

NEWS LETTER

Vol. 11, No. 2

SECOND AIR DIVISION ASSOCIATION

June 1973

PLOESTI AFTERMATH

(ed. note: The following was submitted to the Newsletter by Earl Zimmerman, 389th BG, and takes up where most accounts of Ploesti leave off.)

After coming off the target at Ploesti the condition of our plane left no doubt in our mind that we could not make it back to Benghazi. The Navigator plotted a course for Turkey and we headed for that haven flying right wing on Captain Mooney's plane. Captain Mooney was dead, the plane had one engine out, bomb bay doors hanging open and wounded men on board.



The funeral procession for Captain Mooney

Upon reaching the vicinity of Izmir two old P-40s, sporting a star and crescent, buzzed across our nose and lowered their gear. Mooney's plane could not maintain altitude so we circled as his co-pilot landed in a wheat field. We then followed the other P-40 into a short landing field outside Izmir and burned out our brakes upon landing.

On August 2 members of the James and Mooney crew attended the funeral for Captain Mooney. We heard later that the German Consul complained to the Turks about the American flag passing by the German Consulate during the funeral procession. It bothered us not at all.

The next day both crews left for Ankara by train. Upon arrival we were met by embassy personnel and other crew members who made it to Turkey

from Ploesti. We were all quartered in the Turkish Military Academy on the third floor and later moved to the Yeni Hotel near the center of Ankara. General R. G. Tindall, Military Attache and his assistant Major Brown, were in charge of the internees, 64 in all.

Arrangements were made by the embassy for us to sign out on parole each day during which time we had the freedom of the city. The parole period was from 9 a.m. to 10 p.m. and we were given direct orders not to violate the parole at any time, even when attempting to escape!

While at the Military Academy we attempted a mass break and managed to get 17 of the boys out. Two were caught near the Syrian border and returned. Although the attempt was not a complete success it was well engineered. A fake brawl was started by about ten or fifteen of our lads on the third floor and when the guards responded they were promptly pulled into the fray, their rifles being held by the bystanders — us. When it was determined that some of the doors were left unguarded everyone took off for the hills. I followed my pilot but we got nabbed as we reached an exit on the first floor.

From that time things more or less settled down and the first month in Ankara was filled with dinners and cocktail parties. All of the boys wore new suits and were paid twice a week which

was designed to keep money in your pocket all week long. Some of the lads hit the Raki too much, ran out of money and almost starved to death.

We led a very leisurely life. Arise late, breakfast at the Gar, attend classes (some of the boys took lessons in a variety of subjects), go swimming, play baseball or football at the park, visit the library or photo lab at the embassy, hang around the hotel and play chess, poker or ping pong etc. On occasion we would be invited to use the rifle or pistol range or make a few practice parachute jumps from a 200 foot tower. After lunch the theater or more goofing off, a late dinner, a few quick ones and back to the hotel.

The Yeni Hotel also housed one German deserter, one Russian deserter and seventeen Italian deserters. The Russian and German taught the Americans how to play chess and held a few classes in their language.

A few of the boys took the German to Karpic, the best restaurant in Ankara, for dinner a few times and on one occasion sat near Franz Von Pappen, the German Ambassador. We received orders, via General Tindall, that no American was to take any of the deserters out to dinner.

Three newspapermen, Ray Brock of the New York Times, Bill King of Associated Press and Russell of the New York Herald Tribune made life a little more exciting for the internees. They threw many beer parties and joined in the baseball and football games along with some of the embassy personnel.



Main entrance to Yeni Hotel. Kimtantas, 2nd left; Zimmerman, far right; others, Turkish guards.

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**Second Air Division Association
Eighth Air Force**

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EXTREMELY PROUD AND HONORED

There was a hush in the Municipal Auditorium in Birmingham, Alabama recently when Brig. General James M. Stewart (389th BG) stood in the spotlight before an estimated 1,100 people just after receiving the National Veterans Award. He voiced his thanks simply in just a few meaningful words.

It is significant that Birmingham honors not only veterans but also the Armed Forces, and when I retired from the service several years ago I suddenly realized that I had been the beneficiary in all my dealings with the military. I realized that I had taken more than I had given, and that the friendships and associations I had made, my whole experience in the military, had made me a better civilian. It seems to me that the military is an outstanding training ground for good citizenship.



Gen. & Mrs. James M. Stewart

The military teaches men respect, purpose, discipline and duty, and no nation can long survive without these ingredients. We have all known men who died for freedom and how desperately we wish that they could have lived for freedom. But, in reality, they do live. They live in our hearts and our minds. Because every man who gives his life in the service of freedom forever lodges himself in the American soul. Duty to country should be a never ending thing. When our sense of duty to our country fails to feed upon itself, we are lost."

This award climaxed the 26th annual National Veterans Award Dinner and was one of the opening elements of the National Veterans Day celebration in Birmingham.

(ed. note: Many thanks to W. H. Metz, V.P. Birmingham Post-Herald for the above.)

PRESIDENT'S CORNER

This past year as President of the Association has been one of the most gratifying in my entire life. I was able to meet many of our members in person for the first time, and other hundreds through letters.

We have made great strides and this was due to the efforts of many who worked diligently towards increasing our membership. A 'thank you' to all. A special 'thank you' to Evelyn Cohen, our membership secretary, Dean Moyer our Treasurer and the mini-reunion Chairmen who have been working all year to make this coming reunion the best ever.

I earnestly hope that all of you follow the suggestion we made in this issue of writing to your local paper announcing the reunion. It can only increase our membership.

Take care and I'll see you in Colorado Springs.

Sincerely,
William G. Robertie
President

EVERYBODY PITCH IN

Gordon Bishop from Colorado came up with a now idea for contacting those who served in the 2nd Air Division. He wrote a 'Letter to the Editor' of his local paper announcing the reunion and the results have been excellent.

We are re-printing his letter and urge all our members to do the same. This will not only gain us new members, but will give many who do not know we exist the opportunity to attend the reunion. All it takes is a eight cent stamp. How about it?

"Editor:

The 2nd Air Division of the 8th Air Force is holding its 26th annual reunion at the Antlers Hotel in Colorado Springs July 18-21, 1973.

The 2nd Air Division was made up of the 44th, 93rd, 389th, 392nd, 445th, 446th, 448th, 453rd, 458th, 466th, 467th, 489th, 491st and 482nd Bomb Groups, the 4th and 56th Fighter Groups, and the 361st and 479th Scouting-Fighter Groups.

Additional information is available through: William G. Robertie, Pres. 2nd Air Division Association, P.O. Drawer B, Ipswich, Mass. 01938"

Signed
(Your name and address)

NOTICE

George A. Reynolds has undertaken the task of writing a history about the 458th Bomb Group (none was ever written on this Group) and he needs help from anybody in the 458th with stories and photos. You can write George at 848 South 86th Street, Birmingham, Alabama 35206.

RECALLING AN EXPERIENCE 27 YEARS LATER

by 'Dusty' Worthen

Crew:	Pilot	Joseph J. Rosacker, Iola, Kansas
	Co-Pilot	Glenn Tessmer, Sudbury, Massachusetts
	Bombardier	F. D. "Dusty" Worthen, Burbank, California
	Navigator	John Pace, Dallas, Texas
	Engineer	Otis Hair, Olton, Texas
	Radio Operator	C. J. Philage, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania
	Gunners	C. P. Conley, Ponca City, Oklahoma
		T. C. "Cobb" Gibbs, Monroe, Louisiana
		Bennie Hays, Flint, Michigan
		C. S. "Sid" Metro, Glenn Ridge, New Jersey

Unit: 93rd Bomb Group, 328 Squadron

During the morning of January 28, 1945 we took off on what we all felt was to be a typical bombing mission except the target was Dortmund in the Ruhr Valley, or "Flak Alley". We were flying deputy lead position. The number of missions for the crew members varied from twenty-two to twenty-four.

more flak and a third engine faltered. With this, we headed for the nearest land which was the islands in the Schelde Estuary. We passed over Schouwen Island and started the last three miles to Walcheren Island, then Canadian held, when it was apparent we wouldn't make it. We all knew that



Back Row L to R: Bennie Hayes, Flint, Mich.; Dusty Worthen, Burbank, Calif.; Joe Rosacker, Iola, Kansas; Glenn Tessmer, Sudbury, Mass. Front Row L to R: C. J. Philage, Pittsburgh, Pa.; Chas. Conley, Ponca City, Okla.; T. C. Gibbs, Monroe, La.; John Pace, Dallas, Texas; Otis Hair, Olton, Texas; C. S. Metro, Glenn Ridge, N.J.

We approached the continent from the North Sea, flew over the Zuider Zee and into Germany to the I.P. north of Dortmund. About half way down the bomb run at 22,000 feet with flak ahead we lost our No. 1 engine. All attempts at feathering were unsuccessful. With a windmilling prop, we were not able to maintain speed so dropped out of formation and reversed our course to fly the bomber channel back home to England.

We called for "Little Friend" protection and were escorted part way out. Just before the Zuider Zee we lost our No. 2 engine. This one also would not feather. We were losing altitude too fast to make England so the decision was to fly off the coast of Holland south to now liberated Belgium.

The flying angle with two engines out on one side was eerie. When off the coast opposite the Hague we received

ditching wasn't the way to go so turned back to Schouwen for bail out.

At this time we were at between 1,000 and 1,500 feet. The first man out was just over the south coast; the rest were spread out on a course to just about the north coast. The plane crashed in this area in a snow covered mud flat. It wasn't long before we realized this island was in fact still German held — as we were descending by parachute small arms fire seemed to be coming from everywhere — we were in the vicinity of a German military headquarters. We all landed safely, some with minor injuries, and within about two hours were all captured and were housed in the prison cell of the German camp.

That night we were put aboard a small boat and taken to Rotterdam, then by truck to somewhere near the Holland-German border, then by train to Dortmund which most of the 8th had

continued to a few days before (on the 28th) and pretty well blew apart. As we walked through the Dortmund railroad station it was obvious American flyers were not welcome. We continued down through the Ruhr Valley by train and on to Frankfurt for ten days of interrogation and solitary confinement. Here we experienced our first English block busters from the wrong end.

Our next stop was at Wetzler, German, to pick up supplies. We arrived in the middle of a P-38 bombing attack on the Leica camera plant. From here we all went to the stalag Luft at Nurnberg for about a two month stay. Conditions were cold and rations minimum. The air raids here were like 1,000 4th of July celebrations. As the allied military forces neared Nurnberg we were marched during the next two weeks about 100 miles south to Moosburg, located about 20 miles northeast of Munich and Dachau. During the first days of the march P-51's and P-47's strafed our strung-out columns until they finally realized we were U.S. prisoners.

The Moosberg prison camp was said to have over 1000,000 prisoners of all nationalities. Prisoners were coming from all parts of Germany. About 17,000 were at Nurnberg. On April 29 General Patton liberated the camp. Then, either under U.S. military control or "by-your-own-means", we all found our way to France. Joe spent a little time in the Paris General Hospital. The next stop was the U.S.A. We have all been in touch for the past twenty-eight years.

In 1970, for the first time since 1945, six of the crew — Tessmer (former V.P. in the 2nd A.D. Association), Worthen, Gibbs, Philage, Hair and Rosacker — met, along with our families, at the Cincinnati reunion. All of this group, except the Philages, attended the Norwich reunion in 1972.

After the Norwich sessions we took a boat-train to Amsterdam, spent a few days there and then rented a VW bus and started a trip which would retrace our tour of 1945. The first stop was at Schouwen to look for familiar landmarks in the area. About the only sure one was an old church that T. C. Gibbs walked by after capture. We then went south to Walcheren Island and spent the night at Domburg, a resort on the North Sea. While eating dinner, the motel receptionist, an old timer in the area, visited our table to talk with us about those days in 1945. She reassured us that on November 1, 1944 Walcheren was liberated — so it was only a short distance to friendly territory. From here we drove through Belgium, down the Rhine, spent some time in Rhens, Remagen and rode the Rhine steamer, continued to Heidelberg, looked over the

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44th STRIKES FIRST BLOW

In July 1942 there was very little joy in the 44th camp at Barksdale Field, Louisiana. Having mastered the art of flying the B-24 the Group had been designated as a training unit from which other Groups would be formed to go overseas. But fate sometimes takes a hand, and on July 10, 1942 it did.

Part of the training consisted of the advanced crews flying Gulf Patrol Missions over the Gulf of Mexico looking for German Submarines. Live bombs were carried and at the end of a mission a deserted island in the gulf would be used for practice bombing. In this manner the Bombardiers were able to sharpen their skills as well as the pilots. Strictly routine.

On the morning of July 10th, however, things became much more than 'routine' for the B-24 piloted by 1st Lt. Norsen and 2nd Lt. John Diehl. A periscope was sighted and a swift attack was made from 1200'.

S/Sgt. George W. Guilford, Bombardier, had one pass to make good and he made the most of it. A direct hit was scored and the sub was seen to sink to the bottom.



L to R: Lt. John Diehl, Sgt. George Guilford & Lt. Norsen.

This one incident went a long way towards boosting the moral of the men of the 44th and they began to look upon their training duties in a new light. No longer did they treat the Gulf Patrol missions as a joke. No longer did they feel that their ultimate future was as a training unit. They began to sense that the 44th would play a major role in the defeat of Germany. And indeed it did!

12 STONES FOR A FOUNTAIN

We have been advised by Philip Hepworth, City Librarian, that 12 stones are missing from our Memorial Fountain in front of the Library.

For the benefit of our newer members the Fountain is set in a pool 20 feet long and 10 feet wide with rocks and stones collected from the fifty States arranged as a rock-garden.

The States, and the stones from those States are listed below: Florida - fossil;

Iowa - red jasper; Louisiana - granite; Maine - rose quartz; Montana - covellite; Nevada - gold ore; New Jersey - zincite; New York - rose quartz; South Carolina - blue pebble; Tennessee - green fluor-spar; Utah - zincite and Vermont - jasper.

We urge anyone coming to the reunion from the States listed bring along a stone for replacement in the fountain. The holes are quite small and something the size of a walnut is required.



2nd AD members gather around the pool and fountain.

A TASTE OF WORLD WAR II

GRAVESEND, England - Mrs. Fay Young has decided to put her 14 year old daughter Janet on World War II rations for one week to prove to her that kids have it easy today.

The Girl's menu for the next seven days will consist of 14 ounces of meat, three eggs, two pounds of potatoes and two ounces of cheese, plus unrationed items. For Sunday lunch, this meant a slice of bread and a boiled egg.

"Most teen-agers take the good things in life for granted," said Mrs. Young, "So I decided to teach my daughter a practical lesson."

(ed. note: She could have a point there!)

NECROLOGY

Rose Donahue	Headquarters
John M. Paver	Headquarters
George E. Griffin M.D.	491st
Benjamin F. Feible	466th
Charles B. Nash M.D.	466th

BOARD OF GOVERNORS - MEMORIAL TRUST



Captain Jonathan S. Peel M.C.

We have just learned that at the last meeting of the Board of Governors Captain Jonathan S. Peel M.D. was appointed to fill one of the vacancies. Jonathan Peel lives in Norfolk at Barton Turf near Neatishead where he farms. He also has American forebears and relatives.

Jonathan Peel was Page of Honor to Queen Elizabeth at her Coronation. One of his forebears was Sir Robert Peel Prime Minister of England in the mid nineteenth century and founder of the English Police Force. In his own words:

"My grandmother, Lady Huntingfield who died in the 1950's, was Eleanor Crosby born in New York in 1884. She was the daughter of Ernest Crosby, lawyer, friend of Tolstoy, Poet, Idealistic socialist and because of strict views of justice was sent off to be U.S. Judge in a Mixed Tribunal in Egypt. His wife, Miss Fanny Schieffelin was daughter of H. M. Schieffelin descended from a Lutheran Wortemburg pastor.

On the female side from Dutch settlers (Rutgers and De Piesta's) landowners on Manhattan and in New England and from Margaret Givan grand-daughter of a Baronet Givan of Ednam on the Scottish border. Perhaps the most interesting ancestors of my grandmother include - General William Floyd one of the "signers" of the Declaration of Independence. The Chief of the West Chester Indians. Cromwell's Ambassador to Switzerland who went to America to escape whatever might have happened to him in England.

Incidentally, although 'idealistically socialist' the Crosby's were staunch Republicans".

Jonathan and his wife Jean have three daughters, Ruth 7, Emily 5 and Anne 3.

We look for Jonathan Peel to be one of the key figures on the Board of Governors in the years to come.

THE AIRFIELDS — THIRTY YEARS AFTER

Philip Hepworth
David Stoker

Some of the most frequent requests that my reference library staff and I receive from visiting U.S.A.A.F. Veterans are about the fate of their old bases in East Anglia.

Sometimes we can help quite a lot; if the airfield has been in the news, we can produce newspaper cuttings, but quite often we simply do not know, and can give no satisfactory answer. For this reason I have asked Mr. David Stoker, my Assistant Reference Librarian, to do a little research into the condition of some of the old bases, and we hope to send some notes about a few of the bases to forthcoming *Newsletters*. If we can get the information we hope to cover all the 2nd Air Division bases.

Horsham St. Faiths, the base of the 458th bomb group, was taken over by the R.A.F. after the war and for ten years was used as a military base. In 1956 the runways were extended so that the base could be used for 'Lightning' fighters, but for some reason soon afterwards the Air Ministry announced that the base was to be run down. When the Air Force vacated the base in 1963, leaving many of the old buildings standing and in good repair, there immediately started a controversy about the future of the airfield. Being so near to the centre of Norwich, plans were made to turn it into a municipal airport; other plans were for a great new housing estate of a large industrial estate, whilst the newly founded University of East Anglia at Norwich wanted to use the old quarters as a temporary hall of residence of house students. The result was something of a compromise. The Airfield is now Norwich Airport, a small but prospering airfield, handling a limited service to the continent, internal flights, and many private flights. A part of the old base has been made into the 'Norwich Airport Industrial Estate', which was slow to become established, but now has several new business firms as well as others which have moved from their old premises in the city centre. Room was also found to house the students and they have been occupying the airmen's quarters for the last ten years and will continue to do so for the foreseeable future. Conferences and receptions are occasionally held there; one such was that of the Medical

Librarians Group of the Library Association, which I attended a few years ago.

Attlebridge (Weston Longuville), which was once the home of the 466 Bomb Group, is now the headquarters of probably the world's largest turkey producing organization. This was visited by members of the 2nd Air Division in 1972 and they met Bernard Matthews who began his business in 1950 with twelve turkeys and a second-hand incubator. In 1955 he purchased Great Witchingham Hall, then an empty and neglected stately home, and soon afterwards he purchased the hundred acres of the airfield. Unfortunately most of the buildings had been dismantled soon after the war, but the runways were still intact, and these exactly suited the needs of the operation, the runways offering excellent foundations for many of the fattening houses, and readymade access for motor vehicles between them. The area between the runways provides space for the dispersal of the growing flocks. The old control tower was still standing and became an office for the organization. The aerodrome proved to be such a successful undertaking that it is not surprising that the firm has now purchased the aerodromes at Langham, Oulton and Wendling.

Debden, Essex. At the end of July 1945, the 4th Fighter Group U.S. 8th A.A.F. left Debden and took up temporary residence at Steeple Morden, Cambs pending the Group's return to the U.S. in November 1945. The R.A.F. took up command again at Debden and for the next 15 years, the station was at various times a radio school, a signals division and a R.A.F. technical college, before finally becoming the Royal Air Force Police Depot in 1960 — with the dog squadron following three years later. The station's primary task now is to train officers and other ranks of the Air Force in provost and security duties, and it is organized into two squadrons — training and administrative. The training squadron is split into two flights — police training and dog training — and the administrative squadron into three flights — station services, personnel services and supply. About 200 servicemen are based on Debden now, although the dog training flight is probably the best known. This trains dogs for the R.A.F. Police all over the world and at present there are some 100 dogs under training. The dogs make frequent public appearances — but their real role is looking after airfields and aircraft.

R.A.F. Debden is due to close by the middle of 1975, when the Police School

will be transferred to Manby, Lincolnshire. Plans for the dog training school are as yet uncertain. The airfield at Debden is still operational, all runways being still serviceable, but these see little use except by the occasional visiting dignitary.

Steeple Morden, Cambs. In early July 1945, the 355th Fighter Group U.S. 8th A.A.F. left Steeple Morden for Gablingen in Germany, and in their place the 4th Fighter Group were stationed there until their departure in November 1945. Since that time, the airfield has been in a disused state, and, at the moment, little remains to be seen. All the hangars have been demolished, and the control tower has been reduced to a heap of rubble. Some of the perimeter track still exists today, serving as access routes to the areas of the airfield which have been returned to agriculture. Two local farmers share the area the airfield once occupied, and some use is made of the remaining buildings situated near the site of the tower — housing cattle and farm vehicles, and also a herd of pigs. All of the concrete runways have been torn up.

Bottisham, Cambs. On the 26th September 1944, the 361st Fighter Group U.S. 8th A.A.F. was transferred to Little Walden airfield in Essex. From that time onwards, there was little flying activity at Bottisham, and at the end of the war in Europe the U.S.A.A.F. withdrew from the airfield, and it was left derelict. Just after the war, the airfield living quarters, which were situated about a mile away from the actual airfield in Bottisham village, were used to house displaced persons — homeless evacuees from other countries — various buildings being occupied up until about 1949. Soon after the living quarters were vacated once more, the buildings and the land they stood on were acquired by a local farmer, and they are in use to this day, housing cattle and farm machinery as well as storing grain and fertilizer, etc. The airfield in the meantime has been returned to agriculture, and only two buildings now remain, along with short lengths of the perimeter track. All of the concrete runways have been taken up. The blister hangars were used briefly by the local farmers, but these have now disappeared, and the control tower has been demolished.

During 1972, a survey was carried out by members of the Cambridge Aircraft Preservation Society to locate and photograph (if not actually recover) examples of U.S.A.A.F. artwork in buildings once occupied by American airmen. Bottisham airfield was thoroughly searched but revealed nothing, however, a large number of paintings were discovered in several of the buildings in the living quarters, many of them rendered almost invisible by a thin, and luckily removable layer of white-wash. Insignia of the component squadrons as well as that of the Fighter Group itself were found (361st F.G.) along with two 8th A.F. insignia, sundry murals, period females and cartoons, etc. Numerous colour slides were taken when the restoration work was completed, and these along with a number of other photographs are in the Society's growing photographic collection.



Not all buildings have disappeared, above is the 'spiffy' control tower at Hethel.

Attlebridge Notes

(466th BOMB GROUP)

Editor:

Lt. Col. John H. Woolnough

MORE ON THE 466th HISTORY

The history of the 466th is being colored in nicely, thank you. Still there are many things we need to fill it out fully. Here are some of the hotter items:

Unit Insignia: We have examples of the insignia for the 784th, 786th (may not have been official) and the 787th Bomb Squadrons. We also have a picture of an insignia that must have been that of the 466th BG. We are still looking for anything on the 785th and would like to look at any and all examples of the other unit insignia. It would be helpful also to learn the colors used in the 784th and 466th insignia.

Squadron Colors: The original colors for the squadrons were Red, Gold, Blue, White (784, 785, 786, 787 consecutively). That was replaced by the playing card symbols: Club, Diamond, Heart, Spade. Towards the end of the war, the 466th adopted colors again for display on the cowl rings of the squadron a/c. Most of the photos we have seem to point to the use of the old color schedule (red, gold, blue, white). Sgt. Munafo says he remembers Col. Laubrich comparing the squadron (785th) *yellow noses* to Goering's crack outfit. Yet we have one report that the cowl ring colors were in this order: red, blue, gold, white. How about scratching your head and looking at your photos to see what you can make of it (a/c markings were: T9, 2U, U8, 6L for each sqdn. consecutively). Send in your evidence.

Non-Combat Crashes: We have little information on crashes that were not combat related. They don't show up in my mission files. Your help will be appreciated.

Miscellaneous items: We are still looking for current *addresses* (557 on 4 May 73), and 466 photos (2145 in the collection) and 466 related orders (we have a 1 1/4 inch stack now). Send your history data to Lt. Col. J. H. Woolnough, 7752 Harbour Blvd., Miramar, FL 33023.

466th DRAFTSMAN RECEIVES HIGH AWARD



Col. Pierce and S/Sgt Achterberg

In the process of digging into the records of the 466th Bomb Group, we ran into several references to a very big award that was conferred on S/Sgt Herbert Kenneth Achterberg, 466th Draftsman. We have been fortunate in securing a photograph of Col. Arthur J. Pierce congratulating Achterberg after the award ceremony. In the photo (see above) you can see the size of this imposing medal. The award

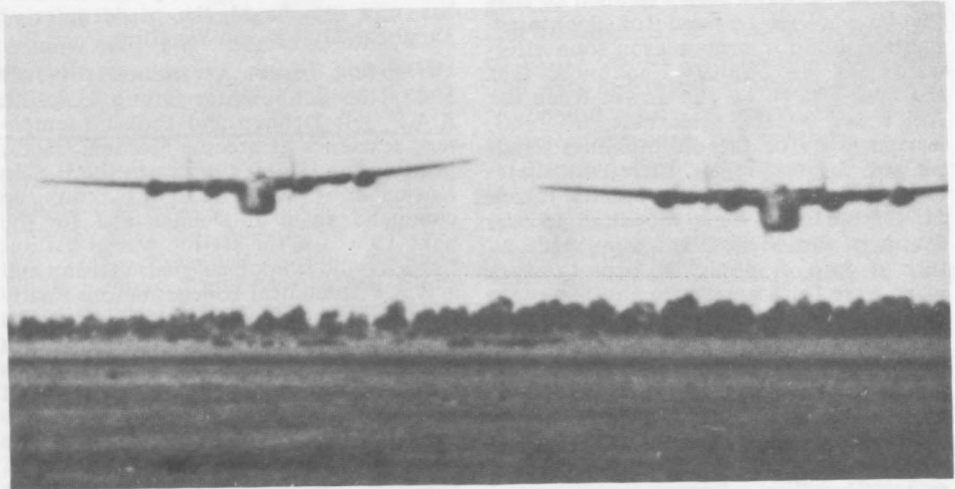
MID-AIR UP-DATE ON THE 466th

One of the dangers of writing history is that you will find some important details *after* publication. Though embarrassing, it will help us have a more complete history. Our story, "The Mid-Air Collision Group" (April issue of the Newsletter) was no exception. Pappy Daniels (787th) writes of a fifth mid-air collision, "In my diary of missions I have written - and I remember it well - 'remarks - Got by O.K. but the flak got close after we left the target. Saw two ships of our formation collide while going over France. Rough!' That mission was on the 16th of April 1945 to Landshut, Germany. We were flying along leisurely in formation when suddenly here comes someones propeller drifting by our left wing. It looked so close, I had to take quick evasive action. Then one of our birds started a slow descending left turn. Our crew counted 8

chutes, then in a few seconds the 9th chute popped out. The plane that lost the prop had rammed the left stabilizer of the plane that went down. The propless a/c returned to Attlebridge. All the new members of the Caterpillar Club got down O.K. So there was one more incident that made us the "Mid-Air Collision Kids." "I'm sure our records will confirm the above."

Yes, Pappy, our records do have an account of that mishap. I just overlooked it. Here is what Capt. James E. Lightle, Assist. S-2, put in the Mission Report for that mission (No. 227). "Due to a mid air crash over Belgium, A/C 591-B (Felber) and A/C 585-H (Evans) did not bomb. A/C 591-B returned to base with No. 3 propeller off, while 585-H crashed over Belgium. All personnel in A/C 585-H parachuted to safety."

It took a delicate touch when the flying was low and fast.



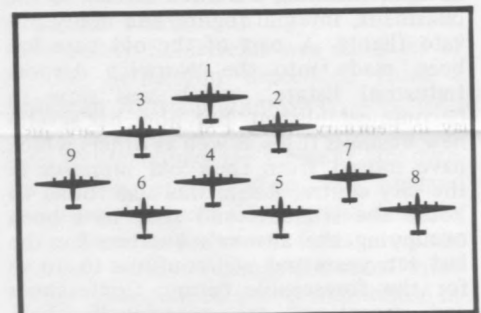
was presented to Sgt. Achterberg by Lt. Col. Steadman (Dep. Co.) on 14 May 1944. During the ceremony several other medals of lesser rank were awarded (Purple Heart, DFC, Air Medal, etc.). The citation that accompanied the award was proclaimed to all those assembled. It is reported in full below:

"*Citation:* For meritorious achievement in the destruction of the enemy while serving as a member of H.M. Eradicators of Vermin, S/Sgt Achterberg displayed the courage, coolness and skill of a true trooper.

Working alone in the mid of night, without the aid of weapon, S/Sgt Achterberg kept vigil over his traps, disregarding the loss of sleep and the subsequent drain on body energy. Unaided, he was responsible for the total destruction of *five* (5) mice, of the small, gray, vicious variety.

The devotion to duty displayed on this occasion by S/Sgt Achterberg reflects the highest credit upon himself and His Majesty's Armed Forces for the Extermination of Vermin.

After the reading of the citation, Col. Steadman pinned the coveted Mouse Medal to the young hero's uniform. Attlebridge Notes is extremely grateful to Hank Bamman (Gp Ops Chief) for bringing this historic event to light.



466 Formation Diagram for 16 Apr. 45 Mission

The Group put four sections in trail that day. Nine in each of the first three sections and ten in the last section. The relative positions of the aircraft in each section is shown on the diagram (in the fourth section, the tenth a/c flew in the slot). Major Remillet was the command pilot for the formation in the Farrington a/c. Evans, flying his 33rd mission, flew in No. 7 position in the first section. Felber, flying his 17th mission, flew in the No. 8 position of the first section. Pappy Daniels was flying in the No. 9 position of the second section.

Well that makes five mid-air collisions for our group. Maybe there were more. Maybe it was an 8th Air Force record. Some record!

JUST ONE OF THOSE DAYS



Lt. Roy E. Guy

3 September 1944 brought with it a dark, damp, dreary English morning. Attlebridge airfield, home of the 466th BG (H), prepared for its 115th mission. This one, Karlsruhe, Germany, was a repeat of the 114th mission on 5 September. On that mission, 13 a/c came back with battle damage due to "intense and accurate flak", four planes had made landings at other bases and two crewmen were wounded. This one would not be a milk run. The briefing officers gave out these details: Bombs 5 x 1000 GP plus 10 x 500 IB; Gas 2,700 gal.; Intervalometer 50' Visible, 150' PFF; Jettison Point 5220-0247; Three 12 ship squadrons (the Group is leading "B" Wing with Jacobowitz in Command), 5 cameras in each squadron; Bombing altitude 26,000 ft. (3,000 ft. to 4,000 ft. higher than last time); Code words Daisey Mae - Visual, Mairzy Doats - PFF, and Lazy Bones - chaff.

After having been awake four and a half hours or more, the crews in the 36 a/c took off (two PFF ships had taken off earlier to lead the 467th BG) at 0730 hrs. Within an hour or two the soggy gloom of the airbase was deepened with the return of 12 aborting aircraft (weather). Then the long wait. At 1500 hrs., the a/c began returning. At first only 17 return, then three straggle in, and finally the word comes in that three had landed at other bases. The Roy E. Guy crew is missing. Guy and three other crews had flown with other groups. The 453rd reported that Guy had flown with them, had feathered No. 3 engine, dropped bombs through the doors and had left the formation in the target area.

Well it was just one of those days. Messy weather, fouled-up formation, one wounded (Mauzy - frostbite) and ten missing, what could you expect in combat. Well most of us forgot the Guy crew. Time - the great leveler - had covered over that sad day. Then one day in February, 1973, Col. Roy E. Guy, just retired from the USAF, was triggered by the resurrection of the 466th BG (H) into digging into his things for an accounting of that day in September 1944. Accordingly, he sent us the following notes he made in a POW camp. (The Editor's notes are in parenthesis.)

"My Story, 14th Mission. We were flying in a silver B24-J named "Hull's Angels" (Henry Hull's a/c, 42-50581-N, Revetment 21, 787th Bomb Squadron). We entered the clouds at 2,000 ft. and broke out at 17,000 ft. (They were briefed to break out at 7,000 and were given no turn-around altitude, this forced them to fly North 33 minutes longer than planned). The group had set on course by the time we reached the forming place. Several other planes were late and turned back. I kept flying, determined not to abort (the Guy crew had bailed out of a combat crippled B-24 over England on 5 Aug. 44, but had never turned back). I poured on the coal, trying to catch up and passed a wing of B-17's. Just as we crossed the French coast we sighted B-24's - the 453rd Bomb Group. They were missing an a/c in the number 9 position. We exchanged signals and I hooked on. We were in solid.

"The Con-trails were thick and persistent. There were also some heavy cumulus clouds in the area. We flew through this mess in scattered formation climbing through 23,000 and 24,000 feet. At 26,000 feet we finally broke out. About that time, we checked our remaining gas and realized we were quite low. I made a note to land in France to refuel on the return trip.

"Fifteen minutes from the target, number one oil pressure started dropping fast. Oil was all over the engine nacelle. We had to feather it. We determined to bomb the target even though we couldn't keep up with the formation. There were bombers all over the sky. Tank (co-pilot Hoyle) was flying and turning to the right to get in bombing position when number four ran away - fast. Tachometer up to 3,500 - then to 4,500 RPM. This pushed the plane into a dive to the right. I jumped on the controls, hit the feathering button and found no effect. I cut the switch and threw the the throttle into idle-cut-off. The engine slowed down, then ran away again. Oil pressure dropped to "O" - oil spouting. Had to feather number four. Two engines gone - no can make it.

"We salvaged the bombs and headed home. The weather was still a problem. I had to fly into the clouds on instruments and at a reduced airspeed. We couldn't hold the altitude. Instruments were frozen over. We thought we were over American held territory by this time, it was so peaceful.

"Flak appeared suddenly at 8,000 feet - directly in front of us - evasive dive to the left - down to 6,000 feet. We were afraid the Americans were shooting at us so we flew down below the clouds - about 500-1,000 feet - to be properly identified. Unfortunately we were on the wrong side of the lines. About one minute after we got out of the clouds, ground flak opened up on us - it came from everywhere. We tried dodging the small towns - too many - big range of mountains to the west - can't get away. We were being hit by 20mm's and 50 caliber - ripping the plane to shreds. Evasive action at 50 to 100 feet off the ground and the intense flak in our face really had me scared. 'We've bought it,' I said to myself. To Hoyle, I said, 'I am going in to land. Where is a field?' 'Over there, on the right!', he replied. I called out, 'gear down', and jockeyed for position - only a few seconds to decide. It was a short wheat field - sort of a hill. I yelled, 'flaps down' and we hit. I thought the nose wheel had broken. I hit the brakes hard, put the throttles in the idle-cut off position, and cut the switches. Just as we were about to cross a road at 130 miles per hour a telephone pole looms up in my face - hard right brake - hide my face - crash! The pole snapped off at the left wing root, we hit a ditch - the nose wheel was torn off there - skidded across a road and the bomb bay doors were ripped off. Hit a second ditch - crash! bang!! - in goes the nose - up comes the tail. The plane came to rest at a crazy 45 degree angle. The nose turret was smashed all the way in. The nose section was pretty well crushed. There was Plexiglas all over the place. After we had stopped, I realized that neither Tank nor I had our safety belts fastened. It was a wonder we were not thrown through the windshield. I scrambled out of the top hatch and ran a short distance to the rest of the crew. Then I realized that my hi-top boots were in the a/c so I rushed back to retrieve them - also grabbed my daughter's booties hanging on the magnetic compass. I rejoined the crew, we paired up, and started to run away. 'Zing!' 'Zing!' 'Rat-a-tat-a-tat,' Bullets whipped by me. I hit the dirt, flat on my face. The Jerries advanced, still firing. A stray bullet caught Garrett (flight engineer) in the left side. I waved a white handkerchief. They finally stopped shooting. Hands up!"

After receiving this exciting story from Roy, I wrote and asked for a short account of

the capture of his crew, ("Roy's Boys"). He sent the following account:

"We were captured by German troops who kept firing at us until they were right upon us. We had scattered 50 to 75 yards apart. Brasch (navigator) and Wiedman (bombardier) were captured some distance away by Germans driving a captured jeep with a 50 cal. machine gun on it. We were searched so poorly that I kept my two escape kits. Later I divided up the escape kits with the others. I kept a hacksaw blade, a dime sized compass and a piece of the escape map. We were moved by truck to a army camp which housed flak gun personnel. We were treated OK except I was rapped by a gun butt. I had smarted off a bit to a German soldier. The next day we went by truck to Saarbrücken and ended up at an airport. A German major arrived by a light aircraft. He spoke good English. In the company of other Germans, he extolled his experiences of bombing England. Then he tried to interrogate us. We gave him the name-rank-serial number answers. He finally stormed out and we never saw him again.

"We were taken by streetcar to a prison which was full of political prisoners. We had a window with three iron bars on it. I tried my hacksaw blade and only managed to scratch one of the bars. Quite futile. The next morning brought an air raid. We were taken to a huge cave shared by German civilians. We found out quickly that they were very hostile toward us. Fortunately our guards kept order.

"Later we were put on a train and moved to Frankfurt, Germany. It was really bombed out. They took us by truck to their interrogation center at Oberusel. It was late at night and we were told to strip off our flying suits and socks. A German sergeant searched me. He missed all three of my items. He left the room. As I was putting on my flight suit, the hacksaw blade fell out. At that moment, a German officer walked in. My blade was gone.

"We were placed in solitary confinement cells for a few days and I was interrogated three times. The Germans were sharp! They knew I was the pilot by the callouses on my left hand. They asked me to fill out a "Red Cross" form which called for all kinds of military information, eg.: bomb group, location, target, bomb load, etc. During the third session, the interrogator pulled down a book which was all about the 466th. He leafed through it, showed me a list of 466th POW's and the name of the new commander for the 787th BS (Major Cockey had just taken over on September 1st - He was killed in the 16 September mid-air collision reported in the last issue of the Newsletter). I guessed he knew my outfit by the markings on the aircraft. That finished my stay there - I lost my compass in a latrine one day.

"A bunch of POW's were moved to Wetzler, Germany. There we received a Red Cross suit case (cardboard) with clothes and other useful things in it. The next day a large group of us were put on a prison train for Stalag Luft No. 1, Barth, Germany, on the Baltic, due North of Berlin. The scariest part of the trip was the bombing of the marshalling yards at Geissen, Germany. Three waves of B-17's came over. You could hear the bombs whistling down. Our train was right in the middle of all of it. Fortunately we were not hit. The rest of the trip was uneventful except the frequent stops due to air raids. We feared the possibility of strafing by our fighters. I saw a B-24 with German crosses on it sitting on the ramp at the Berlin airport. Finally we arrived in Barth and were marched to camp. I underwent my fourth search but the map got through and I was able to get that to our escape committee. From then on it was POW life, but that is another story."

Well there you have it. It was just another day. We will see if we can't get the rest of the POW story from Roy someday along with his account of the "Bail-out" over England.