



The Ragged Irregular

91st Bombardment Group (H) Newsletter

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Uwe Carstens' Day To Remember

It was far too nice a day just to be gathering potatoes, little eight-year-old Uwe Carstens thought, especially on a Saturday during school holidays. He should be doing something interesting and exciting instead of just helping on the family farm! It was like summer that October day in 1943 at the Carstens farm near Kragstedt, Germany, as he and his brother and sister worked with their parents to get the harvest in. But even eight-year-olds had a part to play with the war going on.

In the cloudless sky the thrumming of aircraft engines caught their attention, and the workers concluded they must be Allied bombers on their way toward some unknown target, perhaps Rostow. At any rate, their small rural village was in no danger, so the potato crop continued to be the center of attention.

During lunch the family was startled to hear the rattle of machine gun and cannon fire, and Uwe's father rushed out of the house to see what was going on. "Come quick, there is an air battle goin on," he shouted, and the family rushed out to see the excitement. An American bomber, burning heavily, was approaching the earth headed for the house, and only a hundred or so meters above the ground. Still in the sky were white spots with objects dangling beneath -- parachutes! Just before the plane reached the house it made a slight turn and crashed in an open field about 200 meters from the building. Seconds before the plane hit a final crew member left it, his chute opening almost at the moment he touched down.

Farmer Carstens and other nearby farmers captured the parachutists as they reached the ground, and brought them to the Carstens barn, where already a crowd had gathered, with little Uwe on the front row.

One of the prisoners asked for a drink, and Mrs. Carstens brought glasses of juice for them all. (This act of kindness was to have later repercussions: one of the on-lookers denounced her to the authorities, who charged her with aiding the enemy.)

Soon Luftwaffe troops from a nearby air base arrived to take charge of the crash area and pick up the seven prisoners. As they examined the still-smoldering wreckage they discovered the body of a dead American flyer about 20 meters away, a sergeant who was taken into the Carstens home and placed in the living room. Later a coffin was brought and he was placed in it. The seven in the barn were carried away in a Luftwaffe



8-year-old Uwe in his Boy Scout Uniform

truck, which already had a couple of other American flyers in it, picked up earlier at another location.

The crash had knocked out all the little village's electricity, and as Uwe went to bed early he concluded that the day had been pretty exciting after all -- the air battle, the prisoners, and he had seen his first dead person ever. Surely a day to remember!

The next day the Luftwaffe troops returned to begin taking away the debris from the crash, which was scattered over a wide area. About 50 meters from the impact point they discovered three 1000-pound bombs, with fuses still intact. Two they disarmed, the third was stubborn and had to be detonated. The villagers had to open all their windows and doors, and sit with their backs to the hall walls, Uwe included. Then, a big bang, but no harm done. During the day Uwe found a flying helmet and flying gloves which he promptly appropriated. Three days later the dead sergeant was buried with military honors in the public cemetery near Flensburg, "Friedenshugel" (Peace Hill), and the event was relegated to only occasional mention in village gossip.

But for Uwe the memory remained as bright as ever. Nearly forty years later, a school teacher with a nearly grown son of his own, he determined to find out "the rest of the story." Who were these flyers who had come down on their farm? What events preceded the crash? What had become of them in the years since? The big question was, how could this be done? After all these years he could only remember that it all happened on a beautiful Saturday in October, 1943. There was no recollection or record of what plane, what bomb group, or the names of the flyers involved.

As a first step Uwe contacted the archives of the German weather services, where he luckily discovered that there was only one fine Saturday in October, 1943 -- Oct. 9. So he had a date, a starting place at last! Then he contacted the German military archives, only to discover that all records of air activities for that day had been destroyed. It seemed a quick dead end to his search.

Some months later by pure chance he ran across Jablonski's book "Double Strike on Schweinfurt and Regensburg," and in the bibliography he learned of the existence of the GSA National Archives and Records Service in Washington. He immediately wrote, giving all the details that he knew. Several months later back came a reply that contained all the information he had sought: a plane shot down in his area Oct. 9, one person killed (Kenneth Gorsuch), 351st Bomb Group, Polebrook; names of survivors. He then contacted the 8th AF Historical Society, who put him in touch with Ben Shohen, 351st Association president, who gave him the address of one of the survivors. After several years of diligent effort it seemed the search was over at last!

Uwe wrote to the survivor, and to the American Battle Monuments Commission (ABMC) for more details about Kenneth Gorsuch. But the information he got from both sources was most disappointing. The plane from the 351st simply could not be the plane that crashed on the Carstens' farm, even though the GSA insisted that there was only one



Carstens house and barn. XX above door marks room where Williams was placed.



Uwe, now 48, re-enacts battle scene with model Me 109 and B-17F.

plane that had gone down that day with only one killed.

A check of the Flensburg cemetery archives listed the American flyer buried there Oct. 14, 1943 as William Williams. A check with ABMC revealed that 40 William Williams had been killed in WW II, but none on Oct. 9, 1943. But they gave him the address of the Albert F. Simpson Historical Research Center at Maxwell Field, AL.

Uwe started over again on his search, which was made particularly difficult because his English was poor, and his son, busy with his own school studies, had to translate everything for him. The Maxwell archives sent him the available numbers of all missing air crew reports of Oct. 9, 1943. From that list the GSA provided a microfiche record of the reports (28 for that day). He had to travel 100 kilometers to find a microfiche projector, but after hours of difficult reading he struck gold. In one report Uwe found the name William V. Williams (KIA), from the crew of 1st Lt. James Judy, 322 Bomb. Sqdn., 91st Bomb Group. Surely this was the right plane!

Back again to the 8th AF Historical Society, who put him in touch with the group contact, M/Sgt. George W. Parks (Ret), secretary-treasurer of the 91st B.G. Memorial Assn. Back came an immediate reply with the addresses of two members of the crew -- John Carter (co-pilot) and Niles Withers (tail gunner). In August, 1983, Uwe wrote to Carter, and very quickly the reply came back -- he had found his crew at last! Carter sent a complete report of the events leading up to the crash, and soon there was a second account from Withers. Finally came a letter from Lloyd Johnson, and another from the sister of Verne Williams, Mrs. Norma Wettlaufer.

At last, after 40 years, nearly five of which involved difficult and tedious re-search, Uwe Carstens had found his day to remember!

The 91st mission summary for Oct. 9, 1943 reads: Mission #80, Alert #149. Target Anklam Industrial Aviation (53:11 N 13:41 E). Wx was good, clear and crisp, 41st and 1st CBWs were to draw the enemy's attention from two other strike forces heading further east. Fighter opposition was light until on the route out, the Luftwaffe appeared in strength and pressed their attacks, a furious battle ensued and the two wings took a severe mauling. E/A fired rockets into the formation with success. Eight 91st a/c were damaged. Claims 6-5-7. Visual bombing with excellent results. Group Leader: Major Scheeler, 322nd sqdn. (18 a/c)... (6 aircraft aborted, 5 were listed as missing: Lt. Walsh & crew, 323rd sqdn.; Lt Guttu & crew, 323rd; Lt. Judy & crew, 322nd; Lt. Pinning & crew, 322nd; Lt. Stewart & crew, 322nd.)

In his reply to the query received from Uwe Carstens in August, John Carter described the events this way: "I was a newly arrived aircraft commander from the States, assigned to James Judy's crew as co-pilot because the regular co-pilot was sick. It was my first (and last) mission; Judy was a veteran, this was his eighth.

Just north of the West Frisian Islands we reached our planned altitude of 12,000 feet. At this time there were occasional fighter attacks by Me 110s and Me 109s. Over Mecklinburg Bay we turned SE toward Berlin and the flak and fighter attacks became more intense. I saw FW 190s in singles, pairs, and flights of four making head-on attacks. About 10 o'clock the men in back reported the left waist gun out of commission. (Sgt. William V. Williams had been killed by a single 7.8mm round). Presently there was an explosion under the aircraft and Sgt. Yatsko (ball turret gunner) reported that the bomb bay doors had been damaged. Any closer would have finished us right there! The diversionary part of our mission was a success -- the groups headed for Anklam drew 300 or more fighters; the three divisions going to Poland saw no fighters.

When we approached Anklam for our bomb run the bombardier operated the "Doors Open" switch, but nothing happened; the doors were jammed. Judy then ordered the bombs held, rather than manually cranking open, since we would drop behind the formation if we couldn't reclose the doors, and the five 100-lb. incendiaries we carried in addition to the three 1000-pounders might not clear the aircraft.

Across Mecklinburg Bay again and the northern part of Schleswig-Holstein there were fighter attacks from the rear, and also considerable flak. Tail gunner Niles H. Withers was wounded by a 20mm cannon shell -- a gaping hole above the left knee. Sgt. Yatsko continued to operate the ball turret as a decoy, but the right gun was out of action from an early hit by a 7.8mm armor-piercing round, and the left was out of ammo.

The other guns aboard were out of commission or out of ammo also.

A short time before 12:25, when we were within sight of the North Sea, a number of 20 mm. shells struck the top turret, putting it out of commission and starting a small fire. Sgt. Earl M. Cherry put out the fire and stayed at his post, calling out fighter attacks from the rear, so we could take evasive action. Moments later an 88 mm exploded nearby, cutting the flight control cables, and the aircraft went into a diving right turn. Judy immediately turned on the automatic pilot in an attempt to regain control. We were out of the group formation now, with only partial control possible. More 20 mm shells entered the cockpit, and an oxygen tank was ruptured, causing every floating particle to burst into flames, filling the cockpit with a flash fire. Judy ordered the aircraft abandoned and I turned on the alarm bell. I departed the aircraft via the nose hatch, trying to delay my 'chute opening as long as possible to be clear of the combat zone. I would estimate I got out at 10,000 feet and opened the chute at 5,000 feet -- far too soon, I thought to myself. I could see a Me 109 firing into the fiercely blazing plane (the incendiaries must have ignited). The planes passed by me twice as I floated down. Finally the B-17 went into the ground at about a 45-degree angle and exploded in a ball of fire. (Sgt. Yatsko was the man who bailed out just before the plane struck. He had not heard the alarm bell and it was not till shells struck the turret mechanism, causing it to rotate to the exit position that he discovered the plane was empty and bailed out.)

I landed in an open field 1 or 2 kilometers north of the Carstens farm. Up by a barn a man was waving me to join him. I started that way and he came down to meet me, and then I could see he was wearing a uniform and a "Landwatch" armband, a rifle slung across his shoulder. He was about five feet tall, 60 or 70 years old, and very calm about the whole affair. He escorted me into the barn, where about a dozen spectators had gathered. In about 30 minutes a Luftwaffe truck arrived to collect me and my parachute. Other crewmen were already in the truck. We drove to another farm and picked up several more crewmen, and then on to the Carstens farm, where seven of our own crew waited. Wounded Sgt. Withers lay on the ground. (Judy had come down farther away and hid in a haystack. He was brought in the next day.) We were being interrogated in the truck and when no one would answer, the Luftwaffe officer announced that Withers would not receive medical treatment until we did. I signaled for our crew to put him in the truck, and two Americans and two Luftwaffe men did so. I injected morphine from his first aid kit above the wound. A Luftwaffe officer showed me William V. Williams name tags and told me this man was killed in the crash, and assured me that Williams would receive a proper burial.

We were then taken to a Luftwaffe Air Base near Flensburg, arriving there about dusk. We were billeted in a warm room, good food was provided, and the wounded treated at the Base hospital. The next day we were taken to Oberusel for two weeks, then taken to Stalag Luft III at Sagan. There we remained until the last days of the war, when we were all transferred to Moosburg.

It's Not Too Late If You Hurry

For those of you who haven't gotten "a round tuit" yet, there is still time to make arrangements for the National Reunion in Colorado Springs September 5-9 if you do it IMMEDIATELY! Contact Sec.-Treas. George Parks, 109 Wilshire Ave., Vallajo, CA. 94591 (tel (707) 642-6392) for complete information, program, and Room Reservation Cards.

A number of members who have received the information and made room reservations at the Clarion Hotel have not returned their activities questionnaires to Glenn Boyce as requested. The information is urgently needed to enable the committee to make arrangements for the tours, events, etc. PLEASE return them at once to Glenn Boyce, 1874 South Hoyt St., Lakewood, CO. 80226. If you've misplaced it drop him a note telling which activities you plan to take part in.

WHEN A NUMBER OF UNEXPECTED PERSONS SHOW UP FOR ONE OF THE PLANNED ACTIVITIES IT PUTS A STRAIN ON EVERYTHING -- TRANSPORTATION, FOOD, SPACE, ETC. LET'S ALL WORK TOWARD A SMOOTH-RUNNING REUNION!

New Members - Address Changes

AYCOCK, Haley W. LTC.(Ret)	P.O. Box 7814.	Horseshoe Bay.	TX. 78654 (C)
BALDWIN, Charles E. Jr.	74 Lindsay Rd.	York.	ME. 03909 (C)
COL.(Ret)			
BOWLAN, Delma M.Mrs.	201 E. Helen St.#34.	Herington.	KS. 67449 (C-A)
BURKE, John E.	204 Lake Point Dr.	Oakland Park.	FL. 33309 (N)
	Apt # 102.		
BURKHART, Gerald M.MAJ.(Ret)	Rt.3, Box 259.	Alvarado.	TX. 76009 (N)
BURSEY, Raymond.	602 # 2.Glamorgan.	Scarboro, Ontario.	CD. M1P 2M8.(N)
CALDWELL, Donald E.	2170 Bedford Blvd.	Mansfield.	OH. 44906 (C)
CAREY, Bennett R.	123 Brown St.	Penn Yan.	NY. 14527 (N)
CHRISTOPHER, Frederick L.	15295 E. Colonial Dr.	Orlando.	FL. 32826 (C)
COL.(Ret)			
DeGHETTO, Robert L.	11400 Lorry Lane.	Minnetonka.	MN. 55343 (N)
DENNISON, Wayne.	P.O. Box 382.	Ellsworth.	ME. 04605 (C)
DIETRICH, William H.	2905 Shanandale Dr.	Silver Springs.	MD. 20904 (C)
EBLEN, William L.	3217 Barbara Lane.	Fairfax.	VA. 22031 (C)
EDWARDS, Emery L. Sr.	116 Emery Rd.	Mingo Junction.	OH. 43938 (N)
FUTCH, Kenneth H. LTC.(Ret)	3418 Windsor Dr.	Nacogdoches.	TX. 75961 (N)
GIBSON, Jack F.	111 Comanche Ave.	Thousand Oaks.	CA. 91362 (N)
HAVELAAR, Marion H.LTC.(Ret)	R.R. # 8 Box 1620.	Rapid City.	SD. 57701 (C)
HOFFMAN, James J.	1436 Wolf Lane.	Paradise.	CA. 95969 (N)
HORNING, Arthur J.	6570 Milledgeville-	Wash-Court House.	OH. 43160 (N)
	Octa. Rd.		
KELLER, Donald L.	476 E. Lassen # 14.	Chico.	CA. 95926 (N-A)
LAMBERSON, John T.	1885 S. Quebec Way.	Denver.	CO. 80231.(C)
LEPKOWSKI, Stanley E.	Pruy Rd. N.E.	Mechanicville.	NY. 12118 (N)
LILLEY, Henry L.	9353 Viscount.	El Paso.	TX. 79926 (C)
	Apt.2074-12.		
LINCOLN, Edward J.	RFD # 1, Box 302.	New Castle.	ME. 04553 (N)
LOORMAN, Paul A.	P.O. Box 194.	Gaylordsville.	CT. 06755 (N)
MARTINEAU, Albert P.	24 Concannon St.	Providence.	RI. 02908 (N)
MARUM, John S.	926 W. Alameda.	Tuscon.	AZ. 85705 (N)
MATTIE, Mario G.	2120 David Ave.	Parma.	OH. 44134 (N)
O'KEEFE, Dan J.Ferry.	171 O'Keeke Way.S.E.	Palm Bay.	FL. 32907 (N)
RENZELMAN, Ralph.		Alstead Center.	NH. 03602 (N)
ROBERTS, Richard W. Sr.	5005 Meadow Dr.	Imperial.	MO. 63052 (C)
SABINS, Wayne F.	4622 Archer Dr.S.E.	Olympia.	WA. 98503 (N)
SANDVIK, Oscar K.	1725 S. 15th St.	Fargo.	ND. 58103 (N)
SAYLOR, Warren D. LTC.(Ret)	17361 Mira Loma Cir.	Huntington Beah.	CA. 92647 (N)
SMITH, William T. LTC.(Ret)	15225 Metropol Dr.	Hacienda Hgts.	CA. 91745 (C)
SPURRIER, Eric A.	72 Fourth St.	Providence.	RI. 02906.(N-A)
STIPE, John P.	R.D 4. Box 238-B.	Manheim.	PA. 17545 (C)
TAFT, Gilbert L.	212 N. Wickham Dr.	Penfield.	NY. 14526 (N)
WALSHAW, Leslie R.Maj.(Ret)	USMTM BOX 1208.	AP0 New York.	NY. 09038 (C)
ZABIAKA, Michael H.	CL-19 101 Albatross,	Ocean Shores.	WA. 98569 (N)
	N.W.		
ZAUNER, William J.	2640 Sheraton Rd.	Brookfield.	WI. 53005 (C)
RUSSO, Thomas W.	Del Rio Towers.	Belmar.	NJ. 07719 (N)
	1000 River Road.		

See You In Colorado Springs!

From the Editor's Desk...

Paul C. Burnett

Box 909 Auburn, Al. 36830

Despite the fact that as the years pass we lose an increasing number of 91sters, we continue to find more new members than we lose, for a steadily increasing membership. As of July 1, paid membership for 1984 was 1133, the highest ever. Total membership on our records now numbers 1787. Since January 1 we have gained 17 new Life Members, for a total of 143.

Memorial Day was again a special day of events for the 91st B.G. Memorial Assn. Lt. Col. Don Bader (Ret), ex-322nd sqdn. pilot, placed flowers at the Group memorial at the Air Force Museum in Dayton. According to Don the 91st was the only group to have a service there.

M/Sgt Otto Meikus (Ret) and his wife Gladys represented the 91st at services at the U.S. Military Cemetery at Madingly near Cambridge. This is an outstanding ceremony held annually in memory of those Americans who died in England during WW II. Otto, who has been living in Cambridge for a number of years, will be retiring shortly from his job managing a garage there. He recently presented a plaque of the Group and squadron insignias which will hang in the Eagle Pub in Cambridge, a gift of the Memorial Association.



M/Sgt Otto Meikus (Ret) officially represented the 91st B.G. at services at the U.S. Military Cemetery at Madingly.

Associate member Hendrick de Kock, of Opijnen, Holland, presented flowers from the Group during the annual memorial day services there in memory of the eight former 91sters buried in the local cemetery.

John P. Bruce, who with Keene McCammon, was a special guest at the 40th anniversary of the Opijnen memorial service last year, sent along this note to The Ragged Irregular recently: "With Memorial Day here again, my thoughts and prayers join the many Americans who honor those who gave their all in defense of the ideals of freedom. In most cases, as history has shown, they were shoulder to shoulder with those of other nations who share those same ideals.

My thoughts also return to a special Memorial Day event held in Opijnen, Holland last year when honor was paid to the eight 91sters buried in the Dutch Reformed churchyard there.

The two survivors of the 323rd crew, Keene McCammon and I, had the privilege of attending that exceptionally impressive fortieth anniversary event, which was sponsored by the American Women's Club of Amsterdam and the Betty McDonald Foundation.

Their arduous planning began the previous year and I will always be grateful that their plans included their sponsorship of us as their guests. Their arrangements for our stay were most gracious and enjoyable. We take our hats off to them, and all 91sters can be proud of their memorial activities at Opijnen ever since it became known to them in the late '50s that there were Americans buried there and had been cared for by the Dutch since 1943.

I pass this on that it may be known by all of the faithful manner that these fellow Americans, though not living within the continental limits, are taking part in commemorating the fallen Americans who lie in Opijnen.

Les Walshaw and wife Gloria have transferred from their post in Germany to Riyadh, the capital of Saudi Arabia. Les is a logistician working for the Air Force there for the next two years until they retire to Sacramento. He officially represented the Memorial Association at the Opijnen, Holland, 40th anniversary memorial in 1983.

Don E. Weiss, ex-401st sqdn. bombardier, has retired after 38 years of teaching with the Valley City, N.D. school system. Don made the '76 reunion to Colorado Springs; we'll be looking for him again in September.

An 8th AF Memorial was dedicated at Liverpool, England, May 28 as part of the International Garden Festival held there. The U.S. Information Agency created and sponsored the memorial in honor of the 350,000 Americans based in England in WW II. Lt. Gen. James H. Doolittle, 8th AF commander in 1944-45, and Lt. Gen. William J. Campbell, present commander of the 8th AF at Barksdale Field, represented the U.S.

Since the April issue of the R/I there have been three new Life Members added to the Memorial Association roster:

LTC Frederick L. Christopher (Ret), ex-322nd sqdn., 15295 E. Colonial Dr., Orlando, FL 32826.

Daniel Goldstein, ex-322nd sqdn. and ex-POW, 1113 E. Lawrence Rd., Phoenix, AZ 85014.

James J. Cullen, ex-323rd sqdn. and ex-POW.

Maggie Abb, 1208 Idlewood, Sherman, TX, 75090, has informed us that Bob Abb, former bombardier on George Birdsong's crew of Delta Rebel II, was interred at Arlington National Cemetery on March 20. Bob died in August, 1982 after a rare and prolonged illness, and his body had been in medical research since that time.

Ferrell H. (Stud) Evans, recently underwent open heart surgery, we have been informed by Carl Gundersen, who suggested that Stud would appreciate hearing from his old buddies. His address: 37 Edwards Rd., Johnstown, OH 43031.

Col. Paul McDuffee, former pilot of Shoo Shoo Baby and his ex-co-pilot, W. Robert Langford, got together recently for the first time in more than 40 years, and the two and their wives "enjoyed a wonderful mini-rally" in Tampa, FL. Langford, who now lives at Dozier, AL., got his own crew after several missions.

He is a long-time member of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, and recently visited China with FAD of the United Nations. Both McDuffee and Langford plan

another get-together at the National Reunion in Colorado Springs in September, though Paul reports he is nearly wheelchair bound now and "flying on two engines." He stays in close touch with the restoration progress at Dover, eagerly awaiting the day when Shoo Shoo Baby is flyable again.

McDuffee also got together soon after with another ex-401st pilot (of Gen. Ike), for the first time since WW II, J. Dan Davis, who has retired to Holiday, FL., from New England. Paul points out that they "flew another two tours" reminiscing that day.

The 10th annual 8th Air Force Reunion will be held in Los Angeles 3-7 October.

The 1984 Air War Symposium will be moderated by Roger A. Freeman, the eminent air-war historian, and will feature Gen. Curtis LeMay.

Registration for the event is limited to current dues-paying members of the Society, their families and guests. Others must join or renew membership to take part. Reunion information and registration forms may be obtained by writing to: 8th AFHS Reunion, 3818 Brighton Court, Alexandria, VA 22305.

Since the April R/I we have learned of the deaths of three members of the 91st Memorial Association.

Life Member LTC Louis W. Malone (Ret), 66, ex-322nd pilot, died May 26. His wife, Mary M. resides at 2851 Mason Lane, San Mateo, CA 94403.

Life Member Rocco J. Maiorca, 68, ex-401st sqdn. and POW. His wife Fran lives at 2345 Warwick Ave., Los Angeles, CA. 90032. Died May 26.

Walter Juszczak, 2118 N. Monitor, Chicago, IL 60639, died on Oct. 3, 1983.

Malone and Maiorca have attended the national reunions regularly and both had made reservations for Colorado Springs.

An interesting and valuable note has come from C.V. (Chuck) Welbes for 91sters who might be members of the old Caterpillar Club, who were saved by their chute during the war. He writes: "I've been a member of this club since 1945 and now my membership card is starting to show a little wear, so for the last year or so I've been trying to find the present status

of the Irvin Parachute Co., who sponsored the club during and immediately following WW II, to obtain a new membership card. I exhausted all my resources and asked Curlee Havelaar if he could help. He came up with E. Ericson's name, and Eric had all the right poop."

Ericson says: "There is no survivor in the USA of IRVIN...however the parent company is: Irvin Great Britain Ltd., Icknield Way, Letchworth, Herts. SG6 1EU, Great Britain. Attn: Secretary, Caterpillar Club.

You will need to cite for them the group, date, type of a/c, time of day, locale nearest to bail-out, and the a/c commander. They have marvelous records and will photocopy a copy of your chute data as sent them from your bomb group at end of WW II. It is best to request this copy from them, citing fact you do not have same.

The solid gold pin, as issued in 1945, is available for 14 pounds, with the membership card at one pound extra. Figuring the pound at \$1.50 this amounts to \$31 for the pin and \$1.50 for the card. No postage is required. There is a sterling silver pin available for 8½ pounds, or \$13."

Welbes has recently retired to Mountain Home, Ark. His new address is 210 Leatherwood Drive, Mountain Home, AK. 72653.

While most of us re-live our experiences in the wild blue yonder of WW II with tall tales related over drinks at group reunions, ex-323rd sqdn. pilot Leland E. Forsblad has a unique approach -- he has composed a major musical work, "The Eighth Air Force Memorial," as a testimonial "to the thousands of guys who took part in the war against Nazi Germany."

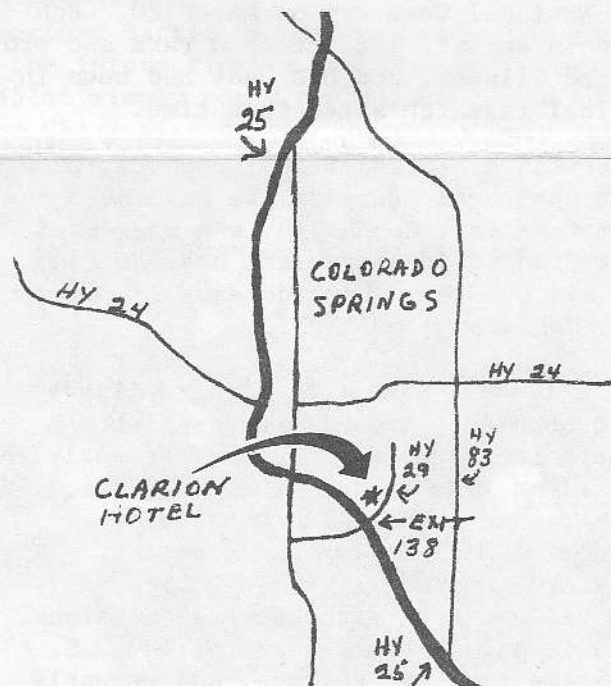
The composition had its world premiere at the University of Oregon in December, and was the featured work at a Fresno State University concert in February, where it received much critical acclaim. It was also performed at the American Bandmasters' Association 50th anniversary in Tempe, AZ in March.

Forsblad, a retired Fresno, CA school music teacher now, joined the 91st in April, 1943, and was assigned the aircraft V-Packette. (This plane had caused public relations personnel quite a flap earlier when the King and Queen visited Basingbourn one day, and wanted to be photographed beside the plane, not realizing what an American v-packette was. As

diplomatically as possible they were persuaded to pose beside the Memphis Belle). Forsblad was shot down on his 16th mission, to Villacoublay, when the crew had to bail out over the channel. Only he and his co-pilot were picked up by the Germans and sent to the south compound of Stalag Luft III. There he was the camp music officer, running the band.

After the war he graduated from Fresno State, and went on to study composition at the University of Southern California. Over the past 30 years he has become a prominent composer in the world of academic music, and has written hundreds of works for band, orchestra, and chorus. He considers "The Eighth Air Force Memorial" his major work.

The work, a tone poem incorporating special effects denoting sounds of war, depicts a mission against Nazi Germany, from beginning to end. "We start with the 'pre-flight' warm-up in the early morning with the engines firing up, followed by the take-off -- the 'wild blue yonder' theme, and the flight, with some intercom chatter among the pilot and crew. Finally, we're over the target and, musically speaking, all hell breaks loose. Then there is a reprise of the 'wild blue' theme, concluded by a hymn tune and the narration of a Kipling piece -- the stanza that includes the 'Lest we forget' theme that's on the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier.



Headquarters at Clarion Hotel, exit 138 on highway 25.