

Ten Young Men

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By Bob Bilbruck, Armament Office

We came from all parts of the country,
Ten young men, 18 to 23
From big towns and small,
From factories and farms,
There was Don and Joe,
Harry, Sam and Little Lou,
Jack and me,
Pete, George and Stew.

Grunts they called us
Because we did not fly.
We were Cooks and Bakers,
Armorers and Engineers.
Chemical Warfare, Truck Drivers
Clerks and Typists.
Ground Support Personnel
Necessary to the Group

We bonded on our trip
By rail from Salt Lake.
We knew each other by name
And their faces were planted
Indelibly in our hearts.
We knew that our lives would
Forever be linked by the
Job ahead of us

Joined the 381st Group at
A little Texas town called Pyote.
We trained and moved to meet
The enemy in at a place in England
We were to call Station 167,
Known now as The Ridgewell AFB.
We worked and talked
And bonded more.

By some miracle we all survived
The explosions , the bombings
The V-I's. the V-II's and
Worst of all, the bicycles

that seemed to get drunk
All on their own
When we were able to
Get that elusive liberty,

The war came to an end
and we all returned home
Five of us surprised
Our family's with English Brides.
We went our separate way
To work in our field of choice.
To raise our families
And enjoy our hard won liberty.

Then one day, an auto accident
Claimed the life of Don
The news hit hard
Our group was now Nine
Two weeks later,
Pete suffered a Heart Attack
and did not survive
Our Group of ten became eight.

The years ticked by
and our contacts were few.
The next thing I knew
Our Group dropped by two
Letters advised me that
Joe and Harry had passed away
The Lord had knocked at their Door
Our Group was now four

I lost contact with Little Lou
Then found out that he passed away
ten years ago. I can't believe
Our Group was now just three.
Several years passed
Before an E-mail was received
sating that Stew was deceased.
Our Group had slid to two.

Yesterday, the telephone rang
The voice was George's wife.
George, she said had taken his life,
She knew that I would want to know.
I hung up the phone an started to cry,
As by body shook with sobs,

I tried to figure out why
Our group of ten left just I.

I looked in the mirror and what I saw
was just a ghost of a young man past.
With a bald head and sagging jaw
Wrinkled and shriveled and slightly bent.
Then I felt a soft hand on my shoulder
I turned to find my wife
with a tears in her eyes
She knew of my fright.

Some day just down the road
My turn will come
And I shall join in the flight
To that land of peace
Where all my buddies have gone
and thousands more
and again we will become
That Great Group of Ten

Submitted by Bob Bilbruck, March 5, 2001