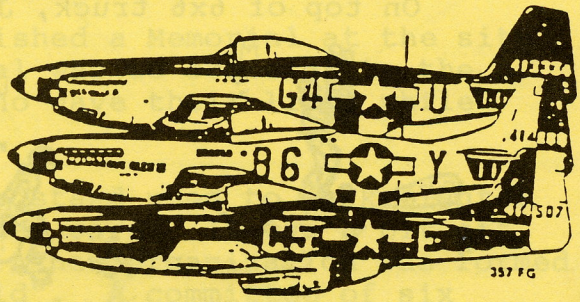
Received 7-17-97

NEWSLETTER



357th FIGHTER GROUP ASSOCIATION

Corresponding Secretary Joe DeShay 465 N. E. 34th Street, Boca Raton, Florida, 33431

ISSUE #56 JULY 1997

ADDRESS CHANGE:
Fry, Mrs. Edward (Pat) Change Apt. 1650 to #1650

GONE ASTRAY:
Harris, David (364th) Mail Returned - P.O.Confusion
Setzer, Michael (Associate) Mail Returned - Moved

LOST SHEEP FOUND:
White, Zane - (364th pilot) Rt. #4, Box 269A, Fulton, MS 38843

NEW LIFE MEMBERS:
172 - Black, Joseph
173 - Zachariae, Lloyd E.

ADD TO ROLL OF HONOR:

Doulos, Stephen (362nd mechanic)	1996
Malinas, Harry K. (363rd crew chief)	February, 1996
Carlson, Herman E. (50th)	15 November, 1994
Redd, Howard E. (364th)	13 November, 1996
Fisher, George A. (Grp. Headquarters)	1 February, 1997

NEW ASSOCIATE MEMBER:
Shaw, Immelda "Mel" (Robert 364th) 958 W. Calle Eveline, Tucson AZ 85705

AIRCRAFT DISCREPANCY HUMOR - Thanks to Bill Overstreet

Problem: "Propeller seeping prop fluid"
Solution: "Propeller seepage normal"

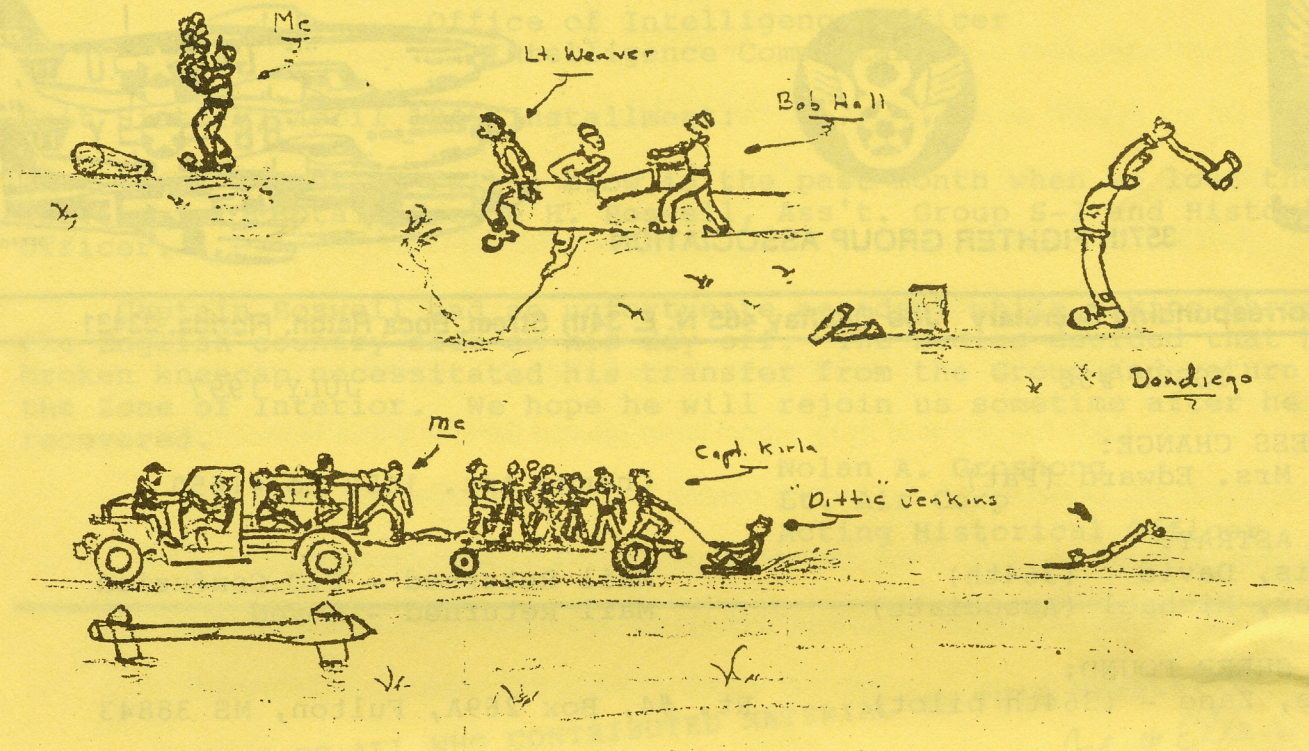
Discrepancy: "Something loose in cockpit"
Corrective Action: "Something tightened in cockpit"

Discrepancy: "Evidence of hydraulic leak on right main landing gear"
Corrective Action: "Evidence removed"

Discrepancy: "Friction locks cause throttle levers to stick"
Corrective Action: "That's what they're there for"

362nd F.S. SQUADRON FIREWOOD DETAIL AT LEISTON
Artistry and photo by Olmsted

On top of 6x6 truck, John Kirla (left) and Otto "Dittie" Jenkins.



Jan. 27th, 45



Olmsted photo

LEISTON AIR FIELD MEMORIAL

In 1992, the Youth Training Corp established a Memorial at the site of the former Leiston Air Field. The Memorial was to commemorate the Airfield, those who served there and those who gave their lives while serving there.

The Memorial was erected on a former hardstand used to park fighter aircraft. As time passed, this Memorial needed care. It was a bit off the passing road and needed more attention. A new organization was formed known as "The Friends of the Leiston Air Field". A committee of six members consisted of two from the Youth Training Corp, two from the surrounding area and two from the "Cakes and Ale Club" at the caravan site.

The committee decided to move the Memorial site to a different nearby location. (Please see the map on next page). The Memorial is to be enlarged and improved. The budgeted cost to carry out this project is estimated to amount to about $5000.00. Since this is quite a sum of money to be raised by the people of the Leiston area, the Memorial Committee gave the 357th Fighter Group Association an opportunity to make a contribution if they wished to do so.

The 357th Fighter Group Association Board of Directors voted their approval to make a contribution. The contribution at this point in time has been granted at $1650.00.

Our Associate Member Gus Clutten who served in a civilian capacity on the airbase with us, has been appointed to a Life Membership on the "Friends of the Leiston Air Field" committee. Peter Saunders is the Chairman and Chris Benson, the Secretary. Peter Little who owns the caravan site and club has agreed to legally make a piece of his farmland available for the new Memorial location. The new site will be on Harrow Lane, actually where the southern end of the 363rd Fighter Squadron perimeter track ended.

As we served there during the war, Harrow Lane was cut off and removed, coming to a dead end on each side of the field. After closing the base, the road was returned to it's former location.

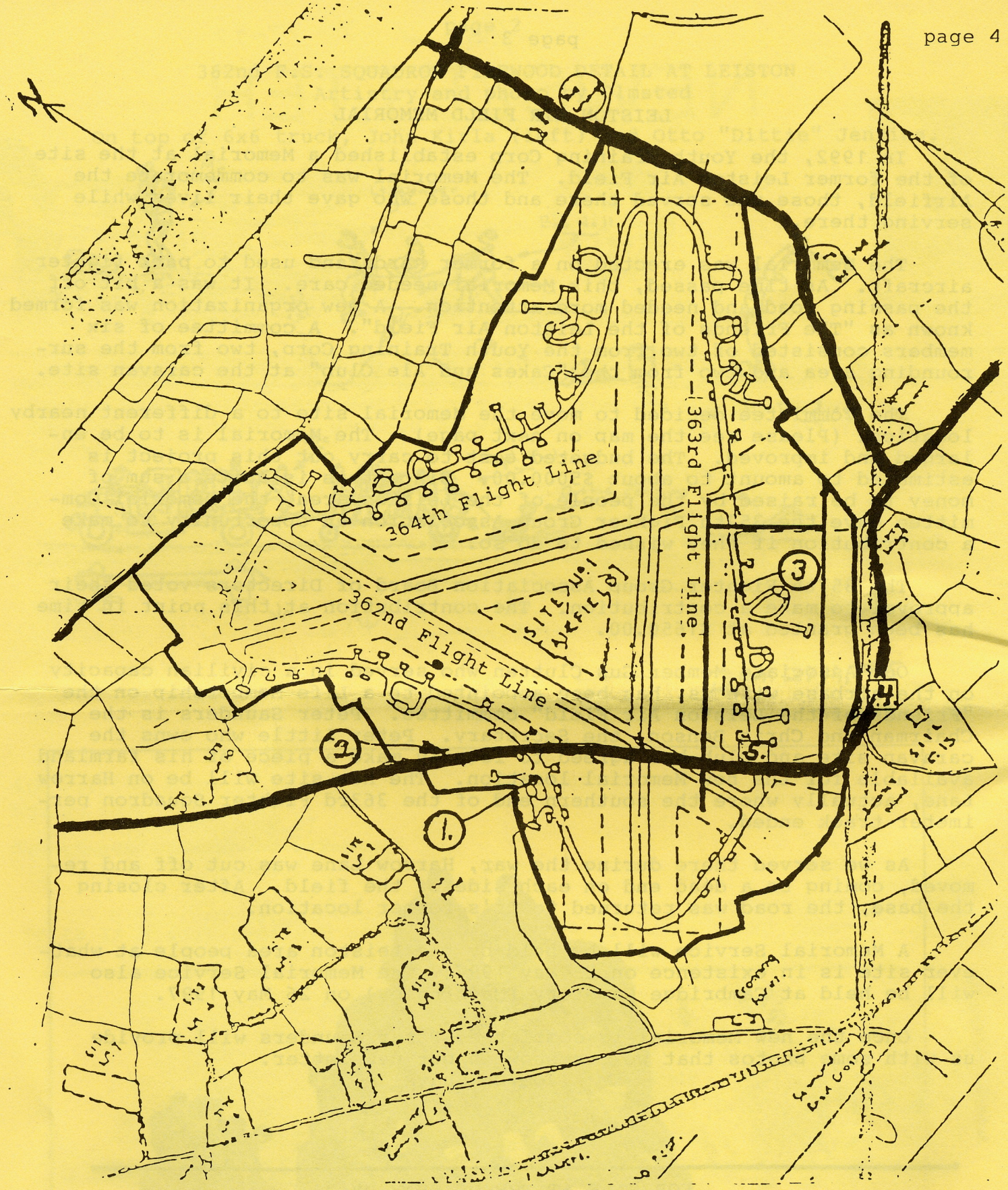
A Memorial Service will be held by the Leiston area people at whatever site is in existence on 25 May 1997. The Memorial Service also will be held at Cambridge Cemetery (Maddingley) on 26 May 1997.

Once the new Memorial is completed, Peter Saunders will provide us with some photos that we can show in our newsletter.

Joe De Shay

FOR SALE AT THE DE SHAY PX

White Caps - 357th Fighter Group Logo - $12.50 each
(Price increase due to cap cost, packaging and postage)
Emblems ---- 362nd, 363rd, 364th - $4.00 each (Grp. emblems sold out)
Lapel Pins - 357th Fighter Group - $4.00 each
ALL PRICES INCLUDE PACKAGING AND POSTAGE. MAKE CHECKS PAYABLE TO:
Joe De Shay, 465 N. E. 34th Street, Boca Raton, FL 33431



Site plan of the airfield showing Cakes and Ale Park Section

1 Memorial Site. 1991 original location
2 Harrow Lane now crosses the airfield.
3. Caravan park within the rectangular marked area
4. Gus Clutten's Home off the base on Harrow Road (estimated)
5. Proposed second location for the Memorial.

364th Pilot captures Prague/Ruzyne Airdrome

As told to Don Kocher when the Snedekers and Kochers got together in 1948.

On April 11, 1945, the 357th was on an escort mission to Donauworth. After they were released from escort duty, they went looking for trouble and a few found it. They looked in on the Prague/Ruzyne Aerodrome, home of over 100 ME262 jets. In spite of very intense light flak, they destroyed two ME262s, two JU88s and a big FW200. Three 364th pilots were shot down by flak during the straffing, Lts Monahan, Muller and Snedeker. I believe Lt. Irving Snedeker was the only survivor.

On his first pass across the airfield, there was a loud bang , a jolt to his Mustang and he saw his prop going off across the field. A 20MM shell had hit the prop hub taking the prop with it. He managed to land the crippled plane inside the Aerodrome perimeter fence, The plane broke in two behind the cockpit in the process. Quickly getting out of the wreck, he sat on the ground a safe distance from it and lit a cigarette, thinking it might be his last one for a while. Told me it was a lonesome feeling watching the group leave for home.

Soon the German Air Police came for him and placed him in a cell on the base. He remained there for several days being entertained (his words) by the Pilots of the jets. They kidded him about flying obsolete propellor planes, Played cards with him and were generally quite friendly even sharing Schnapps. Finally he was transferred to the city jail in Prague where he met an an American Sgt., a gunner from a Bomber. During air raids, they were taken to a place he described as a cave along with the civilian population. They were made to stand facing the wall and in the semi-darkness, the people would slip goodies secretly to them.

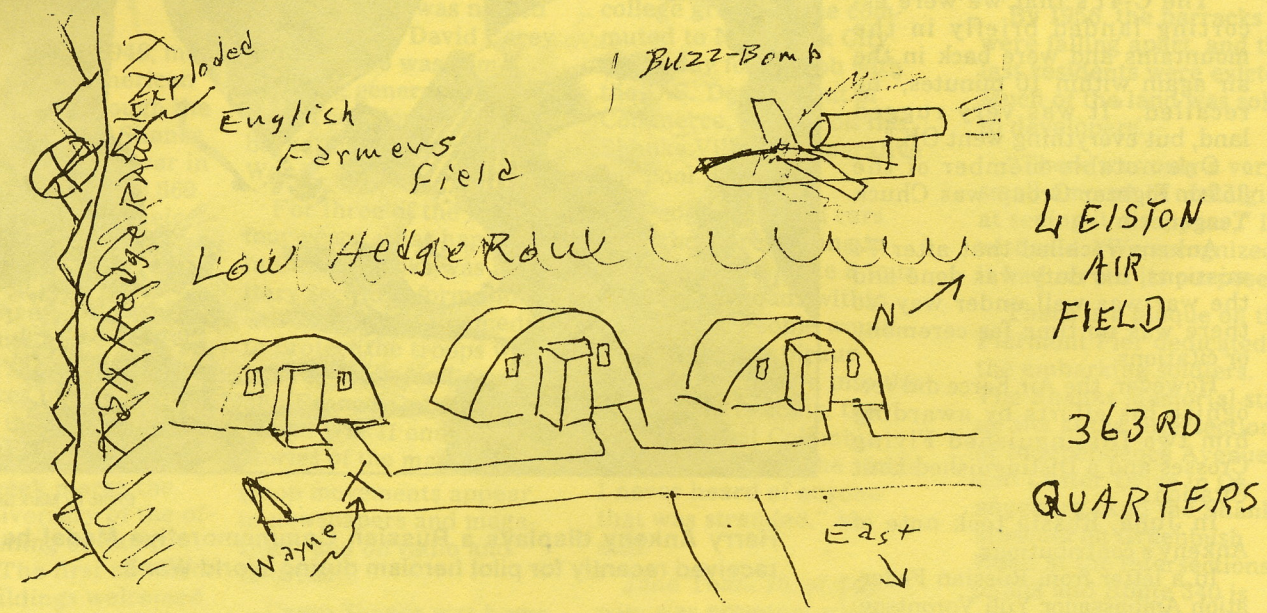
On an unknown date, the two Americans were taken back to the Aerodrome where the Germans were destroying their Jets and other non-transportable goods. They were informed that the Russians were a few days away and the Germans were abandoning the field. Lt. Snedeker was told that since he was the ranking American officer, they were placing themselves in his custody and that he would lead the convoy to meet the American Army coming toward them. The convoy consisted of eight or ten large trucks, fuel trailers and mobile kitchens all well draped with white sheets. The next day, they met units of the American 7th Army. The convoy stopped and waved pillow cases No shots were fired and Lt. Snedeker and the Sgt. convinced the American army that they were Americans and all ended well.

Seattle, WA.

April 30,1997.

Dear Joe,

Occasionly buzz bombs are mentioned in the news letter and I would like to put in my two cents worth on the subject. One night about two in the morning I heard a bomb coming in very close and low and I jumped out of bed in my skivies and ran out side. I ran out the front door of the barracks and looked back between the other barracks in line with ours and there was the bomb coming in low and afire with flames coming out the sides as well the back end. It was dropping down visibly and I think the British had hit it with anti-aircraft fire. When it got passed me and angled away at about 3 or 400 yards it hit a tree by this farmers chicken house and exploded. I saw the big red orange ball of fire and instinctly knew to lay down flat on the sidewalk and the wave of the explotion layed the hedgerow next to the barracks down at a 45 degree angle and right over my head. Later we saw the remains of the bomb when we went on pass to town.



This is about the layout where the bomb traveled and exploded.

Wayne Steen 363rd Ftr. Sq. Communications.

10252-33rd Ave. SW. , Seattle, WA. 98146

Russia lauds ex-pilot Ankeny for heroism in World War II

Fifty years after risking his life on 74 missions in World War II, Harry Ankeny has received a token of thanks for his heroism.

Ankeny was recently awarded a Russian Commemorative Medal for his role as an escort pilot with the 362nd Fighter Squadron, 357th Fighter Group, of the U.S. Air Force.

In 1944, Capt. Ankeny piloted P-51B's, C's and D's on numerous sorties to Germany and France, primarily from English airbases.

Most of the missions for the 8th Air Force were as bomber escorts in defense of besieged Russian troops.

One memorable sortie was a bomber escort run to Piryatin, Russia, San Severo, Italy, and to Yugoslavia.

During the Yugoslavian run to pick up wounded U.S. airmen downed in Yugoslavia, Ankeny came under heavy ground fire and dodged flak within a mile of the touch-down.

"The C-47's that we were escorting landed briefly in the mountains and were back in the air again within 10 minutes," he recalled. "It was very rugged land, but everything went OK."

One notable member of the 357th Fighter Group was Chuck Yeager.

Ankeny recalled that after 74 missions, his duty was done and the war was well under way, so there was no time for ceremony or citations.

However, the Air Force did recognize his efforts by awarding him two Distinguished Flying Crosses and a Distinguished Unit Citation.

In June, Russia took note of Ankeny's contributions.

In a letter from Russian Federation Ambassador Yuli Vorontsov, the diplomat wrote, "On behalf of President Boris Yeltsin, the Russian Government and the entire Russian people, I am pleased to inform you that you have been awarded the Commemorative Medal 'The 50th Anniversary of the Victory in the Great Patriotic War' (World War II)."

Vorontsov continued: "This medal is awarded to you in recognition of your courage and personal contribution to the Allied support of Russia during her fight for freedom against Nazi Germany.

"Please accept my heartfelt congratulations and wishes for your good health, well-being and every success."

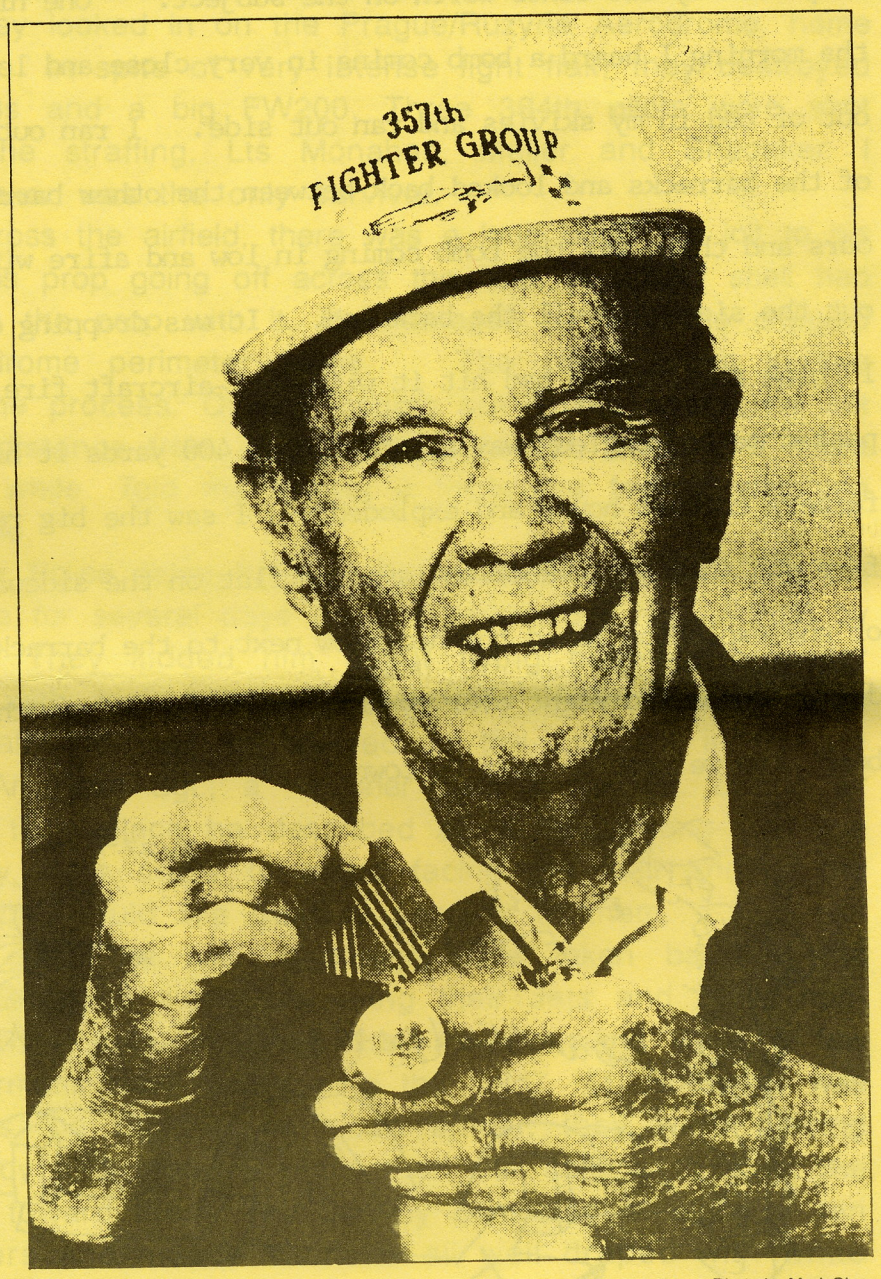


Photo by Mark Slupe

Harry Ankeny displays a Russian Commemorative Medal he received recently for pilot heroism during World War II.

Ankeny, a 20-year resident of the Estes Park area, said he was heartened by the recognition, even though it came 50 years after the fact.

Sen. Hank Brown has indicated a desire to present Ankeny with the award during a special ceremony recognizing his wartime efforts.

A newspaper article taken from the Rockland Journal News. Jan. 7, 1997
Contributed by Michael J. Blanco

Once top secret, Camp Shanks is subject of book



ROCKLAND HISTORY

RANDI WEINER

There are houses there now —hundreds, perhaps thousands of them.

They sit quietly in Orangeburg on land that has seen military troops flock through wearing the homespun uniforms of the Revolutionary war and the government khaki of World War II.

For generations, the 2,040-acre area around Western Highway at Orangeburg Road was farm land. Cabbage, tomatoes and corn covered the rolling hills.

But World War II changed that.

The military needed a place near New York City to gather troops before sending them overseas. The Army chose Orangeburg.

From 1943 to 1946, more than 1,362,630 American troops passed through the barracks of Camp Shanks on their way to the war in Europe. Another 533,869 passed through on their way back.

Soldiers, prisoners of war, orphans, military women and homesteaders all made their home on those acres before the last building in the area was razed in 1956.

This week marks the 54th anniversary of the official opening of Camp Shanks. The first raw barracks buildings welcomed the first group of soldiers on Jan. 4, 1943.

Scott Webber literally wrote the book about Camp Shanks. A small child when the camp was in operation, he was drawn to the story while living in Rockland.

"Here's a piece of real American history that took place in our own lifetime and maybe in 100 years somebody would (write) about it," Webber said. "I said 'why not do it while everyone is still alive.'"

According to Webber's book "Camp Shanks and Shanks Village: A Scrapbook," the Army decided to build its embarkation depot in Orangeburg in 1942.

On Sept. 25, property owners in the area —which spanned Western Highway from Erie Street in Blauvelt to Washington Street in Tappan — were assembled and told they had two weeks to move out. By January, the camp was open for business.

The facility was named for Maj. Gen. David Carey Shanks, who was commanding general of the New York Port of Embarkation during world War I.

For three of the next four years, what happened in Camp Shanks was a military secret. Information was kept out of the media to protect the troops who left regularly for Germany and France. Only after World War II ended did stories of the massive troop movements appear in newspapers and magazines, and on radio and television.

Camp Shanks was home to prisoners of war from 1944 until 1946. The prisoners, most from Germany and Italy, waited at Shanks before being returned to their homes.

The Italian prisoners were permitted to take jobs in the nearby villages. They occasionally got passes to visit relatives in Piermont, Westchester and New York City. The German soldiers were confined to the camp.

By 1946, the military was gone and the barracks were turned into one and two-bedroom apartments, three to a barracks. Now called Shanks Village, the units were home to G.I. veterans and their families who were attending area colleges and universities.

John Lovett, 76, of Pearl River, a Tappan native and former Orangetown supervisor, moved into Shanks Village in 1947. Already a college graduate, he commuted to New York City every day for his job with the U.S. Department of Commerce, relying on the Shanks Village cooperative car pool.

"People who had cars and who were driving to the city would make a tour of the main roads within the village. People would wait at various pickup points to be driven into the city. In the evening, the pickup was at Columbia University. In all the years, I never heard of anyone that was stranded," he said.

Jane Toan, 76, of Tappan, was pregnant when she and her husband, Dan, moved into a unit in 1947.

"It was full of graduate students mostly, all of us young and having children," Toan said. "We had all kinds of clubs, it was just full of the most exciting young minds and enthusiastic people. We had a wonderful choir — we had a lot of Juilliard students —and chess clubs and ballet clubs. Everybody was idealistic and cooperative."

By the early 1950s, many of the young graduates were moving out and into Rockland. Toan said about 200 families were interested in buying land near the village, and "put in about $5 or $10" each to buy land. "That was a lot of money in those days," she said.

The 200 eventually became 32. Those families purchased land in Tappan and built the Hickory Hill homes. Many of the original Shanks villagers still live there, she said.

By 1956, the barracks were falling apart, and the last residents were evicted. Much of the land was sold to developers.

"There was only a very small amount of nostalgia at seeing it disappear," Lovett said. "We recognized it had served its purpose."

There is a plaque on the Piermont Pier dedicated to the embarking soldiers. The Shanks Memorial statue sits at the intersection of Independence Avenue and Lester Drive in Orangeburg. And the Shanks Museum on Greenbush Road at the intersections of 303 and Route 340 is open weekends from June through October.

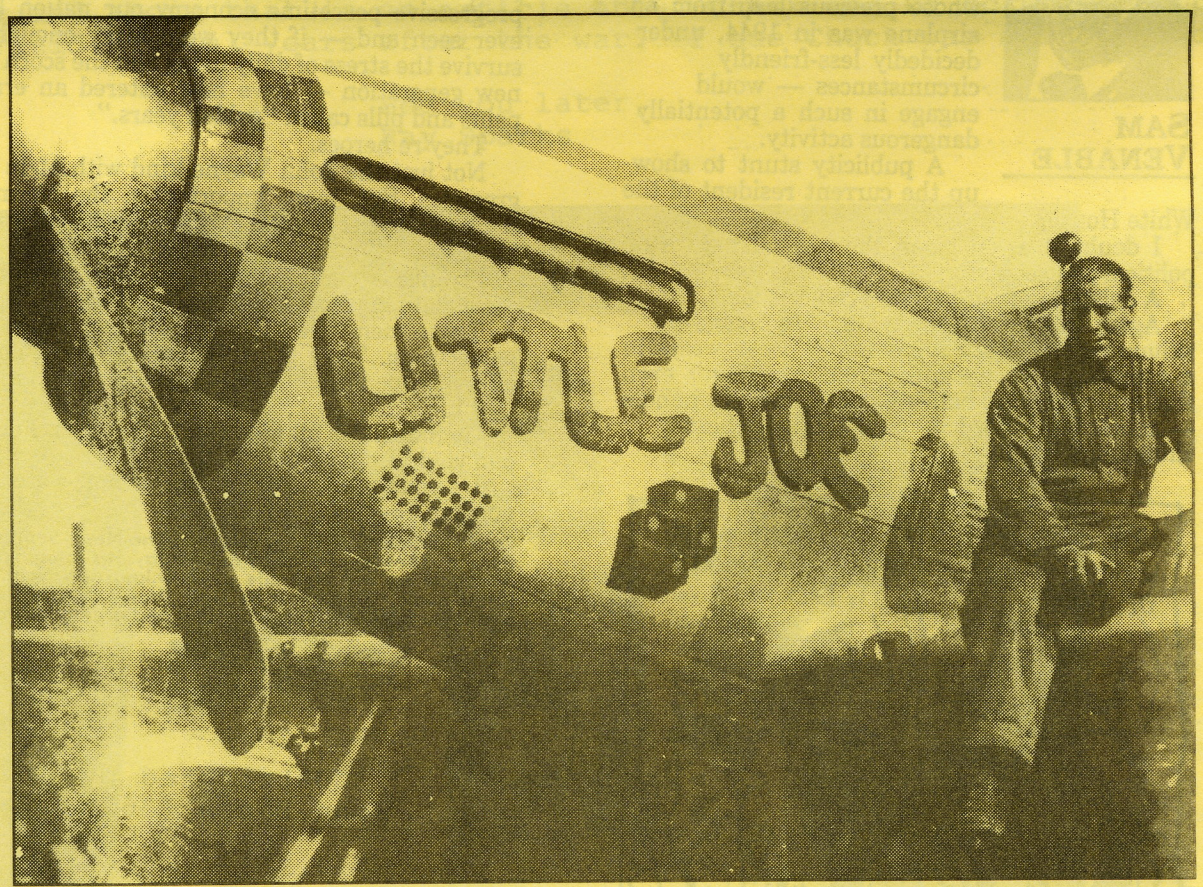
MEMOIRS
from Paul Slentz

Beer Party -- Marysville, CA 1943 -- Outdoors one evening!
Remember drinking with Pete, Capt. Ward, Major Hayes, W.O. Murley, Lt. Sweeney, McKinney, Sumner and other buddies. Guess I received my drinking wings that nite as I woke up the next morning, I didn't know how I got to the barracks. Sure had help from someone (it wasn't Helen)!

Remember one day in London (3 day pass) that I almost didn't have a room for the nite. Always stayed at the Cumberland Hotel at Hyde Park. Decided to go to the hotel to recover from TEA TIME about 4 P.M. Came up from the underground only to find that a V-2 rocket or buzz bomb had just hit the hotel. Glass and people everywhere and we couldn't get near it for a while. Lucked out as it didn't touch our room or floor and we were allowed to stay that nite. Good thing we weren't about 15 minutes earlier.

Will never forget the nite I was on the flight line changing plugs with flashlight about 11 P.M. Seen this German plane coming in with all guns firing (could see the tracers). Next thing I realized I was under the wing on the ground and that the tanks were fully gassed up. Good thing he missed or I wouldn't be able to recall that event.

Vividly remember the day that one of my new pilots burned out the brakes taxing in. This was the second time in a row and I said things to him I now regret. Should have lost my stripes for what I said to him. Did teach him to cut the R.P.M. from 1500 to 750 to taxi in and I had no more trouble.



Olmsted photo

"LITTLE JOE" G4-? Pilot Joe Cannon
362nd. Armament chief Ralph Crawford on the wing at Leiston

A 1st/SGT SPEAKS

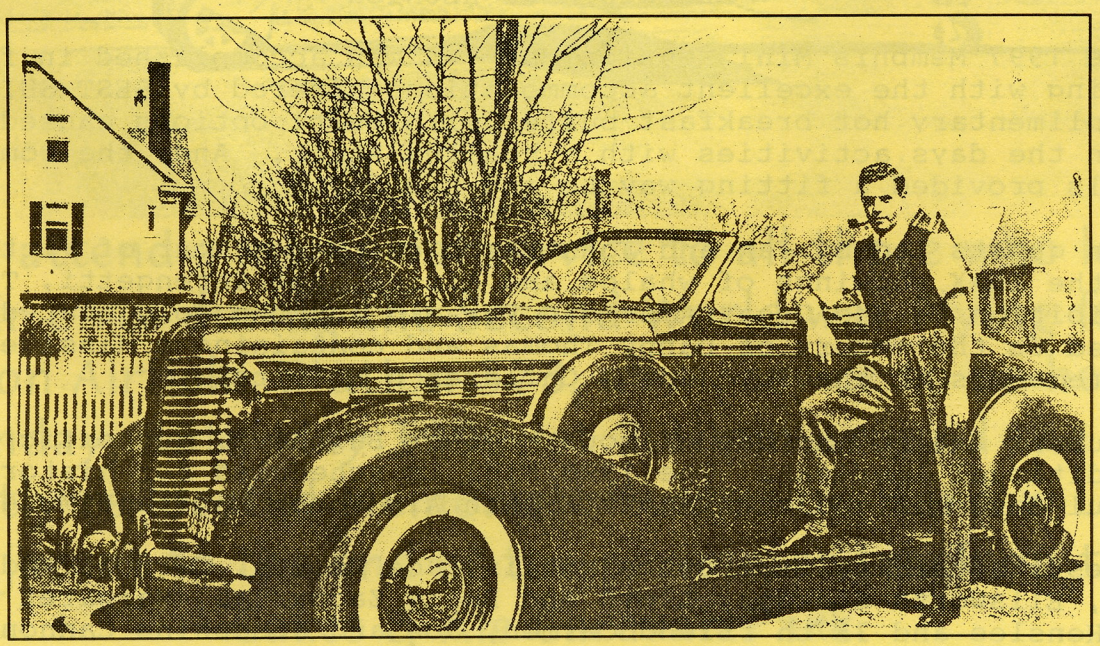
Hi Joe;

Thank you for letting me know about the 357th F.G. on the Discovery Channel. I would have missed it otherwise. I sure did enjoy it and it brought back memories of our old days at Leiston Air Base in England during the war.

Watching them in this show reminded me of how we used to stand outside and watch the young pilots coming back from a mission, as their rolls and half rolls told us how many planes they scored on that mission. How time flies! It seems only like yesterday! Thanks to you, I got to watch it on the day after my 83rd birthday. It was good to see Chuck Yeager, Andy Anderson and the others who I used to know.

I would like to tell you of a meeting which I enjoyed very much. I think it was about 1985 when my wife and I wintered in Texas near Harlingen. We heard that some of the 357th F.G. was going to put on an Air Show in Harlingen. Of course we went. I was wandering around while the planes were coming in and got to visiting with some of the personnel by the grandstand and I mentioned that Chuck Yeager was in my old 363rd F.S. and I had heard that he was going to be there and I'd sure like to get a chance to meet him again. One of them said he knew him and he wasn't there yet, for me to stick around close and he would tell Chuck that I was there and would like to see him. He flew in soon after that and it wasn't long that I looked up and here he came with a Big Grin on his face. He was very busy but visited a short time with my wife and me. I was calling him General Yeager out of respect when he said, "I'm not General to you, I'm just Chuck and you're just my old Sarge to me. You haven't changed all that much. Andy and I and all the pilots used to call you, The Old Man". To 21 yr. old pilots, I guess I seemed old as I was 10 years older. He soon had to run for a meeting. I was so happy to get to see and talk to him again. It made my day and it was a fine show.

"Ole Sarge",
Marvin E. Collet



Bill Overstreet and his 1938 Buick before his days in the military. The white wall tires were duplicated on his P-51 B6-O "Berlin Express"

REFLECTION # 5

RELIGION

The life of a combat fighter pilot in the 8th Air Force during World War II was essentially godless. There was a chaplain assigned our Group; but I don't know his name, I might have said hello to him once, but I had no meaningful communication with him at any time, individually, or with a group.

I never attended a church service, there were no funeral or memorial services on our base for deceased pilots. We never prayed together with or without a chaplain. What you see in the movies is strictly a figment of a Hollywood producers imagination. The 8th Air Force was scheduled to fly every day, weather permitting. There was no time off for Sunday, Christmas, Easter, 4th of July, or any other day; and since we always took off in the morning hours, the Group was over Germany during church services. As a Group or as a Squadron, the pilots did not pray together. Some pilots may have individually gone to the Chaplain for counseling, but I don't know of any who ever did.

To illustrate how incongruous it became, I will relate a true story. We flew 10 days on and 2 days off on a rotating basis. One of my 2 days off occurred on a Sunday and I went to visit my girl friend, Barbara Ayers, in Great Yarmouth. She was a beautiful refined young lady of about 19 to 20 years old and I enjoyed her company and that of her family. This particular Sunday morning we were walking in downtown Great Yarmouth, me in uniform and came upon a church, the Church of England. Barbara asked me to enter and attend services, and I advised her I could not. There was no place in a church for a person such as me doing what I was doing. It was absolutely inconceivable to me that I would enter that church, pray, ask forgiveness for what I had done, and then tomorrow go out and do the same damn things again - kill and destroy.

Churches simply were not for people like me. Barbara pleaded, and finally my old Lutheran training took over and I climbed the stairs and entered the church. The wrath of Hell did not descend on me, the roof did not cave in, and the walls of the church may have trembled a little, but did not collapse upon me.

The only religious experience in our group would have been individually, each pilot with his own God - one on one.

Yes, I sometimes prayed silently in my own solitude, and I had only one prayer.

I was a raw recruit out of flying school when I joined the Group as a replacement pilot, and I advanced rapidly. On my 29th mission I was a flight leader, and a squadron leader on my 39th mission. When you lead you assume the responsibility for those following. You train, discipline and lead. Flying isn't an exact science and sometimes a pilot doesn't do everything quite right and screws up, many times making no difference. but sometimes in critical situations, it is fatal. If you are leading, those with you suffer too.

My only prayer in England was that I would not fail those who were relying so heavily on me. It was then that I made peace with myself, tension left, and through self discipline and dedication to the job on hand, I again became the cool, calm, collected free spirit ready to kill and destroy.

Query: Is prayer an expression of self discipline? Or do you gain self discipline through prayer?

Even though there wasn't much religion, our squadron had a philosophy and maybe that was our religion:

"There are no goodbyes,
and there are no regrets."

There were no funerals, or memorial services, no celebrations of victory or completion of tours, no farewells, nothing. Just that inner warmth that all pilots share of

"There are no goodbyes,
and there are no regrets."

by Bob Schimanski (364th)