

NEWS LETTER

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SECOND AIR DIVISION ASSOCIATION

June 1974

CAMBRIDGE AMERICAN MILITARY CEMETERY and MEMORIAL

by Charles Gallagher (Associate Member)

Over 500 men of the 2nd Air Division Combat Groups sleep their last sleep beneath the velvet green sward of the American Military Cemetery, Madingley, near Cambridge England. Situated on a gentle slope, overlooking the level expanse of the Fens, the site, of 30.5 acres was donated by the University of Cambridge, and was first established on 7 December 1943 – a grim reminder of the date of the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbour. The Cemetery was built, and is maintained by the American Battle Monuments Commission.

It is a quiet, serene place. The atmosphere is one of peace and tranquility. The roar of traffic on the nearby A 45 roadway is muted by the semi-circular grove of trees which embraces the area. In Summer, the entire space is flooded by the song of skylark and thrush – a sound which only serves to accentuate the dignified stillness of the rows of simple white crosses, broken here and there by the proud symbol of the Star of David, here a tribute to those who died for Faith and Country in battle against those who would have made the Star and Cross emblems of degradation.

The graves are arranged in a fan shape, and viewed from the East end of the Memorial Chapel, present a poignant scene, set against the soft green of the grass, and the dark mass of woodland.

The Memorial Building, completed in 1956, is of simple, classic design, 85 feet long, 30 feet wide, and 28 feet high, and is built of Portland stone. Inside, on an interior wall, is a huge map 'The Battle of the Atlantic – The Great Air Assault', illustrating by means of models, the Combined Bomber Offensive, and the fiercely contested Convoy Supply Routes across the Atlantic and Mediterranean.



Inlaid in mosaic on the ceiling, are plan views of B.24's, B.17's, B.26's, P.38's, P.47's, and P.51's, winging their way towards the triumph of the Altar in the Devotional Chapel.

A series of reflecting pools lead the eye from the Flagpole to the Memorial Building, and the pools are bounded by a Mall and by the Wall of the Missing, on which are inscribed the names of over 5,000 men – the majority from the 8th AAF – who have no known graves.

The Wall of the Missing reads like a social history of the United States. Here one can see the indigeneous European names translated to the Continental USA, emphasizing the great trek Westward of whole European communities in the 1800's, names which can now be readily identified with the great States of the Union – the Polish, Swedish, Hungarian, German, Italian, Jewish, Irish, and English influences which, fused together, have produced the phenomenon of modern America.

Glittering proudly in golden lettering, the name of Colonel Leon R. Vance, Medal of Honor, epitomises the valour of the young men of the 8th and particularly of the 2nd Air Div. Colonel Vance led the 489th B.G. on a mission to Wimeroux, during which his aircraft was heavily damaged by enemy action. Notwithstanding severe injuries, and a 'hung-up' 500 lb. bomb, he ditched his ship rather than

leave it when he realized one of his crew members was unable to bail out. Tragically, he was lost in the wastes of the Atlantic months later, when, flying back to the States on a new assignment, the aircraft on which he was a passenger disappeared. No survivors were ever found.

On the exterior of the Visitors Building there is a plaque presented by the citizens of Cheshunt and Waltham Cross to the memory of a crew of the 577th Squadron 392nd B.G. who stayed with their crippled ship rather than leave it to crash on their homes, on 12 August 1944.

Now the young heroes of the 8th lie in serried rows – the farm boy from Iowa, the kid from the teeming East Side, the tycoon's son from Pittsburg or Detroit, and the oil-driller from Texas – all united by the indissoluble bond of sacrifice. Death is the great leveller, and there is no ostentation, no display of family wealth or fame above each last earthly resting place.



'After Life's fitful fever, they sleep well' – and though they lie far from home, they still are amongst friends, friends for whom they paid the supreme price. 'Greater love hath no man, than he lay down his life for his friend'.

Each year, therefore, many English people pay their individual tributes to

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



It seems as if it was only yesterday when I bade a fond farewell to the hundreds (six hundred to be exact) who attended last years reunion in Colorado Springs. Now we are pointing like bird dogs to this years reunion in Wilmington. Nothing could keep us away.

It is impossible for me to list all those who have given the officers of the Association so much help during this past year. But I do want to thank everyone. The membership is now close to the magic 2000 figure and each new member has meant a new friend for all of us.

There are two people I really must mention because without either of them I doubt that the Association would be where it is today. My lovely bride Hazel and my newly acquired bride Evelyn Cohen. I never could have made it through the year without their constant help and encouragement. They are both jewels. Pretty too!

I am going to keep this short as there is much more important material crying for space in the Newsletter. Cheers, one and all, and I'll be seeing you in Wilmington. Don't disappoint us.

Bill Robertie

CAMBRIDGE AMERICAN MILITARY CEMETERY and MEMORIAL

(Continued from Page 1)

their memory. For instance, on the anniversary of the incident, the Mayor of the city of Sheffield sends along a senior member of his administration to lay floral tributes on the graves of crewmen who sacrificed their lives rather than allow their machine to crash upon a school in that city. On Memorial Day, the citizens and Mayor of Cambridge, representatives of the British Armed Forces, and various dignitaries and organizations pay tribute by laying wreaths on the Flagpole Platform.



Each year, too, many hundreds of American tourists, travellers, and relatives of the dead — many of them ex-8th AAF, visit the Cemetery.

The Superintendent is Mr. Joseph Cetola, and the Assistant Superintendent is Mr. James L. Shaffer, who with a staff of local help, are responsible for keeping the Cemetery up to the highest possible standards. Its appearance is sufficient tribute to their diligence and energy.

Both Mr. Cetola and Mr. Shaffer take an interest in their job which goes far beyond mere duty. They are courteous, efficient, and tactful, and make a deep impression upon all who come in contact with them. The Battle Monuments Commission is to be congratulated upon having amongst it's staff, two such responsible officers.

In 1975, we hope that several hundred members of the 2nd Air Division Association will visit Norwich for the Grand Reunion. For those of you who have not yet seen the American Military Cemetery, a visit is well worth considering. The journey from Norwich by car or private bus takes less than 2 hours, and the pilgrimage — for such it could be considered — would be a fitting climax to a week of recollection and tribute.

READY? SET? COME!

To Wilmington, North Carolina that is. Hotel Reservations and activity registration forms are coming in at a good clip and this promises to be one of our better attended reunions in spite of energy shortages and sky rocketing prices.

We could run a contest to see who will be the last person to make a reservation, but the prize would have to be poor accommodations and missing out on many of the functions we have planned. This is a contest everybody should strive to lose.

Aaron Schultz and his committee have worked tirelessly since the last reunion to make your stay in Wilmington comfortable, pleasant and exciting. You will make their job a lot easier by getting your reservations in pronto. This will also guarantee that you will get the most out of your stay there, and I haven't met anybody yet who likes confusion and uncertainty when they arrive in strange surroundings.

Above all, don't forget the 2nd Air Division Ball following the banquet. This time we will dance to OUR music. A little jaded, a little old but awfully smooooooth. So get with it on those hotel reservation forms and activity registration sheets. **WE HAVE TO KNOW HOW MANY.**

See you in Wilmington.

NOTICE — ENGLAND IN 1975

Advance registration for England '75 is now well past the 100 mark. The 707 will accommodate 186 people and once we hit that figure late registrations will have to go on a waiting list. If another plane fills then we will go ahead and charter a second one. I urge everyone to please understand our position on this. Rental of a 707 costs \$46,000. This makes the round-trip air fare about \$285.00 per person. BUT, we have to contract for a plane far in advance of the departure date and this means we must expend funds from our treasury which are non-returnable. This is why we must have firm registrations from those who desire to make the trip. The land package costs will be printed in the Newsletter as soon as they are firm. So if you want to go and have not made your reservation yet better do so in one heck of a hurry. Send your deposit to Joe Warth, 5709 Walkerton Drive, Cincinnati, Ohio 45238.

RE-FLYING WORLD WAR II



Tom Swint

One of the tricks of nostalgia is that we tend to remember people as they were way back when. It does not seem strange to me that all my fly-boy buddies have stayed 22 years old for 30 years.

Last fall I heard that a small town in California was going to hold a reunion for all the guys who passed through its air base during World War II. I wrote to a gal named Isabel Roper Millington in Chico and asked for the flight plan. Isabel was a former Oregon State co-ed who had entertained G.I.s at the Chico U.S.O.

As things turned out I couldn't get time off and 225 old fly-boys had a whale of time without me. Isabel sent me a copy of the guest book. Then unknowingly she burst my nostalgia bubble. She said most of the fellows were not as fleet of foot. Even with a dandy orchestra very few danced. Most men just sat and talked about the war and their wives were dutifully bored.

Several months passed and I recounted how my 8th Air Force group hauled gasoline to the tanks in World War II. Albert Henke of Aberdeen remembered. He sent pictures he took and thanked me for filling the chuck holes in the runway. Then George Finch called me.

George said he had flown as air crew in a Liberator outfit stationed in East Anglia. He said he had some pictures and a recently published history of the 8th Air Force. I looked forward to meeting George. He lives in Burien with the English lass he went back and married in 1946.

GEORGE STOPPED by one Saturday morning and my wife Shirley thought I had planned it that way to avoid some indoor painting. I hadn't but I shall file that for future reference under "good ideas - untried."

George was a gunner in the 448th Bomb Group of the 2nd Air Division. He admitted he had a small ax to grind. He wants to track down more 8th Air Force fly-boys, especially guys from the Liberator squadrons. George had photos of his old crew. He was 20 then and he had more hair in the right places.

As we chatted I realized that George and I were typical of veterans everywhere. He gave me a blow-by-blow of how his B-24 pancaked down in a swamp and the whole crew survived. I came back with my Exeter crash anecdote and capped it with my prize item: the Englishman who fished me out now lives on Queen Anne Hill.

We changed the subject and talked about flak, the German anti-aircraft fire, and seeing bombers explode in the air over the targets.

The more we talked the more I wondered if George and I were falling into a pattern. We were pulling facts out of a hazy memory and reliving our misspent youth. I suppose the men of the Grand Army of the Republic relived Pickett's Charge for 40 or 50 years later. At the time we were actually flying it was not all that danged exciting.

I mentioned that to my knowledge no book about the European Theater of Operations ever had captured the flavor of the bomber squadrons - clean sheets and death in the afternoon. Both George and I were quick to recall the rate of attrition. The Second Air Division Newsletter said 6,032 were killed in their division. There were two other air divisions of B-17 Flying Forts.

I don't mean to be morbid but a lot of those 22-year-old kids raised Billy ole hell in London because they did not think they would survive the stat board in Group Operations. The war seemed endless - more missions, more flak.

As George and I chatted, he mentioned that the 2nd Air Division guys are planning a reunion in Norwich, England, in 1975. The reunion this year will be in Wilmington, N.C. I would kind of like to go back to Rackheath and see my Nissen hut again.

SCANNING THE newsletter, I saw articles saying some old G.I.s had actually tried to have their huts shipped back home as war mementos. Some of the art work on the bricked ends in our Sack Hall would not pass the censor - even in these liberal times. What our mural specialist lacked in talent he made up in clinical details. Oh, to be 22 again. . .

Two other things grabbed me:

1. The base at Metfield, England, is used for crop-spraying planes and Attlebridge (home of the 489th) is now a turkey farm. That's taking that swords-to-plowshares parable literally. ("Son, my old hut was over there to the left of that big gobbler.")

2. The newsletter mentioned that a new book, "Log of the Liberators" by Steve Birdsall is offered to association members for \$8.50. The guy to write is William G. Robertie, Drawer B, Ipswich, Mass. 01938.

Compared to a Boeing 707 or 747 our Libs and Flying Forts look sort of small. Our "Little Friends," the P-51 escort fighter planes, look like toys. But they were BIG stuff in OUR war.

(ed. note: This column appeared in the Seattle Times where Tom puts in his working hours as a Sunday editor. You will be reading more articles by Tom as he is a prolific writer and we are fortunate to have him as a member.)

PRIMER FOR ENGLAND

by Joe Warth

Remember when you were in grammar school back in those pre-war days, one of the subjects that you had to learn was Geography - in which you were taught all about what a country produced, how it was produced, what the customs were, how the land was divided and so forth. Well, this series of short articles will be a great deal like that with a few minor changes, for the better I hope! Anyway lets devote this first article to "Where do we spend our nights in England?" To this there can only be one answer, a place sometimes called the local or the village pub and even as the "Public House". We will have to clear one thing up *A PUB is not a BAR*, it bears no relationship to our cocktail lounge or one of our fancy drinking spas. I think the best way to describe a PUB is to call it "The Village or Local Club" which really is just what they are. An Englishman goes there for more than a mere drink. He goes to catch up on the latest gossip, visit with his neighbors, chat a bit with the local publican, play some darts, skittles or some other game that will pass the time away, and maybe have a snack. In years past, before Wimpy's and Colonel Sanders arrived on British shores, they were just about the only place where you could find short order food.

When you enter a PUB you will be quick to notice that they contain at least two separate rooms. The "public room" used to be, and in some cases still is, the place for the working class to drink and mingle. Also the prices are a little cheaper than the other room which is called the "Saloon". This room was set aside for the genteel (the gentlemen) as this gave them a bit more privacy plus a certain amount of class distinction. Once inside "What do you order"? You have a choice of beers in most, but you must bear in mind that most PUBS now are the property of some brewery so you may not get a great choice of brands. But try them all. They could be bitter, light and bitter, light ale, stout or lager. Oh yes, remember that beer is still served at room temperature which, depending upon the time of year, can be warm or pretty cold. Still no ice available in most places. Ask for a martini and you will get only dry vermouth. Ask the publican for whiskey and you are going to drink Scotch. Bourbon is available by name upon request so ask for it or drink Scotch.



We'll have to be blind to get lost this time!"

PUBS are fun. Go to them with the idea that you are going to have a good time and you will. Drinks won't be forced upon you and you may not even see one of our strange customs, "a topless waitress". You will have a good conversation, meet some very pleasant people, taste a different brand of brew and not go back to your hotel room broke.

If you are a history buff, look for PUBs called the "Bush". They are the oldest in many towns because in the olden days, before reading caught on with the British, the owner of the PUB would plant a tree outside of his door as a sign that he ran a public house.

Now that you have read about the PUBs "Why don't you try one" its easy send your deposit in now, \$25.00 for husband and wife, and reserve your places on the planes to the Reunion in England "75". Send your check to Joe Warth, 5709 Walkerton Drive, Cincinnati, Ohio 45238, oh yes, make it out to: *Second Air Division Association*, but do it in a hurry as its almost "TIME" (which in England means the PUB is closing). When we hit our deadline thats it! Next issue of the newsletter will talk about places to see.

Attlebridge Notes

(466th BOMB GROUP)

Editor:

Lt. Col. John H. Woolnough

THE PLAY BOY CREW

Back in the days when "Play Boy" was two words there was a crew headed by Franklyn V. Cotner that was put together in Casper, Wyoming. They joined the 466th at Alamogordo around the 20th of November 1943. In January 1944 they received their aircraft, 41-29399, and promptly dubbed it "Play Boy" (see photo). Their trip overseas was uneventful, aside from a small riot in Wales - Cotner had to sign them out of the hoosgow in order to continue on to Attlebridge. They were crew #408 in the 784th. Bomb Squadron. Things went along fairly well until their 11th mission, 29 April 1944. The story is picked up by the engineer, Robert F. Pipes (now a retired Master Sergeant).

"We had just completed ten missions and were told we would have a crew rest. The enlisted members of the crew went to one of the local pubs to help Sgt. Ed McCarthy (784th. Ord.) celebrate his birthday. We drank much English ale and beer until the pub closed and spent the remainder of the night chasing the pub owner's ducks around his pond. We finally went back to the airfield and had been asleep about three hours when the CQ awakened me to announce that our crew had been scheduled for a mission. We missed breakfast.

"By the time we arrived at the briefing room, the briefing was over and the officer crew members had already departed for the hardstand where our a/c was parked (#50). When we arrived at the a/c, Lt. Cotner had already completed his walk around inspection and was ready to start the engines. I talked briefly with the navigator, Everding, and he informed me that we were going to Big B. Before take off, the bombardier, Roth, told me that our co-pilot, Dwan, had gone to Norwich the day before, so we had a substitute, John B. Stuart. We also had a new waist gunner, R. I. Falk, to replace Thompson who had transferred to another crew as the engineer.

"Everything was normal until we started on the IP. There we received a direct hit from an 88, our #3 engine was knocked out. We feathered the prop and continued with the formation, dropped our bombs and headed back to England. We were having trouble staying with our formation and finally fell back and attached ourselves to a B-17 Group. We were lagging behind them when about 20 F-W 190's started attacking us. Five or six came in from 6 O'clock - slightly higher than we were. The tail gunner and I were ready for them and started pouring .50 caliber ball, tracer, and armor piercing ammo into them. Two or three broke into flames and went down. Possibly another two or three were hit, I couldn't see what happened to them from the upper turret.

"The tail turret received several direct 20mm hits shattering the armor glass and starting a fire. The tail gunner, Mount, was hit and suffered burns, while the new gunner, Falk, was killed instantly by a shot through the head. The F-W 190 kept on attacking, knocking out our #2 engine. Finally a flight of P-47's arrived. After a short battle, the F-W-290's left.

"The pilot asked me to check our fuel supply. I found we had only 30 to 40 minutes supply left, not enough to reach England. We were losing altitude rapidly. Lt. Cotner said we would fly as long as our fuel held out, but we would bail out over the mainland and not risk ditching in the Channel.



Play Boy, 41-29399, was shot up over Germany on the Berlin raid, 29 Apr 44, and crashed in Holland near the town of Daarle. Though unmanned it made a relatively soft landing, according to eyewitness accounts in RCAF files.

"Finally the inevitable came, our fuel was gone and we were down to about 9,000 ft. The pilot gave the order to start bailing out. The Co-pilot, Navigator, Bombardier, and Radio Operator bailed out the forward bomb bay door. I was sent to the rear to be sure that all were gone. Heafner and Fiskow were standing on the rear bomb bay cat-walk. Fiskow was reluctant to go, so Heafner and I helped him make up his mind. Then Heafner bailed out and I went forward to check on the pilot. He had trimmed the a/c and was coming down from the flight deck. I bailed out and he followed.

"After I bailed out, I could still hear the two engines running on "Play Boy". I saw it disappear into a cloud bank. I could see two or three parachutes below me and Lt. Cotner above me. Then the most complete quietness enveloped me. I was scared and started saying "Hail Marys" and "Our Fathers". Then I heard aircraft engines again and the thoughts of being strafed by F-W-190's fleeted through my mind. I spun around in my chute and spotted a P-47 circling me. I thanked God it was friendly. He followed me down almost to ground level before climbing out again. He wagged his wings as he left, which sent cold chills all over me. I never knew his identity and have thought of him many times since. (Editor's Note: Anyone know how we might locate that little brother?)

"Shortly before coming down to the ground, I saw that I might land in a canal. I slipped the chute and came down on a plowed field. I immediately started gathering up my chute and looked up and a farmer was standing there saying, "Engleesh?"

Sgt. Pipes goes on to tell of how he and Heafner evaded for the rest of the war. Some story, it would have been much more comfortable in a POW camp. That is another story, perhaps we can tell it another time. In any case, it will be in the 466th History.

The Hitchcock crew (787th) also went down in a/c 41-28754 on this mission. We also lost 786th Ops Off., Ralph S. Bryant, when the PFF ship he was in (389th BG, Locke crew, a/c 41-28784) ditched in the North Sea.

Since we received the "Play Boy" story from Bob Pipes, a great deal more has been learned about the 29th of April 1944. The biggest breakthrough came when Col. De Jong of the Royal Netherlands Air Force began filling in the missing pieces. See the article about crashes in Holland for more information on the Cotner and Hitchcock crashes.

THE CO-PILOT

After Vincent L. Reed completed B-24 transition in the Fall of 1943, he was sent to Salt Lake City, UT to pick up a crew. Fully qualified to be an aircraft commander, Vince was eager to go. To his dismay, on arrival at SLC he found they had too many B-24 pilots. Those with the least time in B-24's would have to serve as co-pilots. When they got to Vince they pointed him to the right seat, the pilot had 10% more time in the a/c. What a blow! He swallowed his pride and gritted his way through the crew training phases, the overseas trip and nine long missions. Then the break came - Vince got his own crew. He took over one of the first replacement crews to reach Attlebridge. Oh happy day - for Vince. W. S. Starnes, AC of the new crew, had to move into that awful right seat to make room for that combat seasoned veteran, Vincent Reed. Vince, now a retired Lt. Col., sent the following to share with you:

I'm the co-pilot, I sit on the right
It's up to me to be quick and bright
I never talk back, lest I have regrets
I have to remember what the AC forgets.
I make up the flight plan and study the weather,
Pull up the gear and stand by to feather,
Find our location from a chart on my lap
And fly the old bird when the AC takes a nap.

I take the headings and adjust the power,
Put on the heaters when we're in a shower.
I give him his bearings on the darkest of nights,
Do all the book work without any lights,
And once in a while when his landings are rusty
I always come through with "my but it's gusty!"

So all in all I'm a general stooge
As I sit on the right of a man I call "scrooge".
I suppose you think that is past understanding,
But maybe someday he will give me a landing.

Author Unknown. Editor's Note: I was the Scrooge in the left seat of Vince's first crew. JHW

Several 466th correspondents have had trouble placing my face in their WWII memories (I have the same trouble). As prints are running low, I thought a picture here would cut the demand.

You will have to guess what the ravages of time have done to me. J. H. Woolnough



NOTES FROM THE EDITOR

There is much work that remains to be done on the 466th History. The biggest part still missing is the collection of "war stories" from 466ers. If you have a story you are sitting on, now is the time to get it in - it is getting late. If we contact you for facts related to an event, please let us hear from you soon - even if you do not have the answer

Anyone interested in submitting material for Attlebridge Notes and/or the 466th History Project collection should send them to me at 7752 Harbour Blvd., Miramar, FL 33023.

John H. Woolnough, Editor



The Hitchcock crew, 787th BS, crash landed a/c 41-28754 in a field near Wilp/Twello, Holland on 29 Apr 44. The crew was taken as POW's, no casualties. Photo provided by the Royal Netherland Air Force.

CRASHES IN HOLLAND

After reading a magazine article about the recovery of WWII a/c in the Zuyder Zee that is under way, I wrote to Lt. Col. Aris P. de Jong, Chief of Public Information, Royal Netherland Air Force, asking about 466 crashes. In the resulting correspondence we have learned that none of our a/c ended up in the Zuyder Zee, but the location of ten crash sites are now verified (Garrett, Griffin, Cotner, Hitchcock, Keyes, Archer, Harrington, Munroe, Suchiu, and Felts). B. Johnson and Dibbell also crashed in Holland in 1945. As they came down in Allied controlled territory, the RCAF files do not confirm the location.

Colonel de Jong provided us with a picture of the Hitchcock a/c after landing (see above), and sent the startling news that the unmanned "Play Boy" aircraft with the Falk body aboard made a soft belly landing at Daarle at 1430 hrs (Holland time) on 29 Apr 44. He reported that Cotner was taken prisoner and placed in a hospital in Almelo.

Col. de Jong wishes that he could have accurate information on all Bomb Groups (he needs crew lists and a/c numbers of ships known to have crashed in Holland) to enable his researchers to sort out the many mystery cases and wartime question marks on crashes. Of the 7,000 WWII crashes in the Netherlands, there were at least 1,200 USAAF cases. Other Bomb Group Historians are urged to contact Col. de Jong at his RCAF office in The Hague, Netherlands.

ATTLEBRIDGE REVISITED

One of the latest in a long line of 466 returnees was Philip Kessler (787th Crypto). Philip and his wife, Patricia visited the airbase in December of 1973. Here are several of the pictures they sent in: 1) the water tower, 2) a view of a runway with a turkey hut on it, 3) a barracks that now houses an English family, and 4) a view of the Swann Inn in Ringland, two miles east of the airfield. Phil recommends an Elizabethan Manor House for those who would savor an inexpensive, though delightful, country inn rather than a hotel in the city. Write Phil for address. Visitors to Attlebridge are advised to contact Bernard Matthews Limited, Great Witchingham Hall, Norwich, Norfolk, NOR 65X. This will permit access to the turkey farm which occupies the runways and the Technical Site.



THE SMITH BOYS

"It was a pleasant surprise last evening when Mr. Don Bailey called with your letter of the 19th of January & the photograph taken in the early forties . . . Mr. Bailey was able to contact me through my parents as they are still living near the old aerodrome & we have been staying with them for the Easter holidays . . ." (signed Mike Smith).

The story goes back a long way. It started with a picture taken of George Koc and Roberts (785th BSM) with a young English boy named Mike Smith who lived near the base. The picture shows them (only Mike Smith and Roberts in the cropped version above) looking at the nose art on the aircraft called "Jamaica" (41-28746-0, Rev. #32, assigned to 785th & Booth crew). John H. Smith kept a print through the years and sent it in when we called for pictures (we are still looking). We sent the picture to Mr. Bailey (owner of the land that was home of Woolnough crew aircraft, #15) asking if Mike Smith was still about. The rest of the story is told in Mike Smith's letter.

Mike tells us that he served in the RAF for three years, then went to work for a Norwich insurance company in 1956. He now sells insurance in Lancashire, about 200 miles NW of Norwich. Mike ended his letter with, "I am amazed to think of somebody across the Atlantic still remembering my name, after almost thirty years. Looking forward in anticipation to hearing from you." Anyone that remembers Mike Smith might want to write him at 3 St. John's Close, Read, Burnley, Lancaster, England. Then too you might want to write to the other Smith boy, John H. in Sacramento.



Mike Smith and 785th BSM man, Roberts look at the nose art on "Jamaica", 41-28746, Booth crew.

TALKING TURKEY

Jean Pentz (784th Ord) made several visits to the old base since that war. The presence of the large turkey farm on our airfield impressed Jean so much that he penned this:

ODE TO THE TURKEY GOBLER by MSGT Jean F. Pentz

Taxi along - O' feathered brother.
You were preceded by many another.

Who's giant wing with its Davis flow
taxied the ramps - you now go.

Your missions are shorter - 'n not so high
Theirs were longer - at the top of the sky.

Loaded with bombs and fuel too
It's a wonder it ever flew.

It's engines were four with plenty of scat.
With power and noise provided by Pratt.

The control tower was higher with lotsa glass
It was easy to see a low level pass.

Now the tower is shorter - not very high.
Mostly because you don't fly.

So when you depart for a Christmas dinner
Remember your B-24 brother who left a
winner.



Pappy Daniels, Pilot of 787th crew. Photo compares favorably with Charles Saxon's caricature.

A TALE OF THREE COUNTRIES

In response to a request for a copy of his Saxon caricature, Pappy Daniels sent the photograph and the drawing that appears above. There wasn't room for them in the last issue, so it is used here, another reminder for 466ers to send in their Saxon drawings.

Pappy believes he is one of the few pilots to have landed in three different countries on his first three combat missions. On the first, a 17 Feb 45 mission that was recalled, Daniels rode as co-pilot with another crew (anyone know which one?) to get a feel of the "fun" in combat. They landed at Lille, France due to fog at the base. On his second mission (24 Feb) he landed in England as expected. On his third mission (26 Feb) he flew 787th a/c 185-M, named Peggy Ann. Here is part of Pappy's report: "We flew Behead M-Mike, a gas eater. On the way back we were told that due to a cloud cover at the base we were to land on the Continent if we didn't have two hours fuel left. We flew over Rotterdam and I asked Hank Thomas, the navigator, if this city was in Allied hands (as he was our only college graduate. I thought he would know). Hank said, "Yes". So I started letting down. All of a sudden we spotted tracer bullets coming by the cockpit. So off we went to Antwerp, Belgium. My radio operator, Brenner, couldn't make contact with the base so we were listed as MIA for two days. After a couple of nights of V-bombs, we decided to go home. As I was taxiing out, I knocked off about two feet of the right wing on a guy wire of a bombed out hangar. The ground engineer told us not to go, our flight engineer said we could make it. I told the ground engineer to pick us up on the end of the runway if we didn't make it. We made it. When I called Attlebridge tower and asked "Cretie" for landing instructions, our surprised Squadron Commander (Maj. J. Remillet), who happened to be in the tower, got on the mike and asked where we had been. I told him we had been vacationing. He must not have believed me, for he sent us to London for three days."

Pappy tells us that he got the nickname "Pappy" for being the "oldest member of the Group." Perhaps he means that he was the oldest crew member. The Group Executive Officer (Lt. Col. Joe West) was called "Uncle Joe" in respect for his age seniority. Perhaps "Pappy" will tell us why he is now called "Boomer"?

RADIO CALLSIGNS

In research for the 466th History Project, I find several radio callsigns used by the Group. The Attlebridge tower call was "CRETIE". Formations used the "LINCOLN" call most often, though "MOROCCO" was used occasionally to designate 466 flights. The 785th aircraft used "E-EGLAN", while "B-BEHEAD" identified 787th aircraft. The 784th used the letter "O" and the 786th used "A". I would appreciate learning the phonetic word that followed the "O" and the "A" calls.

THE OBELISK AT WENDLING



by Col. Myron H. Keilman

Wendling is a cluster of a dozen red brick homes with its community pub, outstretching wooded lots and grain fields. It is marked by a regular English road sign about half way between Norwich and Kings Lynn (Remember the Liberty runs?). Turning north for a mile or so, in a neat fenced plot with a white gate, is an eight-foot granite obelisk.

A bronze plate mounted on the front side states: "To the memory of those Americans who flew from these fields and lost their lives for the sake of a free World." On each of two other sides are engraved the numerical designation of the tactical squadrons and service units of the 392nd Bombardment Group (Heavy).



What a great gesture it was for some far-thinking person to conjure the idea; promote its acceptance; collect the funds; procure the plot; design and contract for the obelisk; arrange for its installation; and provide for its perpetual care. Twenty-nine years have passed. The person directly responsible is unknown. The local mailman maintains the plot.

To memorialize the fine young American aviators who were shot down or otherwise ended their aspiring lives is a tribute to the loyal comrades that worked diligently day and night, often in rain, sleet, and fog to support their heroic efforts.

Adjacent to the cross roads where this memorial stands, a disconcerting eye can see facilities from which the American young men lived, administered, operated, maintained, and flew the group force of B-24 Liberator bombers.

The group headquarters, operations building and intelligence offices are in use today as a manufacturing plant facility. The water tower still marks the living quarters area of the headquarters staff and a bomber squadron's aviators. A little more than a stones throw is the West end of the 6,000 foot concrete runway on which poultry sheds now stand.

From the memorial ones memory can visualize aircraft crew chiefs, mechanics, armorers, ordinance and supply airmen peddling their bicycles through the dark nights to maintain, load bombs and ready the ghost-like four-engine airplanes squatted in their dispersals. If one can "see" and feel this

happening, behind these men at 0230 hours will come 2½-ton, canvas-covered trucks groping their way with black-out lights to the briefing room and the combat crew locker next to the control tower.

It doesn't take long – and still in the darkness – there will be the sound of a whining starter, a bright flash of a rich mixture, a bang, and a roar of an R1830 Pratt and Whitney engine. Before you can count very far, there will be upward of 120 such sounds as the pilots of thirty or more B-24s engage starters. The whole area resounds. At another given moment the squatting hulks totter and roll from their dispersals to marshal nose to tail along the perimeter taxi-way to await their take-off.

From the vantage point of the memorial obelisk, it is now just breaking first light of dawn, and a bright green rocket will be seen from the shadowy outline of the flight control tower. With it will follow, at 6,000 foot distance, the sound of four engines throttled to their full military horsepower.

Brakes off! Perhaps you can feel the 74,000 pounds charge to a new life. In moments the roar has filled your ears to bursting. Against the dim, hazy horizon, eyes of thirty years ago "see" the behemoth charging the near-by end of the runway. Ten aviators in their sheepskin helmets with oxygen masks dangling, are sweating out the lift off. Twelve 500 pounders and 8,000 rounds of ammunition is the cargo. In a straining roar it skims across the country road and into the darkness. Then another roaring monster comes charging, and another and another. At last the thirtieth or the thirty-sixth or whatever the "max-effort" could "put up" – and the stillness of the murky dawn gently calms roaring ears and emotions.

Time moves on, and the cross road again fills with bicycles. One really doesn't have to close his eyes to "see" them now. These are the briefing officers, the crew chiefs, the mechanics, the armorers, ordinance men, and a squadron commander streaming back toward the mess hall for breakfast and to their Nissen huts for a few hours rest. They know the mission will take about seven hours; then they will be back on the line to debrief, repair, refuel, reload, rebrief, and sweat out another take-off and another – until the war is won.

One can't stand there gazing and dreaming for long. Passers-by will wonder, or the bus won't wait, or the family may think it strange. Yet the wonder of it all holds you. The take-off roar has stilled, but now there is a far-away drone, a drone of many airplanes circling their radio beacons getting into squadron and group formations; then into wing and division bomber streams. There are smoke curls from the lead ship's identification flares. The formations circle and drone and drone as they fall into their assigned order for penetration of enemy territory and the bombing of their briefed targets. There's an occasional "tail-end Charlie", too. He got off late and is trying to catch up. He's babying a smoking engine in hopes it will last the mission. He's a new crew – not trained to fly close formation. If he doesn't get into formation, he is vulnerable to being shot down by enemy fighters; he will spoil the tight bombing patterns, cause the loss of ten young American aviators and a \$500,000 aircraft.

Forming up those big formations wasn't always easy, either. Most days it could be done between cloud layers at 10,000 to 14,000 feet. But then there were those cold fronts, and the planes would circle and climb, circle and climb on instruments through freezing rain and icing conditions to get "on top". The third mission on D-Day was like that. They had difficulty getting the group and wing formed at 24,000

feet.

On and on they drone; yet on the ground as sleep finally relaxes those from their night-time duties of changing engines, loading bombs, preparing target folders, plotting routes and IP's, the stillness disturbs them. They roll and toss, wondering if the flak will be heavy, how many fighters will attack, will the IP and target be cloud-covered, how many will return – will "my" airplane return?

How many times did this happening occur here at Wendling? Let's think back. There were 285 operational missions credited to the 392nd Group in twenty months of operations. Only three other B-24 groups in England could claim more. That makes an average of a mission every other day. Yet there were times, especially prior to D-Day and in support of the invasion, when the group flew five days in a row. That was rough!

At the cross roads, it is quiet now – only an occasional tanker truck from Kings Lynn with replenishing fuel, a squadron adjutant peddling to group headquarters, and a British mail man. However, it is target time over a thousand German factories, marshaling yards, airfields, submarine pens, or buzz-bomb sites.

The sky along the bomber stream route, once clear, cold and sunny, is now a fierce mixture of long streaming contrails and endless circling ovals from fighter cover. It is nice to know the fighters are there. It wasn't always that way. Think of the North Sea Diversion in October, 1943 – the day the Forts made their return trip to Regensburg and Schweinfurt. The 392nd, with two formations of eighteen airplanes each, flew a diversion-type mission over the North Sea to draw Luftwaffe fighters from the Forts. It was so successful that an estimated 350 enemy fighters attacked in a two-hour running gun fight. Three bombers, one with Don Appert, Squadron Commander, were shot down. There were also the long missions to Norway's heavy water plants, Gydna-Danzig missile test facilities, Bremen, Vegasack, Kiel, Gotha, and Frederickshaven before P-38s and P-51s could cover us "all the way".

The formation must be coming up on the IP by now. The lead ship fires the flare signal, and the bomb bay doors open. The lead pilot turns the auto pilot control to the target heading, increases the power setting to off-set drag of the open bomb bay. Puffs of black smoke appear in clusters near the formations ahead. Now they are just ahead of us – 88mm or 105mm anti-aircraft artillery fire.



On assigned altitude, 160mph indicated airspeed, PDI centered, "You've got the airplane". The lead bombardier takes control of steering the airplane. Peering through the bombsight optics, he gently moves the cross-hairs to the target. The airplane, on auto-pilot, responds to the new heading as do all the airplanes in the formation. Flak is bursting close. Concussions jar the airplane, sending fragments clattering into the fuselage.

Evasive action! The bombardier must perform this with cool nerves and keen judgment without losing his target. Cross-hairs must be back on target at least thirty seconds before bomb release to allow the bombsight to make the bomb trajectory computation. The drift must be "killed".

Bombs Away! This is the moment of truth. Nothing more can be done to get the bombs on the target – the sole purpose of the whole crew, squadron, group, division, and air force effort. Success can be as great as the day the 392nd excelled at Gotha in February 1944 and earned the Presidential Unit Citation or as bitter as failure to reach the assigned target, and neutral Switzerland was bombed. (Reflecting on "results", the 392nd excelled in bombing accuracy throughout its twenty months of operation; in fact, was the most consistently high scoring group in the 2nd Air Division from September 1943.)

A sweeping turn toward the rendezvous is immediate. Flak is left behind. Now the gunners are calling out fighters to the quadrants of the clock. The navigator hangs over the edge of the bomb bay to witness the bomb bursts and hopes the camera will get good pictures.

Fighters! It seemed strange that with few exceptions they made their most persistent strikes as the formations were "out bound". Sometimes they struck only the group ahead. Head on passes were really scary. Those groups before the 392nd really had it tough – with only flexible mounted 50-calibers in the nose of their B-24D's and E's. The 392nd was the first group equipped with nose turrets in their new H models. (What a surprise the FW-109's and ME-101's got on the North Sea Diversion!) Then there were the rockets, the balls of fire, cables, and JU-88's. Those balls of fire were fearsome-looking as they rolled through the air peeling off black smoke. One B-24 caught one in the waist window near Hanover, and the crew had to bail out. Cables were never effective, but the JU-88's would sit back out of 50-caliber range and lob 20mm explosive shells into the formation. They made big holes. The worst attacks, though, were the gaggles of six or more fighters making simultaneous diving attacks from – you guessed it – twelve or one o'clock high. Diving in with all their guns blazing, it was a horrendous sight. Their rate of closure was so fast our top turret gunners couldn't track them. Remember Frederickshaven, March 1944? Between flak and the many fighter attacks only fourteen of twenty-eight airplanes returned to Wendling. The lead ship had an engine shot out on the bomb run; then persistent fighter attacks worked the group over all the way to Strasbourg. The lead navigator was blinded by a 20mm.

The English Channel at last. The group starts its let-down from 24,000 feet. What a relief to get the oxygen mask off – but stay in formation as the Jerries may still be following. There's "The White Cliffs of Dover". Come to think about it, how did the lead ship find its way there and back, find the IP, avoid heavy flak-defended areas, bomb the cloud and smoke-obscured targets, and return the formation to Wendling in the muck? It's a great story of pathfinder-ships, navigators, mickey operators. G-sets, mickey-sets, H2X's – 80% of the 392nd missions bombed with this special equipment.

Nearing Wendling now, watching closely for the yellow runway marker flares. With the low skud the flares are needed to peel-off the formation. Autorich, 2550 RPM, bombardier up from the nose, ready for landing. Peel off, throttle back to 130, half-flaps, 30° bank, gear down.

Through the murk, hear the clunk of oleo struts hitting bottom, the squash of bouncing wheels, the squealing tires, the whine of retarding propellers... These weren't airline

pilots, and it was just damn good to get the airplane back on the ground, whether it was the first mission – the last of twenty-five – the last of thirty – the last of thirty-five. There was a squadron commander that flew two tours. Oh, what was his name?

Feel the anxious pulse of the commanders standing along the railing of the control tower; of the crew chief at his airplane dispersal pad; of the debriefing officers. Are any missing? Did "my" airplane make it? 184 airplanes were shot down or crashed during the twenty months of combat – 1,840 crewmen listed as missing or killed in action. Some returned home from prisoner of war camps.

Twenty-nine winters have passed since those B-24's with their tails high in the air, braking hard, have turned off that runway in front of you. Twenty-nine years have passed since the last combat crew was debriefed as to the accuracy of the bombing; the heavy flak; the fighter cover; the number of parachutes from No. 5 as it was seen to spin out of control, shedding a wing, then its stabilizer, and finally exploding in a ball of fire. Yes, it's twenty-nine years since the nightly bicycle riders and truck loads of combat crews have turned here at this cross road near Wendling.

Today, and tomorrow, the silent sentinel, a granite memorial obelisk is here for those of the 392nd who return to this pretty, peaceful, mid-Norfolk countryside. For a moment, each may pay his respects to the scared but brave aviators who failed to return. Each may replay his role in manning a great force of bombers of the 2nd Air Division of the mighty 8th Air Force.

JOHN H. DIEHL, JR. – ARTIST WITH VISION AND PERCEPTION

From piloting a B-24 to becoming an internationally known artist did not prove to be a very difficult transition for John H. Diehl, Jr. who plied his piloting trade in the 44th Bomb Group.

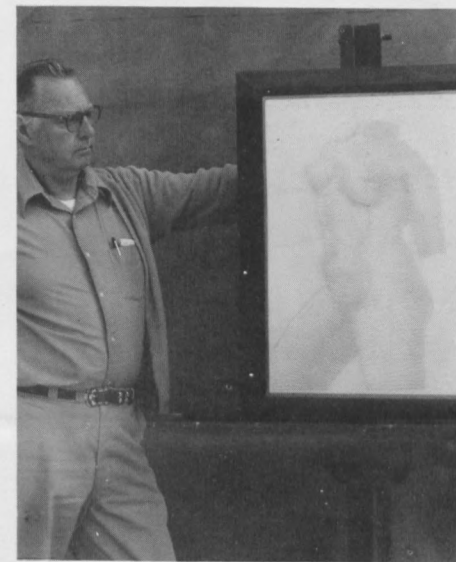
John's works are true art in every sense of the word. He was firmly based in the fundamentals of art and the use of oils early in his career. The reliefs, contours and shadow effects are obtained from many thousands of nails of different sizes, driven into the flat surface of a canvas covered board and then sprayed white.



NOTICE



Earl Zimmerman of the 389th has informed the Newsletter that he recently had the unofficial 389th Group Insignia reproduced. It is available from Earl for \$2.00 each. I wish we could picture it in color as it is a magnificent reproduction. The supply is limited so get your order in early. Earl Zimmerman, 8922 Haverstick Road, Indianapolis, Indiana 46240.



John with unfinished nail sculpture.

All that has gone before is but a prelude of that to come as John moves ever closer to the ultimate in dimension, shadow, and movement through art. His impact will long be felt; his work will open up new horizons for generations to come.

There is every possibility that John will make the reunion this year in Wilmington and if he does he will bring along some of his works. What he brings along will be on display and available for purchase. If your an art lover better plan on attending.

THE SAGA OF SEETHINGS' FLYING DOG

by John W. Archer

As the B-24 Liberator crews prepared for the groups 100th mission to Siracourt, France on the 21st June 1944, an amusing sidelight was experienced during the 4 hours which followed.

The successful efforts of a local terrier dog to fly an operational mission was completed from Seething Airfield that particular day.

'Bomb Boy', as the black and white terrier was affectionately called by his ten co-masters who formed the crew of the Liberator 'Hit Parade', was often referred to around the base as the 'washed out Air Cadet'. The crews never took him up on a mission for fear of the ill-effects that might have resulted at high altitudes.



Not a Terrier but the closest we could come. Photo by Don Olds. Who else?

He had often, in the past, sneaked into the plane right before take-off in order to fly over Germany, but had always been found in time to be put out before the start of the mission.

Through trial and error 'Bomb Boy' finally found a perfectly camouflaged spot right near the nose-wheel. Immediately before take-off he managed to jump into the plane, when everyone was busy checking last minute preparations, and stowed away in his concealed hiding place.

He didn't move until the Liberator had gained altitude. Then he made his way along the flight deck right between the pilot and co-pilot as the plane headed out over the channel towards enemy territory.

The Pilot, cursing roundly when he saw the dog, decided to take him along. This being the Pilot's 21st mission, and as everything was going well, he didn't want to turn back to Seething.

In the meantime he handed 'Bomb Boy' over to the crew and told them that they had better prepare him for the trip.

The first big problem was to give oxygen to the terrier. Fortunately, the crew always carried a spare mask. 'Bomb Boy' wouldn't let the mask be fitted at first. After a time he became a little dizzy

from the rarified atmosphere, and yielded. The radio operator tucked him into his heated flying suit to keep him warm.

'Bomb Boy' acted like a veteran throughout the mission. Occasionally, he cleared his ears by moving his jaws and yawning. He stood before the open bomb-bay doors and watched 'Hit Parade's' bombs fall away to blast the target.

And he ate his share of chocolate D-ration, never once suffering any air sickness, or other ill-effects from high altitude flight.

'Bomb Boy' was with the crew when they were interrogated by the intelligence officer after they had landed, and occasionally put in his comment on the mission with a few well pronounced barks. He was accepted as an honorary observer of the crew and was voted to receive flying pay with 50% increase in his weekly allowance of chocolate from the crew's rations.



"That makes three destroyed and two probables, sergeant!"

ROCKETING PRICES CUT BOOKS BOUGHT FOR THE AMERICAN ROOM



(L to R) - Mr. G. Nobbs, representative of Barclays Trust Company, Mrs. L. M. Barne, Mr. T. C. Eaton, Vice-Chairman, Mr. R. Q. Gurney, Chairman, Mr. J. H. Howard, Clerk to the Governors, Col. E. R. Johnston, Lakenheath Base Commander, Col. T. H. Curtiss, Air Force Attache to the U.S. Embassy, Mr. Philip Hepworth, City Librarian and (front) Lady Mayhew and Miss Joan Benz, deputy city librarian.

The main problem facing our Memorial Room at the Norwich Central Library is not diminishing interest from those on both sides of the Atlantic but the effect of inflation on its finances. This was underlined at the annual meeting of the governors of the Trust pictured above.

Philip Hepworth, the Librarian, stated: "Book prices have rocketed, and it is quite clear that a sum of £500-£700 will not today buy half the number of books that it would a decade ago. Use of books by the growing number of students at the various schools and colleges in the area as well as by the general public continues to grow."

The Vice Chairman, Mr. Tom Eaton, pointed out that most of the books they acquired would not normally be bought by a library. "The local public have the opportunity of seeing and using books which they would be pretty well unable to get in any other library in England", he said.

The chairman, Mr. R. Q. Gurney, said the books would not be available but for the Trust which now has 3990 volumes in the library.

We, the Officers of the Association, were happy to note that all the officers of the Trust were re-elected. Where would we be without them!