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Inside this issue:

<i>Hewett Buck Dunn</i>	1
<i>The Mouthpiece</i>	1
<i>Thomas S. Jeffrey</i>	3
<i>Shilaylee</i>	4
<i>The Red X Rebellion</i>	5
<i>Kid's View of WWII</i>	7
<i>The Big B</i>	10

Special points of interest:

- 13th Combat Wing Historian, Michael Faley, to release new book. Details soon.
- The 100th BG will hold its next full reunion in Albuquerque in 2009
- 95thbg.org has passed 50,000 visitor mark. Congratulations!
- Square J Bulletin is published quarterly

Hewett "Buck" Dunn—390th Hero

Taken from original story by
Dewayne Bennett.

"I want to go home just as much if not more than any fellow, but I can't until the fight here is finished," said Buck to Stars and Stripes in 1944. Amazingly, he went on to fly 104 combat missions for the 390th in the European Theater, and 64 more in the Korean Conflict.

Col. Moller (**Joseph A. Moller**, 390th Commanding Officer from Sept 44-May 45) related how he once encountered Buck late one evening near the Rocker Club (the NCO club). Dunn had a

passed-out enlisted man under each arm. He dropped the two men, and without missing a beat, executed a proper salute, before picking the two men back up and continuing on his way.

Dick Cowles flew about 15 missions with "Buck" Dunn and had a great admiration for him. "Buck could seem to anticipate and call out flak bursts."

On the 18 January 45 mission to Duisburg, Buck called out, "Watch out, they are going to get us!" About 20 seconds later a shell came through the floor and ceiling of the radio room. The next burst was behind **Dick (Richard L.) Cowles'**

tail gunner's position. The plane shot up in altitude and then slammed down just as suddenly. The pilot, Lt. **Waldo W. Shira**, called positions on the intercom to assess the damage. Only Dick Cowles answered the call on the interphone. Lt. Shira told him to come forward and check out the damage. Cowles crawled out of his position with a walk-around bottle found both waist gunners out. He administered aid to them and then went forward to the radio room. There he found tangled metal around the ball turret. One side of the radio room bulkhead was blown out and the radio transmitters were gone. The radio man was on the floor. Cowles first got oxygen

The Mouthpiece—95th History

by **Ted Nesling (UK) - 2007**

It was in the year of 1943, I was a sixteen year old working on a farm by day and playing piano accordion in Eve Gyford's dance band at night. We were playing one Friday evening for a dance in the village of Stradbroke, a couple of miles from Horham Air Base, several

American service men were jitterbugging and jiving, but one was sitting at the bottom of the stage just listening to us playing. After the dance was over he came over and introduced himself as **Dwayne Willis Long** and would we mind if he sat in with us at our next engagement, we said O K, tomorrow night at

Framlingham drill hall, we didn't really know what he was talking about, thought he just wanted to listen. Well, we arrived at Framlingham to find Dwayne waiting for us with a battered case under his arm, we all trooped into the hall with our instruments and started to unpack, Dwayne took a equally battered trumpet

Buck Dunn—Continued



to the radioman, then called the pilot to notify him. Lt. Shira came back to assess the damage to the control cables.

Lt. Shira put the plane on automatic pilot and came back to assess the damage to the control cables. With the help of a revived crewmember, they were able to remove the ball turret gunner, who was unharmed.

Without hesitation Lt. Shira continued over the target, and Buck Dunn triggered the bombs away. This was Dunn's 83 mission

Buck Dunn is the only airman for whom the 390th Memorial Museum founders have authorized a special plaque. He is an honest to God hero, and did what no other of the 300,000 members of the Mighty 8th Air Force did. He flew 104 missions, flying 32 as a tail gunner, one as a waist gunner, one at top turret, and 70 as a togglier. He was one of a kind.

The Mouthpiece—Continued

**The next 95th
Newsletter
will be mailed
in November**

from the case plus a mouthpiece from his pocket, put that trumpet to his lips and blew!!!! We were gob smacked is the under statement of the year. We had never heard playing like it. He went up and down the scales then

finished up playing Bugle-Call Rag just to get warmed up. What a night! After that, he came out most nights when not on duty (he was a cook on the base). He used to cycle as many as twenty miles to be with us, and he became a good friend, coming to our house lots of times to have supper. He taught me a lot about music.

I joined the army in Dec of 1944, and that was the last time I saw Dwayne. I was posted to India the following August. In 1946 I was preparing to leave India when I received a letter from him. He was back in States and at some music

academy in South Dakota. I think it was in the city called Martin (?). Unfortunately, I lost the letter and his address so couldn't reply. So if you are out there Dwayne, or anyone who might know his whereabouts, please get in touch.

By the way, he gave me that mouthpiece as a keepsake, which is now residing in the Museum at Horham Air Base with other memorabilia of Dwayne



General Thomas S. Jeffrey



Thomas S. Jeffrey
March 14, 2008.

“Col. Jeff” as we called him was without a doubt one of our most beloved commanders. His strength and decisions are what legends are made of. His leadership and military training was tailor made for his taking over the 100th at a time when we so needed his guidance, discipline and backbone. His Yankee grit was tempered with his Virginia charm. We loved and revered him and his moving words at the Nashville reunion touched us all and reminded us of his commanding presence. Tom remained in the service and had a long and distinguished career. He retired as a Major General. Now we called him “General Jeff” and those who knew him were proud and honored to call him friend. Much more of his

career is on our website and much will be written about what a fine man, commander, loving husband



& father he was. To quote one of the songs he liked to sing *“Come on and join the Air Corps, it is a grand branch so they say, you never do no work at’ll, just fly around all day.”* You remain in our hearts and always will!

Career Highlights: He led the 390th Group to England in 1943 and remained with it as deputy commander until May 1944. In

May 1944 he chose the assignment to the Commanding Officer of the 100th Bomb Group, where he remained in this capacity until just prior to the end of the war in Europe. During his tour in Europe, General Jeffrey flew 27 missions in B-17s and was awarded the Silver Star, Distinguished Flying Cross with four oak leaf clusters, Bronze Star Medal, Air Medal with three oak leaf clusters, Army Commendation Medal with oak leaf cluster, French Croix de Guerre and Polish Cross of Valor. He participated in the famous Schweinfurt bombing raid in October 1943 and the shuttle bombing missions to Russia. Just prior to the end of World War II, General Jeffrey was assigned as deputy director of operations of U.S. Strategic Air Force in Paris and later as director of operations of U.S. Air Forces in Europe when the Headquarters moved to Wiesbaden, Germany. General Jeffrey had a long and distinguished career.

Shilaylee—Snazziest Ship Flying

"Shilaylee was no ordinary airplane. Early on our pilot, **Mark Wilson**, had the ground crew paint white side walls on the tires. Mark said he wanted the plane "to look sharp" and it did. **Ernest Lovato** painted the Irish name on the nose and the crew's flight jackets because Wilson counted six or seven Irishmen on his crew. Its number was 2317, it's call letter, 'A' for Able'. On the fuselage was 'XR' for the 349th Squadron.

It was in February, 1944, as a replacement crew in the 349th Squadron, that we first met Shilaylee. We flew our first mission in her on February 29th to Brunswick, but it was the missions to Berlin on March 3, 4, 6, and 8 that really broke us in. We got hit so often that the ground crew were grateful for our white side walls. If Mark dropped the wheels down early, it was a sign we were in trouble. The ground crew saw the white wheels and got ready in advance for a lot of work. Shilaylee was a great plane; it brought us back 20 times.

On May 24, we did not fly in Shilaylee because it had a mechanical failure. We flew to Berlin in 'Hard Luck' or 'old 413', the ground crew called it, and on that mission I earned my Purple Heart. After I got out of the hospital our crew was reassembled, and since we were near the end of our tour, we were given a new plane.

On June 5, when we were over Boulogne in our new plane, the aircraft on our right wing was hit by flak and drifted into us. In the crash we lost our co-pilot, navigator, and bombardier. Mark Wilson and I ended up as POWs in Moosburg Stalag 7 until Patton liberated us on April 29, 1945

Note:

On 5 Jun 1944 the Wilson crew was flying a brand new silver B-17G 42-107095, XR-F since they were now a lead Crew. Shilaylee was Lt Wilson's aircraft prior to receiving this new plane.

Eyewitness Report:

Observer is unknown.. A/C #591 (Peterson) was flying right wing on A/C #095 (Wilson) which was hit by a ground rocket and collided with #591 (Peterson). The nose section of #095 (Wilson) was sheared off, but it appeared to remain under control and peeled out of the formation. Five chutes were seen from #095 (Wilson) as they attempted to turn back toward the channel. #591 (Peterson) was last sighted about three miles from Boulogne at 1015 hours.



100th Bomb Group, 349th Squadron's Shilaylee

The Red "X" Rebellion by Bill Carleton

In 1944, the 100th Bomb Group had a "rebellion" that grounded every B-17 on the base.

Lieutenant Colonel **William Utley** had arrived from the States to fulfill our need (?) for a Ground Executive. Quite naturally, he visited the Flight Line and was shocked at the appearance of the men and the surrounding property.

He immediately ordered the four engineering officers to his office and read them the RIOT act. "The men will cut their hair and shave, and wear a clean uniform. Furthermore, the concrete dispersal points will be scrubbed of oil, and the pyramidal tents will be cleared of personal effects, including cots. And, it will be done tomorrow!"

Captain Blazer spoke up to say that this was impossible. This invoked a sharp, "What!" Captain Clift then advised that we are "at this very moment under a mission alert." Colonel Utley replied, "Okay, but on the first Stand Down you will do as I have commanded." The four engineering officers, recent engineering grads of prestigious universities and the Air Corps Cadet Engineering Course, retreated to another office.

The four pondered what this would do to the morale, when Captain Herlihy said, "We can't even preflight planes." Captain Carleton added, "Uh-oh, that puts the planes on a RED X."



100th Engineering, *Front, (left to right), William E. Carlton - 351st Eng. Officer, who later was elevated to Group Engineering Officer when Rovegno returned to the ZI, "Butch" Rovegno, Donald J. Blazer - 350th Eng. Officer, Back, John J. Herlihy - 349th Eng. Officer, and William D. Clift - 418th Eng Officer.*

Continued next page

They then returned to their Line and advised their men of the new order, and so it came to pass on the given day the men went forth and the planes were grounded!

As he walked towards Operations, our Commanding Officer, Colonel **Thomas Jeffrey**, smiled as he pondered a needed practice mission. He was stunned when he saw the 70 RED Xs, and responded with a loud shot, “R A V E G N O!”

Major Ravegno, Group Engineering, was on hand with his soft Tennessee drawl, usually reserved for riots, “Ah know Sir, but the boys are carrying out the order of your new Ground Executive.”

Turning on his heels, Colonel Jeffrey muttered through his clenched teeth, “I’ll fix it.”

Of course, we were not privy to any conversation, but someone in a nearby building heard someone shout, “If you ever go out to the Flight Line again, your ass will be on the first plane out of here!”

The following morning, the planes were emitting their deep-throated purrs, and our Willie and Joe Mechanics, wrench in hand, were giving “Thumbs-up” to the pilots taxiing for take-off.

Post Comment: Colonel Utley, following an in-house orientation, turned out to be a good guy, but he did not visit the Flight Line again.





A Kid's View of WWII

By
Bob Timewell

This reminiscence was prompted by the following paragraph on page 167 of **Harry Crosby's** book "A Wing and a Prayer."

"At 16-00 hours the next day, Christmas, we had turkey and ham, mashed potatoes, gravy, sweet potatoes, corn, peas, cranberry sauce, rolls, pickles, cake, ice cream, and three kinds of pie. We invited 150 kids from the surrounding villages, and they ate as though they had never seen such food."

A friend had recently read Harry's book and one evening during a dinner party he had happened to mention the fact. This started a discussion of what we could remember about the war years and how in spite of the shortage of food (or because of it) it is said that the population of Britain had never been so healthy. It was also commented how lots of young people today are overweight. Not in fighting trim!

Well, I can't speak for the kids of the villages surrounding Thorpe Abbots. I lived some two hundred and fifty miles northwest in a town called Runcorn on the upper reaches of the river Mersey some ten miles from the port of Liverpool, as the crow flies. I can assure you that my contemporaries and I had never seen such food and certainly never in such profusion. But I suppose the old cliché applies, "What you never have you never miss."

Some of my memories of those turbulent times are very vivid while others have faded. Of the night air raids by the Luftwaffe on Liverpool and its surrounding area, my memories are sharp. Far from being afraid, my pals and I found the experience exciting. After the alert had sounded, we would get out of bed and dress up warmly. My mother would then make her way, with me in tow, to the nearest air raid shelter. I'm sure she was terrified, but she never once showed her fear. I had a toy gun, which I used to point up at the sky making suitable noises with my mouth at the German bombers passing overhead. You could tell they were German by the sound of the engines, which were not synchronized and so made a discordant dull, rumbling sound. The ack ack batteries (anti aircraft guns) would then start firing at the German bombers dropping flares, which I called "Flying Onions." The whole effect was like a giant fireworks display. Not appreciating the danger of the situation, I was always most disappointed when we reached the comparative safety of the air raid shelter. Inside the lighting was dim, with just two small light bulbs, and it was cold and damp with a musty smell of damp concrete. Running the full length of the shelter on each side was primitive seating from lathes of wood.

The next morning on our way to school we always used to collect pieces of shrapnel (flak) that was lying in the streets or gardens. School was a different world to those today. We carried our gas masks in a small box slung over our shoulders. The Lord help you if you forgot to carry it! The school was a nineteenth century Victorian building which had gas lighting. The lavatories were outside in the playground open to the weather. At mid morning break we were given milk to drink that the teacher served directly from a milk churn. At midday, dinner was served, and if memory serves it cost a sixpence. The food was appalling; the thought of the stews that smelled horrible and were full of fat still makes me shudder! I was punished more than once with the cane for refusing to eat watery, tasteless, overcooked, white cabbage and those awful slimy Brussels sprouts.

There was only one male teacher in the school, and that was Mr. Robinson, the Headmaster, who I remember as a kindly person. Although he did cane me a number of times, I'm sure it was with justification, for I was no little angel! All the other teachers were women, and boy were they formidable. I remember one who taught geography; she really used to scare me. In her classroom was a large map of the world mounted on the wall. I can recall the question, "What are the pink bits?" The required answer was "The British Empire, Miss." The Lord help you if you didn't know the answer! The lessons seemed to consist of having such facts rammed into our heads.

There were frequent Air Raid Exercises. The school bell would sound, and we had to make our way in an orderly crocodile to an air raid shelter, a number of which had been erected in the playground. They had wood lathe seating and very poor lighting. We had to don our gas masks, and then lessons continued. After a few minutes the window steamed up and we couldn't see. But I don't remember any children being frightened "I think we all welcomed the break from routine.

In May 1941, the Luftwaffe mounted a sustained, savage campaign against Liverpool which went on night after night. There were no lights showing from the houses and, of course, no street lights as strict blackout was in force. You literally could not see your hand in front of your face. Yet once the air raids started the flash of the anti aircraft guns firing, the flares being dropped by the Germans, the massive flashes from the exploding bombs, and the burning buildings lit the sky like daylight. One night a stick of bombs came down near our shelter, but fortunately, only one exploded; the shelter shook with the blast. The next morning we found that it had hit a house about one hundred yards from the shelter, completely demolishing it. Fortunately, the occupants had been in the shelter, so no one was hurt.

My grandfather had a big shop in the town of Wallasey, where I was born, in which he sold glass and chinaware. He was an acknowledged expert in cut glass lead crystal, particularly that which was produced in Czechoslovakia. People came from all over England to buy from him. One night during the May 1941 raids, a stick of bombs straddled his store. He and my Grandmother had taken to the cellar to shelter immediately after the alert was sounded. During the raid they heard bumps and thumps above them. Eventually the all clear sounded, and Grandfather went to open the trap door. At first he was unable to move it, but using a lever and all his strength he managed to force it open. They climbed out, and to their utter amazement, they were standing in what remained of the street. Later he said that he was amazed to see that his whole property, both store and house, had disappeared. The whole area was covered in debris, bricks, broken furniture, and worst of all the broken remains of a young woman hanging in the branches of a shattered tree. This affected him greatly for some time after. The only things of the store to survive were two lead crystal bowls that had been on display in the store window. One was undamaged and the other had lost a foot. Both have been passed down to me and are still in use.

All this I saw for myself two days later. My father and I traveled from Runcorn by train to Liverpool. We had to walk down to the river Mersey, as the city was a shambles, with acres of rubble and shattered glass; salvaged contents of shops and offices lay littered at the side of streets. I recall seeing a mass of coins in the remains of a shop till melted into a solid lump of metal. Eventually, we caught the ferryboat to Wallasey; in the river were a couple of sunken ships with just the tops of the masts sticking out of the water. We arrived at the site of my grandfather's shop and witnessed the same devastation we had just seen in Liverpool. There was a horrible stench of brick dust and smoldering skeletons of buildings, and the broken, pathetic remains of household furniture lay outside the

wrecked houses.

While pilots and soldiers fought the enemy that caused all that destruction, my mother and millions like her fought a war against a different, ancient enemy...hunger. It was a war that they could not afford to lose. The system of wartime rationing and food distribution proved to be a success, but it must be said that the success was largely due to the resourcefulness of the housewives.

The introduction of rationing was gradual; ration books were used for the first time on 8 January 1940. Although the system was fine tuned from time to time, the following table gives a fair idea of the weekly ration per person:

Bacon or ham 4 oz

Sugar 12 oz

Butter 4 oz

Tea 2 oz

Margarine 2 oz

Cooking fat 2 oz

Cheese 2 oz

Eggs 1 every two weeks, 1 packet of dried eggs per month (equivalent to 12 fresh eggs)

Meat 1s-1d worth (minute!)

Jam, Syrup according to season from 8 oz to 2 lb per month.

By the end of 1940, most hoarded food cupboards were empty. Such items as tinned salmon, tinned meat, and tinned fruit and vegetables had vanished. In late 1941 the Ministry of Food introduced a points rationing scheme; every ration book holder received 16 points per month to spend as they wished at any shop that had the required item. At first only tinned meat and vegetables were on points, but as time went by, more items were added: canned fruit, condensed milk, cereals, and biscuits. The government had realized that this was an ideal way by which it could control supply, by raising or lowering the points value of each item. By this means the housewife could again be a discriminating shopper, instead of being just a collector of rations. Changes in the point values were published in the newspapers.

Two American items, which proved very popular, were tins of "Spam," a sort of spiced meat loaf, and tins of sausage meat. Although one tin used up 16 points, a whole month's supply, it was good for several meals and contained a thick layer of fat, which could be used for cooking.

All these shortages led to experiments in the kitchen to find substitutes. My mother was always experimenting! My father and I were the guinea pigs. Most times they were a great success, but she did have some disasters. She made a cake, and since she did not have sufficient fat, used castor oil. The result? Well, the cake was great but my father and I performed the "green apple two step" all the next day.

Fish was not rationed, and this, of course, resulted in long queues outside the fishmonger's shop. If you were at the back of the queue there was a fair chance that you could go home cold, wet, and empty handed. On one of these occasions, my Mother dished up a new fish dish; at first she refused to say what it was. We just couldn't eat it. It was tough as leather and tasted of cod liver oil. Eventually she owned up that it was whale meat, an experiment that was not repeated. Sausages were also not rationed, but it was best not to inquire as to their contents. In our family they were referred to as "sweet mysteries of life."

In the early part of the war, it was considered to be unpatriotic to have a white wedding. But later, as restrictions and rationing made it more difficult, it became a matter of pride to have a wedding as near the pre-war standard as possible. This was not accomplished without a lot of effort. Photographic materials were in short supply as were photographers. It was illegal to manufacture confetti, or to throw rice. Also, it was illegal to use sugar for the icing of cakes. This was a deathblow to the traditional three-tiered wedding cake. You will, of course, see photographs of very impressive wartime wedding cakes. The white, three-tiered works of art are, in fact, cardboard covers. Spam or dried egg sandwiches were also served.

One day whilst my mother and I were waiting for a train at Lime Street Station, Liverpool, some American soldiers passed us. My mother, who was very good looking, received a couple of wolf whistles, and I, being an enterprising young lad seeing the possibilities of the situation, asked, "got any gum, chum?" I was amazed! I got enough gum and candy to last me for months, but when I arrived home, I was disciplined and told never to ask strangers for candy again! Realizing that to disobey this instruction would bring swift retribution, I obeyed. The next time I saw some Americans I just said "hello," and bingo, it happened again! I was given chewing gum.

On another occasion we, the family, were traveling by train to Gloucester. It was slow, and the carriages were packed with people. Most were in uniform, and some were even sitting on their suitcases in the corridors. An American soldier stood up and offered my mother his seat. He had a large box of chocolates, which he had just opened. He took one chocolate and passed the box to me, commenting, "You kids don't get half enough candy!"

I always remember your friendly easy going ways and your generosity, particularly to children. You certainly brought a breath of fresh air and colour to drab gray wartime Britain!

The Big "B"

Following World War II, I was fortunate to become acquainted with **Grif Mumford** and **Harry Conley**. They were both pilots in the original cadre of the 95th Bomb Group, 8th Air Force. I was a waist gunner in a replacement crew assigned to the 95th in the latter part of the war, so I didn't know either one of them in England. In the post war years, Grif and I served on the governing board of our Association, and since the three of us lived in the Bay Area of California, we often got together and became close friends.

It became our custom to meet for lunch once a month to discuss the business of the 95th BG Association and our favorite subject: "How we won the Air War." We usually met at The Circus Club of Menlo Park where Harry, a devoted horseman, was a member. After one or two "Beefeater cocktails," the stories would begin to flow.

Often we would talk about the first daylight bombing of Berlin. Grif was the mission commander for that great event, and I relished hearing the story from him; however, Harry would

never fail to lament the fact that bad weather had prevented him from completing the same mission! He was a Squadron Commander and had been selected to lead nine groups from the Third Air Division on 3 March 1944, but they were all turned back when they encountered bad weather in the area above Hamburg. In the spring of 1944, everyone who flew with the 8th Air Force felt the frustration in not bombing Berlin. Harry, as mission commander of that first aborted attempt, felt it most keenly; furthermore, it was to have been his 25th mission!

The next day, 4 March, Berlin was selected again as the prime target for the 13th Combat Wing. The weather was predicted as better than the previous day, and Lt. Colonel Grif Mumford, Commanding Officer of the 412th squadron and Base Operations Officer was selected to lead the mission. Something new was to take place. A "Pathfinder" aircraft piloted by Lt. **Bill Owen** of the 482nd BG was to accompany the mission. It was equipped with radar navigational equipment to help see through the clouds to the target below. Because radar was considered "top secret" at the time, no publicity was allowed for the crew. Grif as mission commander was to fly the right seat of a B-17 231320, piloted by Lt. **Alvin Brown**, 412th Squadron. His plane was named "I'll BE AROUND." There was to be P-51 fighter support from the 4th and 357th Fighter Groups. Grif would lead the Wing and Lt. **Hal Powers**, also of the 412th, was to lead Flight A.

Crews were wakened at 0300 hours. They dressed, ate breakfast and assembled for briefing. The curtain was drawn revealing the big familiar map of the continent and a line from East Anglia to Berlin. There was the usual mix of whistles and groans that reflected the different attitudes about going to Berlin. Major "**Jigs**" **Donohue**, the silver tongued briefing officer, gave a detailed description of the expected fighter opposition and flak, weather, assembly and takeoff time, then ended the briefing referring to the mission as a "gallant adventure." Harry attended the briefing as usual, but his job that day was to stay at Headquarters and "sweat it out."

Just prior to takeoff time, the perimeter at Horham airfield was buzzing with activity. The "Forts" sitting on their hardstands were being loaded with 500 lb bombs as light snow showers swept across the runways. In the eerie dawn light, the gunners were mounting their 50 caliber Browning guns, and the Chaplains could be seen passing among the hardstands giving their blessings to the crews. As takeoff time approached, you could hear the B-17 engines "coughing" and then roaring to life. Then a line of olive drab planes began to lumber around the perimeter towards the runway to find their place for take off. At 0700 hours, a green flare from the control tower signaled the first plane to take off. The mission to the BIG B was on its way! The 95th had put up thirty-eight planes, including two Pathfinder planes.

The assembly in the skies above East Anglia had its usual frightening moments as the Forts from all the surrounding bomb groups jockeyed for their appointed places in the formation. One bomb group from the 3rd Air Division was unable to attain combat formation and aborted before we left England. Another was scattered all over the sky while crossing the North Sea and abandoned the mission before reaching the coast of Belgium, but all the other groups of the 13th Combat Wing pressed on towards Berlin.

The formations leveled off at 27,000 feet over Eastern Belgium, but there was a solid layer of clouds that prohibited any view of the continent. Ahead was a huge wall of dark clouds that rose to an altitude of 29,000 feet as though it were a barrier to Hitler's Third Reich. About this time, Harry, anxiously waiting for reports at Base Headquarters, received a message saying that several flights had turned back and were headed for secondary targets. But then a second message said that the 95th Group led by Grif Mumford had completed their bombing run on Berlin and were headed home! What happened? According to Grif, his radio operator, T/Sergeant **Frank Atterbury**, received an encrypted bomber code message that read, "ABANDON OPS. RETURN TO BASE, 1200 HOURS RZNC." Atterbury informed Grif that the message did not follow standard operating procedure, and Grif concluded the message probably came from an enemy transmitter; he made the courageous decision to continue to the assigned target! But there was a state of confusion among the other Flights. They had all received the message to turn back, and there was much intercom chatter about Grif's decision to continue. Some claimed that Division had instructed all Combat Wing Leaders to use their discretion on continuing to the target or bomb other targets of opportunity. Many formations could be seen making 180° turns and breaking radio silence with the remark, "you'll be sorry." But Grif and Al Brown leading 28 planes of the 95th and 8 from the 100th Bomb Group flew eastward through the towering wall of clouds toward Berlin.

A new menace appeared! About twenty ME 109s and FW 190s appeared and immediately began their attack on our Bombers. They were attacking from 12 o'clock high, and sometimes our pilots could see the faces of their attackers. The attack no sooner started than our P 51s appeared from nowhere and chased them away. This was a great morale booster, for many of the crews thought our escort fighters had returned to England with the other Bombers. They stayed with the mission and saved the lives of the crews! Finally our formations reached the I.P., and German anti-aircraft guns began a flak barrage that burst well above our formations, but eventually they honed in on us. When the lead plane attempted to open its bomb bay doors, the doors wouldn't open! They were frozen shut because the heating system in the plane had malfunctioned; the temperature outside was minus 65° Fahrenheit! The Pathfinder plane was

ordered to pull alongside Grif's plane and a dialog ensued with the pilot, Bill Owen, about what to do. It was agreed that the Pathfinder Bombardier, Lt. Marshal Thixton, would find the target using both visual and radar methods, then drop his bombs and a marker flare for the rest of the formations to follow. The plan worked! The bombs were released at 1335 hours. In spite of lousy weather, German fighters and flak. Our P 51s destroyed five German ME109s and FW190s. Chuck Yeager was flying a Mustang that day and shot down his first German fighter! But sixteen P51s from the 4th and 357th Fighter Groups were lost—some to weather! The 95th lost four planes, and the 100th lost one. In all, twenty-one planes of the 95th and eight of the 100th completed the mission. According to Al Brown, "We had proved that Germany's most prized and protected target, Berlin, was no longer safe from 8th Air Force air attacks!

The planes of the 95th Bomb Group returned to Horham at 1705 hours. General **Curtis LeMay** personally greeted Grif and the crew of "I'LL BE AROUND." This dispelled the fear of some that the "brass" had come to our base to discipline Colonel Mumford for failing to comply with the order to return home. It was quite the opposite! Grif was awarded the Silver Star by General LeMay as news correspondents crowded around to ask questions and get the story. One of those correspondents was **Andy Rooney** of Sixty Minutes fame. Lt. Al Brown, the pilot of the lead plane and Lt Bill Owen were both awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross. A commendation of high praise was given to 1st Lt. **Malcolm Durr** for his outstanding job of navigating the first mission to the BIG B.

For the mission on 4 March 1944, the 95th Bombardment Group (H) was given its third Presidential Unit Citation.

Notes to THE BIG B:

After the war, Grif continued to serve in the United States Air Force and finally retired as Colonel USAF. He died on 2 July 2007. Harry left the service after the war and returned to his original love of horses and the "wide open spaces" of the west as a cattleman. He died on 9 July 2002.

For more detailed information on the first daylight bombing of Berlin, I have found two publications valuable: B-17s Over Berlin, Personal Stories from the 95th Bomb Group (H) by **Ian L. Hawkins** and No Foxholes in the Sky by **Harry Conley**, edited by **Mark H. Miller** and **Stuart G. Whittlesy Jr.**, FNP Military Division, 6527 Main Street, Trumbull CN 06611.

Maynard D. Stewart, Major USAF ret