Philip C. Hewitt
Professor and Chair
Earth Sciences
(1967-1997)



U. S. Army Air Corps
WWII

You can escape death, hide from it, and, with the medical miracles available today, you can postpone it, but, you cannot avoid it - it ultimately will find you. Such is the story of emeritus Dr. Phillip C. Hewitt, Professor Emeritus, Earth Sciences, (1967-1997), whom was caught on Monday, July 5, 2004 at age 78. Phil escaped death and hid from it while serving in the Army Air Corps in World War II. In recent years he was able to postpone death, through the use of modern medications, although suffering from serious respiratory failure. When he retired in 1997 I do not believe he or anyone else expected that he could hide for seven more years. A month or so ago I talked by phone with Phil and he sounded much better than in previous conversations. He advised me at the time that he still had corrections to make to my rendition of his war story that I shared with you in an "Update" on July 30, 2001. He told me he would dictate the story to his daughter and then share it. I do hope that he had time to do so since there are so many WWII stories being lost as these veterans take their memories from this life. In the meantime, to honor him, I am including my uncorrected version of his story:

July 30, 2001
War Story ---

Phil Hewitt, Earth Sciences, called with a report on how the total incompetence of his squadron (15th army air corps) saved the life of Stefan Pribil during World War II. Phil learned of one of the results of his award-worthy ineptitude at a social gathering, also attended by Stefan, at which Phil was telling war stories. The mission for Phil's squadron was to bomb an old bridge in a village that had never before (or since) been a bombing target --- in fact, since there was a new bridge capable of carrying tanks, etc., Phil's squadron could not understand why the old bridge was the target. Likewise the village officials did not see the old bridge as a potential target, so, villagers were advised to hide under the old bridge in the unlikely event of a bombing. Thusly, as Phil learned at the

social gathering at the home of Physics Professor Richard Mancuso, Stefan Pribil was hiding under the bridge when Phil Hewitt and his whole squadron failed in their attempts to hit the bridge - not a single bomb hit on target - and, thankfully, both Phil and Stefan could later enjoy the "success" of the mission.