

**W**illiam J. Watson - SWL - \*1922-1984\* - William Jefferson Watson - Born 20 Aug 1922 – per the 1930 USA Census - of Cambridge, Parents John Ross Watson (Janitor USPO) and Florence Morrison Watson, sister Minnie F. Age 10. Brought up out on Clark Street on the north end of town.



This would make Wm J. in the CHS Class of 1940 resided 1205 Stewart Av., Cambridge - Clancy Waller W8CL would have known Bill. Bill's occupation Tool Maker Phillips Products retiring there & enjoyed woodcraft. Wife Norma Jean CHS office secretary. Bill expired 20 Mar 84, age 61, he died while in the down town district shopping. Burial at Northwood in the area of my fathers grave.

Just after the war in 1947 there was a reorganization of the Cambridge Radio Club and Bill Watson & Francis Mitchell were listed as two of the visitor attendees in a Jeffersonian article dated that summer.

That is how I got interested in learning more about Bill Watson and Francis Mitchell and what became of them.

In a conversation with Norma Jean Watson 4 Dec 04, she explained that Bill was a B17 crew member in WW2 and was a radioman/waist gunner aboard the Flying-fortress. His crew survived their 25 missions in 1943-44 over Germany and France then returned to the states. Norma Jean advised your author that Bill wrote notes about each mission that he kept in his cap band.



Bill had a life long interest in Scouting and was usually involved in the Scouts later on in life. Bill, like Andy Smith had an interest in radio but did not have time to pursue the hobby. Bill and Norma Jean raised 4 sons. A member of 1<sup>st</sup> U.M.E., serving on administrative board. Member of Lodge 66 F&AM and Salvation Army volunteer

Watson's wife Norma recalled the Kimmerle family on N.10th, the boys were interested in short wave radio and had a setup in the basement. Internet checks, a Lt John Kimmerle B17 Pilot of the 34<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group flight records, nothing else obtained. Kimmerle is not listed any longer having residence in Cambridge.

Note:Norma Jean Watson will be age 80 this coming Monday 12-4-04

Update, March 2008, at my aunts 80<sup>th</sup> birthday in Cambridge, we again met Norma Jean Watson and she was her gracious self and said she would mail copies of her husbands flights in WW2. They arrived and here is the rest of the story. Continued

SGT Bill Watson was a crew member of the “Boomerang Barbara” they accomplished 16 of their 25 missions in the good luck ship Boomerang Barbara and their home base was station 136 Knettishall Heath England. - Captain Robert Bailey was their flight captain on all 25 missions which were complete March 16<sup>th</sup> 1944 - 25<sup>th</sup> and last raid, 6 hours over enemy territory, lots of contact.

For various reasons including mechanical, Watson’s crew couldn’t always fly the same aircraft, The Boomerang Barbara crashed with an auxiliary crew 20 February 44 with 8 crew killed and one held prisoner of war. Bill’s last flight was in “Devil’s Luck” can you believe that name? For their 25th

mission, then Devils Luck went down in July 1944 with 8 crew killed, after Bill rotated home. Captain Bailey kept his crew together through thick and thin.



Watson is standing second from left and Captain Bailey is front 2<sup>nd</sup> left, his co pilot on his left.

The people of the English country side have never forgotten the honor and fidelity of their American friends during WW2. Here is a memorial to the 388<sup>th</sup> Knettishall Station. Bill mentioned the dreaded flights over Berlin, the flack and accuracy of the German pilots was deadly. It seemed they had the best pilots over Berlin.



Some of Bill’s comments, March 3 over Berlin, I saw a 17 on fire and blow up. Hope I never see it again. The flack was the most accurate yet. One piece hit me in the hip. It stung till we hit the ground. Hope I never have to go back.

16 March 1944 “I am very glad and thank God that I am finished.” The end of a tour of operations over France and Germany.

With help from Norma Jean Watson, Bill’s XYL.