the Saturday night Banquet; produced 3 new couples (6 friends) who have remembered me! Before I answer their letters I just feel I must first write and thank you for the great reunion work you have done.

Affectionately,
Bertha M. Dahm

(ed. note: Next summer, Bertha, you get put to work! But we are very glad that you enjoyed yourself and hope that you help spread the message of the 2nd Air Division Assoc. We are a unique organization, I think you will admit.)

Dear Bill:

The reunion this past summer was a high point of the year. It was my first reunion but I hope not the last. Joe Abernathy, the other member of my crew, and I are already talking about getting as many members of our crew as possible together for a micro-mini-reunion in Norwich in 1975. I hope we will see you and others there too. Again, thanks for your part in the successful reunion in Colorado Springs.

Sincerely,
Ed. Wilson

Dear Bill:

I think you all did a wonderful job on the Colorado Springs reunion. We had a wonderful time. Although the 458th wasn't represented very well we still had a good time and are looking forward to the reunion in 1974. So with Gods will we'll be there. And again thanks for a job well done.

Sincerely,
H. E. Armstrong

(ed. note: How about getting in touch with Fred Vacek who is heading up a mini-reunion for the 458th next year; With the two of you working together the 458th should be well represented in 1974. Believe me, it's a lot of fun - and the hard work is only incidental!)

Dear Bill:

I would like to extend a sincere 'thank you' for a great "73" reunion. My first. Hope I can attend many more.

Sincerely,
Bob Young

(ed. note: Hang in there Bob. There are many more in the offing.)

Dear Bill:

My wife Connie and I sure enjoyed the Colorado Springs reunion. It was by far one of the best. We all owe you a sincere 'thank you' for all your efforts.

We expect to attend the Wilmington reunion next year, but doubt if we'll go to Norwich again in 1975. Let me know if I can be of some help to you out here on the West Coast.

Sincerely,
F. D. 'Dusty' Worthen

(ed. note: You sure can Dusty. Just make sure that you put the notice of our next reunion in your local paper and papers.)

Dear Bill:

I enjoyed our reunion at Colorado Springs more than anything in the last 29 years. I'm looking forward to Wilmington, N.C. Thanks again for your fine efforts in leading our organization.

Sincerely,
George F. Clark

Dear Bill:

We greatly enjoyed the Newsletter and sorry we had to miss the reunion and will also have to miss the 1975 reunion in Norwich. But we will never forget the Memorial.

We are Associate Members, our son S/Sgt. Harold Lane, 93rd, was killed in an air crash at Chipping Norton, June 26, 1943.

The only reason we must miss these reunions is because of our age (80 and 72).

We read every word in the Newsletters. How well we remember meeting some of the members you mention.

Sincerely,
Luke M. Lane

(ed. note: We never forget those we left behind Luke. Nor do we ever forget those THEY left behind. Keep with it and I am looking forward to meeting you at one of our reunions in the near future. At 80 and 72 you've got your whole life ahead of you. Think about that.)

Dear Bill:

The reunion in Colorado Springs was the first one I have ever attended because it was the first one I have ever heard of, thanks to a young man from Rolla, Missouri who ran a letter in the local paper. A great big 'thank you' to the people who planned and organized the reunion and made it so enjoyable for all who attended. We hope to be able to attend all future reunions and wish there was a way to get word to more people who served in the 93rd.

Sincerely,
John L. Sullivan

(ed. note: There is John. Just put a notice in your local papers about the 2nd AD and list the Groups. You will be surprised at the answers you will receive. That young man from Rolla, Missouri is Don Olds and I don't know what we would do without him. He and his wife, Mame, make every reunion worth attending. Don and Mame have adopted the 2nd AD as their own and Don is responsible for many of the photos that appear in our Newsletter. Bless them.)

Dear Bill:

I would like to say at this time that I enjoyed our reunion very much this past July. I was very impressed with the memorial service at the Academy, but some day I am going to have to go back for more pictures of the chapel as the ones I took did not come out too well.

This is the first time that I had two dinners of the banquet type at the same hotel that were both hot when served and also very tasty. Another plus for the committee.

At our reunion there were three of us who went through aviation cadets together and went overseas with the 467th as co-pilots. That was 30 years ago this summer. My how time flies.

That's all for now. Keep that Newsletter coming.

Sincerely,
Henry P. Lemmen

(ed. note: Maybe some who took pictures at the Academy chapel will send you copies Henry, and time does, indeed, fly. But I think you will agree that at a 2nd Air Division reunion time seems to have stood still. Well we can dream can't we?????)

Dear Bill:

I would like to suggest as a way to perpetuate the Memorial Library that the Association print a simple brochure to outline what you want to accomplish, and with legal advice suggest proper wording for a codicil for a last will and testament.

This would specifically call attention to the need to perpetuate the program, and would give a person something to discuss with his family and his attorney. A few bequests could go a long way in accomplishing this aim.

Just a thought in case it is useful.

Best regards,
Vere McCarthy

(ed. note: Couldn't agree with you more Vere and we hope that many will take your letter to heart. We do have a unique Memorial and it can only be kept going with a healthy infusion of cold, hard cash. Many of our members do respond annually with donations and for this we are eternally grateful. I have every confidence that those 6,034 we left behind will never be forgotten.)

Dear Bill:

Dick wanted me to tell you that the article "A Survey of USAAF Artwork in East Anglia" brought back many, many memories. He remembers all those pictures and they were very familiar. Having been a member of the 361st Fighter Group he knew who the fellow was who painted the pictures. His last name was Koch, but he has no idea of his whereabouts. Henry Walter, who used to be a member of the 2nd AD, might know his address. He was the mail clerk for the Group and he has kept in touch with many of the men.

About the painting of the ship on the wall. That was the Queen Elizabeth which was the ship they went to England on. He also says there were no RAF personnel stationed there when he was at Bottisham.

We had a wonderful time at Colorado Springs. All the plans seemed to go off like clockwork so I know plenty of time and hard work went into the preparations. Please accept our thanks for everyone's effort in making this reunion so perfect and memorable.

Trust we will see you in Wilmington.

Sincerely,
Mrs. Richard Shults

(ed. note: Many thanks for the info on the paintings and you can bet the family silver that you'll see us in Wilmington. Now where do we find Henry Walter?)

Dear Bill:

Is anyone from the "Little Brian", 733rd Sqdn., 453rd BG, Captain Philip Stock, Pilot, still about?

Sincerely,
Herbert O. Wright

(ed. note: Don't know. Can anybody help?)

Dear Evelyn:

The reunion was the highlight of our summer. It was great to see four (4) old friends and so many new friends that were "there" also. My wife and daughter still talk of our trip.

England in '75
Joe L. Abernathy

(ed. note: England in '75 it is. Just get your \$25.00 deposit to Joe Warth so that there WILL be an England in '75.)

Dear Bill:

We were delighted with the amount that your joint efforts produced (\$500, plus \$415 in individual donations) this year, and this is particularly satisfying when one might expect with the passing years that enthusiasm would diminish. You will no doubt have received my letter of 23rd August asking for further details of the names and addresses of the individual donors. Only this morning Tom Goodyear, whom I have not seen since the Reunion, called in here and is writing to a number of friends of the late Cecil Gowing to obtain funds to purchase books in his memory. We were very pleased to see him looking so well.

I am sure you are very modest in what you say about the closer link between the Association, the Library and the Board of Governors. So far as the Association and the Board of Governors is concerned, that is due very largely to yourself and Tom Eaton, but every progressive movement is due to individuals and not to institutions.

My own position has always been most peculiar, as I simply attend Trust Meetings as the custodian of the books. Years ago I was not even invited! However, I have always enjoyed this work personally and have been most fortunate in that Joan Benns has also. I have, too, in the Reference Library, as you know, a young man, David Stoker, who is also interested though from rather a different angle. I was also fortunate to be able to make several personal contacts when I came to the United States in 1969 on business that had nothing really to do with the American Memorial Trust! This, I suppose, is typical of the haphazard way, particu-

larly in England, that we go about things. I am quite sure, however, that there will be other enthusiasts to follow us, and hope that some of us will be around for a few years yet.

Again many thanks and all good wishes to Hazel and yourself.

Yours sincerely,
Philip Hepworth
City Librarian

Dear Bill,

I have a special interest in our old bird since as a boy of 18 I first worked on the original L B 30 at Consolidated Aircraft in San Diego and later the B-24 before I enlisted in the Cadet program. I then flew my combat tour with the 448th BG. I have watched the Legion magazine for all of these many years for a reunion of my B.G. and finally this year we had our first, which I hope is only the beginning. I thought the 2nd Air Div. was much to big for me to see anyone I flew with or knew, but after attending the reunion this year I realize what I have been missing. I did not meet anyone from the group that I knew, but it was great to see all of the people who shared our experiences, and my wife and I plan to make the trip to Norwich in '75.

We were, as I noticed most others were by the news letter, most impressed by the memorial service at the academy, and I was not ashamed by the tears flowing down my cheeks, as I remembered our good friends and bunk mates who went down in our ship while we were on pass, and of many others who I did not know as well that I watched go to their end. I am very proud that the 2nd A.D. had the foresight to plan the memorial and that I was a small part of this. I often wondered what ever happened to our donations. I feel that this sets us apart from all the others, and brings us closer to our neighbors in England. Also that this is the foundation on which the 2nd A.D. Assoc. will live.

Sincerely,
Richard L. Neurer

(ed. note: Amen!)

Dear Bill:

One of the absorbing interests of members of the Cambridge Aircraft Preservation Society is the history, and activities, of the 8th Air Force, principally because of the deeds of heroism and sacrifice which so many young men of that immortal company performed, and because of the contribution which the 8th made to aviation history in East Anglia.

Recently, whilst doing some research in the files of the Cambridge Evening News, we came across on item relating to a Liberator crash at Manea, Cambridgeshire, a few weeks after V-E day. To be precise the date was 20 May 1945. Further investigation turned up another report from the Cambridgeshire Times, see photostat copy.

This seemed to be a particularly tragic incident, since both reports of the crash spoke of the crew and passengers being in transit back to the States.

There was no mention of the aircrafts base or squadron, so we decided to delve a little further.

On Monday 28 May 1973, Steve Gotts our energetic and enthusiastic secretary, and myself went to Manea, to try and gather as much information as possible about this incident, especially to verify from which base the machine came.

We were lucky to be able to contact two men who actually attended the crash, and who had rendered assistance.

These were Mr. Wayman, a postman, and Mr. Harlod Short, an agricultural worker.

The aircraft crashed in a field owned by Mr. Fred Muffitt, whose son still works the land. We called at his house, but there was no one at home. Steve has since written him enquiring if

we might inspect the site when the present crop has been harvested, as it has been possible to pinpoint the place of impact.

No one had any idea where the machine came from, except a vague guess that it came from Norfolk.

Two crew members had bailed out from a low level, and Mr. Short told Steve that one of the two parachutists had landed near him, and ran over anxiously enquiring if he had seen 'any other guys, as my brother was in that plane'. Unfortunately it would seem that his brother was one of those killed, and he was in too distressed a state to give a name.

The aircraft burned for a considerable time, and Mr. Wayman confirmed that it seemed to come in from an Easterly, or Nor' Easterly direction, and approached over a railway line which runs near Manea. The weather was stormy with thunder and lightning accompanied by heavy rain.

On Thursday 21 June 1973 whilst carrying out further investigation at the American Military Cemetery, Madingley, Cambridge, we came across several graves dated 20 May 1945, the actual date of the crash. They were of three members of the 389th Bomb Group, 566 Squadron, and are as follows: Karman, Theodore L. S/Sgt. Serial No. 18070933; Moss, Jack N. S/Sgt. Serial No. 39278938; Hopke, Robert C. Cpl. Serial No. 16076892.

Bearing in mind that newspaper reports speak of 15 men having been in the machine, we were also interested to log two further graves with the same date - 20 May 1945 - these being of: Pembroke, Myron S. Pvt. 1332 Eng. Gen. Sev. Regt. Serial No. 36568873; Comer, William E. QM2C USN. Serial No. 2023519.

We consider that it is not outside the bounds of possibility that these may have been passengers on the ill-fated machine.

Reference to our 'bible' - the 'MIGHTY EIGHTH' (Roger Freeman) - the 389th is shown as having despatched it's first aircraft back to the States on 20 May 1945. Could this have been the Lib. in question?

We would be very grateful indeed for any information relating to this particular crash, e.g. aircraft Serial No., call letter, name (if any), and we would be most interested to know if either of the two survivors are alive today, and perhaps indeed they might happen to be members of the 2nd Air Div. Association.

All correspondence will be promptly answered, and photographs of the graves of crew members will be provided if required by any correspondent who can supply information. Your News Letter is one of the most interesting and informative we have seen, and does supply we amateur historians with invaluable information. We see it through the good offices of David Stoker of Norwich Central Library.

With very best wishes for the continued success of your publication.

Sincerely
Charles Gallagher
99 Kinross Rd.
Cambridge
CB4 QU
England

Dear Bill:

My wife and I enjoyed our first reunion in Colorado Springs this year. It was the first time I had seen anybody from my Group (466th) for at least 25 years.

Hope it will be possible for us to attend future reunions and meet more of my fellow fliers.

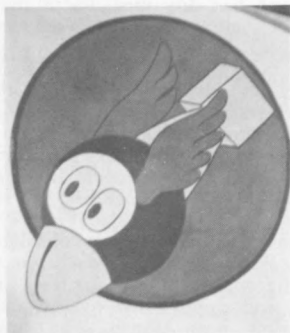
Congratulations to you and your fellow officers for such a good job in Colorado Springs.

Sincerely,
Edward M. Ritts

(ed. note: It wasn't us in setting it up, it was you in coming Ed. Just give us a helping hand and put notices in your local papers that we exist.)

44th MINI REUNION NEWS

by Charles (Joe) Warth



So — you didn't make this years reunion in Colorado Springs. To busy? Not enough vacation time? Kids still away at camp? Wife was sick? Nobody to watch the farm? Sure there are a million and one excuses for not coming, but it boils down to the fact that you were missed, and you also missed the time of your life. No kidding. This was the first reunion that a good many of the ones who were there ever attended. They came as strangers and, most likely, with a feeling of fear as to what they could possibly talk about with a bunch of guys they didn't remember. Naturally they had forgotten a lot of the minor details, like names, faces, what kind of work they did while with the 44th etc. But this, for the most part, only lasted a few minutes. The bar was packed, the hospitality room was overflowing, the lobby and the elevators were full of strangers too for these first few minutes, but then came the dawn. Everybody started to realize that they were having a good time also. Now lets see just what you did miss.

We had our 44th mini-reunion with over 60 in attendance. I would name all the people who were there but Bill Robertie set a word limit so lets put it this way. (ed. note: I did not. I just said keep it short!) They came from Hawaii, the West Coast, the East Coast and most of the places in-between. We had our C.O. there, a fellow named Johnson. Maybe you heard of him. Well anyway he brought along his daughter and his Son-in-law, a chap called Hoyt Vandenburg, Jr. who gave us a rundown on his present duty assignment at the Air Force Academy. You see he is B/Gen. Hoyt S. Vandenberg, Jr., Commandant of Cadets.

Mike Fusano told us about his boss and how he used to drive him around Shipdham and Norwich. In fact he even introduced the General to us. Col. Griffin flew in from Hawaii just to act as M.C. Now I know you may have heard some of his jokes way back when, but he's brought them up-to date and even cleaned them up a bit. I could go on and tell you who else was there, and even what we had to eat and drink, but

I don't want to spoil it for you for next year.

To make a long story short, we had a ball! But like any game in which you use a ball you always need more players — so why don't you make it to North Carolina next summer. And while you are thinking about North Carolina in '74 start planning now to take your wife to Norwich in '75. You are going to be hearing a great deal about both of these reunions so try not to miss them.

The reunion at Colorado Springs this year was a — SUCCESS.

HOW TO WIN FRIENDS!

Yorkshire, England — “Where do I have to park my car in order to get a parking ticket?” the American asked the traffic warden walking along the sidewalk.

The warden pointed to double yellow lines on the opposite side of the street and the American promptly drove his car over and parked it. Just as promptly he got his ticket.

The unidentified American explained he wanted a souvenir to take back home!

THE AIRFIELDS 30 YEARS AFTER (Cont'd.)

by David Stoker

METFIELD

The base of the 392nd and 491st Bomb Groups at Metfield has been used since the war as an airfield for crop spraying. However, when visited in February of this year, there were several excavators in the process of breaking up the runway. For the last sixteen years grants have been available for farmers to improve their agricultural land, and there has always been a ready market for concrete hard-core for use in road-building. Unfortunately crop yields are often low after the removal of runways because of the large amount of stone that remains in the ground.

At Metfield they have removed most of each runway but left narrow strips (wide enough for a car or tractor), the remaining area being cultivated. There is also a narrow road running across the airfield, which, from its position, appears to have been laid on part of the perimeter track. The control tower is still standing but appears to be in a very dilapidated and dangerous state. This appears to be the only wartime building that is still standing.

HALESWORTH

Like the Attlebridge airfield, the home of the 489th bomb group at Halesworth (Holton) is now a giant turkey farm. After the war the base quickly fell into decay until it was purchased from the Air Ministry by Le Grys Turkeys about a dozen years ago. Since that time the main runways have formed the foundation of a large number of Turkey huts and supplied ready made access between them. The runways are naturally all in good repair although most of the perimeter track is in poor condition. The land between the runways, and surrounding the field is all cultivated.

Whilst almost all of the buildings have long since disappeared, there are a few sheds of World War II vintage used as a store by a local agricultural merchant. On the Upper Holton side of the airfield some of the hardstands have haystacks on them, and others hutches for pigs.

One of the workmen told me that the airfield is now either used as a landmark, or is on a recognized flight path, for several times a week U.S.A.F. transports fly directly overhead.

“Personally, I feel conspicuous as hell.”

- M/Sgt. Ted Miller

