

VOL IV

NOVEMBER 1965

Dear Troops,

Once again we meet by the media of the Newsletter. We are starting a new section in the Newsletter celled the "President's Corner" which we think will be of interest to you. It will includesmessages from your President; special articles; etc. If after reading this issue's "President's Corner", you have any suggestions or experiences drop Warren Alberts a line giving him your comments. His address is: 352 Ravine Rd, Hinsdale, Illinois.

President's Corner

Dear 2AD Members:

I am pleased with the steady growth of the Association. Let's keep up the good work. One of our main problems is how to locate our former buddies, and to help, I have asked Howard Moore to develop a program which will get the activities of our Association in front of the largest group of people we can oh a continuing basis. More about this later.

I hope you will enjoy the article, "Scouts Out", by Col. Bill Getz which appears in this issue. Bill and I had been on the same American Management Association Council for several years before we realized that we were both 2ADer's. This past summer in New York over a brew or two we got to reminiscing and, of course, we discovered we were former buddies in the Second Air Division. He told me of some of the experiences of the Air Scouts and I thought it wes such an interesting story that all of you should know it first hand.

I feel there are many such stories amongst our membership. If you have a story you think should be told, let us hear from you.

Sincerely,

Warren E. Alberts President -Second Air Division Association

"SCOUTS OUT"

2nd Bomb Division Scouting Force

(writ by hand from memory)

By late 1943 it was apparent to the U.S. Bomber Command

that the greatest deterrent to American bomber operations in Europe was not German fighters and flak, but the unpredictable and miserable European weather, particularly during the winter months. Not that the Jerries were not taking their toll, but that the number of aborts and poor target results were attributable to the extremely limited visibility afforded from the confined cockpit of a bomber flying at over 20,000 feet, in tight formation, in generally poor weather. The target conditions were usually a surprise to the leader of the bomber formation, Nor did weather reconnaissance aircraft bring significant relief, although they were an improvement. The recon aircraft provided the general area weather situation, and not specific target conditions. Something more was needed. (General Elliott Roosevelt, the President's son, commanded a recce outfit, flying British DeHavilland Mosquitp Bombers.)

It is said that everyone talks about the weather, but no one does anything about it. This may be true, but there was one 8th Air Force bomber pilot who thought differently. Colonel John A. Brooks, "Johnny" had completed a bomber tour with the 389th Bomb Group. He knew firsthand the uncertainty of target conditions faced by the leader of the bombers. Many times he had wished that he had "eyes" over the target so that decisions on method of bombing or diversion to secondary targets could be made before reaching the IP (Initial Point. The point where the bombers began their bomb run to the target.) for the bomb run. West Pointer Brooks remembered his infantry training. "Scouts out" was as familiar to the infantry company on the march in World War II as it was to the Cavalry fighting Indians in true Western movie action. Why not scouts for the bomber force? Think what it would mean to the bomb division Leader to have experienced eyes scouting the bomber route to the target, just a few minutes ahead of the bombers, same altitude, radioing weather, visibility, enemy action, etc. Thirty minutes before the bombers reached the IP, the scouts could advise the leader on whether to make a visual run and drop, radar, or combination. In some cases he could recommend going to secondary targets, or even selecting secondary targets. Once the bombers reached the IP, the scouts could observe the formation from above and help straggling groups turn short to close-up, relay commands from the leader and generally provide the bomb leader with assistance.

After bomb release, the bomb leader could only hope that all groups could reform for the trip home. Through all the confusion of flak, fighters, clouds, and disabled aircraft, it was nothing less than luck that bomb groups were able to reform in any semblance of order for the dangerous trip home, There was safety in numbers. Scouts could help groups rally. From a position above the bombers, it would be possible to see a panerama of the activity, and advise group leaders on reforming, call in fighters to protect the cripples and also take a look at the bombing results. And of course, the trip

home, usually over a different route than incoming, was filled with the same wonder of what lies ahead. Scouts could again go out ahead of the bomber force, following their route and at their altitude and keep the bomb division leader advised of what to expect. Over, England, the Scouts could advise whether all bases were open, or when alternate landing points should be used.

The idea appeared sound, but who would be the soouts and what kind of aircraft would they fly? To be of real value, the scout would have to be experienced with bomber problems, and even more specifically, the problems of the bomb division leader, Since his recommendations would weigh heavily with the leader, the scout would have to exercise the judgement as if he himself were leading the bombers. This meant that the scouts would have to be lead-crew bomber pilots.

The obvious answer to the type of aircraft was a fighter but what kind? If the scouts were to be in front of the bombers on the way in and out, and practically until the bombers landed, it meant they would be in the air as long a time as the bombers, and some bomber missions were 8 hours long!

The P-51D proved to be the answer. The first of the bubble canopy 51's, it had unusual range when equipped with large 110 gallon wing tanks. The planes finally delivered to the Scouts were also equipped with the first K-14 computing gunsights in the European Theater. They even made former bomber pilots expert gunners!

Brooks looked for volunteers from the various 2nd Division Bomb Groups: lead-crew pilots who had completed their teurs and were willing to stick their necks out for a second tour. He had no problem but to select the best available. Those accepted were sent to the P-51 transition school at Goxhill, England (North of the Wash). There they received six to ten hours in the rear seat of an AT-6 (gives you a similar visual impression in landing as a P-51). Ten hours in a P-51B, with the "Greenhouse" canopy, completed the training.

The Scouts were stationed on the airbase of a regular 8th Air Force P-51 group (355th) at Steeple Morden, England, ten miles from the well-known B-17 base at Bassingbourne. The Scouts were there for logistic and maintenance support, but were officially the 2nd Bomb Division Scouting Force assigned to the Headquarters. However, all pilots were assigned on detached service from their parent bomb groups! The author used to take advantage of this situation, as did all the former bomber pilots, and on his days "off" fly his P-51 to his home bomber base, gather a crew, and fly locally in B-2h's to keep "current" in h-engine aircraft.

A very important part of the Scout operation were the 12 to 15 fighter pilots also detached to the organization from various 8th Air Force fighter outfits. Their thankless lot was to fly "wing" to the ex-4-engine jockies, and to keep them out of trouble. These fellows qualify as the unsung heroes of the 8th Air Force.

Not all Scout missions were of the routine previously described. Take the time Johnny Brooks was leading eight Scouts to a major target to be bombed by most of the 8th's bombers. This was towards the end of the war when it was difficult to get the Luftewaffe off the ground. When they did come, it was in "gaggles" of 100 to 150. The leader end deputy were experienced, but the remainder were kids with little more than 112 hours of flying time. Germany was desperate.

Johnny was 30 minutes out in front of the bombers. Over Germany he saw below him approximately 100 plus ME 109's forming to attack the bombers. They were forming in the favorite, large "V" formation. With odds over 10 to 1, there was only one thing to do: instead, Johnny decided to attack! In the anxiety of the moment, Johnny slightly misjudged speed and distance, and found himself flying straight up the "V". All eight Scouts began firing, and eight ME 109's went down including the leader and the deputy. Any German could have killed a Scout if he had just pressed his trigger. The Jerries were so surprised and bewildered, they broke up formation and went home. No bombers were touched. Johnny got two 109's and the DSC.



2 ND BOMB DIVISION SCOUTING FORCE

There was another occasion when the ground forces in Southern France (Trier Area) were hard-pressed and needed air support in the worst way. All bases in England were zero-zero, and most of the bases in France. There was one exception; the 2nd Combat Bomb Wing had a 200' ceiling and $\frac{1}{2}$ mile visibility. They decided to go! When the bombers flew, so did the Scouts.

Brooks asked for volunteers, since they would have to make a blind take-off, fly through impossible weather, and bail-out upon return. Everyone wanted to be a hero, so Johnny selected Bob Whitlow as leader, yours truly as deputy, and two fighter pilots for our wing. "Wild Willy" Whalen of Hamilton, New York had my wing. Bill Hornickel of Elizabeth, Indiana flew Whitlow's wing. (After the war, Whitlow was the first Athletic Director of the Air Academy and is now head coach of a professional football club.) With no 20-years-after-the-war exaggeration, it was necessary to tow the P-51's to the iced runway. It was impossible to see further than 5 feet through the dense, cold and damp English fog.

Bob sank all 230 lbs., 6'h" into his cockpit, set his gyros, and took off on the gauges. Hornickel tucked his wing inside of Bob's (the tip was no more than 3' from Bob's fuselage), and took-off, his eyes glued to Bob's piane. Bill Whalen and I did the same thing. We were all very young.

At 3000' we were out of the soup into a broken cloud condition. This remained until we reached the target. We could see the target. We told the bomb group leader, who in the meantime, at his lower altitude, was in and out of clouds, flying formation. He was very unhappy. Bob told him he could get through and make a radar run and a visual drop. The leader was not certain. Bob told him he would send his deputy back to steer him to the target. That was me. Although it was utterly ridiculous that one could find a needle in a haystack, Luck had it that we did find the group. Carefully sliding up to the group, we identified ourselves and told the leader he could make it by altering his course further West. From his vantage point he could not see the way (formation flying was not easy-on instruments). So, with the wingman flying high cover, I lowered my gear and flaps, throttled back, placed myself in front of the bombers and 1ed them to the vicinity of the target. Whitlow kept relaying vital information.

Our return to England and Landing was spectacular, scary and downright foolish. But then, we were young, and that is also enother story. There are many fabulous stories that could be told of the Scouts, especially of Wild Willie Whalen. He was an Ace, both American and almost German (from crashing American planes). What a glorious

pilot and loveable fool. Of course, everyone from the era have their stories. The Scouts were little known and little praised, yet their contribution increased bomber target coverage by log during the crucial 1914-1915 winter. They did not fly for gain nor glory - they had had their fill, but as former lead-crew bomber pilots, they knew the value of their efforts. Many a 2nd Division commander, group commander, and just plain pilots who are alive today, will testify to the relief he felt when he knew on a mission that we had "SCOUTS OUT"!

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The following letter was received by Evelyn Cohen and if anyone can be of assistance to Gerald Collins please write to him directly.

Dear Miss Cohen:

Many thanks for your letter in answer to mine requesting help regarding the project I am working on concerning a book about the 389th Bomb Group, no doubt if my letter is published in your newsletter I will in all probability receive some mail from old members from this unit.

As yet, I have not had much luck in gathering material except from Maxwell AFB who very kindly sent me a potted version of the group history, and some information was given by the National Archives in Washington, but what is actually needed are first hand accounts from crew members relating their own personal experiences at home on the base and flying on missions, they could also be a great help in providing individual airplane codes and anmes which is one of the biggest problems besetting me at the moment, for as you can no doubt appreciate these details are vital for the accuracy of the book, and if upon publication some of the facts put down in the story are untrue it would not be long before I would receive letters informing me of this but then it would be too late.

Yes, I have made several visits to the American Wing of the Norwich Library and spent quite some time reading various books relating to the Second Air Divisions stay in East Anglia all of which I found extremely interesting, and I think the wing is a wonderful and iftting tribute to the men of the 8th Air Force who served their country in time of war from this part of England and for the brave ones who gave their lives for the cause of freedom.

I have also been to see the American cemetery at Cambridge which is truly a beautiful place of rest set in what must be one of the prettiest parts of Britain. While I was there I took several colour shots both of the grounds and the chapel, the interior of which is magnificent and if you or any members of the Second Air Division Association would like some copies I will gladly send you a few.

Although the book I am writing is concerned solely with the 389th B.G. (this is because I lived next door to Hethel and spent many exciting boyhood hours on and around the base watching the B-24's and I consider the 389th to be of personal interest to me) I am also interested in all the Bomb Groups who were within the 2nd Air Division, and I am trying to collect an album of photographs of the Liberators that flew with the various units but rather surprisingly I find that there are very few pictures available of 2nd f.D. B-24's though there are many of her sister ship the B-17. I suppose this might be because the Flying Fortress was a more glamorous airplane and received much more publicity. If you yourself know of any pictures I could obtain for my collection I would indeed be very grateful, one other request Miss Cohen although I am not a member of your association if I subscribed a donation would it be possible for me to become an honorary member and receive the monthly editions of the newsletter as I have been reading one or two old copies and have found them very interesting and feel it is a good thing that such an organization exists to uphold the interest and memories of the men who served in the now historic Second Air Division of the U.S. Eighth Air Force USAAF who played such an active part in the fight for liberty that was World War Two.

I will bring this letter to a close now and await a reply from you at your earliest convenience.

Yours very Sincerely,

G. P. Collins 2ha Watford Way, Hendon, N.W.h London, England

Charter Flight

I know that those of you who submitted your application and money to Ray Hess for the proposed Charter Flight to Norwich in May of 1966 were very disappointed that there were not enough applicants to make this trip possible and that you have already received your refund.

The lack of response to this Cherter Flight, must have been for varied reasons such as the time of departure and return dates which were available to us which would interfere for many with graduating sons and daughters from school; the short length of time in which to get your application and money submitted; plus many personal reasons.

Since the Charter Flight has been cancelled, the Annual Reunion will be held somewhere in the U. S. We have enclosed a card giving a choice of locations and dates for you to fill out and mail no later than the 15th of December to Warren Alberts so that a time and place can be selected for the 1966 Annual Reunion. We have also included on the card a space to indicate whether or not you would be interested in a Charter Flight to England during 1967, and the time of year bearing in mind that the peak season Eastbound is from 1 June to 21 September and Westbound from 9 July to 21 September. For exemple: A charter flight departing the U.S. on 20 June and returning on 10 July would be hitting both East and Westbound peak seasons and would cost more than one departing 20 June and returning 8 July.

= New Members

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- Dyott, Charles H., Industrial Eng. Deptl, United Air Lines, P.O. Box 8800, Chicago, Illinois, 60666 458th BG
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- Foglesong, Donald G., 6844 Windward Street, Cincinnati, Ohio 45227 467th BG
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- Huitt, Burl E., 621 Sheridan, Canon City, Colorado 81212 389th BG
- Hunsaker, Col. Ben W., Hqs. USAFSO, Box 364, Albrook AFB, Canal Zone
- Isbell, Brig. Gen. James H., 2nd Reserve Region, Andrews AFE, Washington, D.C. 20331 458th BG
- Jacobs, Frank W., Jr., 162 W. 75th Street, New York 23, New York 467th BG
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- Keller, William L., RR 2 Box 201, Mooresville, Indiana li67th BG
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- Mahoney, James J., 6 Sharman Drive, RD 1, Norwich, New York 13815 492nd & 467th BG
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- Martin, James A., Seekonk Street, Norfolk, Mass. 01746 467th BG
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Williams, William J., 3906 Clive Avenue, Long Beach, 7, L67th BG California

Yarling, Robert K., 28 W. Penna. Street, Shelbyville, 2nd C.W.

Change of Address



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Gram, Laurence C., Lt. Col. (Ret), 7900 West National Avenue, West Allis, Wisconsin 53214

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Huff, Major Edgar J., 6225 Westchester Drive, Washington, D.C. 20031

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Paver, John M., 107 Red Bird Trail, Austin, Texas 78746

Welters, Allen J., Lark Drive County Rd 26, RFD, S. St. Paul, Minnesota

ADDITIONS +

Barkan, Harold E., 431 E. 20th Street, Apt 8G, New York, New York

Cemper, Raymond J., c/c E. W. Gibson, 1425 E. 59th Street Long Beach, California

Hansen, Joseph, 136 Lth Street, Edison TWP - Clara Barton Section, Fords, New Jersey

Klinkbeil, Julius M., Metropolitan Life Insurance Company, 307 Broadway, Saratoga Springs, New York 12866

Time has taken its toll and we are sorry to report the passing of three more of our members.

Baker, Donald J., Moorefield, West Virginia

Damm, Griffith E. We are pleased that his widow Mrs. Eleanor M. Damm, 371 Sherman Avenue, Elmhurst, Illinois wishes to remain with us as a member. Griffith was killed in a hunting accident in Canada the early part of the year.

Gahn, Norman J., 1:411 N. Ardmore, Shorewood 11, Wisconsin

Ha. 2 AIR DIV

Ray P. Foote is retired from the Benkers Trust Company and living in Vermont enjoying visits from his six grandchildren. Al Levit wrote Dean Moyer that the Second Air Division Memorial brochure and the Playboy magazine both arrived in the same mail and that he couldn't put the brochure down until he had finished every page. Al was also pleasantly surprised to receive a call from Tom Messenger whom he hadn't seen or talked to in some twenty years.

- 44 Bomb Gp

Fred R. Fent, Jr, Maj. Gen. USAF (Het) sent his best regards to all his old friends. Thomas M. Ferrell wrote such a nice long newsy letter. Due to lack of space, I shall include a few excerpts from his letter. "First, Let me express my heartfelt gratitude to you and all the others who have given so much time and effort to cur "Second Air Division Association". Even though I have never attended on of the reunions due to distance, finances, or illness, I know it is a wonderful organization, and I wear, with much pride, my lapel emblem. I noticed that John H. Gibson attended the 1965 Annual Reunion. He was Cormanding Officer of the 44th during the time I flew 33 missions as rear turrett gunner on Lt. John Docktor's crew. - - - I was present when the 44th had its 200 mission party at which time Col. Gibson as well as General Leon Johnson were thrown into a pool of water which was near the Red Cross Building, I believe.
- - I was in the 506th Squadron commended by Major James C. McAtee (Later promoted to Lt. Col.). Do you have any information as to his present addrass, etc.? -- Also have a picture of General Leon W. Johnson pinning the Distinguished Flying Cross on my lapel. Could you give me any information about him, his address, etc? (Can any-one help Tom with this info?)

93 BOMB GP

Halver S. Halverson enjoys traveling to see old friends and has seen Wilson Bennett and Fred Gravage. Nevin H. Gibson writes books on golf in addition to being in the insurance business. The manuscript of Nevin's fourth book in now in the hands of his printer. Entitled "You Can Play Par Golf", it was written in collaboration with pro Charlie Bassler of Indian Springs CC in Washingg ton. This next bit of news is tardy but I'm sure that there are some of you who might be interested. Dorothy M. Harrison former ARC wrote the following. In the Louisville Times for May 3, 1965 was the obituary notice of L. J. Madden under the headline "War Pilot L. J. Madden Dies Here." (He died May 2nd). Madden flew on the Ploesti Mission with the 376th BG, not a part of the 2nd Air Division, but the 93rd and 44th also flew that raid and may be interested in news of an old comrade. The 376th was Commanded by K. K. Compton who held command of the 93rd before Col. (Now General) Ted Timberlake. Madden was the legendary "Ploesti Stowaway" aboard Myron Conn's B-24. According to information in Cal Stewart's book Ploesti, he was an "elderly squadron Intelligence Officer. . . a retread from World War I. He pulled his rank on Conn to fly as observer and safely returned to Benghazi. The newspaper account says that Madden died at Veterans Hospital. He was Chief of the Procurement Division of the Midwestern District of the U. S. General Services Adrinistration. He was one of Louisville's first licensed pilots. He left a widow (Patsey Field Harney Madden) and a 7-month old son, James Patrick. Death was apparently due to a heart attack. According to an article in the June 1965 issue of the Reserve Officers Association Magazine Lt. Gen. Edward J Timberlake (now retired) earned the ROA's 1965 Minute Man Hall of Fame Award. One of his most famous lcaderships was "Ted's Flying Circus". Charles Lockwood is very much interested in hearing from anyone who started training with the 1st Group in Louisiana and Florida. Col "Chuck" Merrill recently say Col. Carl C. Barthel at a World-Wide Materiel Conference in Orlando, Florida. Walter M. Stewart writes that he and his wife Ruth and four children just completed a large Mormon Chapel in Morwich and is now completing his mission for the church by building a smaller one in Flensburg, North Germany.