
VIEWS LETTER

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IT WAS A FORTRESS COMING HOME

By *Allen Ostrom*

They could hear it before they could see it! Not all that unusual in those days as the personnel at Station 131 gathered around the tower and scattered hardstands to await the return of the B-17's sent out earlier that morning.

First comes the far off rumble and drone of the Cyclones—then a spec on the East Anglia horizon. Soon a small cluster indicating the lead squadron. Finally, the group.

Then the counting. 1-2-3-4-5... ..

But that would have been normal. Today was different! It was too early for the group to return.

"They're 20 minutes early. Can't be the 398th."

They could hear it before they could see it! Something was coming home. But what?

All eyes turned toward the northeast, aligning with the main runway, each ground guy and stood-down airman straining to make out this "wail of a Banshee," as one called it.

Not like a single B-17 with its characteristic deep roar of the engines blended with four thrashing propellers. This was a howl! Like a powerful wind blowing into a huge whistle.

Then it came into view. It WAS a B-17!

Low and pointing her nose at the 6,000 foot runway, it appeared for all the world to be crawling toward the earth, screaming in protest.

No need for the red flares. All who saw this Fort knew there was death aboard.

"Look at that nose!" they said as all eyes stared in amazement as this single, shattered remnant of a once beautiful airplane glided in for an unrealistic "hot" landing. She took all the runway as the "Banshee" noise finally abated, and came to an inglorious stop in the mud just beyond the concrete runway.

Men and machines raced to the now silent and lonely aircraft. The ambulance and medical staff were there first. The fire truck....ground and air personnel....jeeps, truck, bikes.....

Out came one of the crew members from the waist door, then another. Strangely quiet. The scene was almost weird. Men stood by as if in shock, not knowing whether to sing or cry.

Either would have been acceptable.

The medics quietly made their way to the nose by way of the waist door as the remainder of the crew began exiting. And to answer the obvious question, "what happened?"

"What happened?" was easy to see. The nose was a scene of utter destruction. It was as though some giant aerial can opener had peeled the nose like an orange, relocating shreds of metal, Plexiglas, wires and tubes on the cockpit windshield and even up to the top turret. The left cheek gun hung limp like a broken arm.

One man pointed to the crease in chin turret. No mistaking that mark! A German 88 anti-aircraft shell had exploded in the lap of the togglier.

This would be George Abbott of Mt. Labanon , PA. He had been a waist gunner before training to take over the bombardier's role.

Still in the cockpit, physically and emotionally exhausted, were pilot Larry deLancey and co-pilot, Phil Stahlman.

Navigator Ray LeDoux finally tapped deLancey on the shoulder and suggested they get out. Engineer

turret gunner, Ben Ruckel, already had made his way to the waist was exiting along with radio operator Wendell Reed, ball turret gunner, Al Albro, waist gunner, Russell Lachman, and tail gunner, Herbert Guild.

Stahlman was flying his last scheduled mission as a replacement for regular co-pilot, Grady Cumbie. The latter had been hospitalized the day before with an ear problem. Lachman was also a "sub" filling in for Abbott in the waist.

DeLancey made it as far as the end of the runway, where he sat down with knees drawn up, arms crossed and head down. The ordeal was over, and now the drama was beginning a mental re-play.

Then a strange scene took place.

Group CO Col. Frank P. Hunter had arrived after viewing the landing from the tower and was about to approach deLancey. He was physically restrained by flight surgeon, Dr. Robert Sweet.

"Colonel, that young man doesn't want to talk now. When he is ready you can talk to him, but for now leave him alone."

Sweet handed pills out to each crew member and told them to go to their huts and sleep.

No dramatics, no cameras, no interviews. The crew would depart the next day for "flak leave" to shake off the stress, and then be expected back early in November. (Just in time to resume "normal" activities on a mission to Merseburg!)

Mission No. 98 from Nuthampstead had begun at 0400 that morning of October 15, 1944. It would be Cologne (again), led by CA pilots, Robert Templeman of the 602nd, Frank Schofield of the 601st and Charles Khourie of the 603rd.

Tragedy and death appeared quickly and early that day. Templeman and pilot Bill Scott got the 602nd off at the scheduled 0630 hour, but at approximately 0645 Khourie and pilot, Bill Meyran, and their entire crew crashed on takeoff in the town of Anstey. All were killed. Schofield and Harold Stallcup followed successfully with the 601st, with deLancey flying on their left wing in the lead element.

The ride to the target was routine, until the flak started becoming "unroutinely" accurate.

"We were going through heavy flak on the bomb run," remembered deLancey.

"I felt the plane begin to lift as the bombs were dropped, then all of a sudden we were rocked by a violent explosion. My first thought - 'a bomb exploded in the bomb bay' - was immediately discarded as the top of the nose section peeled back over the cockpit blocking the forward view."

"It seemed like the whole world exploded in front of us," added Stahlman. "The instrument panel all but disintegrated and layers of quilted batting exploded in a million pieces. It was like a momentary snowstorm in the cockpit."

It had been a direct hit in the nose. Killed instantly was the toggler, Abbott. Navigator LeDoux, only three feet behind Abbott, was knocked unconscious for a moment, but was miraculously was alive.

Although stunned and bleeding, LeDoux made his way to the cockpit to find the two pilots struggling to maintain control of an airplane that by all rights should have been in its death plunge. LeDoux said there was nothing anyone could do for Abbott, while Ruckel opened the door to the bomb bay and signaled to the four crewman in the radio room that all was OK - for the time being.

The blast had torn away the top and much of the sides of the nose. Depositing enough of the metal on the windshield to make it difficult for either of the pilots to see.

"The instrument panel was torn loose and all the flight instruments were inoperative with the exception of the magnetic compass mounted in the panel above the windshield. And its accuracy was questionable. The radio and intercom were gone, the oxygen lines broken, and there was a ruptured hydraulic line under my rudder pedals," said deLancey.

All this was complicated by the sub-zero temperature at 27,000 feet blasting into the cockpit.

"It was apparent that the damage was severe enough that we could not continue to fly in formation or at high altitude. My first concern was to avoid the other aircraft in the formation, and to get clear of the other planes in case we had to bail out. We eased out of formation, and at the same time removed our oxygen masks as they were collapsing on our faces as the tanks were empty."

At this point the formation continued on its prescribed course for home a long, slow turn southeast of

Cologne and finally westward.

DeLancey and Stahlman turned left, descending rapidly and hoping, they were heading west. (And also, not into the gun sights of German fighters.) Without maps and navigation aids, they had difficulty getting a fix. By this time they were down to 2,000 feet.

"We finally agreed that we were over Belgium and were flying in a southwesterly direction," said the pilot.

"About this time a pair of P-51's showed up and flew a loose formation on us across Belgium. I often wondered what they thought as they looked at the mess up front."

"We hit the coast right along the Belgium/Holland border, a bit farther north than we had estimated. Ray said we were just south of Walcheren Island."

Still in an area of ground fighting, the plane received some small arms fire. This gesture was returned in kind by Albro, shooting from one of the waist guns.

"We might have tried for one of the airfields in France, but having no maps this also was questionable. Besides, the controls and engines seemed to be OK, so I made the decision to try for home."

"Once over England, LeDoux soon picked up landmarks and gave me course corrections taking us directly to Nuthampstead. It was just a great bit of navigation. Ray just stood there on the flight deck and gave us the headings from memory."

Nearing the field, Stahlman let the landing gear down. That was an assurance. But a check of the hydraulic pump sent another spray of oil to the cockpit floor. Probably no brakes!

Nevertheless, a flare from Ruckel's pistol had to announce the "ready or not" landing. No "downwind leg" and "final approach" this time. Straight in!

"The landing was strictly by guess and feel," said DeLancey. "Without instruments, I suspect I came in a little hot. Also, I had to lean to the left to see straight ahead. The landing was satisfactory, and I had sufficient braking to slow the plane down some. However, as I neared the taxiway, I could feel the brakes getting 'soft'. I felt that losing control and blocking the taxiway would cause more problems than leaving the plane at the end of the runway."

That consideration was for the rest of the group. Soon three squadrons of B-17's would be returning, and they didn't need a derelict airplane blocking the way to their respective hardstands.

Stahlman, supremely thankful that his career with the 398th had come to an end, soon returned home and in due course became a Captain with Eastern Airlines. Retired in 1984, Stahlman said his final Eastern flight "was a bit more routine" than the one 40 years before.

DeLancey and LeDoux received decorations on December 11, 1944 for their parts in the October 15 drama. DeLancey was awarded the Silver Star for his "miraculous feat of flying skill and ability" on behalf of General Doolittle, CO of the Eighth Air Force. LeDoux for his "extraordinary navigation skill", received the Distinguished Flying Cross.

The following deLancey 1944 article was transcribed from the 398th BG Historical Microfilm. Note: Due to wartime security, Nuthampstead is not mentioned, and the route deLancey flew home is referred to in general terms.

TO: STARS AND STRIPES FOR GENERAL RELEASE
AN EIGHTH AIR FORCE BOMBER STATION, ENGLAND

After literally losing the nose of his B-17 Flying Fortress as the result of a direct hit by flak over Cologne, Germany on October 15, 1944, 1st Lt. Lawrence M. deLancey, 25, of Corvallis, Oregon returned to England and landed the crew safely at his home base. Each man walked away from the plane except the togglier, Staff Sergeant George E. Abbott, Mt. Lebanon, Pennsylvania, who was killed instantly when the flak struck.

It was only the combined skill and teamwork of Lt. deLancey and 2nd Lt. Raymond J. LeDoux, of Mt. Angel, Oregon, navigator, that enabled the plane and crew to return safely.

"Just after we dropped our bombs and started to turn away from the target", Lt. deLancey explained, "a flak burst hit directly in the nose and blew practically the entire nose section to threads. Part of the nose peeled back and obstructed my vision and that of my co-pilot, 1st Lt. Phillip H. Stahlman of Shippenville, Pennsylvania

. What little there was left in front of me looked like a scrap heap. The wind was rushing through. Our feet were exposed to the open air at nearly 30,000 feet above the ground the temperature was unbearable.

"There we were in a heavily defended flak area with no nose and practically no instruments. The instrument panel was bent toward me as the result of the impact. My altimeter and magnetic compass were about the only instruments still operating, and I couldn't depend on their accuracy too well. Naturally I headed for home immediately. The hit which had killed S/Sgt. Abbott had also knocked Lt. LeDoux back in the catwalk (just below where I was sitting). Our oxygen system also was out so I descended to a safe altitude.

"Lt. LeDoux who had lost all his instruments and maps in the nose did a superb piece of navigating to even find England."

During the route home flak again was encountered but due to evasive action Lt. deLancey was able to return to friendly territory. Lt. LeDoux navigated the ship directly to his home field.

Although the plane was off balance without any nose section, without any brakes (there was no hydraulic pressure left), and with obstructed vision, Lt. deLancey made a beautiful landing to the complete amazement of all personnel at this field who still are wondering how the feat was accomplished.

The other members of the crew include:

1. Technical Sergeant Benjamin H. Ruckel, Roscoe , California, engineer top turret gunner;
2. Technical Sergeant Wendell A. Reed, Shelby , Michigan, radio operator gunner;
3. Technical Sergeant Russell A. Lachman, Rockport , Mass., waist gunner;
4. Staff Sergeant Albert Albro, Antioch, California , ball turret gunner and
5. Staff Sergeant Herbert D. Guild, Bronx, New York, tail gunner.



Don't we owe these vets of WWII a great debt of gratitude? Those still living are in their eighties and nineties and most of them still deal with the memories of a horrible war where many of their friends fellow soldiers and airmen are still buried in foreign lands. With the exception of Staff Sergeant George E. Abbott who was instantly killed, this crew was very lucky to have completed this mission. The next time you see an elderly vet, give him a hug and tell him you care. It will probably make his day.

Final comment by awd

What is a calph? What is A caliphate?

What do these words have to do with America? This might be useful information someday! Maybe we ought to look em' up!

A Great Dog Story

They told me the big, black Lab's name was Reggie, as I looked at him lying in his pen.. The shelter was clean, no-kill, and the people really friendly. I'd only been in the area for six months, but everywhere I went in the small college town, people were welcoming and open.

Everyone waves when you pass them on the street. But something was still missing as I attempted to settle in to my new life here, and I thought a dog couldn't hurt. Give me someone to talk to. And I had just seen Reggie's advertisement on the local news. The shelter said they had received numerous calls right after, but they said the people who had come down to see him just didn't look like "Lab people," whatever that meant. They must've thought I did.

But at first, I thought the shelter had misjudged me in giving me Reggie and his things which consisted of a dog pad, bag of toys almost all of which were brand new tennis balls, his dishes, and a sealed letter from his previous owner. See, Reggie and I didn't really hit it off when we got home. We struggled for two weeks (which is how long the shelter told me to give him to adjust to his new home). Maybe it was the fact that I was trying to adjust, too.

Maybe we were too much alike.

For some reason, his stuff (except for the tennis balls --- he wouldn't go anywhere without two stuffed in his mouth) got tossed in with all of my other unpacked boxes.

I guess I didn't really think he'd need all his old stuff, that I'd get him new things once he settled in. But it became pretty clear pretty soon that he wasn't going to.

I tried the normal commands the shelter told me he knew, ones like "sit," "stay," "come" and "heel," and he'd follow them - when he felt like it.

He never really seemed to listen when I called his name --- sure, he'd look in my direction after the fourth or fifth time I said it, but then he'd just go back to doing whatever.

When I'd ask again, you could almost see him sigh and then grudgingly obey.

This just wasn't going to work. He chewed a couple shoes and some unpacked boxes.

I was a little too stern with him, and he resented it, I could tell. The friction got so bad that I couldn't wait for the two weeks to be up, and when it was, I was in full-on search mode for my cell phone amid all of my unpacked stuff. I remembered leaving it on the stack of boxes in the guest room, but I also mumbled, rather cynically, that the "damn dog probably hid it from me."

Finally, I found it, but before I could punch up the shelter's number, I also found his pad and other toys from the shelter..I tossed the pad in Reggie's direction and he sniffed it and wagged, some of the most enthusiasm I'd seen since bringing him home. But then I called, "Hey, Reggie, you like that? Come here and I'll give you a treat." Instead, he sort of glanced in my direction --- maybe "glared" is more accurate --- and then gave a discontented sigh and flopped down with his back to me.

Well, that's not going to do it either, I thought. And I punched the shelter phone number. But I hung up when I saw the sealed envelope. I had completely forgotten about that, too.

"Okay, Reggie," I said out loud, "let's see if your previous owner has any advice."

Whoever Gets My Dog:

Well, I can't say that I'm happy you're reading this, a letter I told the shelter could only be opened by Reggie's new owner. I'm not even happy writing it. If you're reading this, it means I just got back from my last car ride with my Lab after dropping him off at the shelter. He knew something was different.

I have packed up his pad and toys before and set them by the back door before a trip, but this time... it's like he knew something was wrong. And something is wrong...which is why I have to go to try to make it right.

So let me tell you about my Lab in the hopes that it will help you bond with him and be with you.

First, he loves tennis balls. The more the merrier. Sometimes I think he's part squirrel, the way he

hordes them. He usually always has two in his mouth, and he tries to get a third in there. Hasn't done it yet. Doesn't matter where you throw them, he'll bound after it, so be careful - really don't do it by any roads. I made that mistake once, and it almost cost him dearly.

Next, commands. Maybe the shelter staff already told you, but I'll go over them again: Reggie knows the obvious ones ---"sit," "stay," "come" and "heel."

He knows hand signals: "Back" to turn around and go back when you put your hand straight up; and "over" if you put your hand out right or left. "Shake" for shaking water off, and "paw" for a high-five. He does "down" when he feels like lying down --- I bet you could work on that with him some more. He knows "ball," and "food," "bone" and "treat" like nobody's business. I trained Reggie with small food treats. Nothing opens his ears like little pieces of hot dog. Feeding schedule: twice a day, once about seven in the morning, and again at six in the evening. Regular store-bought stuff; the shelter has the brand. He's up on his shots. Call the clinic on 9th Street and update his info with yours; they'll make sure to send you reminders for when he's due. Be forewarned: Reggie hates the vet. Good luck getting him in the car. I don't know how he knows when it's time to go to the vet, but he knows.

Finally, give him some time. I've never been married, so it's only been Reggie and me for his whole life. He's gone everywhere with me, so please include him on your daily car rides if you can. He sits well in the backseat, and he doesn't bark or complain. He just loves to be around people, and me most especially.

Which means that this transition is going to be hard with him going to live with someone new.

And that's why I need to share one more bit of info with you....His name's not Reggie.

I don't know what made me do it, but when I dropped him off at the shelter, I told them his name was Reggie. He's a smart dog, he'll get used to it and will respond to it, of that I have no doubt. But I just couldn't bear to give them his real name. For me to do that, it seemed so final, that handing him over to the shelter was as good as me admitting that I'd never see him again.. And, if I end up coming back, getting him, and tearing up this letter, it means everything's fine. But if someone else is reading it, well ... well it means that his new owner should know his real name. It'll help you bond with him. Who knows, maybe you'll even notice a change in his demeanor if he's been giving you problems.

His real name is "Tank." Because that is what I drive.

Again, if you're reading this and you're from the area, maybe my name has been on the news. I told the shelter that they couldn't make "Reggie" available for adoption until they received word from my company commander. See, my parents are gone, I have no siblings, no one I could've left Tank with ... and it was my only real request of the Army upon my deployment to Iraq, that they make one phone.. call the shelter ... in the "event" ... to tell them that Tank could be put up for adoption. Luckily, my colonel is a dog guy, too, and he knew where my platoon was headed. He said he'd do it personally. And if you're reading this, then he made good on his word.

Well, this letter is getting downright depressing, even though, frankly, I'm just writing it for my dog. I couldn't imagine if I was writing it for a wife and kids and family ... but still, Tank has been my family for the last six years, almost as long as the Army has been my family.

And now I hope and pray that you make him part of your family and that he will adjust and come to love you the same way he loved me.

That unconditional love from a dog is what I take with me to Iraq as an inspiration to do something selfless, to protect innocent people from those who would do terrible things ... and to keep those terrible people from coming over here. If I have to give up Tank in order to do it, I am glad to have done so. He is my example of service and of love. I hope I honored him by my service to my country and comrades.

All right, that's enough. I deploy this evening and have to drop this letter off at the shelter. I don't think I'll say another good-bye to Tank, though. I cried too much the first time. Maybe I'll peek in on him and see if he finally got that third tennis ball in his mouth.

Good luck with Tank. Give him a good home, and give him an extra kiss goodnight - every night - from me.

*Thank you,
Paul Mallory*

I folded the letter and slipped it back in the envelope. Sure I had heard of Paul Mallory, everyone in town knew him, even new people like me. Local kid, killed in Iraq a few months ago and posthumously earning the Silver Star when he gave his life to save three buddies.

Flags had been at half-mast all summer. I leaned forward in my chair and rested my elbows on my knees, staring at the dog.

"Hey, Tank," I said quietly. The dog's head whipped up, his ears cocked and his eyes bright.. "C'mere boy."

He was instantly on his feet, his nails clicking on the hardwood floor. He sat in front of me, his head tilted, searching for the name he hadn't heard in months.

"Tank," I whispered.

His tail swished.

I kept whispering his name, over and over, and each time, his ears lowered, his eyes softened, and his posture relaxed as a wave of contentment just seemed to flood him. I stroked his ears, rubbed his shoulders, buried my face into his scruff and hugged him.

"It's me now, Tank, just you and me. Your old pal gave you to me." Tank reached up and licked my cheek. "So whatdaya say we play some ball?" His ears perked again.. "Yeah? Ball? You like that? Ball?" Tank tore from my hands and disappeared in the next room.

And when he came back, he had three tennis balls in his mouth!!

BOOK REPORTS

LIFE AT 35,000 FEET By **RENDA BRUMBELOE**, is a great read, especially for anyone interested in Airline Aviation with a flight-deck perspective. The book compares dealing with problems facing an Airline pilot along with problems facing normal people everyday. It is amazing how similar these problems can sometimes be. This is a great first Book for Renda, I'll be looking for many more. I recommend this one for sure.

Heaven is for Real, By **TODD BURPO**, is a heartwarming read. This book has the capability of removing any skepticism whatsoever from ones mind about the reality of heaven and the afterlife for a born again Christian. There is even a very accurate painting of Jesus inside. If you can read, this book is a no-brainer, get a copy—it will thrill your heart.

AMERICA BY HEART By **SARAH PALIN**, is a fan-tastic read. This is another heartwarming book written by a real present-day patriot. This little lady has been lambasted by some of the most evil and/or the most ignorant people in the world. She has stood up well to all of their attacks. This woman will make a great President of these United States of America. Sarah Palin is a woman with "True Grit," which is a quality that has been missing in a vast majority of our public officials and politicians since Ronald Reagan was President. The book isn't about her being lambasted at all, but **it is about what America was and should be**. A wonderful and easy read that I highly recommend.

THE PIGRIM'S PROGRESS From This World to That Which Is To Come by **John Bunyan, 1628-1688**. This is an old book, if you have never read it, do so soon as it will be worth your time. If you have read, read it again, it will be time well spent.

THE TRAGEDY OF PUDD'NHEAD WILSON By **MARK TWAIN**, is a little-known classic. This book is a great and easy read written by a fantastic storyteller. It will be well worth your time to find a copy and give it a read. I've enjoyed it so much that I have read it twice.

Put me in charge ...

Put me in charge of food stamps. I'd get rid of Lone Star cards; no cash for Ding Dongs or Ho Hos,' just money for 50-pound bags of rice and beans, blocks of cheese and all the powdered milk you can haul away. If you want steak and frozen pizza, then get a job.

Put me in charge of Medicaid. The first thing I'd do is to get women Norplant birth control implants or tubal ligations. Then, we'll test recipients for drugs, alcohol, nicotine and document all tattoos and piercings. If you want to reproduce or use drugs, alcohol, smoke or get tats and piercings, then get a job.

Put me in charge of government housing. Ever live in military barracks? You will maintain our property in a clean and good state of repair. Your "home" will be subject to inspections anytime and possessions will be inventoried. If you want a plasma TV or Xbox 360, then get a job and your own place.

In addition, you will either present a check stub from a job each week or you will report to a "government" job. It may be cleaning the road-ways of trash, painting and repairing public housing, whatever we find for you.

We will sell your 22-inch rims, low profile tires, your blasting stereo and speakers and put that money toward the "common good." Before you write that I've violated someone's rights, realize that all of the above is voluntary. If you want our money, accept our rules. Before you say that this would be "demeaning" and ruin your "self esteem," consider that it wasn't that long ago that taking someone else's money for doing absolutely nothing was demeaning and lowered self esteem.

If we are expected to pay for other people's mistakes we should at least attempt to make them learn from their bad choices. The current system rewards them for continuing to make bad choices.

Author is unknown

If you have a computer, check out
the web site:

TheViewsLetter.com

Thanks for the cards, letters and donations your
support is much appreciated.

VIEWSLETTER

1015 West Dorchester Way

Mustang, OK 73064

Around the House

By Barkley Doudney Schnauzer Dog

As you can see, the Boss didn't leave me a lot of room to say much. But this I can say—it's cold, and I don't like it! I'm ready for Springtime!

Linda and the Boss seem to be doing fine, her here and him there. Both busy doing whatever humans do to occupy their time.

The Boss comes with mud on his boots, and the smell of horse in his clothing. He says he would be a better farmer if he had more money. Linda says she could be a better shopper if she had more money.

I guess that is what we need—more money!

Keep looking forward and remember to raise all the cane you can when it comes to your Representatives. Hold all Government employees' feet to the fire of truth! ~*Barkley*

Around the Farm

By *Twister Doudney Horse*

We have had a few cold days lately, one night the mercury dropped to 12 deg. f. Lucky for me and Blackie that the Boss has been feeding us regularly and we made it through that cold spell okay. A couple weeks ago, we got around nine inches of snow. It's only the second time that I've seen snow. Last year we got a couple of inches, but it was gone in less than a day. This time it was on the ground for almost a week.

Blackie is a short, black filly that has been hanging out here for almost a year. She is good company and I like her. At first, she spent some time fraternizing with Nipper, the jackass, but now I think she's got herself pregnant and doesn't pay him much attention anymore.

I think the Boss likes her more than he likes me because she has been sucking up to him a lot lately. She would be easier for him to ride; he has a little trouble climbing on me, after all, I'm a pretty tall horse for a Quarter Horse. If he ever does start riding her she won't suck up to him so much. He would be max payload for her, and that would be a funny site. I can't wait! Makes me smile just to think about it.

I've been playing a game with the Boss, lately. He always wants to tie Blackie and me up when he is feeding the cattle. Everyone knows that horses and cattle don't mix when it comes to feeding time. So, his solution is to tie us up and then feed the cattle and us separately. Well, I may be a gelding, but I have my pride! I won't stand second to some cow or even a bull for that matter. So I avoid him when he comes around with a halter in his hand, and then he ignores me when it comes to giving me some feed. He will halter and tie Blackie and feed her and just ignore me. But this requires him to either hand feed Blackie or guard her when she is feeding, because she is afraid of me and will stand and let me eat her feed, that is unless the Boss is there.

I can tell it irritates him to have to deal with me this way during feeding time. I would do well to remember that there were three other horses that used to irritate him, and they are now gone. He hauled them off to who knows where? I've heard tell that they ended up being a steak for someone in Belgium, Germany or France. I don't know for sure what that means, but I don't think it's good, maybe I should swallow my pride and cooperate. However, it's kind of fun to rub on him a little bit once in a while.

The cold weather has caused him to fire up his chain saws and cut wood. He keeps a fire going all the time, and ran very low on wood. I think he is getting old enough that the cold effects him more than it used to, although, he would never admit that. He thinks he is going to live forever. That's the way he acts anyway. If he were a rooster, he would be crowing day and night.

All said and done, I like him okay as long as he keeps the feed available.

Presently, there is one calf that he has been unable to trap and take off to the sale. All others calves are gone. Nothing but cows and Al, the big bull.

The other morning when the temp was in the teens, the Boss was getting feed to coax me over where he could halter me, when all of a sudden I heard this loud thud. I looked over and he was laying on the ground groaning. He had slipped on some ice and fell hard, I know because I heard him hit the cold, icy ground. For the next couple of days his normal patience was missing and he became a little irritable. He was hobbling around like a feeble old man. He got over it though, I knew he would.

There are four new calves, two heifers and one bull. Haven't gotten close enough to the last one to tell what it is. Keep a close watch! *Twister*

Freedom is never more than one generation away from extinction. We didn't pass it to our children in the bloodstream. It must be fought for, protected, and handed on for them to do the same, or one day we will spend our sunset years telling our children and our children's children what it was once like in the United States when men were free. ~Ronald Reagan

A proud fat man and
his two grand twins!
On Christmas
Morning 2010

