

# NEWS LETTER

Vol. 16 No. 4

SECOND AIR DIVISION ASSOCIATION

December 1978



by Ken Gregson (Hdq.)

## A TREE GROWS IN JERUSALEM FOR 6,052

We all know about our 'Living Memorial' as it exists in the form of the American Room in the Norwich Central Library, but did you know that there is another "Living Memorial" located in the Jerusalem hills and in the form of a tree? We didn't either until very recently.

Sol Greenberg (453rd) was visiting Israel in 1976 and while there he had a tree planted in memory of those in the 2nd Air Division who gave their lives. According to Sol it is a common thing in Israel to have a tree planted in memory of a person or event. He had done the same thing in memory of his parents over 30 years ago.

Sol says that a scroll goes along with each tree and the one in memory of the 2nd AD dead reads as follows:

*"In memory of the six thousand B-24 Liberator flyers who fell in the air battles over Europe 1942, 1943, 1944 and 1945"*

Next to the Memorial Room in Norwich we can't think of a more fitting memorial because it helps another country, another people, to live and prosper.



After arrival and awaiting specific orders, there we were on Dec. 25, 1942. With the unseen ahead of us there were some far seeing individuals who should have been called soothsayers — especially one who decided early that the youngsters of Norwich should be taken care of at the coming Christmas period. Up to that date they had known only life during war time.

Yours Truly was picked as chairman of the Committee for a Christmas party. By that time we had moved to Horsham St. Faith with its majestic quarters — large dining rooms and complete services we could build into.

The first task was to corral enough candy for a proper Christmas party — dinner and entertainment. At noon our lorries had picked a group of children at a given assembly place in Norwich. Fortunately, before Christmas, an agreement had been reached among the men that one half of their candy allotment at the PX would be withheld and placed away for Christmas.

Our excellent Mess Officer and his eager helpers did the dinner in grand style. We worked diligently all Christmas Eve and night, packing those wonderful candy bars into a hundred large bags which my good friend, William Furze, President of the Norwich Glass Co., had scrounged for us.

Our good Doctor saved us a lot of trouble by advising the waiters to go easy with the children as none of them had been on full rations their entire lives. We did not issue the candy until after the Movie "Peter Pan" was over and each child received a bag as they left the theatre.

We still had a huge box filled with candy and chewing gum and the problem became 'how to get rid of it'. Trying to be Santa Claus, we phoned different institutions — hospitals and others — but due to the rigid rules about our supplies we found all to be negative to receiving this huge supply.

At the Children's Hospital the Mother Superior surmised that all we were talking about was a box of sweets so she agreed to accept it. However, as six big huskies walked in with that box measuring 2½ feet x 4 feet x 5 feet and filled to the brim there was a loud gasp of surprise and we had a lot of explaining to do. We explained as well as we could and requested that they use their good office for it's complete disposal. They finally agreed.

That was not only a red letter day for us but we learned later it was one that many, many of those youngsters never forgot — and many of us will always remember.

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## THE PRESIDENT'S CORNER

Our 31st Annual Reunion in San Diego was a great success — check the 'attendees' listed in the September Newsletter. Just when it seems we may have 'peaked', we find that our very able Evelyn Cohen, has again "gone one better". Fact is that Evelyn, Bill and Hazel Robertie and other dedicated people have gone thru some considerable, personal expense to provide us the very best at a moderate cost. The membership has voiced its approval at every business meeting I've ever attended. There will always be those who comment on the high costs, but a visit to your local grocery or auto garage will quickly awaken you to the loud and clear voice of ——— inflation.

I asked our membership to personally get involved in seeking out new members. Although our Roster shows nearly 3500 members, we still have some distance to go to get all the eligibles. Our growth rate can be improved — must be — in order to keep the Annual Dues at \$7.00.

I've been lucky to have "Pete" Henry as the Executive Vice President. His approach to increasing the membership by inserting a 'Letter-to-the-Editor' in local newspapers during his business travels, is extremely successful. Using Pete's basic approach, I submitted a similar letter to all the domestic airlines' news vehicles. I had



E. A. Rokicki and wife, Cell

29 responses and 28 "sign-ups" the first time I submitted the request. I'm still working on the Eastern Airlines chap in Bermuda — I think he's about ready.

Keeping in mind that our purpose for existence is still a continuance of doing the work necessary to fund the Memorial Trust, a small contribution along with your 1979 Dues Renewal will help us meet our \$50,000 goal. Can't think of a finer way to make our 32nd Annual Reunion — and our 4th one in Norwich — better, than by completing that pledge. We ask your continued support to the Library Fund and to the memory of our comrades who have 'folded their wings'.

E. A. Rokicki (458th)  
President

## THE BAWDESWELL CHURCH

by Henry A. Bamman (466th)

The background on the Bawdeswell Church is:

In April, 1945, a Mosquito on return from the Continent and in trouble, struck and destroyed the 14th century Bawdeswell Church. Fragments of the plane fell on the Chaucer House, the home of Mr. and Mrs. Lloyd Lewis (14th century, now in the National Trust).

In Attlebridge, the men and officers of the 466th had built a chapel and furnished it. The wood came from an old mess hall and was fine Honduras mahogany; we used the wood for altar rails, pulpit, lectern, and altar. Just before the 466th came back to the States, we gave all of the wood pieces to the Bawdeswell Church, along with a set of silver plated communion cups that we had made from shell casings. All of that wood was used in rebuilding the

new church, and the communion cups are still used with small groups.

I have returned to Bawdeswell several times since World War II, and I always have visited the church.



## FORMER AF SUPPLY SERGEANT HERE RECALLS 'THE BIG ONE'

(from Santa Maria  
Times, Calif.)



JONASSON

March 18, 1945 had no real claim to fame in World War II, except that the 389th Bomb Group of the 8th Air Force came back from a bomb run over Berlin with minimal losses. For the airmen of the 389th, including Sgt. Roy Jonasson, it meant that the war in Europe was as good as over.

"We'd been to Berlin many times," he said, "but as the war wound down we didn't lose as many men. Towards the end, with the fighters going in all the way to fly cover, the bombers flew a lot of missions without losing one plane."

That was a far cry from the early days in the ETO, said Jonasson, when "you'd see 'em come in shot to pieces, some of them with nine out of 10 crew members killed. One time the radio operator was the only one to make it out of the crash alive. We don't know how he did it, he just did."

It wasn't all kick back and relax at the end of the war, either, added Jonasson. "We'd heard that as soon as the war in Europe was over, we were going to be shipped to Okinawa for the Pacific Theatre. The feeling of the boys was that the war was just partly over."



Jonasson's "boys" were just about every other enlisted man and most of the officers in his squadron, the 564th Squadron, 389th Bomb Group, Second Division, 8th Air Force.

Because Jonasson was drafted from his grocery managing job in Pomona two days before his 36th birthday, he was older than virtually every man in his unit.

"Of course they called me 'Pops'," said Jonasson. "All these boys were 10 to 15 years younger than I was. I'd get 'em home when they got drunk, tried to see to it they didn't get hurt."

Jonasson, now retired and living in Santa Maria, Calif., spent two years as a tech supply sergeant for the 564th as the squadron flew missions into France and Germany from Hethel Field outside of Norwich, England. The ground crews didn't go through the hell the plane crews did, said Jonasson, but they didn't get by unscathed either.

"The worst part was when you went back to the barracks and there were maybe four crews gone, that's 40 men, with the beds empty and their bicycles laying outside. The clothing sergeant



Sgt. Felts, Sgt. Jonasson, Sgt. Attencio.

had the job of going through all the lockers afterwards, and he almost went nuts."

Some couldn't handle it, explained Jonasson: it got to be too much. "We had a sheet metal worker, a real conscientious sergeant that'd work day and night. But, y'know, sometimes these bombers would come in with 59-60 holes in 'em, and they'd tell him to get as many ready to fly the next day as he could. If he hadn't cared that much he would've been all right. But he was too conscientious, and they finally took him and shipped him back."

The ground crews, the mechanics especially, were working day in and day out (in the rain, mostly) to get the planes back up in the air. That included emergency measures on the runway.

"I remember once a starter wouldn't kick over on one of the engines," said Jonasson. The mechanic threw some canvas over the prop hub, hooked up a rope to the jeep and started the prop that way. "This one's ready to go," he said.

The 389th is probably best known as one of the five bomb groups that went in on the first Ploesti oilfield bomb run, a low-level attack that cost the Second Division 500 men and earned it a Congressional Medal of Honor. A Presidential Unit Citation was soon to follow.

But the bomb group was also known for other things, like the fact that it was Jimmy Stewart's unit when he served with the Air Force.

"I remember I was waiting out on the line once when this officer came up and asked me how many hours the engines had on them," said Jonasson. "I told him, and after he'd climbed in the plane, somebody said, 'You know who was talking to you?' and I said, 'Nope,' and he said, 'That's Jimmy Stewart. He's going to be with us now'."

Jonasson remembered that Stewart, even though an actor, commanded respect from his men. "I'll say this for him. He flew both the hard missions as well as the easy ones."

Jonasson met Gen. Jimmy Doolittle, too, on a day when the general gathered with other officers on the flight line to hear the first reports from Liberators returning from a hard-hit mission. "We just couldn't track 'em, they were going too fast." Jonasson remembers the pilots saying: it was the first use of jet fighters by the Germans.

Besides bombing runs, the 389th, and the whole Second Division, made runs to drop tinfoil for radar-scrambling purposes, as well as flying gas to Gen. George S. Patton's troops late in the war, when Patton had outrun all of his supply lines. Liberators were fitted with special tanks and flown above the front lines, where Patton's armored units were waiting for the gas.



March 10, 1945 "I was up at 4:30 a.m. and in the first light of dawn I could see vapor trails. . . ."

In order to keep those memories alive, Jonasson joined with other members of the old Second Division in a reunion at the Hotel del Coronado in San Diego this summer, from July 13-15.

All veterans of the Second Division of the 8th Air Force were invited, including the 44th, 93rd, 389th, 392nd, 445th, 446th, 448th, 453rd, 458th, 467th, 489th, 491st and 492nd Bomb Groups, the 4th and 5th Fighter Groups, and the 391st and 479th Scouting-Fighter Groups.

Looking back at all of it now, Jonasson said, "It seems like it happened a long time ago, a long time."

In World War II, the Second Division lost 1,458 B-24s. Turning the pages of the 389th's official history, Jonasson found himself thinking about the airmen who were killed and the reunions since the war.

"We're losing a few more each year now," he said.

## DID YOU KNOW



by Steve Gotts

Those of us in FOTE who have visited the American Military Cemetery near Madingley, Cambridgeshire, may have noticed a bronze plaque mounted on the wall of the visitor's reception building. The plaque, in the form of a shield, records the names of the 10 man crew of a 392nd B.G. B-24 which crashed after a mid-air collision near Cheshunt in Hertfordshire, on 12 August 1944.

The crewmen who lost their lives, all of the 577th Squadron, were 2nd Lt. John D. Ellis, 2nd Lt. Robert B. Cox, (who are buried in the cemetery); F/O Samuel C. Stalsby, T/Sgt. Stanley E. Jankowski, T/Sgt. John Holling, S/Sgt. Jay V. Cable, S/Sgt. Clare W. Hultengren, S/Sgt. Frank Minick, (also in the cemetery), S/Sgt. William C. McGinley and S/Sgt. Jack O. Shaeffer.

Over the years, much has been written about the many dangers faced daily by 8th Air Force bomber aircrews, whilst flying missions over Europe during WW 2. Two years ago, whilst the author was assisting in the research of this particular crash, information was discovered about an earlier incident, involving six of these airmen, which seems to provide a typical example of the hazards confronting all aircrews fighting the air war.

During the afternoon of Saturday, 29 April 1944, B-24 Liberators of the 392nd Bomb. Group, 2nd Air Division, were returning from a mission over Berlin to their base at Wendling, in Norfolk. One of these aircraft, ship no. 546 was in serious trouble — enemy fighters had shot up the plane, badly damaging the tail unit. Because of this, the pilots decided to abandon their machine, and, at approximately 13.05 hours, as the Liberator crossed the Suffolk coast north of Kessingland, eight of the crew bailed out. The men landed safely in an area southwest of Lowestoft, and after a search by local police, they were found and taken to Beccles airfield. When interviewed, they stated that their pilots had intended to abandon their aircraft safely in the sea.

However, the men realized their luck when they heard that minutes after

## "WILD ONE" AT WENDOVER

by WALT RUDE



As all flying personnel will know, it is standard cockpit procedure to apply the brakes after lift-off and prior to the retraction of the landing gear. Our pilot, though one of the best, had the bad habit of locking the brakes during the sequence. Unfortunately, and with the brakes locked, we hit the prop-wash of the aircraft taking off just ahead of us, and the result was our being forced back down on the runway. Both main tires blew, sounding only too much like a couple of 75MM cannon going off.

There then followed a long-winded radio contact with a group of experts gathered in the control tower. What to do — that was the question being discussed by said experts. The first deci-

they bailed out, '546 crashed on the Norfolk coast, killing their pilot, Lt. Read. Lt. Bates, the co-pilot, parachuted to safety and landed in Norfolk. Among the eight crewmen who escaped from their doomed bomber were Jankowski - engineer, Holling - radio operator, Minick - ball turret gunner, Hultengren - waist gunner, McGinley - waist gunner and Shaeffer - tail gunner.

Having survived the flak and fighter defenses of Berlin, the long and tortuous flight home to England and having jumped to safety from their stricken machine, four short months later, the luck ran out — these six men crashed to their deaths — not over Germany, as did so many others, but tragically in Hertfordshire, England, whilst assembling for another mission.

sion was that all aboard, about 32, with the exception of the pilot, co-pilot and your narrator, would bail out. This decision, though, was discarded when the power in the tower came to the conclusion that a mass bail-out of some 29 almost completely inexperienced parachutists would probably result in more injuries than a potential hazardous landing.

After circling the field for several hours to lighten the fuel load, our super pilot set that B-24 down like an old hen squatting down on a clutch of hatching eggs. However, when the weight of the Lib settled down on the struts and the blown tires, the vibration became terrific. And where was yours truly? I had been ordered to get as many men as possible under the top-turret to support it and prevent its breaking loose when the vibration became excessive.

Needless to say, I was far from ecstatic about being used as a support-prop for a flimsily mounted turret.

All went well, though, and we finally braked down to a very gentle stop. At that point no one had to give an order to evacuate the aircraft.

The only sad part to the entire experience came when a number of us were informed that we would have to remain at dear old Wendover to assist in the replacement of the strut assemblies.

## DUES

It's that time of the year again — dues paying time. If you haven't received your dues statement from Evelyn Cohen by the time you receive this (I'm mailing early to avoid the Christmas rush) it will be along shortly. It will be a tremendous assist to us if you send your dues in as soon as you receive your statement. As our Treasurer Dean Moyer can verify it takes a lot of money to keep this organization alive and well, mainly because our membership is now at the 3400 mark and rising. Did you ever mail out 3400 of anything? Horrendous! In spite of inflation we have been able to keep the dues at \$7.00, but it does take a lot of planning. So give us a helping hand and get your dues to Evelyn as soon as you receive your statement. Many thanks.

Bill Robertie

## NORWICH 1979

Evelyn Cohen (Hdq.)

The following schedule of events has been sent to all those who have signed up for our reunion in Norwich next year. The dates are from May 31 to June 16 and all additional information is contained in the schedule. As of this writing we have about ten empty seats so if you haven't made a reservation yet but want to go contact Evelyn at your earliest opportunity.

Thursday, May 31 — charter flights from Philadelphia and Chicago — exact times to follow.

Friday, June 1 — Arrive Mildenhall AFB, buses to hotels (Post House, Hotel Norwich and Hotel Nelson). We will arrange for exchange of money on our arrival. 6:30 P.M. — buffet supper at Blackfriars Hall — early to bed.

Saturday, June 2 — 10 A.M. business meeting Norwich City Hall. Afternoon free. Evening — reception, cocktail party and buffet Norwich Castle.

Sunday, June 3 — Buses to Duxford Air Museum, visit with Friends of the 8th, box lunch. We will then proceed to Cambridge Cemetery for Memorial Day Services. We will participate in these services by placing wreaths in memory of those members of the 2nd Air Division who gave their lives while serving with the Division. Evening open.

Monday, June 4 — Buses for various bases will leave from all hotels, schedules to be posted. Evening — plans are still not firm.

Tuesday, June 5 — Free morning and afternoon for trips to beauty shop, shopping, visiting, etc. Evening — gala banquet and cocktail party at Blackfriars Hall. We will have as our guests Officials of the City of Norwich and County of Norfolk, Members of the Board of Governors and their spouses, Friends of the 8th, etc.

Wednesday, June 6 — leave Norwich by making your own arrangements. If anyone wishes to stay in Norwich after Tuesday, June 5, I will be most happy to make your hotel reservations. Keep in mind that hotels are small and you must make advance reservations. You may either stay on in the rooms assigned to you or request other accommodations.

All hotels will serve breakfast, VAT is included as are tips (service charges). If you are travelling alone and wish to share a twin bedded room, please let me know. If you are more than 2 we have some family rooms available, but you must let me know how many rooms you will need.

We will need additional information for Pan Am and ask that you complete the attached form as quickly as possible. Please list all the information requested for each person having a reservation. Also list relationship to 2 AD member.

If you have any questions you may reach me at home before 9 A.M. and after 6 P.M. weekdays. 215-OR3-7699.

## PAINTINGS

During May and June of next year — you could say during our reunion in Norwich — there will be a display of paintings of WWII Aircraft (all types) at the Boswell's Gallery in Norwich.

The paintings will be the works of old friend Mike Bailey and new friend Fred Searle. Both are well known for their aircraft art work and both, I'm sure, would be happy to do one for you.



Ray Wetmore's "Daddy's Girl" crossing the English Channel. Searle.



George Preddy touching down at Bodney, summer '44.

You can see from Fred Searle's painting above that no detail is too small to be included.

Mike Bailey is remembered by most of us as the person who painted the B-24 which now hangs in the Memorial Room of the Norwich Central Library. Both artists do excellent work and a couple of hours in Boswell's gallery during this display will be time well spent.

## ATTENTION ALL MAINTENANCE CREWS

by David G. Mayor (SAD-2)

This is an open letter to the maintenance crews of the 2nd AD from us at BAD-2. We did a lot of work for you guys including things that you were unable to do because we had the facilities and the time which you did not.

In fact, we were constantly commenting among ourselves about how in the devil did you guys accomplish the miracles you did between missions. At least we didn't have a bunch of Krauts breaking up our work a few hours after we had knocked ourselves out to get a ship in the air.

We would all like to hear from you (Pvts. to M/Sgts.) via the 2nd AD Newsletter telling us of some of the problems, grief and sometimes humorous incidents surrounding your operations at the combat bases. If you guys will come across with these stories (we hear lots from the air crews) we will let Bill Robertie steal some of our yarns for you in your Newsletter. Deal?

In fact, rumor has it that Bill Robertie has purloined one of our stories for this issue.

(ed: Now would I do a thing like that? Right on!)

## B-24 PRINTS

At the reunion this year one of the exhibitors of paintings and prints was Dan Witkoff, 7415 Blix Street, San Diego, CA 92111. Dan has asked that we bring an example of his work to the attention of our members in case some of them would like a pen and ink drawing of their plane. The following print is one of "Ronnie" and you can see that he has not missed a single detail.

This particular print was sent to the Newsletter by Rick Rokicki who also sent a photo of what he did with it and what can be done with a little imagination. Of course Rick is a frustrated artist himself!



Rick advises that a pen and ink drawing rolled up in a tube sells for \$3.00. Dan also ships them flat (Litho bonded to a stiff backing) for \$5.00. So if your interested write to Dan Witkoff at the above address.

## NEWS FROM THE EIGHTBALLS

by Pete Henry (44th)

You may be getting a little tired of reading about my letters-to-the-editor campaign and also wonder if I'm not getting a little weary of it myself. Since the San Diego reunion, I've sent out about 40 of these letters and received almost 50 replies from former members of the Second Air Division Assn. That doesn't seem like a very good percentage but you must realize that most of the papers didn't print the letter. One letter to Rochester, N.Y. and one letter to Buffalo, N.Y. brought in more than 30 replies. And then I get a letter like the one I'm about to quote (in part) and it makes it all worthwhile. The following letter was received from Oliver O. Kalke, now living in Van Etten (near Rochester), N.Y., who was with the 44th B.G. Base Technical Inspection Office in WWII.

"Dear Pete:

Thank you very much for the prompt response to my request for information about the 2nd Air Division membership. My check is on its way to Evelyn Cohen, so I am looking forward to getting the roster.

I am sending you the one name and address I am sure of at this time. Here it is: Mr. Vernon C. Riensche." Address not quoted.

Vernon may already be a member of the Association, but he may also be helpful in securing additional names for you. My wife and I had the pleasure of meeting him and his wife last January. He showed me a beautifully bound copy of the activities of the 44th B.G. It was from this book that he contacted me several years ago.

In going through the few souvenirs and faded photographs of the 44th, I didn't find your plane's picture. It is almost certain I inspected your aircraft numerous times during my tenure. If you ever contact your crew chief and ground crew, they may recall me as 'that little p-k'. In fact, I provoked several of the squadron's engineering officers with my strict inspections.

However, I justified my attitude based on my experience gained in the 6th Anti-Submarine Squadron. Our patrol ships left Gander Air Field on ten, twelve and fourteen hour trips over the bleak Atlantic Ocean to Iceland, Greenland and North Ireland. When the ground crews crabbled, I told them they were sending ten valuable combat men out to God knows what and I wanted them to return. This same thought applied to you fellows flying out of Shipdham. We couldn't do much about ack-ack and fighter attacks but I insisted that a mechanically perfect plane had a lot better chance of returning.

It gave me no pleasure to present a growing list of defects to a squadron but I had the pleasure of seeing a lot of Corporal crew chiefs promoted to Master Sergeant when I could write — 'This aircraft is in excellent condition'. Many of the boys thanked me when we were returning home on the Queen Mary.

All the above may sound corny and you'll probably laugh when I tell you I haven't worked on an aircraft since my discharge. Following my return to civilian life, I was connected with mechanics but only on trucks, moving vans and truck equipment installations and, for twenty-three and one-half years prior to retirement, on dump trucks and concrete mixers. None of these flew very high! My idea about doing a proper job has netted me a very pleasant retirement and a clear conscience.

While my Air Force service was a most pleasant time of my life, I am mindful of the many sacrifices and tragedies of WWII. We had our share of them in the 44th and I am happy that many, like yourself, came through.

Here are some of the officers of the 6th (Anti-Submarine Squadron) that may have been sent to the 44th: John T. Ashford Jr., John A. Bogan, George S. Boylan Jr., Dean H. Dalton, Gerald C. Grell.

All of us were divided among the Second Air Division groups since we were B-24 people. I believe Gerald Grell was commissioned Major and commanded the 66th, 67th or 68th. I was in the 506th briefly."

Oliver's letter goes on to say that he is anxiously awaiting information about the '79 reunion and that they will be wintering in Florida until May 1, 1979. He looks forward to the day when he can join us all again at one of the reunions.

## WHO INVENTED THE ROTARY LAWN MOWER?

We can't tell you the name of the person who actually invented the rotary lawn mower but we can tell you that it was somebody in the 3rd SAD at Grinston.



Bottom view of grass cutter.

It was first used to cut grass around the shops, hangars and living area. Of course it wasn't called a "rotary lawn mower" at that time, but was simply described as a grass cutter. This invention was described in the official base history, but would you believe it — the name of its inventor was not listed!

Obviously it was constructed by someone in the maintenance division who used his brain instead of his back.

(ed. Thanks to Wiley Noble of the 3rd SAD)

## IS THE LIBRARY ROOM APPRECIATED?

A few months ago George F. Osborne donated a book to the Memorial Library Room and in it he put his name and address. Just prior to this year's reunion George received the following letter from Joan E. Wallace of Norwich.

"Dear Mr. Osborne:

I would like to take this opportunity to write to you. I visited the library in Norwich and saw your address in the book called 'Beautiful California' which you had presented to the American Memorial Room. I often visit the Library and have spent many delightful hours there reading the travel and history books of your truly beautiful country.

I have often passed the remark that it is such a great pity that no addresses are in the books for people to write to say how much they appreciated the kind gifts, and to say that 1941-1945 will never be forgotten. I would like to add we have a book in a glass case with all the names of the 2nd Air Division men who did not return. Each day a page is turned and left open for a day so their names still live on. This glass case stands in the library close to the unfurled flag of the Stars and Stripes of the USA.

I would like to say thank you for your kindness, and also to the many who presented the lovely books in memory of comrades and loved ones that we too can remember each time a page is turned. I wish you and your family good health and every happiness.

Mrs. Joan E. Wallace  
11 Coleburn Road  
Cooper Lane Estate  
Norwich, Norfolk, England"

IS THE MEMORIAL LIBRARY ROOM APPRECIATED? I think this letter from Mrs. Wallace answers that question quite convincingly.

## OLDS & ENDS FROM THE 453rd BG

BY Don Olds (453rd)

Received a letter from Dale Benesh out in Loveland, Colorado who served with the 735th Squadron. He flew many missions on 'JABBERWOCK' and probably flew with as many different pilots as anybody. He went with Barry once, Walker once, Berry once, five with Kolb, nine with McGilvary and 18 with Ervin. Besides this, he had nine aborts, two with pilots he can't even remember.

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In September my wife and I went up to Pacific, MO., to attend the 25th wedding anniversary party for Roy (Ed) and Ramona Myers. Ed was a gunner on the Eugene O'Leary Crew and he and Ramona have attended the Valley Forge and Lake Geneva reunions but couldn't make it to San Diego this past summer. They are signed up for the Norwich trip in '79 however. Congratulations to the Myers.

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Below are a couple of pictures from the San Diego bash. In one is LeRoy Berg, on the left, who was a mechanic in the 732nd Sq. and serviced 'PORKY' whose pilot was Orris Warrington. I know LeRoy was happy to get to see Orris in San Diego. On the right is Walt Edgeworth who worked in the 732nd Armament Shop.



The other photo, taken at the Saturday evening banquet was Muriel & Dan Reading on the left and Vi and LeRoy Steingraber on the right. Both of these guys were members of the original cadre, on Melvin Williams Crew #77 of the 735th Sq. They were shot down on 21 June 44 on a Berlin Raid.



Wonder if any of our members know where Capt. Merlin J. Cook hailed from. In some of the 453rd records he is listed as the Group Historian. I'd like to locate him in hopes he has a 453rd file that would be interesting to many of us. When he came back with the group after the war he went to Fort Leavenworth for furlough and reassignment. So I'm kinda guessing he was from the Missouri-Kansas area. If anyone knows his old WW 2 hometown please let me know.

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Sounds like a goodly number of former 453rd men and their wives will be making the trek to Norwich next June. Others will be traveling to England via their own methods and will meet us in Norwich for the festivities. Suppose the trip to Old Buc airfield will be the highlight for most. Latest word is that not much is left. One piece of the main runway and bits of the perimeter track remain plus a couple of scattered huts. Mr. West, who farms most of the land the airfield occupied, has warmly welcomed ex-453rd men who have visited his farm in recent years.

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Were the boys stationed at Old Buc musically in tune with the folks back in the states you ask?? Of course they were. The GI'Verns furnished the men at Old Buc with everything from hot swing to smooth rhythm. The band was actually started at Wendover, Utah under leadership of Colonel Johnson of the 327th Service Group of Special Services. With instruments under their arms they came overseas and despite being broken up twice after reaching England, never gave up. New members joined the original five and finally with a strength of nine they played their first dance at the Aero Club in early April of '44. Through conscientious rehearsing and playing numerous dates they gained their goal of being one of the top bands in the ETO. Band members included Al Brondel, William Clearfield, Frank Pleskovich, Louis Arcaraci, Johnny Strainse, Roland Whilden, Russell Stier, Carl Angerman and Jimmy Veltre. I've been in touch with William Clearfield but I wonder where the others might be??

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At San Diego some of our members from the 453rd borrowed various photos, documents etc., that they wanted to copy and return to me. As of now I haven't gotten any of this material back. So, if you have items you borrowed at San Diego and haven't returned would you please do so. Then I won't have to write each of you individual letters. Thanks.

SEASONS GREETINGS TO ALL!!

## HEROES MEETING, SECRETS REVEALED

(from Amateur Photographer)

You think the Battle of Britain finished 38 years ago in the skies over London and Kent? Maybe so, but it very nearly started up again in the dignified reception rooms of the RAF Club in London's Piccadilly.

The occasion was the unveiling of a superb picture painted by Frank Wootton, which shows a formation of British bombers, escorted by Spitfires, crossing the French coast for a bombing run on one of the ports. Diving to attack them is a squadron of Me109s, led by Oberst Lieutenant Adolf Galland (later General). But also diving to attack the 109s is the Spit' of Wing-Commander Bob Stanford-Tuck, who appears to me to be just opening fire on the leading 109 with about a 10° deflection shot.

It's a great picture which captures the whole atmosphere of air fighting. But I readily admit to being biased as, from my earliest childhood, my one, unswerving ambition was to become a fighter-pilot. I never made the grade, but during the early forties I hero-worshipped Stanford-Tuck who, to me, epitomized all a fighter-pilot should be: totally ruthless and a superb shot, with 30 confirmed victories to his credit.

The photo I wanted was of Stanford-Tuck with his old enemy, Adolf Galland (103 victories), who had come over for the unveiling. Although they tried to kill each other during the war, they are now close friends.

During his short speech, Galland revealed one of the tactics he employed during Battle. When a Spit' was on his tail and he was unable to shake it off, he would sometimes open fire with his guns, shooting at no target.

"The Spit' pilot would think he had scored a hit on me and the smoke from my guns would make him think I was on fire," he explained. "Having the 'English-gentleman spirit', there was a chance he would pull away and give me a chance to get him".

"Not likely if it were me," murmured Tuck. But another member of the gathering, also an ex-wartime pilot, and now an air correspondent, nearly had apoplexy at this.

"That's exactly how the dirty ——— shot me down!" he shouted. "It was a disgusting trick and now he's got the gall to come here..." (Expletives, expletives).

It needed quite a number of the other journalists present to quiet him down and restrain him from sailing into Galland with all guns firing.

Which was a pity, I thought. Could have been a damned good picture for me of the Battle of Britain, Part II, taking place!

# THE INFORMALITY OF THE WARTIME ARMY

by David G. Mayor (BAD-2)

Those of you who were at Warton in Dec. of '43 will remember that pile of crates that showed up one morning and were stacked out behind hangars 1 & 2. I remember because the assembly of the contents of those crates brought me one of my first tasks at Warton.

Those crates contained the first of 391 Stinson L-5s and Piper L-4s that were assembled (and repaired) at the world's greatest air depot. I was given the job of preparing these grasshoppers for test flight and then storing them until the enlisted pilots from the artillery came to claim their new, and 'powerful' mounts in which to become the "Terrors of the Luftwaffe".

One day while working on the ramp a seedy looking L-4 taxied up and a young Sgt. got out. He said that he had been told that we would store his airplane for him while he enjoyed a couple of weeks leave in Blackpool.

"No sweat. Leave it right there and we'll shove it in the hangar for you 'til you get back". At the end of the work day it was wheeled in among its younger cousins to await the return of its pilot. As usual I noted its vital statistics in my little book, closed the hangar doors and promptly forgot that the little waif of the artillery even existed.

A couple of weeks later a stranger wearing the chevrons of a S/Sgt. came up to me and asked if I remembered him. Of course I didn't, but I asked if I could help him.

"I'm the guy what left his cub with you a couple of weeks ago." The light dawned. "Didja have a good time in Blackpool?" I asked. "Just great", says he, "but where is my airplane?" "Over there in Hangar 31," says I in a most unconcerned manner.

"Well," says he, "I have looked in there and can't find it". Giving him my best condescending look I took him in tow and said, "Here, I'll show ya."

We entered the open hangar door and I commenced looking around for that beat up excuse for Mr. Piper's pride and joy. I wasn't having much luck so I asked him if he remembered the number of his ship. He did, and spit it off the end of his tongue as if it was his ASN.

I reached for my little book and ran my finger down the columns of serial numbers until I came to the one in question. I glanced over to the right hand column and I'm sure that I must have turned white at what I saw.

"Gee Sarg, I sold that ship to some guy last week who came to pick up a new cub." "What!!! You sold my

airplane? What kind of an operation are you guys running here? Where's the engineering officer?"

Here is where that old G.I. ingenuity came into play. Knowing that if I didn't act fast I was in deep, deep trouble I said; "Calm down. Here is a whole hangar full of new aircraft. Take your pick." His face lit up like a Christmas tree. "You mean I can have any one of these new planes and no questions asked?" As he spoke he headed for the nearest Stinson.

"Hold it . . . hold it!" I said. "You can have any L-4. The L-5s don't count." He was only slightly put out, but that was overcome at the prospect of getting a nice, new airplane to replace the bag-of-bolts he had left with us.

"You mean that I can have any of the L-4s in this hangar?"

"Why not," I said, "Who's to know 'cept you and me, and I'm sure as hell not gonna tell!" "Terrific!" he exclaimed. As I pulled the prop and got him started he quipped; "I'm gonna send the rest of the guys up here for furlough. You not only have a great time in Blackpool but ya get a brand new airplane to boot."

He taxied merrily away and off he went into the calm, cloudy Lancashire grey yonder. I thought to myself, ere he flew outta sight, he's happy and I am if Captain Baland doesn't check. Fortunately he never did.

I have often felt a little bit sorry for the poor guy who came to BAD 2 for a new airplane and was saddled with the happy sergeants cast off. How much simpler things were in 1944.

## NOTICE

As we do every year at this time we are notifying all our members who are having difficult times financially to contact Evelyn Cohen and explain your situation to her. She will arrange for a waiver of your dues as she has done so often in the past. Funds have been donated by generous members to cover these situations so don't think you are a 'drag' on the Association because you are not. We don't want to lose any member for any reason.

One other thing. We are getting close to reaching our \$50,000 goal for the Memorial Trust Fund. We will appreciate any amount you care to donate along with your dues. But DO get those dues in.

## WRITERS WANTED

We are still looking for material to be used in the Newsletter and we appreciate all stories and photos sent in to us. You might think that your particular story is of no interest, but what you should do is send it in and let us decide.

Interest of Historians in WWII will remain for many years to come and their only source for material will be what has been written by participants in all publications. So get those stories to us and we'll do our best to get you 'immortalized'. Would you settle for 'remembered'!

## HETHEL HIGHLIGHTS:

by Earl Zimmerman (389)

For those of you who have attended the last few reunions you will know about the picture I displayed of the oil painting of Jesus on the cross which I took during 1975 reunion at Hethel. One of the few remaining original buildings left standing is the old Base Chapel/Gym where the oil painting appears on the wall. I have been trying to authenticate the painting ever since and out of the blue I was sent an original magazine cover by Jim Lennon and you can see that the painting was painted during our stay at Hethel while Father Beck was Chaplain. By the way, many of you have asked about Father Beck and I am sorry to report that he passed away many years ago. Jim is a new member and our thanks to him for the cover and accompanying article which is too long for the Newsletter.

Apologies to Joe Dimino. During our mini-reunion at San Diego, which was held in Aaron Schultz's room, a discussion of Ploesti came up and Joe stated that our target was on fire when we went over. I said it was not on fire. The Sky Scorpions set our own target on fire, I was thinking in terms of another Group hitting our target before our arrival, which happened at other targets. It was on fire as we hit our target in three waves and the last wave had to go through fire and smoke. I met Joe at breakfast the next morning and we discussed the entire raid. By the way, when I say breakfast I really mean it. Two tables about 30 feet long. You name and it was on the table, just help yourself to all you wanted.

Save those pennies for Norwich and let's make a good showing for the Sky Scorpions as we will go out to see the oil painting in the Chapel.



# WAS THE 389TH RAMMED?

by Robert S. Ramsey, Jr. (389th BG)

The mission on Saturday, April 7, 1945, to Duneberg, Germany was number thirteen for our crew, and it was both lucky and unlucky for us. We were lucky to become so intricately involved and lucky to escape without a scratch. The target was an ammunition factory, flak was briefed to be nil and, if fighters did not hit us, it was expected to be a milk run. The problems began early when enemy fighters were reported in the area as we crossed the Zuider Zee on the way to the target. However, it was about twenty minutes later before our co-pilot called on the intercom to tell us that the formation directly behind was being attacked. From my top turret position, I could see a couple of fighters flying through a distant formation to our rear. About that time, two fighters attacked our formation with one coming from the three o'clock position and the other from the rear. After these passes, we were feeling better because two attacks had been encountered without any bomber loss in our group, and at this stage of the war, sustained fighter attacks were not normal. Usually, a couple of passes were about the extent of the fighter activity.

However, the disaster was yet to arrive, and it suddenly appeared in the form of a FW-190. Some of the waist gunners picked him up low, but I first saw him coming in at a relatively slow climb from 10 o'clock. He had passed through our P-51 protectors and was practically in our formation. Since this was the only fighter attacking our area, the entire formation concentrated the total fire power on this single, slow-moving, climbing fighter. We could see tracers converging on the German plane as he flew directly toward the formation.

I do not believe that the fighter pilot fired a single shot. If he did, it was not obvious, and no tracers were seen leaving his plane. He just continued to bore into the formation and, at times, he flipped his wings as a P-51 did when it was trying to identify himself as a friendly fighter. It was evident that with all of the machine gun attention which he was attracting the plane was riddled, and the pilot certainly should have been wounded. Our crew was leading low left, and as the German continued to come into the formation, he climbed until he was level with the division lead plane, which was slightly in front and above us. As he reached

the altitude of the lead plane, he approached to within a distance of only a wing span. If he had continued his course, he would have rammed directly into the lead plane. Instead, he turned and started flying in the same direction of flight and was exactly beside and parallel to Dallas, who was flying division lead.

Apparently, the machine gun fire had either caused the FW-190 to start to disintegrate or, possibly, his next action was due to either loss of control or the final desperate act of a wounded pilot. In any event, it appeared that the bottom part (the floor) of the fighter was about to break away from the plane. At this moment, the FW-190 was banked sharply to the right and landed on top of the lead ship. The B-24 disintegrated, and my view was unobstructed from the top turret of the lead plane in the low left formation. After hitting the lead plane, the fighter continued to roll and another flip to the right caused him to hit the #2 plane, Kunble, and that plane also seemed to disintegrate. Wreckage filled the air and pieces of planes were bouncing off the planes in our lower formation.

It all seemed to be a slow motion dream, even though the events took place in seconds. I recall seeing engines and an inflated life raft floating in the air. The raft must have been automatically inflated during an explosion in one of the B-24s. A third ship in the lead formation passed directly over our plane with number 3 and 4 engines on fire. In a matter of seconds, the division lead had been wiped out and

planes carrying the base CO, Col. Herboth, and Major Tallason, in another plane, were either destroyed or on fire. Our crew assumed the division lead and made the bomb run. The return trip home was, thankfully, uneventful. In the two ships that were demolished, I never did know whether there were survivors. I did hear that the plane with the engines on fire landed safely in France.

I have never felt that I understood the intentions of the German fighter pilot, as the circumstances were peculiar. Did he come in to intentionally ram? He was a lone FW-190 flying directly, and slowly into a formation which was capable of delivering a substantial amount of concentrated fire power. For some unknown reason, he did not fire any guns. When I first observed him, he could have continued his flight, without climbing, and rammed directly into our plane which was leading low left. However, his intentions were obviously to attain the altitude of division lead, as he climbed above us. When he reached the lead altitude, he did not continue on his same course, but changed direction and flew beside the lead plane for a few seconds. He then, either purposely or due to loss of control, made the maneuver which destroyed the lead planes. Maybe his entire objective was to sacrifice his life and eliminate as many critical enemy planes as possible. If so, his purpose was accomplished. However, he did not deter the goal of the mission, even though he exacted an extremely high price.

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## 1979 ROSTER "ON HOLD"

Every two years the Association has published a Roster of all its members. We have always been able to include the cost of printing and mailing as part of our dues payment. This year, due to the rising costs of everything, we are in a bind.

Printing a Roster containing some 3500 names and addresses is the same as printing a book, and the cost is practically the same. Faced with these figures we have to ask ourselves how many of our members actually want a Roster. Having asked this question, the next one is obvious. Why saddle ourselves with the cost of printing and mailing 3500 Rosters if only about 500 members actually want one? Finding the answer to this one is not easy but I'll try.

I will have a limited number of copies printed as a start and these will be sold to members at a cost of \$2.75 to cover printing and mailing. Those of you who want a copy please send your check or money order to me (William G. Robertie, P.O. Drawer B, Ipswich, Mass. 01938).

# A RETURN TO NORTH PECKINGHAM, NORWICH AND WOODBRIDGE

by Maj. Gen. Ralph S. Saunders (491st)

On 13 June I departed Loring, Maine, for Woodbridge, England (via Keflavik) leading a flight of three HH-53 Jolly Green Rescue helicopters. After two attempts to "skirt" the freezing conditions off the southern tip of Greenland, we made it on the third try. The H-53 is only a little slower than the B-24 and is also air refuelable from an HC-130.

We arrived over England about 1000 hours on a beautiful, clear day with perfect blue skies. Twenty-three hours from Goose Bay to England. We flew over Swafham, North Peckingham and Norwich down to Woodbridge. After our arrival at Woodbridge, thirty-two of the maintenance personnel were awarded Air Force Commendation Medals for their support in getting the helicopters across the North Atlantic. Then the post-mission medical "pick me up" — we were off to the sack for a twelve-hour crew rest. However, a local disc jockey was playing a World War II Glenn Miller album — Tuxedo Junction, etc. By this time the nostalgia was pretty heavy.

A couple of days later, while visiting our son who flies F-5 Aggressors out of Alconbury, my wife and I drove to Norwich to visit the museum and library. We missed J. W. Ponder of the 491st by just two days.

All in all it was a good trip and brought back fond memories. I am retiring next year and plan to join all at the reunion in 1980. Best of luck on your 1979 trip.

Below is a brief rundown on the history of Woodbridge. I know many 22d Air Division pilots have fond memories for this air patch/depot. I had to use it with a shot up rudder and no hydraulic system. It's still going strong. The 67th Rescue Squadron is located there and doing great work across the channel.

Every military installation that existed during World War II has its own unique history, but few can compete with the past events of Royal Air Force (RAF) Station Woodbridge. Located on the east coast of England approximately 85 miles northeast of London, the mission of RAF Woodbridge was not to conduct combat operations against the enemy, but to recover distressed British and Allied aircraft based in England.

Actual construction of the base began in July 1942. When completed, the runway was 3,000 yards long and 250 yards wide — 1,000 yards longer and five times wider than the normal runway. A grass overrun extended 500 yards beyond the east end of the run-

way and over 1,000 yards beyond the west end. In all, the runway covered 150 acres of land.

The airfield was officially opened 15 November 1943. By the end of its first month of operation, the base handled 33 emergency landings; December 1943 - 57 emergency landings; January 1944 - 60 aircraft handled; February 1944 - 72 emergency landings. The installation of a Fog Investigation and Dispersal Operation (FIDO) system began during February 1944. The FIDO system functioned by burning gasoline in a system of perforated pipes that were laid parallel to the runway. In June 1944 - 147 aircraft emergencies were handled. On one occasion, prior to official confirmation that the Germans were using the V-1, a sharp-eyed control officer observed one of the "buzz" bombs in the area. Thinking it was an aircraft in trouble, the officer attempted to "home" in on it with his Aldis lamp. Fortunately, he was unsuccessful and the V-1 continued its erratic course and exploded in the countryside, some distance from the base.

Emergency landings in July 1944 were 191. Included in this figure were 38 four-engine aircraft that landed at the base during a 55-minute period one morning which established a new record.

Woodbridge received some unexpected visitors during the early hours of 13 July 1944. As an aircraft landed and came to a stop, the noncommissioned officer (NCO) in charge of the ground crew was surprised to see swastikas painted on the aircraft. The German aircrew soon realized their mistake and began destroying the aircraft; however, upon reaching the aircraft, the NCO wrenched open a door beneath the aircraft which caused the pilot to fall out. After a brief struggle, the pilot was subdued and the remaining two crew members surrendered without incident. Interrogation of the Germans revealed that they had been on a flight from Holland to Berlin, Germany, when they became lost. When they landed at Woodbridge — with 10 liters of fuel remaining — they believed it to be an airfield near Berlin. An investigation of the German aircraft revealed it to be a fairly new Junkers JU-88 night fighter.

The 1,000th emergency landing at Woodbridge was recorded during August 1944 and, by the end of the month, the total had risen to 1,144.

During September 1944, a total of 266 emergency landings were made and, although this was another record, the total was to be more than doubled a few months later.

By the end of 1944, a total of 2,719 aircraft had made use of Woodbridge since its official opening. Many of those aircraft had casualties aboard; and by the end of the year, a total of 570 wounded aircrewmembers had been treated in the base's well equipped dispensary.

Two new records were established at Woodbridge during January 1945. The first occurred when 950 diverted aircrew members descended upon the base in a mere two and one-half hour period. The second, which was to remain unbroken, was for the total number of emergency landings during the month which reached 554. Numerous weather diversions were the primary reasons for the majority of those landings.

The base was closed to emergency landings on 19 March for a period of five days. During that time, two squadrons from RAF Tarrant Ruston, Dorset, England, which flew Halifax bombers, towed in 68 Hamilcar and Horsa gliders. Soon the Hamilcars were loaded with T-9 Locust tanks, while other light vehicles, guns and other equipment were loaded into the Horsas. Then, during the night of 23 March, the primary force of 60 Halifaxes and a reserve force of eight bombers were mated to gliders and lined up on the runway. This massive force was a partial representation of the RAF's contribution to Operation Varsity, the largest Allied airborne operation of the war.

During the landing approach of an extensively damaged Halifax on 9 April 1945, ground personnel observed an individual dangling beneath the aircraft. It was later learned that when the mid-upper gun turret was blown away by enemy fire, the gunner had been knocked back by the blast and had fallen through a hole in the bottom of the fuselage. The rest of the crew believed him to be lost. However, as he fell his parachute harness was snagged by a projection at the rear of the shattered bomb bay. Aside from shock and exposure sustained during the three and one-half hour flight from the target area, the gunner was uninjured despite the fact that his oxygen mask and goggles had scraped the surface of the runway during the landing.

In mid-September 1969, it was announced that the 79 TFS was to move to RAF Upper Heyford. It was also announced that the 67th Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Squadron (ARRS) would move from Moron Air Base, Spain, to Woodbridge.

## LOOKING UP OUR LAUNDRY GIRL AT OLD BUCK

by John Hildebran (453rd)

During my stay at Old Buck and the 453rd Bomb Group near Attleborough I really lived it up and had my laundry "sent out". The little 12 year old girl and her brothers would pull their red wagon nearly two miles out to the base and pick up the laundry from several of the crews. They would haul it back to their home where their mother would wash and fold everything, then a couple of days later they would haul it back out to the base, and get another load. The Rider family had left their home in London due to the constant bombings, and getting tired of sleeping in the underground they moved to Attleborough in 1939. The laundry delivery service was performed by Julie Rider and her two brothers, John and Ernie. After my tour of duty was up and I came home, and married my Aida, I told her about these kids 'way back in East Anglia that were really good to us guys. Aida and I decided to send them a little something, other than some socks etc. We sent Julie a little water paint set. One of those little sets with about six colors, a small brush and in a metal container. We had them in grade school I think.



Well time went on and I forgot all about Old Buck and 1944, until 1968. Aida and I thought it would be wonderful to go back over there and I could show her where I was stationed when "I won the war!" I had lost all track of the Rider's so I posted a letter to the Attleborough Chamber of Trade asking them if they had any idea of what might have happened to the Rider family. In their reply they mentioned that the last they knew of them, the mother was the only one still living in town. One son lived outside of town and Julie had married and lived in the Norwich area.

(As a sidelight, our own son had an English GT6 car at the time I wrote the letter to the Chamber of Trade. I mentioned this to them and in their letter back to me they said . . . quote . . . I hope your son gets along well with his new Triumph GT.6. With our present traffic regulation we have to export them in order to get them out of second gear . . . unquote. Just a little English humor there.)

But getting back to Julie. I finally got around to sending a letter to her mother, whom I had never met incidentally, in the spring of 1974. What timing! The day my letter reached Mrs. Rider, Julie happened to be visiting her mother. So after some 30 years my little Laundry girl and I have been corresponding. Her first letter to Aida and I asked if Aida was the girl that had sent her paints when she was a girl. 30 years had passed and those paints still stuck in her memory.



My wife and I finally got our plans firmed up and in September 1974 we flew to London, rented a car, drove on the wrong (or is it the right) side of the road and found Besthorpe Road in Attleborough. And found Julie, now married and has a son going to the Norfolk Police Academy. What a wonderful reunion! And what a wonderful family. Julie is now in charge of the school cafeteria and her husband, Bob is the caretaker at the same school. I think one of the best things that was said on that first reunion was when Julie told me that she would have recognized me if she had seen me on the street! Really now! I must have changed a little bit in 30 years. But it made me feel kind of good anyway.

Since that September in 1974 my wife and I have been back twice. And every time we meet more and more wonderful Attleborough people. Julie's boy has now graduated from Police Academy and is a full fledged policeman in Norwich. Her brother John still lives outside town but the other brother, Ernie, who used to come out to the base, now lives in Australia, and Mrs. Rider, bless her heart, still remembers doing up my underwear. Aida and Julie are the best of friends but when we were over there in 1976 Julie took us out to the spot where our Nissan hut had been. She and I stood on the piece of cement slab that is still there and talked about 1944. I couldn't remember where anything was. Some of the Hq buildings are still there but for some reason, it is all a blank to me. Well Julie remembers! She can tell

## U.S.A.F. COLLECTION, DUXFORD, ENGLAND

In 1976, following an approach made by a number of interested British and United States citizens, the Trustees of the Imperial War Museum decided to seek to establish a United States Army Air Forces collection in the United Kingdom to record and illustrate the immense and vital contribution made by the United States Army air arm to the Allied victory in the Second World War. This project is particularly important to the Imperial War Museum because its terms of reference cover the two world wars and other twentieth century conflicts and the role of the United States Army Air Forces is therefore a crucial part of the story which the Museum has to tell. Because the largest of the Army Air Forces the Eighth, and later also the Ninth, were stationed in England, it seemed particularly appropriate to establish such a collection in the United Kingdom, thus also commemorating the close cooperation between the Eighth and Fifteenth Air Forces in particular with Royal Air Force Bomber Command in the strategic air offensive against Germany.

In addition the Museum has now developed its site at Duxford, near Cambridge, to the point where it could become a focal point of the interest in the United States Army Air Forces both among British residents and among the many thousands of foreign visitors to the University city of Cambridge only eight miles away. Duxford, which houses the greater part of the Museum's collections of aircraft and other large exhibits which cannot be displayed in the Museum's headquarters in London, was used for a period in 1942 by a unit of the United States Twelfth Air Force, and then from 1943 to 1945 was the home of the 78th Fighter Group of the United States Eighth Air Force.

you the exact spot where my hut was and the exact spot where my bunk was in the hut! As my Aida said, "Say Julie, just how well did you know my husband?"

We have missed two years of revisiting Attleborough but God willing Aida and I will be there next May with the 2nd AD and once again get together with all those wonderful people. I would like to have a large bunch of fellows, and wives from the 453rd make this trip next year and I promise you will have a reunion that you will remember as long as you live. You might even meet a girl that can tell you where your bunk used to be!!

# "100 MISSIONS FOR C-CHARLIE, THE OLD VETERAN"

by Thaddeus C. Poprawa (389th)

On the enclosed photograph, you can see the smiling faces of the Jerry Kincl crew of the 564 Sqdn., 389 B.G. after we had completed the 100 mission for "C-Charlie, the Old Veteran". (Unfortunately, the ground crew members are not identified.) Standing, L-R: Bill Wiltrout, NG; Ted Poprawa, NAV (author); ground crew; Dave Thomas, CP, ground crew; Jerry Kincl, P; ground crew; Kneeling L-R: Bill Hausman, RO; Stan Kupecki, Engr.; Leo Brown, WG; Walter Paskins, WG; George Justice, TG.



This memorable achievement took place 10 Mar. 45 on a mission to Paderborn, Germany — the 18th for our crew. I can't remember anything unusual about the mission itself, however; at that stage, the missions were generally all alike, long grueling exhausting affairs. On this particular

mission we were airborne 7½ hours. We were pretty busy at this time of the war; in the space of 25 calendar days, we flew 13 missions, no record by any means, but it kept us hopping. Memory fails to recollect anything significant about these sorties, except I'll remember the ones to Berlin and Magdeburg, the belt got cinched a little tighter on those runs.

I will recreate this 100th mission for "C-Charlie" from my navigational log. (When the 389th disbanded from Hethel in June 45, I went into the squadron office and absconded with my file containing all of my mission navigational logs.)

0715 Stations; (That meant that briefing was at 0545, breakfast at 0445, and reveille at 0400 — those were the days) 0803 takeoff; 0845 formed up; 0944 left English coast Control Point 1; 1024 over Holland, CP2; several changes of course now followed; 1100 received code word "rot gut" over the air meaning the primary target was open; 1153 at the I.P.; 1154 start dumping "chaff"; 1155 bomb bay doors open; 1206 bombs away!; moderate flak, completed 180 turn to right; 1215 regrouped and on course for home; 1353 Dutch coast out; 1435 English coast in; 1442 orders to proceed on instrument

let down; 1502 peeled off individually; 1506 broke out of the soup at 2500 ft.; 1528 landed at Hethel.

So ended the 100th mission for "C-Charlie, The Old Veteran". I am sorry to report that I have no further information on the old crate; I don't know if it successfully survived the war. All I know is that after our brief taste of fame (having our picture taken by the group photographer) we returned to normal duty. We didn't get pulled back to the states for a bond selling tour, getting kissed by Hollywood starlets, etc. We kept slugging out the missions, completing our 30th on 25 Apr. 45, when we went on a week's flak leave to an English castle at Knightshtayes. The leave ended just in time for us to celebrate VE Day in London. (We may have been a few days AWOL, but nobody seemed to mind.)

As far as "C-Charlie" goes, she was a good old bucket of bolts. She served well, and the taxpayers got their money's worth on this plane. I don't know any of her history, who her original crew was? (by this time, no crew was assigned to any particular plane — we flew planes at the discretion of the CO). At any rate, "C-Charlie" deserves a salute for her accomplishments and a tip of the hat in the memory book.

## MY DISCOVERY THAT AN ASSOC. EXISTED

by Rick Rokicki (458th)

In 1974, Ceil and I visited Norwich, England. It was her first visit to East Anglia although we previously had been to London. This time we left the tourist areas, took the train to Norwich and planned several days of touring by car.

We accidentally stumbled upon the Memorial Library after going thru the market area. I mentioned to Ceil that this must be the Memorial we contributed that "pound" note to (worth \$4.25 at that time). How about that. Someone really DID something with those pounds! Imagine my surprise when we entered and saw the facility! The real 'socket' was that there was a Second Air Division Association, Eighth Air Force, that was THEN 26 years old! After looking thru several issues of the Newsletter, I dropped Bill Robertie a note and received an appli-

cation from Evelyn Cohen. Joined up and haven't missed a reunion since.

It is hard to believe that now, after the Association's 31st Reunion, that we are still adding new members who had no idea that the Second Air Division Association existed. Although our membership is at, or near, 3,500 it could easily be doubled with a small effort on everyone's part. Our continued growth is important — not only in fellowship, meeting new and seeing old friends, socializing — and of course conducting business that is necessary at such reunions, but continuing to subscribe to, and support the Memorial Trust Funding program. We have made great strides in nearing our \$50,000 goal. With our 32nd Annual Reunion next spring in Norwich, we should put an extra "bit" with our renewal dues. At present, two aircraft are nearly full and this, the 4th Reunion to be held in Norwich, promises to be the biggest and best to date. Those who have attended previous reunions in Norwich know how great they were, and will do all possible to attend again. To those who haven't as yet returned, you'll

have a tear in your eye when you once again set foot in that great city and it's exceptionally great people. Plan to be there — plan to be a part of the Greatest Norwich Reunion!

## LIB-LAFFS

by ED HOHMAN 491st



# LETTERS

Dear Evelyn:

Now that the Reunion is history, I know your annual hectic is at its low for the year. So I'd like to start with our special arrangements for next year while you still have a little spare time. Or, it may be that you won't have to have much truck with us at all.

What we want to do is get to England and back on our own and rent a car while we're there. But we'll want accommodations and whatever other doings the Reunion entails through you. We have time for any correspondence and effort we might be able to put in on your behalf — 'cause I'm now retired out here.

If it'd be better for us to arrange our own accommodations, please let me know, although we'd rather be with whatever other 453rd people attend. I want to try to get four of our crew to go and will be writing to them pretty soon, to get them thinking along those lines; we had four of us in Philadelphia last year. And I'm afraid I conned my Attleborough C.O. into going to San Diego before it turned out I couldn't get there myself because we were still moving here. Anyway, I referred him to Don Olds and I trust he had a good time. I was sorry to miss it; now I can only read about it in the next newsletter.

Please let me know what we'll be paying for all the activities in Norwich — and if you're starting any fund to help some deserving or a special interest or activities pool, I'll change the amount of the check. In case anybody's interested, I'm gonna take my old A2 jacket to donate to the museum at Norwich (and it still fits.)

Depending on the dates, we may be leaving earlier and/or coming back later than the charter group. We plan to spend some time with Chris Gotts, whom you may know. I contributed a few paragraphs to a book he's writing about 8th AF bail-outs during the war. I've also corresponded with a Bill Wuest, who was living near the old 453 base, in Attleborough. I will try to reestablish contact with him, though it's been a while; he may be back in the states again.

Don't rush. If I don't hear from you in a couple of months, I'll write again. I'm the least of your worries.

Jack Tisch

Dear Sir:

Mr. Louis Pennow from Lakenheath Air Base, Suffolk, has given me your address in the hope that you may be able to help me to locate D. A. Brabham 18133822, who as far as I know was stationed at Hardwick, Norfolk during World War II.

I have also written to the National Personnel Records Centre at St. Louis, Missouri, but if they are unable to forward a letter is there any way you can help?

After my mother died earlier this year, I found the identity bracelet inscribed: D. A. Brabham, 6-28-43, 18133822

My mother's name at the time was Eileen J. Potter and she lived at Grove Cottage, Poringland, Norwich.

I was told after her death that he had tried to contact us four years ago when he was in England.

Thank you for your kind attention and I would be very grateful if you could offer any suggestions as to how I can trace him.

Ann Burge (née Potter)  
7, St. Georges Close,  
Thurton, Norwich  
NR14 6A4  
Norfolk U.K.

(ed; Can anyone out there help Ann?)

Dear Bill:

Thanks a lot for your letter welcoming me into the Association. I don't know how I missed hearing about the organization for so many years. If I had found out about it just a little sooner I would have been able to have attended the Coronado affair as I spend every weekend in San Diego. Sorry I missed it — sounds like it was great.

I just finished a separate letter to Evelyn and squared my dues away.

As to your comments regarding the 44th, of course I remember Bill Cameron (we were neighbors on Guam in the 50's), Jim Posey, and Howard Moore (we were in S.A.C. together).

I was an original member of the 506th Bomb Squadron, being co-pilot on Walt Bunker's crew. We trained as a squadron and joined the 44th as its fourth squadron in early 43. I took over the crew and we transferred into the 67th Squadron right after we returned from North Africa after the Ploesti mission. I left the 67th and 44th in early 44. I stayed in the Air Force and retired in 1971.

I received your last two newsletters and read every word. You sure do a great job on them.

Hope to see you in Norwich in 79. Thanks again.

Richard D. Butler

Dear Evelyn:

I had the pleasure of visiting Norwich this past spring, also my old base at Hethel (389th B.Gp.)

Needless to say it was one of the most nostalgic trips that I have ever taken. It was difficult to realize that so many years had passed since flying those missions and everything else that went along with them. I can only encourage all of those who have not had the opportunity — to go on the coming 2nd Air Div. tour (Spring 1979). It will surely be one of the highlights of their lives.

Bentley Kern (389th B.Gp.)

Dear Mr. Henry:

I am writing in regard to an article which appeared in our local newspaper on August 20, 1978 telling about a reunion that is to take place in the spring of 1979.



I was a member of the 702nd Bomb Squadron — 445th Bomb Group stationed at Tibitham Air Base in England during World War II. I engineered the B-24 Bomber, "Head Wind Herky".

I have been married since 1946, have eight children, ages 9-29, and four grandchildren. I am employed by the Ford Motor Co. at the Buffalo Stamping Plant where I am an automation technician. I am 1st Vice Commander of the Catholic War Veterans Freedom Post #485. A movie starring James Caan entitled, "Hide In Plain Sight" was recently filmed in Buffalo; I was an extra in the movie playing the part of a Supreme Court Judge.

I would be interested in receiving the newsletter and also any information concerning other veterans from the 445th. Thank you.

John J. Ciccia  
15 Fifteenth St.  
Buffalo, N.Y. 14213

P.S. I have enclosed an old photo of myself.

Dear Bill:

What a splendid time we had at the reunion in Colorado. Our thanks to everyone involved.

We had three fantastic weeks touring America after visiting Colorado and have just about caught up on the backlog of work awaiting us on return, so I'm late in writing to thank you.

We were most grateful to everyone who helped us to "find" Elmer Clarey (his wife Maxine, said we should have asked her — she knew where he was all the time!). It was marvelous of Joe Charles to achieve his ambition and return Elmers "Wings" and there was a bonus, we all got on so well I think we shall be friends for life. Lorraine and Bob Shaffer and Maxine and Elmer are planning to attend the reunion next year and we hope to show them our part of the country. There will be a welcome on the mat for any 2nd A.D.A. members who reach our area and we hope to be able to be in Norwich.

We think you all did a wonderful job arranging the reunion at Colorado and especially found the Candle Lighting ceremony very impressive. Its the first time my family have witnessed this and I'm sure there was not a dry-eye in the room. Thank you once again for a visit we shall always remember. We hope that the group will be made as welcome in England next year as the English tourists are in America. Our best wishes to you all.

Barbara, Charles & Gail  
(Hayes-Halliday)

Dear Evelyn:

I learned of the 2nd Division Association, 8th Air Force, thru my employer who loaned me a stack of Newsletters which afforded me several hours of fascinating reading.

I was left waist gunner on the crew skippered by Flight Officer Benjamin J. Glidden. We were with the 852nd Sqdn., 491st B.G. at North Pickenham. We were with the 491st from December 1st, 1944 until it was disbanded at McChord Field, Washington, after the war ended. Our crew flew nine (9) missions.

Although my length of service and experience with the 8th A.F. was quite short, my interest and pride in its legend and history are the greatest.

I would be most proud to be a member of this fine organization and I am enclosing a check to cover my dues.

Please place my name on your mailing list for the Newsletter and any other available publications.

Hayden W. Fullbright

Dear Evelyn:

First of all I would like to tell you and who ever else worked and helped with the 1978 San Diego Convention that Junior and I had a most enjoyable time. It was our first time to an Eighth Air Force Convention, and if they are all run as well and so much fun we don't want to miss any. We met so many wonderful people also.

Thanks again to all of you who worked so hard to make it fun for everyone.

Second, we would like to make reservations for Norwich in 1979. As you know we live in California, so we can make our own flight from here if you can make reservations for the convention there.

So please put our names on the list and let me know how much money to send you.

Junior and Jackie Austin

Dear Bill:

It was with sadness that I read of the passing of Harrison Cassell (392nd) in the necrology column in the latest Newsletter. His was a lead crew in the 579th Squadron under Myron Keilman. We spent many an hour of flying his wing. I am reminded of the time we flew the airplane "Sally Ann" to Kiel. The navigators oxygen system malfunctioned and our navigator, Marshall Crouch spent much of the mission in a state of euphoria. He never completely lost consciousness but was blissfully unaware of anything going on about him. It was the most perfect imitation of an advanced case of drunkenness we ever saw. Upon our return Crouch stated that he wanted to fly all future missions under the same conditions. He recalled seeing no flak or fighters and was totally happy. Needless to say, he didn't contribute much to that mission.

Now to make a comment concerning the letter and pictures submitted by our bombardier, Stan Stupski. Our crew was on a rest leave when Lt. Peyton flew "El Lobo" on that particular mission. It was decided at the time that it was prop damage either from a free flying propeller or from a very close encounter with a following B-24. The one man who best could have related exactly what happened tragically went down with the tail turret. His chest chute pack was on the catwalk forward of the turret. Not too long after this episode Lt. Peyton and his entire crew were killed on another mission. The only survivor was his navigator who was grounded that day. Also that tail turret was only the first of three that El Lobo eventually had.

I thoroughly enjoyed San Diego and am now looking forward to Norwich.  
Vernon A. Baumgart

Dear Evelyn:

Seems I've just been reaping the harvest of others all these years. Never writing, never attending a reunion — though the '73 was held a mere 70 miles distance (Colo. Springs) — just dutifully paying my dues.

Today let me do a bit more. Enclosed is a check for \$100. toward membership of others.

Toured Scotland and England in 1974 visiting our relatives and touring the countryside. Rackheath and Norwich included. Truly the Memorial Room is well worth the effort the 2nd ADA can put into it.

Thanks for the many good Newsletters.  
R. J. Rambosky (467th)  
P.S. Enclosed my 1979 membership fee, also thank you again. Oh yes, remaining funds to the Memorial Library please.

Dear Bill:

With regards to the request for information about a plane called the MASSILON TIGER, this plane was flown in the states by Norman Putnam and his crew.

Norman came from Massilon, Ohio and I recall his telling me how he buzzed the town on his way overseas. After making the North Atlantic crossing and landing in Britain, the plane was taken away from him, and he never stopped talking about it during the four or five months we lived in the same hut together.

They flew their tour with the 733rd squadron of the 453rd Bomb Group at Old Buckenham, and the co-pilot, who's name I forgot then went on to fly a tour in P-51's.

Judy and I just spent the weekend in Severna Park, Maryland with Col. Donald H. Heaton and his wife Ellen. Don was the 733rd squadron commander when I flew my tour. We had a lovely time.

Sol Greenberg

Dear Mr. Michalczyk (448th)

Thank you for your note to my secretary, Janet Lawson. We both found the enclosure very interesting indeed.

We should be happy to see you when the 2nd Air Division visits England next year and it might be of interest to you to know that wearing our other hat as commercial brewers, we recently brewed a commemorative brew for the 75th New Zealand Air Squadron when they held a reunion at Mepal in Cambridgeshire where they were based during the war. Half the brew was on draught and the other half was in bottles with a commemorative label, *obviously designed as souvenirs*. It is my understanding that the bottles sold like "hot cakes" and they drank the place dry in a matter of seconds. The Mepal Parish Council were involved and organized a special day to receive the "75th". I think about 500 people descended upon the village to look over the old air strip and places they would remember.

How about a 2nd Air Division Brew?  
A. T. Bowles  
(ed: You brew it and we'll drink it.)

Dear Evelyn:

Let me congratulate you and the committee on the outstanding job at Hotel Del. Believe me, we had a wonderful time. Seeing some of the fellows from the 392nd for the first time since Aug. 1944 was a real thrill.

My wife and I would like to join the group going to England. Will you please send me details and if cash is required, I'll send it by return mail.

J. F. Thomas also of the 392nd who is flying 747 for United has plans to join us in Norwich with his wife Elva.

Fred (Thomas) and I are trying to entice the other members of our crew to also join us.

We'll be anxiously waiting for the information. I'm sorry I didn't get acquainted with the Association many years ago.

R. J. (Bob) Powers

Dear Evelyn:

Enclosed is my check in the amount of \$17.00. I do believe I have paid my dues for '78 but if not use \$7.00 for dues and the balance as you see fit. New members or the Library.

I do expect to attend the Norwich '79 meeting if only for 3 days. My wife and two sisters-in-law will be in Ireland and Scotland so my time will be limited. Will you advise me of the costs for hotels and meeting expenses when details are worked out.

Do enjoy the Newsletter so keep it up. Will also try to contact other 466th BG members and let them know about the 2nd ADA. Thank you and best regards,

Col. W. Robert Flannery, RET.

Dear Ms. Cohen:

Your mailing address was given to me last evening during a phone call. An original crew member of our B-24 crew (made up at Davis-Monthan in April of 1943) called me from Mason City, Iowa — the first I have heard from him in close to 34 years.

I am really excited at the prospects of a newsletter, a roster, and all the fill-in of the near vacuum I have been in. How do I subscribe?

I was a pilot with the 576th Squadron of the 392nd Group, Wendling, from Sept. 1943 to 18 March 44.

I'll be looking forward to starting a subscription.

Very truly yours,  
Walter T. Hebron, 392rd

Dear Bill:

On a warm, humid St. Louis weekend, June 1977, the crew of Elmer W. Smith, Jr., 44th B.G., 66th B.S., met for their first reunion since they completed their tour of 30 missions in March 1945.

Eight of the nine members showed. The ninth man, Sgt. Jack Frost, of Meeker, Colorado cancelled at the last minute, due to illness in his family.

The crew was formed in Casper, Wyoming in the spring of 1944, and from the beginning it was destined to be an outstanding bunch. Selected "crew of the week", and other outstanding recognitions, the crew joined the 44th B.G. in August of 1944 and flew mission number one on August 30, 1944. As a crew, they flew 29 missions together and became a lead crew in December, '44.

Among the outstanding lead missions were the low level raid over central Germany in February, 1945, where they lead the 2nd Air Division in and out; and the Air Force lead of the heavies dropping supplies the day the Rhine crossing offensive began, March 24, 1945.

Major Smith was Sq. Operations officer on V-E Day. He returned to his pre-service occupation with the Arkansas Highway Department as an engineer. Bombardier Lt. Art Holt is a professor at Towson State in Maryland. Co-pilot Lt. Arver Trish returned to the Greenville, Michigan Post Office where he is still employed as a Supervisor. Nav. Lt. Ed Serbin of St. Louis, Missouri graduated from the University of Wisconsin and went into the insurance business. He is now an official with the Missouri Division of Insurance.

Radio Operator T/Sgt. George Kubus is a very successful industrial executive with Peerless of America in Chicago. Engineer T/Sgt. Paul Taylor is an executive with Lukenheimer Valve in Cincinnati. S/Sgt. John Zoud is a plumbing contractor in Cozud, Nebraska and S/Sgt. Ed Wrubleski is a steel worker in Pittsburgh.

As you can see, all members of the crew live in different states. We have kept in contact irregularly during the past 32 years. Finally at last year's 8th A.F. reunion in Dayton, Taylor, Holt, and Serbin decided that we had to get together before we got too damn old to travel. Thus the June reunion.

There were many a tearful eye as the eight crewmen and six wives heard Elmer Smith toast the best damn crew in the 8th. The secret of our success was the leadership of Major Smith and T/Sgt. Kubus. The discipline and cooperation displayed by these men earned them respect from their commanding officers from O.T.U. to Gen. Leon Johnson of the 14th Wing. There were six distinguished Flying Crosses, 45 Air Medals and one Purple Heart awarded to this crew. The Purple Heart went to Art Holt when one day while sleeping across the German border, a splinter of plexiglass pierced his little arm, suddenly awakening the slumbering bombardier.

The success of the reunion so stimulated everyone that the second reunion has been scheduled for Chicago in the summer of 1979. There will be some trips to England by at least 3 or 4 of the couples in 1978 or 1979.

The love and devotion of all of Elmer Smith's men to him and his love and concern for them has always been evident to anyone who has ever known them or seen them in action.

Edward J. Serbin

Dear Bill:

Some of our members bent on research may be interested in my experience.

In 1971 I wrote to the Historical Section, Maxwell Air Force Base, Alabama for information on my former unit, the 732nd Squadron, 453rd Bomb Gr. I was informed the information was possibly classified, but in any event a security clearance from the Secretary of the Air Force was required, and it was suggested a personal visit be made to the Archives. Further the material would be available on a "need to know" basis.

Early in 1977 I decided to give it another try and lo and behold I was informed I could obtain a 16mm microfilm of the material for the sum of \$7.50. A little over two months after sending my check the film arrived. Not only did it contain material on the 732nd, it also covered, in one tape, Squadrons 718 thru 735. I don't know where all these other squadrons belong, there were only four in the 453rd Group; the 732nd, 733rd, 734th and 735th.

After receiving the film I had to find a way to read it. Even in a city the size of Philadelphia it was not easy. The cost of a microfilm reader is around \$500.00 and you can't rent one. Only a few places have them available to the public. I wound up in the Philadelphia Public Library where they have a 35mm reader which can be used for the 16mm.

It was a disappointment. The writeups on the missions were sketchy and no names of the crew members given — other than the pilot. Further, only about 50% of the material was legible. Age or poor quality of paper or duplicating has made it impossible to read many of the reports. Never the less, some material may be in better shape and it is well worth the \$7.50 to experience the thrill of anticipation going from frame to frame wondering what is coming up next. I recommend you send away for your film if available.

Here is a sample of one of the more legible reports: "732nd Squadron, October 2, 1944, Mission #153 to Hamm." Again the largest railroad center in Germany, the Hamm Marshaling Yards was the target. Weather necessitated PFF bombing. Lt. Armstrong led the group with Lt. Crowley in #3 position, while Lt. Fink led the high right element of the lead section with Lt. Reinders on his wing. Capt. Shearer led the low left Squadron. Although enemy fighters were reported over the radio none were seen. No one complained about that."

As you see there isn't much to it.

The Lt. Armstrong mentioned is Maurice Armstrong, formerly of Tulsa, Oklahoma, whose present address is unknown to this crew member who flew waist gunner.

Robert E. Murray, Jr.

P.S. The address to write for film is: The Albert F. Simpson Historical Research Center, U.S.A.F., HQR Maxwell A.F.B., Alabama 36112

Dear Jon:

Received your letter of August 7 regarding the Second Air Association of the 8th Air Force. You have done some good detective work — I am the one who possessed the Serial No. 19063197. I was with the 492nd Bomb Group, 733rd Squadron (B-24's) at "Old Buck", Attleboro, Norfolk, England.

I hope this will help you with your records. I am looking forward to receiving information from the National Secretary.

Charles G. Weidemann  
Vicar

St. Aidan's Episcopal Church  
Malibu, Calif. 90265

Dear Ms. Cohen:

Ted Parkers Article "Big Bang at Metfield" brought back some memories, and prompted me to dig out a photo of that event. Here is a picture of the cloud of smoke as seen from in front of the 854th mailroom. I can't remember the names of the men in the picture but do recall a funny event that all such happenings seem to have along with the bad. One of the mechanics was making use of the outdoor toilet and had the bad luck to have it blown over trapping him inside.



Needless to say he took a terrible "Ribbing" from everyone, and this same man was trapped again the same way by another explosion on the line his "fame" spread throughout the group.

It was good to see an article about the 491st (BG) and because it was about our 854th (SQDN) it really was welcome.

Along with the photo please find enclosed a check for membership dues. As I am tardy with dues, I have missed the Newsletter since June, 1978. Is there any way I might acquire the issues I've missed?

Lewis Callaway

Morning, Evelyn:

From all reports I missed a whale of a good time in Coronado, but it was just too close to the completion of the new office building. Mike Fagen, the new VP for the 491st, is a neighbor I see, Atwater just being down the road a piece.

Evelyn, I've enclosed my check for \$100 and hope there are four spots left for Norwich. With me will be my wife, Mildred, my sister, Noreen Rodacker, and of course, Uncle Pat, who will be 11 by then.

Regarding 1980, Texas in October isn't all that bad, I'm going to be there next month for a conference and it sounds as if the facilities are great.

Thanks, Evelyn for all the work you've done on behalf of the 2nd AD.

Guy McElhany

Dear Mr. Robertie:

I am currently doing research for a book about the impact of American servicemen upon London during the Second World War. My project centres upon their impressions of London and their reactions to the town, and also upon London's reaction to the Americans.

I should be pleased to hear from any former servicemen with personal reminiscences of London between 1942 and 1945. I would be particularly interested in hearing about first impressions of London and its inhabitants. Details such as date of arrival and duty station would also be a great help.

David Johnson  
2164 Stecher Avenue  
Union, New Jersey 07083

Dear Evelyn:

Thanks so much for your reply and my membership card. I'm looking forward to my membership in the Association. Sorry about my misunderstanding on the dues. Enclosed is my check making up the difference plus something for the Memorial.

I received a nice welcoming letter from Bill Robertie and am answering him separately.

In regard to the Norwich trip next year, I would appreciate receiving any of the information about schedules, activities, reservations, etc. in Norwich. Living on the West Coast, I believe that I would be better off to make my travel arrangements direct from Los Angeles and join the group in Norwich.

Thanks again for signing me up.

Richard D. Butler

Dear Evelyn:

I have no idea when these dues are due — I do know Oliver L. Hicks has not sent them and does want to stay in the group — So I'll just have to take it upon myself to mail his dues in — Enclosed is a check for \$7.00.

We went to the dinner on Sept. 23rd that Mr. Wallace so well put together. We both enjoyed it so much. They plan to do it again in Feb. So Hicks is interested. He is just bad about tending to it — So I'll try okay!

If its not right — let me know and I'll try again.

Camille Hicks for Oliver L. Hicks  
(ed: Thank you Camille. Oliver sounds like a carbon copy of me!)

Dear Evelyn Cohen:

My name is Raymond Fay. I am a recent member to the 2nd Air Division, and I'm very pleased and happy, wishing it could have happened when it started, but first learned of it through DAV magazine, some time ago, and joined immediately. I'm very concerned about receiving information on my own crew and also the 67th Sqd. of the 44th Bomb Group. I was an engineer gunner on a Lt. Charles Phillips crew. He was from Geo. I have no address. Our crew flew 34 missions with quite bad luck on some of them. On our 21st mission over Hamburg, Germany, we were severely shot up and had our control cables shot out and our navigator got killed and also other wounded aboard. We crash landed at home base, with left tire blown out and also cable damage. We all survived the crash, fortunately.

I have a complete diary of every mission in complete detail, plus many news clippings of the targets that were bombed etc. Would like to come to the reunion but the 17th of June I broke my left leg in 4 places and will be in a cast for over 6 mos. so would like my name posted on a registration list if possible. My home is in Brooksville, Fla., and am vacationing Wisconsin with my daughter for the summer. I'm a 100% DA Vet. as I had back injuries in a plane crash in 1944 and have had surgery 4 times and wear a back brace all the time. I'm very sorry that I can't make this reunion, but will try and make the next. I had ordered the 8 Ball patch and was ready to come but will be thinking of everyone at the time.

Would like very much if you could recap any part of this letter so it might reach others of my crew members. I hope you can help me out.

Thank you very much,

Raymond Fay

# FLASHBACKS

by ED HOHMAN • 491st

REMEMBER THOSE 'HAZARDOUS MISSIONS' INTO TOWN (AND BACK?) ON WHEELS? THE 'ALCOHOL' WAS FOR MEDICINAL USE OF COURSE... (THE GUYS BACK AT THE BASE WOULD HAVE BEEN SICK IF YOU DIDN'T BRING SOME BACK!)



HE'S ONE OF THOSE AMERICAN FLYERS... THEY'RE KINDA 'NOBBY'!

SICK CALL...



491st HAD THIS POSTER!

WHY CAN'T I BE IN THE GROUND CREW?

(YOU WERE ALWAYS HEALTHY ENOUGH FOR COMBAT!)

'EVER HAVE A DAY WHEN YOU WISHED SOME '4-F' COULD TAKE YOUR PLACE?

HOW IT ALL STARTED (FOR SOME OF US) ... MIAMI BEACH, BASIC TRAINING, 1943

WHAT ARE WE LINED UP FOR THIS TIME, SARGE?

AERIAL GUNNERY PHYSICALS!

OH NO!

YEAH! WHAT'S UP?



MEMORABLE MOMENTS...

MAIL CALL! SIX LETTERS AND A BOX OF COOKIES FROM THE GAL BACK HOME! (COOKIES NEVER SEEMED TO LAST!)



PHOTOS of the FORTIES

THRU THESE GATES PASS THE BEST DAMNED RADIO OPERATORS IN THE WORLD!

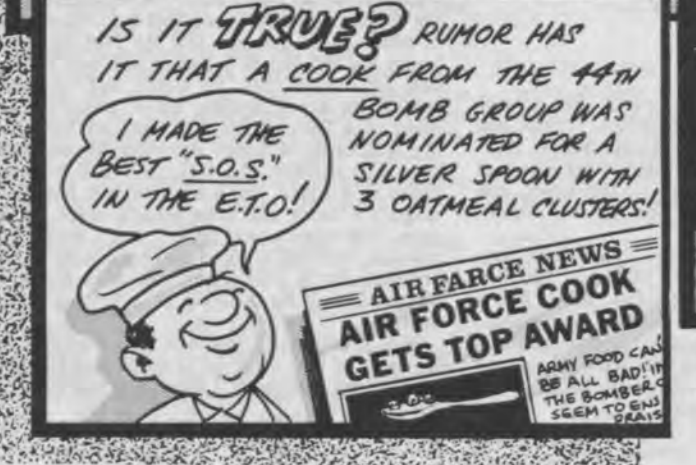


IS IT TRUE? RUMOR HAS IT THAT A COOK FROM THE 44th BOMB GROUP WAS NOMINATED FOR A SILVER SPOON WITH 3 OATMEAL CLUSTERS!

I MADE THE BEST "S.O.S." IN THE E.T.O.!

AIR FORCE NEWS  
AIR FORCE COOK GETS TOP AWARD

ARMY FOOD CAN BE ALL BAD! IF THE BOMBERG SEEM TO ENJOY PRAYS!



MANY A 'GREEN' G.I. PASSED THROUGH THE GATES AT SCOTT FIELD... THE FLAK AND FIGHTERS CAME LATER! (YOUR PHOTOS ARE NEEDED FOR THIS FEATURE!)