



*Madingley Cemetery, Cambridge UK
Wreath laying ceremony, May 20, 1985*

We've assembled here, May 20th, 1985 at Madingley Cemetery to honor the memory of our fallen comrades in arms who served with the Armed Services of the United States of America. Those lying beneath these crosses represent men and perhaps women who served in our Army, Navy, Air Force and related support groups. They all made the supreme sacrifice; that of laying down their lives, not willingly, but of necessity. As I view this cemetery I am deeply moved and even have mixed emotions. Emotions of pride and emotions of sorrow. Of pride in that I know they are worthy of all the honor and remembrance that we can bestow upon them for the great sacrifice which they made. Of sorrow, in that they forfeited all the fruits of the life which we are now enjoying. The majority of them were young men who never realized nor experienced the dreams of young manhood; that of courting a sweetheart, of taking marriage vows, buying a home, and raising a family. Of having grandchildren or even holding a baby in their arms. And in thinking about these we may inevitably ask ourselves the question, WHY! I believe I found the answer to this question in the life of David as recorded in the Old Testament.

As a young lad David went out to visit his brothers who were serving in the army of Israel. While there he saw the giant of the Philistine army named Goliath coming out each day and challenging the army of Israel to a duel. No man among the Israelites was brave enough to accept the challenge. David told his brothers that he would fight against Goliath. His brothers derided him saying, "Who are you, an inexperienced boy to challenge this great and noted warrior. Why don't you go back to taking care of your father's sheep, for that's all you are, just a shepherd boy." But David answered back, "Is there not a cause?" Later on in life David wrote in Psalms 30:14 these words. "There is a generation whose teeth are as swords and their jaw teeth as knives, to devour the poor from off the earth, and the needy from among men." I believe we have lived in this generation that David prophesied about. We have seen the rise of Communism by Lenin and Marx, Naziism by Hitler, Fascism by Mussolini and the desires of expansionism by Tojo of Japan. All of these men and their principles were as teeth and jaw teeth, whose ultimate end was to subjugate peoples and nations; to devour the poor from off the earth.

So there was a cause for which these young men here at Madingley died, and that cause represented freedom, personal liberty and peace, which in themselves are costly commodities. These graves represent the cost of these intangible commodities which cannot be purchased except through the exchange of pain and death. So let us always honor and remember them and their achievements. They should never be forgotten.

In closing, let me say that there is another cross and another grave that should be important to all of us, but they are not here at Madingley. The cross is the one upon which Jesus Christ died

for your sins and mine as our substitute. The grave is the one in which He lay, but it is now empty, for God raised Him from the dead. As the scripture says, "He was delivered for our offenses and raised again for our justification." This He did, not of necessity but willingly. As these young men gave their lives to conquer the evil forces of humanity, so God gave His Son for us; that Death, Hell and the Grave, the evil forces of the spiritual world may be conquered in our behalf.

THE MEMOIRS OF THE "COCA-COLA KID" (GERRY DARNELL)

Welcome back to Podington! For some of you this is your first time back, others have already returned once or twice to where it all happened forty years ago. How time flies. There will be memories some sad, some happy; you will recall the good times and the bad, but I'm sure you will remember especially those who perished to preserve the peace we now enjoy.

But for me Podington has mainly happy memories, for as a child of nine years old I spent much of my time on the Base, at the Red Cross Club where my brother Danny worked during the war years. I remember quite vividly playing the piano near the stage; "In the Mood" was my 'Party Piece.' I also learned to play snooker; the GI's stood me on a box to reach the table and the cue was three times my height! The phonograph in the corner was nearly always playing "Paper Doll" and the Station Band also practiced in the Library; I now realize the Library should really have been the quiet area of the Club!!

I remember the American cyclists coming into Bozeat. Eddie, Larry, "Red," Porky, Frank Sherlock, Charlie Mildenberger, Buck Leatherwood, "Funnel," to name but a few. One I especially look forward to seeing in this party is John Bennett, along with several more 92nd veterans whom I have met during my two visits to the USA. These visits took me to the home of a wonderful family in Oklahoma—Mr. and Mrs. "Pinky" Biggers. "Pinky" made friends with my wife's parents and still, to this day, carries a picture of my wife—in pigtails and all of seven years old.

I recall the laundry my Mother did for one crew, lying in its usual corner awaiting collection. Tommy Schroeder always collected it in the "Recon" van and there came the day when he collected it but never delivered any more. There was much sadness and quietness in our home and I now realize that crew were lost.

One man I mentioned above was "Porky;" that's how we knew him—simply "Porky." This man's talent on the piano was really something. He played in the Bozeat pubs and Working Mens' Club; Boogie Woogie was his pride and joy and indeed everyone enjoyed his playing. I often wonder what did eventually happen to him; it was said he shot himself, but I hope this wasn't true. This brings me to a very tragic event at Bozeat. Leonard Clark was playing cricket with a few of us lads to while away the time until his girl friend turned up for a date; he bent down to pick up the ball, there was a "bang" and poor Clarky was bleeding badly. The pistol he was carrying had somehow discharged, the bullet perforating a main artery, and he died in the Cottage Hospital at Wellingborough. This rocked us all as we all loved Clarky. I can hear him now, singing his favourite song "I'm Thinking About the Wabash;" he was a great guy.

On a happier note, Christmas was a happy time at the Red Cross Club, with parties arranged for us by the GI's; we were entertained royally. During the party or afterwards, we had our 'handouts'—brown paper bags containing oranges, apples, chewing gum, candies, etc. Then we were driven home in the large covered lorries (trucks) provided especially for us.

Saturday night was Dance Night at Bozeat Church (Village) Hall and at these dances we had a good supply of gum provided by the GI's we knew and also by the members of the band from the

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Base when they played. The names stay in my mind—Juicy Fruit, Beechnut, Wrigleys, Dentyne, Beemans, and later on, Orbit.

I remember visiting a B-17 crash, just outside Hinwick, when my friend and I asked the crash guard for some "Gum, chum." He replied that he was sorry he hadn't any, but gave us some chewing tobacco! This we chewed; we also swallowed the stuff and didn't attend school for two weeks!!

I lived dangerously at Podington Airfield, behind the shooting-in butts. We had an old bomb box, tarred inside, and used it as a boat on the lake. All this happened whilst B-17s were testing their guns and bullets often ricocheted near us. GI's also used their Colt 45's to shoot rabbits in the woods, where we *should not* have been anyway!

When we counted the aircraft back in after a mission, we used to particularly look for those whose individual identification letters, on the fin below the Triangle B, coincided with the initials of our Christian names—in my case, G. It's very sad now to realize how many times aircraft 'G' failed to return.

These are a few of my memories of the 92nd at Podington; during your stay here for the Memorial Dedication, I hope we can talk and recall some more highlights of those days.

Editor's Note: Gerry was a member of the UK Committee



Memorial Chapel—Madingley

SECRETARY'S COLUMN

This edition is going out rather soon after the UK dedication and some of the data cannot be included because it has not arrived in time to make press time. This was the easiest of our gatherings in terms of planning and execution. The cooperation of Tamarac in arranging transportation, accommodations and meals was outstanding. The coordination of Tamarac with the UK Committee made the whole affair very enjoyable for all of us. I know that the constant communications I had with Dick D'Amato were transmitted to the Committee as Dick went over to the UK several times to personally visit with them and go over the events, visiting the places involved. We are especially appreciative to the members of the committee who tended to our needs and escorted us at every turn, and finally our heartfelt thanks to the Ladies of the village who prepared the excellent buffets.

When I look back at everything which took place and recall the memorial service, I could not help but think of three of our group who contributed so much to the success of our organization and in the long run contributed to our being able to pull off an affair of this magnitude. I remember John Mitchell who was literally our founder. He and Mary researched the names and addresses of enough of us to host the first reunion in Dayton and the subsequent one two years later in Denver. He spent the time between the two reunions tracking down additional members and posting notices in newspapers all over the country. Second, I remember our first President, Col. Jim Sutton who passed away shortly after the Spokane reunion. Jim and Mid made every reunion in spite of both their health problems. His sage advice and leadership was the glue that continually strengthened our

group through the years. Finally I remember Don Parker, our first vice president. While Don was not as visible as Jim Sutton, he stepped out to take an officers position when we were trying to get organized and incorporated. Now before I get a lot of mail telling me that John Mitchell is alive, I am well aware that he is lying in a nursing home incapacitated and dropped contact with us at the request of Mary.

Your secretary is indebted to John Bosko, Sam Yandian and Gordon Clubb for their photos of the Podington scenes. These photos are being placed in the archives. We are also indebted to Sam Yandian for the recording cassette enabling us to transcribe the Roger Freeman and Kemp McLaughlin addresses.

NOW FOR THE BIG NEWS: Ray Griffith, the 1986 Reunion Chairman has announced that it will be TAMPA on October 8 thru 11. He has blocked room in the Admiral Benbow Inn (five minutes from Tampa International Airport, and twenty minutes from McDill). A tentative schedule has been formulated and as soon as it is firmed up, it will be published in the News. Such events as a tour of Busch Gardens, a dinner cruise on Tampa Bay, Golf, etc. are under consideration. Ray is getting help from Woolsey Mills and Chuck Andrews. If there are any other members in the vicinity willing to assist, call Ray at (813) 629-1432. The 1986 Reunion of the 8AHFS follows the next week end on the East Coast of Florida. **MAKE YOUR PLANS NOW TO ATTEND.**

We now go on to the 50th ANNIVERSARY OF THE B-17 in Seattle on 26-28th of July. The host for the 92nd Reunion are Bob Chesterfield (206) 624-3440 and John Bosko (206) 232-8365. The last listing (April 26th) I recieved from Bob indicated that he had reservations for 100 people which included wives.

Those of you still contemplating going please contact the Hosts as showing up unexpectedly creates problems for them. If you plan to attend and stay with friends in the area also notify the Hosts so they can include you in any plans they make for get togethers.

The 446th REUNION will be held 15-18 August at the SHOWBOAT MOTEL AND SENECA LAKE LANDING RESTAURANT. Those of you interested in attending and who have not received a brochure outlining the program, write to John Shorrock, 276 E. Middle Tpe, Manchester, CT 06040. Cost per couple is \$176.90.

The 407th BOMB SQUADRON REUNION dates are August 5-8th, and will be centered at the Stouffer's Valley Forge Hotel at King of Prussia, PA. Bill MacTavish is the contact and can be reached at 441 S. Lewis Road, Royersford, PA 19468. Telephone No. 215-948-9425. Bill advises that James Griffith, CO and 1st Sgt Gaither Reams will be in attendance. It should be noted that the 407th reunions initiated by the Reynolds started before our 92nd Memorial Group organized. Good Luck fellows.

The 8TH AIR FORCE HISTORICAL SOCIETY REUNION FOR 1985 is scheduled for 15-19 October in Wichita, Kansas. Those of you interested and need info should contact 8AF REUNION, 6424 Torreon Drive NE, Albuquerque, NM 87109. This is a big event, so do not figure to appear in Wichita and expect to get hotel reservations or attend the seminars.

John Davison's Diary is now available at six dollars each (\$6). The price was reduced by fifty cents due to a savings from the printer. Those who have ordered one and did not get the refund please advise if I missed you.

Finally we have restocked the B-17 tie tac and the Triangle B combination tie tac and lapel pin. One 326 BS Patch is left over from the last order. Those of you still wanting patches will have to contact the Secretary as it takes ten (10) to make a minimum order. The "Route as Briefed" is no longer in stock; however, I have been able to help the last few who ordered by drawing on the few bookstores that still have them on the shelves.