



# 783<sup>rd</sup> Latrine O Gram

MARCH 2003

Fifteenth Air Force  
55<sup>th</sup> Bombardment Wing

## 57 YEARS UNTOLD STORY

64 PAGES

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 24, 2002

FOCUS: WORLD WAR II

For 57 years, a former prisoner of war searched for the man who saved his life. Now he's finally getting a chance to say thanks. And he didn't have to go far at all.

# A rescue, a reunion

By CHARITY VOGEL  
News Staff Reporter

Francis Heimiller always knew he owed the mysterious American soldier his life. But for 57 years, he was never able to say thank you.

This Christmas, all that has changed. Here's the story of how Heimiller and his lifesaver, another Army Air Forces veteran named Eugene Kulczyk, found each other this month in the most unlikely of places: Their own hometown.

It was March 1945. Heimiller, a 21-year-old Army Air Forces gunner from Swormville, was lying in a filthy barn somewhere in the vast open farmlands between Danzig and Berlin.

German guards were telling Heimiller, who was a prisoner of war, to move. The prisoners were being forced to march by the German army, which was retreating before the advancing Allies. But Heimiller couldn't budge.

He had hurt his spine falling out of his B-17 bomber when it was hit by enemy fire over Germany, and the pain when he tried to stand up was excruciating. Heimiller decided he would just lie in the barn, and if the Germans killed him — as they often did, when prisoners wouldn't get up and march — well, then that would be the end.

Just then, an American soldier walked up, pushing a little wooden wagon.

The stranger loaded Heimiller onto the wagon, over his protests. When Heimiller tried to shove him away, crying out in pain, the man picked up a wooden stick and threatened Heimiller with it.

"I was ready to give up, but he wasn't," Heimiller remembers. "And he never did give up, either."

For two months and one week — time, to prisoners, tends to be very specific — the stranger, 24-year-old Kulczyk, pushed and pulled Heimiller in the little wagon.

With the straggling train of American prisoners, the two men walked for miles under German guard. They traveled through open fields and down cobblestone roads. They crossed the Elbe River three times. At night, they slept out in the open, or in barns they happened to pass along the way.



Francis Heimiller, left, and Eugene Kulczyk, reunited after 57 years, at the Department of Veterans Affairs service office on Main Street. Behind them are Robert MacPherson and Edwin Grzywa, fellow former prisoners of war.

As they walked, the two men spoke to each other — but not of home. Beyond exchanging names and swapping military talk, they never discussed their backgrounds.

Instead, they talked about a favorite subject of prisoners of war: food.

Being an American prisoner of war in World War II meant slow starvation. Heimiller, who weighed about 180 pounds when he entered the Army Air Forces, lost 70 pounds while he was a prisoner. Kulczyk was down to a mere 80 to 90 pounds by the time the war ended.

"He talked about one thing, potato pan-

cakes. He was telling me how to cook them and everything," recalls Heimiller, smiling at the memory. "Finally I said to him, 'Shut up.'"

On the evening of May 14, the group of prisoners was locked in a barn out in the open countryside. As they slept, their German captors stole away.

The next day a group of British soldiers unlocked the barn door and liberated the starving American men.

"They said, 'Hey, Yanks, the war is

### 57 YEARS LATER

Quid Fit Umbriagos continue proving cream always rises to the top. This news article will document the details of a Quid Fitter who conducted himself unselfishly above and beyond under the most trying circumstances. And -for 57 years never revealed his act to not even his wife or any of their 8 children.

Since 1983 when we put the first Latrine O Gram together stories of Quid Fit deeds have been received from time to time proving what a special group of 'Drafted Recruits' wore the Quid Fit patch. These stories and some that cannot be printed because of the accompanying liabilities prove the 783rders were rightfully the 'Kings of the Hill'.

Gene was the Engineer-Gunner on the Jesse Jumper Crew 'scragged' on the 8 July 1944 raid on the Florisdorf Oil Refinery near Vienna. The Group was awarded their first Presidential Unit Citation on this mission. 22 aircraft were launched; assembled; and headed for the target. Upon reaching the IP

# POWs: Usual question, but this time, an answer

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over." said Kulczyk, who was a flight engineer in the 15th Air Force, 783rd Squadron, 465th Bomb Group.

After that day, Heimiller and Kulczyk lost track of each other. They came home to the United States and focused on living normal, happy lives.

Heimiller, now 79, worked for Curtiss-Wright Corp. and then for Continental Can. He and his wife, Lila, have been married for 47 years; they raised two children.

Buffalo native Kulczyk, now 82, worked for Bell Aircraft and then Ford Motor Co. He married his wife, the former Mary Michalak, just months after being liberated — on Oct. 6, 1945. The couple has eight children and many grandchildren.

But something was always missing, especially for Heimiller, who served in the 8th Air Force, 94th Group.

He was on a quest, for decades, to find and thank the man who saved his life. He checked phone books but somehow had no luck. Whenever he would meet another ex-POW or Army Air Forces veteran, he would ask one question: Do you know a man named Eugene Kulczyk?

For 57 years, no one did.

Then, this month, Heimiller joined a discussion group for for-

mer POWs at the Department of Veterans Affairs service office on Main Street. When he stood before the group to introduce himself, he finished with the question he was beginning to lose hope that anyone would ever answer:

Does anyone here know a man named Eugene Kulczyk?

Every head in the room turned to look at Kulczyk, who was sitting in the corner.

And both men began to cry.

"I was stunned and dumbfounded when he started coming across the room," said Kulczyk, a man of few words and restrained emotions. Of his actions back in 1945, he said: "I couldn't leave him. You don't think about things being hard — you just do them."

"It put tears in my eyes," said a former POW who witnessed the reunion, Edwin Grzywa, who spent 14 months as a prisoner of the German army.

"It makes me very emotional," added another onlooker, Robert MacPherson, who was a POW for six months in Germany.

But the moment was most meaningful for Heimiller, who finds himself, in 2002, thanking the man who saved his life 57 years ago.

"All I could think of was Jesus carrying the cross, and I was his cross," said Heimiller. "I was never so proud of my country in all my life."

and turning on the bomb run 9 planes had aborted leaving 13 planes that had formed into two boxes constituting the 465th Bomb Group effort against one of Hitler's most valuable petroleum supplies. The Group weathered the heavy and intense Vienna flak and knocked out the refinery. Once clear Jerry fighters struck 'scragging' Jumper. Last seen they were making a sweeping, descending 180 degree turn to the right. For years we pondered why they had turned back toward the target rather than continuing to toward Yugo & home. It wasn't until 'Ole Droopy Drawers' attended a reunion and revealed the extent of battle damage including the cockpit where even the feathering knobs were shot off. At that interval of the aerial war for an entire Bomb Group consisting of only 13 planes to attack and inflict such heavy damage to so heavily a defended target and return 12 planes was considered quite an achievement

Gene and his bride Mary are reunion faithful attending both Mini as well as Regular affairs. They arrive early to be the official Squadron greeters generally accompanied by their friends and fellow POW Cleo & Susanne Jackson. Reliable sources inform us Gene never unpacks his suitcase between reunions.

Comments have been made about the shots he and the writer continually fire at one another. Now that Gene is a genuine 'K Ration Box Hero' we will agree to show him the proper respect by redirecting our efforts to convince his fellow POW & Pollock Bo Bolinski he must now accept 'Ole Droopy Drawers' as the Numero Uno Squadron Pollock.

**CONGRATULATIONS! WE SALUTE GENE KULCZYK! A GREAT QUID FIT UMBRIAGO!**

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"Uncle Willie!"

## GIs' PAL DEAD AT 81

The passing of Bill Mauldin was a personal loss to many. His cartoons were a great contribution to easing life on the hill. With the arrival of the 783rd living conditions were non-existent—no tents; no cots; C & K Rations the food staples; not so much as a Lister Bag of water—just a rocky hill with scrub trees. Initially, one canteen of water per day & flak helmet served as the shower that came later. Scrambling & scrounging to improve the Squadron area while commencing combat operations and taking our first losses left morale at a low point. It is still remembered when a person was fortunate to come by a Stars & Stripes they would first turn to Bill Mauldin's humorous cartoons to boost their spirits. All will remember officers were targets of opportunity. In later life replaced by politicians. Illustrating the GIs' plight & lifestyles were his most chosen subjects. The saying—one picture is equal to 1 000 words truly described BILL MAULDIN'S cartoons.

**DURING HIS LIFE'S TOUR BILL MAULDIN MADE LIFE BETTER FOR ALL!**

# HAPPY BIRTHDAY FOLKS



<u>78 YEARS</u> WILFORD DAVIS	<u>82 YEARS</u> HARRIET COHEN	<u>84 YEARS</u> JOHN WALKER	<u>89 YEARS</u> JACK BERNSTEIN
<u>79 YEARS</u> WALLY VOLKMAN	RALPH SMITH	ANDY ANDERSON	
<u>81 YEARS</u> CHARLIE PAYNE	LE ROY CRENSHAW	<u>85 YEARS</u> HAL BROWN	<u>95 YEARS</u> LOUIE JACKSON
	<u>83 YEARS</u> ISIDORE GERSTNER	SAM CINTOLO	

MAY EACH ENJOY MANY MANY MORE

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## QUESTIONS EACH AMERICAN NEEDS TO CONSIDER

When the Germans UNCONDITIONALLY SURRENDERED didn't that mean they were a conquered nation?  
Didn't the Allies at the insistence and using primarily United States tax dollars help rebuild and return this conquered nation and people their freedom?  
Did not the United States bail the French out of both WW I and WW II with them never repaying their war debts?  
Did not the United States deliver millions in supplies at a great loss of American lives to the Russians during WW II without which the Germans would have kicked Ivan's useless and collective behinds—and which they have never repaid?  
Did you know that it was primarily American Exploration & Production Specialists that drilled; developed and furnished the know how to produce Iraq's oil properties the many years until becoming cross threaded prior to Desert Storm?  
With the Iraqis not having the know how; capabilities of manufacturing the needed equipment; and other capabilities to operate their oil fields; military & industrial needs—guess who jumped in and has been doing the job for them at exorbitant prices while gaining favor with Saddam and also building his tunnels and furnishing know how for weapons of mass destruction?  
Anyone with knowledge of foreign exploration & production; industrial manufacturing can tell you— it is the Germans'; the French; and the Russians laughing at the 'Dumb Americans' while filling their coin purses.  
Has it ever dawned on each and every reader why these three ungrateful countries have participated in the United Nations deliberations aiding; abetting & supporting Saddam in his 12 year 'Iraqi Waltz'?  
Does the 30% of the Americans bashing our President & protesting realize they are supporting the above?  
Saddest—why has the American News Media failed their fiduciary responsibilities and shown complete 'Lock Jaw' not reporting the above well documented facts?  
My Dear Ole Mother always said, "birds of a feather always flock together"! The older we become the smarter she was! .  
For almost 8 years we have written the LOG and always attempted to avoid politics and religion. The above expose is being presented in the sincere belief each and every American has both the right and obligation to address the true facts of such an important issue. Once informed it is certainly an individual's choice to wet their pampers; grovel before the 'Baghdad Butcher'; while hugging a 'Kraut'; kissing a 'Frog'; and idolizing a 'Rooskie' in their support of these ungrateful mercenaries capitulating on the situation to pick Saddam's pockets while ignoring the consequences that must come sooner or later. They will be ice skating in hell before we will. The more we chewed on the above distasteful ingredients the larger they became until it was necessary to spit them out!  
It is hoped the majority of our members accept the above was offered in a constructive spirit in the hopes each will support our President and most of all each and every fighting person who may go into battle—may the 'Big Sky Pilot' watch over him or her! written 3-6-03

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# 783<sup>rd</sup> BOMB SQUADRON REUNION

## Savannah, Georgia

### OCTOBER 2 – 5, 2003

The decision is made and plans are progressing. Be sure to set these dates aside. **Full details and your registration form will be in the June LOG.**

Lola and I spent two days in Savannah at the end of January on our way to Florida and again on the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> of March on our return trip. With a lot of help from Tom and Ann Tennille, who live in Savannah, we were able to complete most of the basic plans for our reunion.

Savannah is a beautiful city with a great history. James Oglethorpe landed on the shores of the Savannah River in 1733 and chartered the 13<sup>th</sup> and final crown colony. The city is laid out on a grid of streets with public squares at regular intervals (I counted 21 squares in the Historic District alone). The official guide of Savannah states, "Savannah has long been a treasure; in 1864 during the Civil War, General William Tecumseh Sherman, having captured the city for the Union and spellbound by its beauty, deemed it a fitting Christmas present for President Abraham Lincoln." You will tour the city on Friday morning (Tom and Ann are completing our tour plans as I write this letter).

Our headquarters will be at the new Best Western Bradbury Suites located at the intersection of I-95 and US 80. We have 40 of the 92 rooms blocked out for our reunion. The rooms are actually two-room suites with cable TV, coffee maker, microwave, refrigerator, hairdryer, iron and ironing board, and a dataport. They also provide free shuttle to the airport which is only 2 miles away. I should also mention an indoor pool, Jacuzzi, steam room and exercise room. Don't let all this scare you because we have a negotiated price of \$74 for our rooms even though we will be there during the "high" season.

Getting to Savannah by car is easy and our hotel is just off I-95. I count 10 airlines that provide service to the Savannah/Hilton Head International Airport and there are over 40 direct flights out daily. Savannah is also a regular stop for Amtrak and Greyhound busses.

**SPECIAL FEATURE** - You will be able to walk out the side door of our motel and there sits the Mighty Eighth Air Force Museum. We have made special arrangement so that all during your stay you will have access to the museum by wearing your name tag, which we will provide when you register. It only seems fitting that a squadron of the **Amazing Fifteenth** visit the museum of the **Mighty Eighth**. Oh yes, our banquet on Saturday night will be in the museum.

I would be remiss if I didn't mention golf. Tom, Lola and I tried out the course we have tentatively selected. I won't say it was tough but I lost a ball on each of the first three holes and quit counting after that. The Course Rating is 71.7 and the Slope Rating is 132. Sam will love it. Maybe we can get Amanda Workman, Andy Anderson's granddaughter, to give us a few lessons (she is the golf coach at one of the colleges in Savannah).

If you haven't visited Savannah, you will be pleasantly surprised; it is a great seaport city. If you have been there, you know you will enjoy a revisit. We hope to see you there in October.

Harry Fike

## PILLS & USED UP PARTS REPLACEMENT DEPARTMENT



**LEONARD CLUTTS**-was working on the line at Davis Monthan as a Crew Chief when Colonel Andrus invited him to join the Squadron and become a member of a Combat Crew. During OTU he flew with a number of crews before choosing to become the Engineer on the Greenwood crew and having his 'Tail Feathers' plucked on the July 19 'Munich Milk Run' after making over 35 missions. Having undergone open heart surgery some years back the 81 years of hard living has tumbled his gyro and initiated his 'slud" down the hill of life. The past couple of months have found him playing revolving doors in and out of different hospitals receiving treatment for multiple health problems.

**DOE EINECKER**-as previously reported is waging a determined battle with reoccurring Big C. As part of her struggles continuous & periodic Chemo treatments for the remainder of her life that would buckle big,, strong boys are only a part of her medical routine. In between treatments rather than lying down and surrendering she manages the Red Cross Blood donations for her area proving us correct describing her as being tougher than a 'Junk Yard Guard Dog'. Never forget during her long physical struggles she has had to drag a heavy anchor in that guy Joe who parks his shoes under her bed. When we say heavy that may be the under description for both the 20 & 21st centuries considering during her problems he backed the danged car over her adding insult to injury.

**DORIS KAY**-sometime back she detoured onto a bumpy health road and has suffered physical problems causing repeated trips to the hospital and need for continuous health care. Being a retired Nurse you can bet your boots & spurs she is waging a determined battle. Her visits to the hospital will perhaps allow her welcomed respites from Don's frequent, "THERE I WAS 20 000 FEET ON OUR BACK WITH FLAK SO THICK WE COULD DROP THE GEAR AND TAXI ON IT".

**MIKE MAGAZZINE**-the Squadron's 'MR DO EVERYTHING' decided to take up acrobatics by trying a 'rolling somersault' down their basement stairs 'busting' his rear end while severely damaging his pride. A mouse in the corner witnessing this spectacle probably thought it was seeing an Italian Bowling Ball bouncing down the steps. Doesn't old age, bifocals and unsure equilibrium make those 'Golden Years' an enjoyment? However, having known that 'Little Guinea' for almost 60 years you can take our guarantee and bet your retirement income he will be present when the next bugle blows--- ready to tote more than his share of the load..

**BARBARA MURPHY**-the wife of Alvin Murphy 'scragged" on the August 3, 1944 'Friedrichsafen Slaughter'-- like so many is finding her 'Golden Years'----'Days of Care with Doctors and Hospital Visits'. Bless her-- she deserves the best of care ! We will always remember the Nashville Reunion attended while recuperating from having a Macular Hole of The Retina patched leaving us blind as a bat. While staggering along she and Alvy would suddenly appear out of no where and we find their hands on our arms guiding and keeping us from stumbling over some obstacle. It comes to mind the years are unkindest to those most deserving each time we receive word of her health decline.

**CLEO JACKSON**-the 'Ole Kriege POW" and official Reunion Greeter had to make another pit stop at the 'Butcher Shop' so his 'Old Man's ' problems could be medicated & treated. Would you believe he attempted to keep his problem a top secrete not realizing the cat was out of the bag before completing his first nites stay. At last report he had escaped and back home well and happy allowing Susanne to wait on him hand and foot. Those Krauts sure spoiled those useless rascals during their R & R stay.

**KATHY & MICKEY SCHWARTZ**-when misery gets in a household it seems to wear it's welcome out once and all before departing. Kathy has encountered health problems requiring hospitalization and further treatments and care. At the same time Mickey has been diagnosed with macular degeneration in one eye being fortunate the other was spared.

**HARRIET COHEN**-better know as Madam Queen the Den Mother, who attends the reunions gathering her flock of our daughters leading them astray, is battling eye problems. With the vision in one almost gone she and her eye specialist are waging a determined battle to save the sight in the other. Being a tough 'Ole Hen ' we will wager she will give it one good battle. Together we are the only two surviving relics and remains of what once was the 50 mission Petranek Crew.

**CHERI FIKE AMHOF**-that good looking, long legged daughter of Harry & Lola Fike, who has worked and contributed so much to our past Reunions, recently encountered what could have been a most serious medical problem. Suffering a sinking spell she was rushed in for a angyplasty exam. It was determined at some point and time she had suffered a undetected heart attack possibly during an 8 hour back surgery some years back. All will be happy to learn with proper rest, medication and rehabilitation she should make a good recovery.

**CONGRATULATIONS! MIKE & SARAH MAGAZZINE-MARRIED 50 YEARS  
AND STILL HONEYMOONING-ITALIAN STALLION POWER IN ACTION!**

**CONGRATULATIONS JOE & DOE EINECKER-MARRIED 55 YEARS  
A LUCKY GUY TO FIND A COURAGEOUS LADY!**

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### **HOT POOP FROM 3RD STOOL DOWN**

**SNOW BIRDS FLEE UNINHABITABLE ENVIRONMENTS**-with our President & wife leading the exodus; Bobby Wills; Floyd Coffield; Sam & Bea Cintolo; Stan & Elaine Pace; Frank & Edith Goplen to name only a few have outdistanced the geese seeking warmer climates & relief..

**HARRIET COHEN**-is strutting like a peacock having just been blessed with her 4th Great Grandchild the 3rd girl and one boy. **CONGRATULATIONS! GRANDMA GRUNTI**

**MELANIE JONES**-the grand daughter of Charlie payne is approaching completing her first year at the USAF Academy.

**CONGRATULATIONS MELANIE! ON A JOB  
WELL DONE**

**COME ONE! COME ALL!**



**ALL ABOARD!!**



**SAVANNAH REUNION  
OCT 2-5 2003  
THURS-SUNDAY**

**BEST WESTERN BRADBURY SUITES**

YOU CAN BET YOUR BOOTS & SPURS IF THE GOOD LORD IS WILLING AND THE CREEK DOESN'T RISE GENE & MARY KULCZYK ALONG WITH CLEO & SUSANNE JACKSON WILL BE THERE TO GREET YOU AND THE DEPENDABLE CORE GROUP THAT MAKE MOST OF THE 'ROUND UPS'

ALL OF YOU PROCRASTINATORS HAD BETTER FORGET YOUR ALIBIS AND CHECK YOUR HOUR GLASSES OF LIFE FOR YOU MAY FIND THE LIMITED SAND LEFT IS SLIM TO NONE WITH EACH REMAINING DAY BEING A PRECIOUS GIFT AND FEW IN NUMBER

THIS MAY WELL BE THE LAST TIME YOU HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO VISIT WITH OLD & VALUED FRIENDS THAT ONCE RISKED THEIR LIVES FOR YOU AND WERE UNLIKE ANY YOU HAVE HAD SINCE.

EACH AND EVERYONE START MAKING HIS AND HER PLANS NOW TO MAKE THIS A GREAT REUNION AND GET TOGETHER!

PAST HISTORY PROVES HARRY & LOLA WILL MAKE IT UNFORGETTABLE!

QUID FIT!  
SAM

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