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Baseball in Wartime

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The Boys of an English Summer

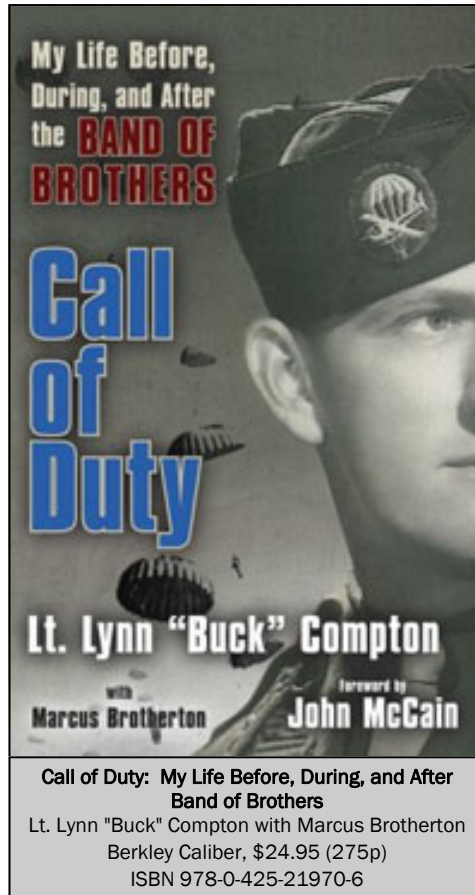
Welcome to the 12th issue of the Baseball in Wartime newsletter - the only publication dedicated to baseball during World War II.

The newsletter is now distributed to over 2,000 recipients and continues to feature in-depth articles on little-known wartime baseball events as well as keeping you up-to-date with the latest news.

This issue features a detailed account of the all-professional game that was played between the Army and Eighth Air Force at London, England in 1943. The discovery of this event back in the mid-1990s was the catalyst to my obsession with wartime baseball. It triggered a host of interviews with players or their relatives that led to my efforts in trying to capture details of every professional baseball player's World War II military service.

Sadly, one of the first players I communicated with - Dee Dzuris of the Eighth Air Force All-Stars - passed away on June 15, 2008. I am honored to be able to say I made his acquaintance - he will always be one of my heroes.

Another member of the Eighth Air Force All-Stars was Bill Brech and unfortunately I never had the opportunity to meet him. Bill passed away in 1978 at the age of just 56. However, in November 2007, I met Bill's son, Brad, at the "When Baseball Went to War" conference in New Orleans. It was a wonderful opportunity to discuss his father and I was proud to talk about Bill in the keynote speech I gave that weekend.



I first heard about Buck Compton from Chuck Eisenmann, who was manager of the US Army's Seine Section Clowns during WWII. Compton was Eisenmann's catcher and had seen action as paratrooper on D-Day and during the Battle of the Bulge. Eisenmann told me that Compton had gone on to be the assistant district attorney who prosecuted Robert Kennedy's assassin Sirhan Sirhan.

A few years ago Compton's wartime exploits were portrayed in the outstanding TV series "Band of Brothers," and this book fills the gaps about this gentleman's incredible life before, during and after the war.

Compton was an outstanding athlete at LA High School and then at UCLA where he was teammates with Jackie Robinson. He turned down offers to play professional baseball after the war but says that being a "fair to

middlein' baseball player," had an "uncanny way of influencing my life and career in more ways than one."

In 2007, I was contacted by Marcus Brotherton who assisted Compton in the writing of this book. He wanted to use a photo of the Seine Section Clowns ball team that I had on Compton's bio page on Baseball in Wartime. I was happy to oblige. I was also looking forward to reading about this exceptional man's life and I wasn't disappointed in any way. Compton is an ordinary man with an extraordinary life. A true American hero - a genuine citizen soldier.

You can get **Call of Duty** from the **Baseball in Wartime Book Store** (in association with amazon.com) <http://astore.amazon.com/baseballinwar-20>



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The Boys of an English Summer

August 7, 1943 witnessed the first all-professional baseball game played in England since the New York Giants and Chicago White Sox toured the country in the fall of 1924. Featuring the best baseball talent serving with American military units in the country, the US Army and Eighth Air Force met before 21,500 fans in a London-based fund-raising event that went down in history as a baseball masterpiece.

The Yanks Are Coming

By the early months of 1942, American servicemen were arriving in the British Isles. The first echelons of the Eighth Air Force arrived in February and the number of US troops stationed in Britain had reached 750,000 by 1943. It was a time of upheaval, deprivation and anguish; a time when young Americans were taken from their families and loved ones and faced with the rigors of military life, the anxiety of serving in a foreign country and the uncertainty of what lay ahead.

American servicemen needed a morale booster and baseball fit the bill. With the full support of the military high command – who regarded sports as an ideal way to keep soldiers physically and mentally fit – baseball flourished. Former professional stars were soon playing alongside sandlot heroes and high school lettermen in intricate league structures up and down the country.



The Eighth Air Force All-Stars of 1943. Back row, left to right: Monte Weaver, Ed Hawkins, Bill Brech, Lew Tabor, Ed Gatlin, James Vance, Bill Moore. Middle row: Hugh Gustafson, Nick Fracaro, Dee Dzuris, Gene Thompson, Ross Grimsley, James Beane, Jack Gaston, Stan Stuka. Front row: Al Slakis, Joe Gradisher, Larry Toth, Paul Campbell, Joe Rundus, Floyd Lancaster.

Baseball was quick to find its way into the everyday lives of British civilians, too. After months of almost non-stop bombing by Hitler's Luftwaffe and with all professional sports on hold for the duration, people were anxious for a spectator sport. American military teams were willing to oblige, and games staged in soccer, rugby and cricket stadiums were a common occurrence for the remainder of the war. Local dignitaries often attended these events to throw out the first ball, and the British press always took a keen interest, describing with enthusiasm the "wonderful catching" and "spirited dashes from one base to another behind the pitcher's back."

No Man Has a Cinch

The Army All-Professional team was led by manager Jules "Red" Shapiro, who hoped to utilize the services of Lieutenant Charles "Chuck" Eisenmann – Pacific Coast League pitcher – on the mound. Eisenmann, however, underwent an appendectomy in July and was relegated to the role of coach for the series. In his place, the Army was banking on the pitching services of Ralph Ifft, Lou Thuman and Norman Russell. Ifft was 14-4 with a 2.01 ERA for Butler of the Penn State Association in 1940, while Thuman had pitched five games for the Washington Senators between 1939 and 1940. Russell had a 16-4 record with Mobile of the Southeastern League in 1941.

Catching duties were expected to be handled by Texas League receiver Walt Novick, while George Burns – a semi-pro from

Sylacauga, Alabama, was the number one candidate at first base. Maurice Jacobs of the Eastern League would play second base, while Walt Hemperly of the Canadian-American League would handle third base. The team's shortstop was Pete Pavich, who had played with Clinton of the Three-I League before the war. Candidates for the outfield included Mid-Atlantic Leaguer Albert Brusko, Richard Catalano of the Penn State League and Massachusetts semi-pro Lou Kelley. "No man has a cinch," announced Shapiro in late July. "All these guys will have to prove themselves and hustle for the job."

Turning his attention to the opposition, Shapiro declared, "Those Air Force bums are flying a little too high. We'll bring them down and take some of that cockiness out of them."

Air Force Talent

Managed by Corporal Bill Moore, co-owner of the Greenville club in the South Atlantic League, and coached by Lieutenant Monte Weaver, who pitched for the Washington Senators for nine years, the Eighth Air Force

EMPIRE STADIUM WEMBLEY
 Managing Director: A. J. ELVIN
AUGUST 7th, 1943, at 2.30 p.m.
BASEBALL
 In aid of H.R.H. The Duke of Gloucester's Red Cross and St. John Fund
CHALLENGE MATCH
U.S. ARMY v. CANADIAN FORCES
 AND
ALL PROFESSIONAL GAME
U.S. AIR FORCE v. U.S. GROUND FORCES
 Each Game will consist of Seven Innings.
DIAGRAM OF THE FIELD OF PLAY
 Left Field, Center Field, Right Field, Short Stop, 3rd Basemen, 2nd Base, 1st Basemen, Pitcher, 3rd Base, 2nd Base, 1st Base, Home Plate, Catcher, FOUL GROUND.
AIR RAID PRECAUTIONS.
 In the event of an Air Raid Alert, if aircraft are reported in the immediate vicinity of the Stadium, spectators will be requested to leave the enclosure and make their way quietly to the Circulating Corridors under the Seats as directed by the Stewards and Officials. Those wishing to leave the Stadium may do so by any of the usual Exits.
OFFICIAL PROGRAMME SIXPENCE



Wembley Stadium, London, England

The Boys of an English Summer

Eighth Air Force All-Professional Team

Name	Home Town	Position	Station	Pre-war Club
Cpl Gene Thompson	Needles, CA	OF	306 th BG	California League
Cpl Paul Campbell	Charlotte, NC	1B/OF	306 th BG	American League
Pfc Al Slakis	Swoyersville, PA	SS	303 rd BG	Coastal Plain League
S/Sgt Hugh Gustafson	Winnipeg, Manitoba	1B/OF	93 rd BG	American Association
Cpl Larry Toth	Toledo, OH	2B	8 th AF HQ Engineers	Ohio State League
Sgt Jack Gaston	Lindale, GA	OF	8 th AF Fighter Command	Semi-Pro
Cpl Stan Stuka	Clinton, MA	C	93 rd BG	Interstate League
Cpl Jim Vance	Floyd County, KY	C	Unknown	Middle Atlantic League
Pvt Ed Hawkins	Seneca, SC	OF	988 th MP (Aviation) Cpy	Amateur
Pvt Floyd Lancaster	Lafayette, IN	2B	988 th MP (Aviation) Cpy	Amateur
Pfc Andy Dzuris	Dunmore, PA	SS	988 th MP (Aviation) Cpy	Ohio State League
Pfc Nick Fracaro	Joliet, IL	OF	VIII Bomber Cmd HQ	Amateur
Sgt Joe Gradisher	Muskegon, MI	3B	VIII Bomber Cmd HQ	Amateur
Cpl Ross Grimsley	Americus, KS	P	VIII Bomber Cmd HQ	Semi-Pro
Sgt Joe Rundus	Bellville, KS	P	303 rd BG	Evangeline League
Sgt Bill Brech	Secaucus, NJ	P	988 th MP (Aviation) Cpy	Semi-Pro
Lt Lewis Tabor	Greenville, SC	P	8 th AF Service Command	Bi-State League
Sgt Lou Anschutz	Detroit, MI	P	BG	Wisconsin State League
Cpl James Beane	High Point, NC	C	VIII Bomber Cmd HQ	Unknown
Pfc Ed Gatlin	Hammond, LA	C	988 th MP (Aviation) Cpy	Semi-Pro
Lt Monte Weaver	Washington, DC	Coach	65 th Fighter Wing HQ	American League
Cpl Bill Moore	Greenville, SC	Manager	Unknown	Co-owner of Greenville club in Sally League.

The following players were selected for the Wembley game but did not participate in the 30-day tour

Sgt James Woods	Shreveport, LA	C	Unknown	Unknown
Sgt Thomas Sooy	Milville, NJ	2B	Unknown	Eastern Shore League
M/Sgt Vince Cicero	Chicago, IL	3B	Unknown	Northern League
Cpl John Linde	Portland, OR	OF	Unknown	Western Int League
Pfc John Kilroy	Washington, DC	OF	8 th AF HQ Engineers	Unknown
Pvt Frank Burger	Chicago, IL	3B	8 th AF HQ Engineers	Unknown

brought a powerful squad to London on August 7.

The pitching staff was headed by Bill Brech, a semi-pro hurler from Secaucus, New Jersey, who had amassed a 12-2 record with the 988th Military Police Fliers. Southpaw Ross Grimsley, a semi-pro at the time who would go on to pitch for the Chicago White Sox in 1951, had struck out 86 batters in seven games for the VIII Bomber Command



The starting pitchers meet before the game. The Army's Ralph Ifft (right) shakes hands with Bill Brech of the Eighth Air Force.

Headquarters. The pitching staff was further bolstered by Wisconsin State League pitcher Lou Anschutz and Joe Rundus, who hurled in the Evangeline League in 1939.

At first base, the Air Force could call upon Paul Campbell, who played 26 games for the Boston Red Sox in 1942, and Northern League MVP Hugh Gustafson. Larry Toth, who played in the Ohio State League, was the second base selection, while Joe Gradisher, a speedy semi-pro from Muskegon, Michigan was to play third. Andy Dzuris, who formerly played for Lima of the Ohio State League, was to be the shortstop and leadoff man. The outfield choice included California League centerfielder Gene Thompson, John Linde, who played in the Western International League, Jack Gaston of the Northwest Georgia Textile League, and Nick Fracaro, a semi-pro from Joliet, Illinois. Ready for duty behind the plate were Stan Stuka, who was on the Philadelphia Phillies' roster in 1941, and Jim Vance of the Mid-Atlantic League.

The Best Baseball Game That I Have Ever Seen

A crowd of 21,500 was on hand at Wembley Stadium – England's most famous sporting

arena – where they were entertained by bands of the US Army before a preliminary game matched the CBS Clowns, a US Army team, against the Canadian Military Headquarters squad, which was won by the Clowns, 6-3.

The game was followed by a display by the Massed Pipe Bands of the Canadian Army, and in front of high-ranking American officers, including Lieutenant-General Jacob L Devers, European Theater commander and Major-General Ira C Eaker, Eighth Air Force



A section of the crowd at Wembley Stadium on August 7, 1943

The Boys of an English Summer

US Army					Eighth Air Force				
	AB	R	H	E		AB	R	H	E
Taggert, 3b	2	0	0	1	Dzuris, ss	3	0	0	0
Hemperly, 3b	1	0	0	0	Gradisher, 3b	3	0	2	0
Korisher, 2b	3	0	0	0	Campbell, 1b	3	0	1	0
Kelley, cf	2	0	0	0	Thompson, cf	3	0	1	0
a-Fontana	1	0	0	0	Gaston, lf	3	0	0	0
Pavich, ss	3	0	0	0	Gustafson, rf	3	1	1	0
O'Donnell, rf	3	0	0	0	Toth, 2b	3	0	2	2
Jacobs, lf	3	0	0	0	Stuka, c	3	0	0	0
Burns, 1b	2	0	0	0	Brech, p	2	0	0	0
Novick, c	1	0	0	1					
Ifft, p	1	0	0	0					
Thuman, p	1	0	0	0					
Totals	23	0	0	2	Totals	26	1	7	2
a - batted for Kelly in 7th									
US Army	000000 0 - 0								
Eight Air Force	010000 0 - 1								



Ross Grimsley, Gene Thompson, Nick Fracaro and Bill Brech

commander, the All-Professional teams took the field – the Army in blue, the Air Force in red.

With all the professional talent in the Army line-up, no one expected Air Force pitcher Bill Brech, to retire the Army hitters in order in the first six innings of the seven-inning contest, but that’s exactly what he did. In all, he allowed only two runners to reach base, faced just 23 batters and struck out six as he secured his 1-0 no-hitter and a place in the hypothetical European Theater Baseball Hall of Fame.

Pitching for the Army was Ralph Ifft, who allowed five hits over four innings before being replaced by Lou Thuman. The Air Force scored their only run in the second inning when Hugh Gustafson and Larry Toth led off with singles. Gustafson moved up to third after Stan Stuka flied deep to center and scored when Lee Taggert, playing third base, made a fine play to trap Bill Brech’s hard hit grounder but threw wildly to second in an attempt to force Toth.



Eighth Air Force teammates congratulate Bill Brech after his no-hitter

“I took great pride in this team and have said repeatedly it played the best baseball game that I have ever seen, and I have seen all of the big league teams in action,” Major-General Eaker proudly announced following the game. Eaker, an avid baseball

fan, had been heavily involved in the organization of this event and rewarded the victorious Air Force team with a 30-day tour of military bases around Britain. He later wrote to each player telling them how they “contributed materially to the morale and high spirit of the Eighth Air Force by [their] personal example and great professional skill.”

Barnstorming Britain

The tour would take in many of the fighter and bomber bases that were now spread across Britain, providing baseball at the highest level. “There are a lot of combat crews in those stations who haven’t seen a ball game this season,” said Bill Moore, the All-Star’s manager, as they prepared for the first game, “This is our opportunity to do what we can for them.”

The tour opened on Tuesday, August 10 with a 9-0 win against a Photo Intelligence team. It was the All-Star’s second successive no-hitter with Joe Rundus performing the honors on this occasion. The following day they defeated Fighter Command, 5-1, then made it four in a row with wins against the Eagles (13-3) and the Comets (17-7).

Day in and day out the team traveled by bus from one base to the next and it was often dark by the time they hit the road. Because the blackout restrictions in Britain meant there were no

lights on the street or on the bus one player often had to walk in front to lead the way.

By late August, the All-Stars had amassed a record of 22 wins without defeat. In a five game series at a bomber station in Norfolk, the All-Stars beat the Flashes, 14-0, on Gene Thompson’s one-hitter; the Tigers, 1-0, on Lou Tabor’s two-hitter, and the Irregulars, 10-0, on a Joe Rundus two-hitter. They then defeated the Moles, 5-0, before suffering their only defeat at the hands of the Alcon-Falcons – a five-inning thriller that saw Sergeant Tony DaVilla allow the All-Stars only two hits in defeating Ross Grimsley, 1-0.

On September 4, the All-Stars bounced back and pasted the 93rd Bomb Group Traveling Circus, 11-1, before 4,000 fans in a charity event in Norwich, England. Lou Tabor earning his third win for the All-Stars.

The All-Stars wound up their 30-day barnstorming tour by again trouncing the Traveling Circus, 18-1, behind the four-hit pitching of Bill Brech. The All-Stars had played 29 games and won 28.

By early September 1943, they had returned to their military duties. They would play ball again the next summer – some in Britain, others in Europe as their units followed the advancing Allied forces – but it would be two years before they would return home to the United States and be able to share with their loved ones the story of how, for 30 days, they had been the boys of an English summer.

Player Biographies

Sergeant Louis “Lou” Anschutz - Pitcher

Lou Anschutz, from Detroit, Michigan, began his professional career with the Goldsboro Goldbugs of the Coastal Plain League in 1940. In 1941, he joined the Appleton Papermakers, a Cleveland Indians farm team in the Wisconsin State League, where he had a 1-0 record in two appearances before entering military service. He returned to the Detroit area after the war and served as a detective with the local sheriff’s department.

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Sergeant William C "Bill" Brech – Pitcher



Bill Brech was well known in Secaucus, New Jersey, before the war as a pitcher with the Otto Mack semi-pro team. He signed with Harrisburg of the Class B Inter-State League for the 1946 season, but did

not play. Instead, Brech worked for the shipping department of the Inland Steel Container Company and continued to play semi-pro baseball with the Otto Mack team, which toured the northeast coast of the United States for several years. Brech was just 56 when he passed away in June 1978. In November 2007, I had the honor of meeting Brech's son, Brad Brech at the National WWII Museum in New Orleans.

Corporal Paul M Campbell – First Base



Paul Campbell was born in Paw Creek, North Carolina. He played American Legion baseball and semi-pro ball with the Arcadia and Pacolet teams in the competitive South

Carolina textile leagues before signing his first professional contract with Danville of the Bi-State League in 1936. He batted .324 with 15 home runs and 88 RBIs his rookie year and moved up to Rocky Mount of the Piedmont League for 1937 where he hit .309. In 1938, Campbell was with Little Rock of the Southern Association. He batted .330, led the league with 192 hits, and was rated as "one of the greatest first basemen ever to come out of the Southern Association." Campbell had strong seasons with Louisville of American Association in 1939 and 1940, and was with Boston at the start of 1941.

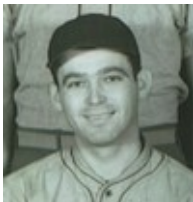
When asked how he felt about losing vital playing years during the war, he replied: "That's the way it was and, besides, I had fun playing ball over there."

Campbell was back with the Red Sox in 1946, and played 28 games. He also made a pinch-running appearance in the World Series. He was purchased by Detroit at the end of 1947 and played a total of 146 games for the Tigers over the next two seasons. He became a minor league player-manager in 1952 and went on to serve as president of the Louisville club. He began a long career with the Cincinnati Reds in 1958 when he became a scout. In 1964 he was promoted to Traveling Secretary, remaining in that position until 1978.

Paul Campbell, who spent 57 years in professional baseball, passed away on June

22, 2006 in Fairfield Glade, Tennessee. He was 88 years old.

Private First-Class Andrew J "Dee" Dzuris – Shortstop



After graduating from Dunmore (PA) High School, Dee Dzuris attended St Thomas College until signing with the Gloversville-Johnstown Glovers of the Canadian-American League in 1939.

He batted only .176 with the Glovers and joined the Lima Pandas of the Ohio State League later in the year.

"The British people did not understand the game at first," recalled Dzuris. "But interest grew and crowds became larger and more knowledgeable, especially for the charity games."

After the war, Dzuris worked for the Veterans Administration for seven years and played semi-pro baseball with the Scranton Red Sox and the All Hyde Park team. He was 1949 batting champion with a .429 average. Dzuris later worked as a clerk for the US Postal Service and retired after 23 years. He then held the position of attendance officer for the Dunmore School District for 10 years. Dee Dzuris passed away on June 15, 2008 in Moses Taylor Hospital, Scranton, after being stricken ill at home. He was 90.

Private First-Class Nicholas J "Nick" Fracaro – Outfield



Nick Fracaro was a naturally gifted athlete from Joliet, Illinois. He was a football star at Joliet Catholic High School before the war and starred with the Joliet Rivals baseball team. After the

war, Fracaro continued to play baseball with the Joliet Rivals Baseball Association and the Lockport Moose team, and worked as a pipe fitter for Texaco until his retirement. Nick Fracaro passed away in May 1995 at age 75.

Sergeant Jack B Gaston - Outfield



Jack Gaston was born in Oostanaula, Georgia. An outstanding baseball player, he led the Northwest Georgia Textile League with a .422 batting average while playing for the Lindale Pepperell Mill team in 1936.

Gaston returned to the Pepperell Mill team after military service. In 1948, he batted .428 for the season, posted a perfect 7-0 record, and was the most valuable player in the league playoff series. He continued playing into the 1950s. By the time he retired from the game he had played 25 years in textile league baseball. But he didn't stop

swinging a bat for many more years, and in 1984, at the age of 73, he slapped an inside-the-park home run to lead his slow pitch softball team to an 11-0 win. Jack Gaston passed away in Lindale, Georgia, on September 26, 1994, aged 83.

Private First-Class Edward L "Ed" Gatlin - Catcher



Ed Gatlin played pre-war semi-pro baseball with the Ponchatoula Athletics before entering military service in February 1942. "I was involved in a lot of baseball in England," recalled Gatlin. "We

traveled and played in every military base in the country."

After the war Ed Gatlin worked in farm produce for 24 years. He passed away in Hammond, Louisiana on August 15, 2000.

Sergeant Joseph J "Joe" Gradisher – Third Base



Joe Gradisher was from Muskegon, Michigan. He met his wife, Nancy (who was born in Glasgow, Scotland), while in England. She was serving with the British armed forces as a searchlight

operator in London and they married in 1943. When Nancy arrived in the USA in October 1944 she was the first war bride in Muskegon County.

When Gradisher returned to Muskegon, he was asked to tryout for a professional team but felt he was too old at 30. He continued to play baseball with local teams until the age of 60. He also coached Little League teams and was instrumental in starting a senior slow-pitch softball league in the area. Joe Gradisher passed away in October 1990 at age 75.

Corporal Ross A Grimsley – Pitcher



Ross Grimsley was born near Americus, Kansas, and graduated from Americus High School in 1941. He pitched for the Independence Indians in the semi-pro Southeastern Kansas Ban Johnson League before

entering military service. Grimsley met his future wife in England - Judy Robinson of Lima, Ohio - who was serving as a WAAC. They married in Jacksonville, Florida on September 17, 1948.

Grimsley began his professional career in 1946 with the independent Chanute Athletics of the Class D Kansas-Oklahoma-Missouri League where he was the strike out king with 295 whiffs and led the league with 18 wins and a 1.93 ERA in 196 innings. He

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was 19-9 with the Topeka Owls of the Class C Western Association in 1947 and led the league with 262 strike outs. He was purchased by the St Louis Cardinals at the close of the 1947 and pitched for Houston, Columbus and Winston-Salem before being drafted by the Brooklyn Dodgers in 1950. He was purchased by the Chicago White Sox in August 1951 and made his first major league appearance on September 3. He made a total of seven relief appearances with the White Sox that season, appearing in 14 innings with a 3.86 ERA.

Grimsley continued to pitch in the minors until 1960 then went to work for the Dupont Corporation in Memphis, Tennessee. Twenty years after his brief appearance with the White Sox, his son, Ross II, broke into the majors with the Reds. Ross Grimsley II went on to pitch for the Orioles and Expos, winning 20 games with Montreal in 1978.

Ross Grimsley passed away in Memphis, Tennessee on February 6, 1994. He was 71 years old.

Staff Sergeant Hugh E Gustafson – First Base



Hugh Gustafson was born on in Hibbing, Minnesota but was raised by his parents in Winnipeg, Canada. Gustafson was a star athlete as a youth, playing baseball and hockey, as well as earning a reputation as an outstanding football player with the Deer Lodge Juniors. After playing sandlot baseball he signed with the Winnipeg Maroons of the Northern League in 1936. In 124 games he batted .265 with 6 home runs. The following year he batted .300 with the Maroons and raised his average to .323 as the Maroons' first baseman in 1938. In 1939, his fourth year with the team, he batted an exceptional .367 with 11 home runs and 106 RBIs, and was voted the Northern League's Most Valuable Player.

In 1940, he moved up to the Madison Blues of the Class B Three-I League where he continued to hit well, batting .308 in 123 games. Gustafson began the 1941 season with the Milwaukee Brewers of the Class AA American Association, but after hitting just .118 in 14 games he rejoined Madison where he batted .264 for the year. But Gustafson wasn't only playing professional baseball during these years. In 1936, he joined the Philadelphia Ramblers of the International-American Hockey League as the team's center and remained with them through the 1939-1940 season. The following year he signed with Pittsburgh Hornets of the American Hockey League and was with the Providence Reds of the same league in 1941-1942.

Hugh Gustafson did not return to professional baseball after the war but continued to play professional hockey with the Washington Lions of the Eastern Hockey League (1945-1946), before becoming player-coach with the Hibbing Saints of the semi-pro Northern Hockey League. He did, however, still play baseball with the Brandon Greys, Elmwood Seniors and Winnipeg of the Manitoba Senior League.

Private Floyd "Lanny" Lancaster – Second Base



Lanny Lancaster was born in Lafayette, Indiana where he was an all-round high school athlete and played semi-pro baseball. After the war he attended Indiana Business College and was a family counselor

at Tippecanoe Memory Gardens, retiring in 1991. He passed away on October 2, 1996, aged 76.

Corporal Bill Moore - Manager



Bill Moore of Greenville, South Carolina, was co-owner of the South Atlantic League's Greenville Spinners before the war.

Sergeant Joseph F "Joe" Rundus - Pitcher



Joe Rundus of Belleville, Kansas, was playing for the Concordia club in the Ban Johnson League when he was signed by the Brooklyn Dodgers and was assigned to the Beatrice Blues of the Nebraska State League in 1936 where he had an 11-14 won-loss record. In 1937, he was 16-8 with the Dayton Ducks of the Mid-Atlantic League. He pitched

for the Clinton Owls of the Three-I League in 1938 and ended his pro career with the Abbeville A's of the Evangeline League in 1939.

Joe Rundus played semi-pro baseball after the war in Kansas and Nebraska. He worked for many years as a farmer and rancher then moved to Las Vegas where he was a city building inspector. He retired in 1983 and passed away in Las Vegas, Nevada on February 6, 2004, aged 90.

Private First-Class Alfred A Slakis - Shortstop



Al Slakis was from Swoyersville, Pennsylvania and played in the Coastal Plain League in 1940 with the Williamston Martins. In 1941, he batted .244 with the Kinston Eagles of the same league.

Corporal Stanley E "Stan" Stuka - Catcher



Stan Stuka was born in Clinton, Massachusetts, and was an outstanding athlete at Clinton High School. In 1938, he signed with the Lexington Bees of the Kitty League – a Boston Braves affiliate - appearing in 106 games and batting .254. He spent most of 1939 with the Landis Senators of the North Carolina State League, and played 113 games for the Martinsville Manufacturers of the Bi-State League – a Phillies' affiliate - in 1940, batting .297 with 12 home runs and 93 RBIs, and receiving a late-season call-up to Philadelphia. Although Stuka did not make an appearance with the Phillies in 1940, he was back with the big league club for spring training in 1941, spending the season with the Allentown Wings of the Interstate League where he played 92 games and batted .261.

Stan Stuka did not pursue a career in baseball after the war but continued to play at the semi-pro level, while working as a tool

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draftsman at the Norton Company in Worcester, Massachusetts. He passed away on April 6, 1965, aged 50.

Lieutenant Lewis V "Lew" Tabor - Pitcher



Lew Tabor was from Greenville, South Carolina, attended the University of South Carolina and signed with the Knoxville Smokies of the Southern Association in 1939. The Smokies assigned the

right-hander to the Martinsville Manufacturers of the Bi-State League where he was 7-4 with a 3.39 ERA. In 1940, he had a 13-8 won-loss record with the Manufacturers.

Corporal Eugene B "Gene" Thompson - Outfield



"Gene" Thompson was born in Needles, California on September 14, 1921. He graduated from Needles High School in 1938 and was signed by the Hollywood Stars in 1940. The Stars sent him to the Salina Millers in the

Western Association, where he hit .279 in 125 games with 12 home runs and 82 RBIs.

Thompson was with San Bernardino and Santa Barbara in the California League in 1941. Thompson had only been in England for a couple of months when he was commended for "heroism displayed in rescuing an elderly man and woman from drowning at Bedford, England, 11 November 1942." The commendation, dated December 23, 1942, continued. "Hearing cries for help emanating from the river Ouse, Corporal Thompson, with complete disregard for his own safety, plunged into the river and succeeded in bringing the drowning man and woman to shore, and administered artificial respiration until arrival of an ambulance. The heroism displayed upon this occasion reflects highest credit upon Corporal Thompson and Armed Forces of the United States."

Thompson returned to the United States in November 1945. Still the property of the Hollywood Stars, he played for the Yakima Stars of the Western International League in 1946, batting .301 in 122 games. Thompson remained with Yakima in 1947 and played the winter of that year down in Hermosillo, Mexico, where he made the all-star team. The Hollywood Stars ended their affiliation with the Yakima team after 1947, but Thompson remained with the independent ball club for another two years. In 1950, Thompson joined the Victoria Athletics in the Western International League. The following

year, 1951, was to be his last in baseball. He batted .298 with Victoria in 110 games and quit when the season finished. "My problem was I played the game for fun, both on and off the field," Thompson recalled. "I loved it, but couldn't really get serious. I never took advantage of my ability, never made much money, but sure did have fun.

Thompson spent the next 20 years with the Los Angeles Police Department and rose to the rank of sergeant and assistant watch commander. He retired from the LAPD in 1971 and moved to Salome, Arizona, where he spent most of his retirement years. Gene Thompson passed away in Yucaipa, California on August 7, 1996. He was 74 years old.

Corporal Larry Toth - Second Base



Larry Toth was from Toledo, Ohio and played in the Ohio State League before the war. He was with the Lima Pandas in 1939 and batted .308 with the Fremont Green Sox in 1941.

Corporal James E "Jim" Vance - Catcher



Jim Vance began his pro career with the Bristol Twins of the Appalachian League in 1941 where he batted .315 in 75 games. In 1942 he was with the Erie Sailors of the Mid-Atlantic League.

Vance returned to professional baseball after the war with the Pensacola Fliers of the Southeastern League in 1946, ending his career with the Jenkins Cavaliers of the Mountain States League in 1948.

Second Lieutenant Montie M "Monte" Weaver - Coach



Monte Weaver was not your stereotypical pitcher of the 1930s. The wiry, right-handed North Carolinian was one of the most educated players on the major league diamond and the exact antithesis of the

flannel-clad, tobacco-chewing players of his era.

In 1924, the 18-year-old attended Emory and Henry College, a small Methodist college in southwest Virginia. To pay his way he pitched for a semi-pro colliery league team in Jenkins, Kentucky, earning \$300 a month. The big leagues, however, were a long way from his mind. He was working towards a

master's degree in mathematics studying the safe speed of railroad trains relative to the curvature of the tracks. He later joined the elite faculty at the University of Virginia, where he taught analytic geometry and was on his way to getting a doctor's degree until baseball beckoned during the summer of 1928.

Based on his semi-pro performances, Weaver - aged 22 - was coaxed to join Durham in the Piedmont League where he started and completed 19 games, regularly pitching on just two days rest. By 1931 he was a 20-game winner with the Baltimore Orioles of the International League and the ever cautious Clark Griffith, who had often seen Weaver pitch against the Senators in spring training, bought him to Washington in September 1931 at a cost of \$25,000.

Weaver won his first four starts in 1932 with an up-and-coming Senators team and finished the year with a 22-10 won-loss record, fifth most wins in the American League. In 1933, Weaver struggled with a shoulder injury and could manage only ten regular season wins but realized the ambition of all pitchers when, on October 6, he started the fourth game of the World Series against the Giants. New York took the first two games at the Polo Grounds but Earl Whitehill shutout the Giants, 4-0, in the third game. Weaver faced Carl Hubbell in the fourth game and it started with all the makings of an unexpected pitchers' duel as Weaver and Hubbell kept a blank scoresheet through the first three innings. It was Giants' manager Bill Terry who broke the ice in the fourth inning hitting a home run into the temporary bleachers in shallow right field. From then on it remained a head-to-head duel until Hubbell muffed a bunt in the seventh that tied the game. Both starters remained as the game went into extra innings. In the top of the eleventh the Giants rallied as Travis Jackson bunted safely down the third base line, was bunted to second and scored on Blondy Ryan's ground ball through the infield. The Senators did not give up easy, however. Runners reached second and third with one out before an intentional walk set up a double play to end the game and World Series' fame for Weaver. Weaver remained on the Senators' staff through 1938 and pitched for the Red Sox in 1939 although his glory days were behind him.

After 27 months overseas Monte Weaver returned to the United States in November 1945 and moved to Florida where he got into the grove business. Within a few years he owned three groves producing an abundance of oranges and grapefruit. He passed away on June 14, 1994, a day before his 88th birthday.

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The Professional Baseball Player Databases

www.baseballinwartime.com/database.htm

The Boys of an English Summer

Statistics from the Eighth Air Force All-Stars 30-day tour

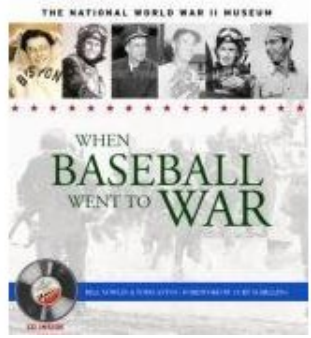
Batting	Pos	G	AB	R	H	HR	Avg
Gene Thompson	OF-P	28	92	39	48	5	.522
Paul Campbell	1B-OF	29	100	37	47	7	.470
Al Slakis	SS	21	82	26	36	4	.439
Hugh Gustafson	1B-OF	26	86	34	35	3	.408
Larry Toth	2B	22	75	19	30	2	.400
Jack Gaston	OF	17	50	15	20	3	.400
Stan Stuka	C-P	21	64	21	25	1	.391
Jim Vance	C-P	16	39	14	14	1	.359
Ed Hawkins	OF	11	27	9	9	0	.333
Floyd Lancaster	2B	16	41	16	13	0	.317
Dee Dzuris	SS	18	57	19	18	3	.316
Nick Fracaro	OF	18	43	16	13	2	.302
Joe Gradisher	3B	20	70	17	19	1	.291
Lew Tabor	P	10	26	4	7	0	.269
Ross Grimsley	P	5	11	1	2	0	.182
Joe Rundus	P	7	24	5	4	0	.166
Bill Brech	P	7	14	1	1	0	.071
James Beane	C	7	11	3	4	0	.364
Lou Anshultz	P	1	2	1	1	0	.500
Ed Gatlin	C	1	1	0	0	0	.000

Pitching	Won	Lost
Joe Rundus	7	0
Bill Brech	6	0
Gene Thompson	5	0
Lew Tabor	3	0
Ross Grimsley	3	1
Stan Stuka	2	0
Jim Vance	1	0
Lou Anshultz	1	0

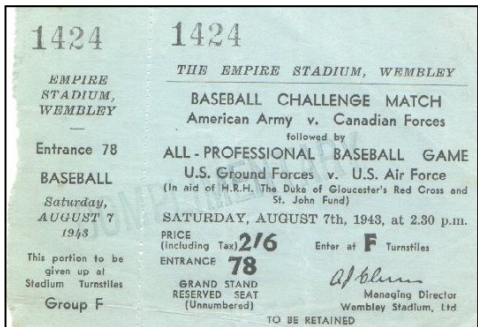
Look out for some exciting news in the next issue of the Baseball in Wartime newsletter. A new book entitled "When Baseball Went to War" will soon be published by Triumph Books. Edited by Todd Anton (author of "No Greater Love") and Bill Nowlin (vice-president of SABR), the book includes contributions from many of the

guest speakers at 2007's New Orleans' "When Baseball Went to War" conference. My contributions to this project include articles on Zeke Bonura and Warren Spahn, plus an introductory piece.

The book is currently available on pre-order from amazon.com and can ordered at the Baseball in Wartime Book Store.



Baseball in Wartime Book Store
<http://astore.amazon.com/baseballinwar-20>



A ticket from the All-Professional game

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Gary Bedingfield



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Monte Weaver—Eighth Air Force All-Stars coach

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