

**Col. EC. "Ned" Humphreys, Jr.**

We are saddened as all veterans of World War II are, by the passing of Col. EC "Ned" Humphreys. He was the editor of the Bombardiers Newsletter, a high quality magazine that not only served the Bombardiers in his association, but other veterans as well. He featured great articles on the several bombsights used by the USAF, and other stories of bombardier activities. He always published an up to date list of bombardiers passings and maintained an up to date list of all WWII Air Force units planning reunions.



"Ned" Humphreys

Over the years, your editor had contact with him many times and he always was happy to share his news articles with us. Col. "Ned" Humphreys, Jr. USAF Ret. died at the age of 76. He was born in Memphis, Tennessee and was raised in Mississippi. A resident of Spanish Fort, AL for ten years, Col. Humphreys retired from the U.S. Air Force in 1969 with over 31 years of service. He began his military career with the Mississippi National Guard. Our hearts go out to his wife Marcia and his three sons and their families. He will be missed by many.

**1/Sgt Claude Basler, 827 Sq.**

Dear Bud & Bea:

We are so very sorry to note in The Torretta Flyer that you had to have more heart surgery. I hope you're back to good health by now. We're looking forward to seeing you in San Diego in October. We spent most of February in Arizona as we had a lot of snow this past winter in West Virginia. Some time after Christmas, we realized we hadn't heard from Claude Basler at Christmas time. After we returned from Phoenix the end of February, we called Annette, his wife, who told us what we had feared. He died of leukemia on December 6, 1995. I asked Russell to write what he knew about "Blackie" and the following are his memories. Blackie and Annette attended the Harrisburg reunion and I met them then. We visited them in their home in Hummelstown, PA one time since then. I believe they had two sons and one daughter.

I met Claude Basler in April 1944 He had just finished radio school. We met at Kansas City for crew formation. and went to Mountain Home, Idaho for crew flying training (phase training) There was Pilot John H Wise ("Buster"), Co/pilot Ferress Jones ("Jonsey"), Navigator Elias Smith ("Smitty"), Engineer Evans, radio operator Claude Basler. ("Blackie"), Waist gunner Bob Havlick, Ball Gunner Frank Haverdick, Tail gunner Ira Whitely("Old Sarge") and myself Russell Hayhurst, nose gunner. We were a very close crew all the way through, just as brothers. We left Mountain Home in November 1944, stopped at Kansas City camp, went home for

Christmas 1944, then on to Newport News, December 31. Blackie, Frank, the old sarge, and myself went out on the town New Years Eve and met an elderly man who after the party took us all home for breakfast and then took us to our boat. It was the USS America. We were on board for eleven days, docking in Naples, Italy on January 12, 1945. We were issued winter clothes and boarded a cattle car type train arriving in Cerignola on January 14. We were transferred to 484th Field Operations Hut. It was bitter cold. On our third mission I was wounded in the leg and made corporal. On the seventh mission Blackie, Frank, Bob, and myself were made sergeants. On my 14th mission, we were presented with the Presidential Unit Citation and made staff sergeant. On May 7th, when the Germans surrendered, our crew had 17 missions. We were given ship #31 to fly back to America via Italy to North Africa to the Azores to Greenland, and finally to Fort Sumpter, Connecticut where we were sent home for 30 days leave. I never saw my crew together again after that, but we kept in touch for a few years. John S Wise died in 1990, Bob Havlick died in 1993 and now Claude Basler in 1995. I don't know about the others.

Sincerely,  
Russell ("Junior") Hayhurst

**1/Ct Walter Bruesch, 826 Sq**

Deadwood, SD  
Dear Mr. Markel:



Walter Bruesch

Thank you for your kind letter of April 4 (my Dad's birthday, by the way), offering my family sympathy on behalf of the 484th Bomb Group, for my Dad's passing. His military career played an important part in his life. I have received all of his military papers, and, since he kept everything, I have much to go through. I'm sure there is something that could be contributed to the Air Force Mu-

seum, but I need some time before I can go through same. You can include anything you'd like from the following in his obituary, and I have included photos also:

My father, Walter L. Bruesch, enlisted in the national guard on June 7, 1939, having just turned a young 17 years of age, with 3 of his friends "thanks to Wahlquist's persuasion (sic)" (his best buddy). It wasn't until March 3, 1941, that he was inducted into "the Federal Army, the mighty thing." After December 7, 1941, his group was patrolling the coast near San Louis Obispo with "75's".