



# NEWS LETTER

Vol. 16 No. 2

SECOND AIR DIVISION ASSOCIATION

June 1978

## BEDTIME RAMBLINGS

by Jacob T. Elias (44th BG)

Why? I often wonder why. It is now over thirty-eight years since I left Shipdham-in-the-Mud, and yet, in those half-real moments before I fall asleep, my mind flies over the sea to that place I was happy to leave. A pot-pourri of memories slowly floats through my consciousness. People, places, smells, violent scenes, rain, hoar-frost on overhead wires, muddy tires on a bicycle.

Transfer to the 14th Combat Wing at Shipdham. The bustle of organizing the Wing, the excitement as word came of Leon Johnson's promotion to Brig. General, the impossible attempts to make the long cold brick barracks livable. Cold. Summer, I was told, had lasted several weeks this year instead of the usual three days. A tiny stove in the center of a long, high-ceilinged room with concrete floor and brick sides, totally inadequate for heating anything but a few inches of air directly above it. Our ration of two buckets of coke was fireproof anyway. We fled to the Red Cross building when we could, basking in the warmth of that fireplace. Mud everywhere, sticky, cold, mocking.

I found a bicycle for two dollars, one of the best investments I ever made. American style coaster brake, too, instead of the handle levers, probably the only one on the base. Rides through the narrow roads over the gentle hills, the high hedgerows, mist and fine rain. A stop at a tea shop in a village, and hot aromatic tea with heavy cake or scones. They were Spartan confections — would never be allowed within a hundred yards of a 'patisserie', but they were full of the good stuff that enable the Briton to withstand the soggy winter.

Typing letters and filing reports was

not my idea of winning the war and getting the Congressional Medal of Honor pinned on my chest by the President of the USA himself. My attitude was probably noted by — (I'll be charitable and not mention his name). My request for transfer to a combat crew was quickly approved and I moved to the 68th Squadron area. A month later I found myself listed on the alert sheet for my first mission as waist gunner.

Shaking with fear as we rose in the half-night and assembled in the blueing sky, headed for the Channel. Tension and fear as I looked at the Dutch coastline. "Clear the guns" came the order, and the shaking gun in my hands told me this was no bad dream, but reality. A terrible fever raged through me as I realized the ground underneath was hostile.

Coming in over the target on the Pas de Calais, black blossoms with red centers appeared miraculously around us. Pretty, I thought. What are they? A few blossomed closer, thuds shook the plane. Then it struck me — this was FLAK! More evil blossoms flowered all around us and then we swung away as the bombs were released, the shuddering stopped as the bomb bay doors closed and we headed back for home. How welcome was the sight of the Channel, more welcome the sight of Lowestoft and the friendly fields of Suffolk and Norfolk. That first step on solid ground, how good it felt!

A couple of days later and over to Abbeville. The flak was heavy, the ship bounced and shook as we went in. Bombs away, bomb bay doors closed, a swing west, then I felt it, like a hammer hitting my leg. What was that? I asked myself, then felt something wet rolling down inside the heavy clothes.

The bombardier came back and powdered the wound with sulfa, wrapped a bandage on it. The ambulance was waiting as soon as we stopped on the revetment, a fast trip to the base medic, and then a longer trip to Wymondham where the nickel sized piece was removed, the smaller pieces left in the leg for souvenirs.

A month there, living in a warm room, clean white sheets, food served on dishes, attentive nurses. Like a vacation, except for feeling hemmed in, useless. Restlessness grew as the tension before D-Day grew in the British Isles. I persuaded the doctor to let me go back to Shipdham earlier than he wanted.

Back at the 68th I was assigned to the "Flak Magnet", Joy Smith in charge. What a pilot! Cool, efficient as a computer, a rock of strength, yet with a sly sense of humor. The rest of the crew great, knowing their jobs. Kenny Sprowl, "Sparks", Gene DeWaters, Flight Engineer, Johnny Shelton at the waist window across from me. Several missions to France and Germany, then D-Day. One engine knocked out, we fly alone on the return, but we make it OK. Another time Johnny gets a piece in the neck and the bombardier and I are frantic in our efforts to stem the blood. He made it in spite of us. Bastogne and bombing by radar, praying the bombs don't drop on our own troops — a good friend of mine is down there with the 82nd Airborne.

My thirty missions are finished just a few days past New Year of 1944. What a relief! Yet it is hard to part with all those guys on the crew and in my Nissen hut. As I pack and ready myself, the radio with the cracked case up on the shelf faithfully sings out with "Take the A Train", "One O'clock Jump", "Deep Purple", "I Walk Alone". I look at the guys, stretched

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## BEDTIME RAMBLINGS (Continued from page 1)

out on their bunks, reading, or sitting on the edge, writing a letter. Van Rogers is heating water for tea, dropping an extra piece of wood down the insatiable throat of that little stove to hurry up the heat. Harry Ricketts is sewing a button on his jacket, almost as though he knew what he was doing. Elvin Scheetz is writing a letter. How I hate to leave them, much as I want to go home! What a wrench to go from them. That scene made a mark on my consciousness that has faded but never gone.

In 1955 I went back to Norfolk to visit my friends in Wroxham. Monica dropped me off at "The King's Head" one day, where the road goes into the airbase from the Shipdham-Dereham road. I refused her offer to drive me into the base. "I'll Walk Alone", as Lily Ann Carroll used to sing in 1944.

The day was one of those normal ones, low gray clouds fleeing ahead of the cold wind though it was August again, the same month I'd come in 1943. The barman in "The King's Head" assured me I was at the right place. Then he gave me the name of another man who'd stopped a few weeks before, a professor at Syracuse University in New York, who wanted to hear from anyone who followed.

I walked slowly along the road sad. Why was I sad? I couldn't understand. The runway that ended on this road came into sight, seams in the concrete sprouting weeds. In the distance stood the control tower, silent, like a mourning sentinel in the bleak landscape. Not a soul in sight. Ghostly and unreal. Around the corner and there was the grove of tall trees where "Southern Comfort" used to sit. A little further and I found the 14th Combat Wing Buildings. The brick buildings were battered and broken, shattered ruins, but the Nissen huts were intact, used for sheltering and feeding cattle. Windows were broken, brambles growing through the frames.

Up in the recreation area I found the pond where General Johnson was dunked during the 200 mission party. The Red Cross Building and Library were gone, across the way was no sign of the 68th Squadron Area. Down at the messhall and theatre, shells of buildings, concrete floors the only remains of some buildings. Out on the main runway stood an abandoned farm machine. Up in the control tower broken glass covered the floor, a door swung eerily in the breeze, rust ate at all the frame.

I stood looking out at the world that seemed deserted by humans. And my mind saw once again the slow moving lines of lumbering bombers, one by one stopping at the end of the runway to

gun their engines, gently start to move and then roar in a mighty effort to lift their bomb-heavy bodies from the clinging ground. And I saw the trucks and jeeps busily going to and fro, the ground crews watching warily as their ships made their run and lifted off, worrying and praying.

I walked back toward the Dereham road again and faces flitted through my mind, faces of men — boys, really, but men ahead of their time. Faces I had come to look forward to seeing in the morning, faces of men I had come to think beautiful no matter what the shape of nose or chin or color of eye, faces of men I had come to love for their smiles, their teasing, their sadness in unguarded moments, for their courage in facing death though the fear in their hearts was deep as in mine.

My heart was verily sad as I trod with heavy heart toward Dereham. Where were they, those wonderful kids? Those great-hearted kids with smooth cheeks, a few stray hairs on their upper lip, kids who did not speak of patriotism, love of country, fear of death, but who went out and did the best they could, clumsily at times, perfectly some times, but always the best their only human minds and bodies could do. All the time they were trying, they were wondering if they would ever again see their loved ones in Pennsylvania, in Texas or Georgia, Brooklyn or L. A. As I remembered those faces a corrosive sadness spread through my veins. I shivered with the cold sadness. And though I have been back to Norfolk four or five times since, I have never returned to Shipdham. I just could not go back.

Yet many and many a time, in those moments before I fall asleep, I do return to that Niseen hut. Again we are making tea on that little stove, and there is teasing and laughing, faces smiling at me, and the radio is playing again. "One O'clock Jump", "Begin the Beguine", "Deep Purple", "Frenesi", "Green Eyes", "Chattanooga Choo-choo", and Lily Ann Carroll singing blue, "I'll Walk Alone".

I don't want my sons to experience war. But I wish they could experience that complete camaraderie that I had at Shipdham-in-the-Mud. A friend to ride his bike beside yours through the beauty of the country, a friend to drink some hot tea beside the comforting fire after a walk in cold rain, a friend with you when the going is tough, a friend beside you when trouble gets almost too much for one person to handle. I had those friends at Shipdham. That is why my mind often goes back Shipdham, finds comfort in going back to Shipdham, and most likely will keep going back to that barracks full of love.

# THE THIRTY THREE YEAR SEARCH

by Al Blanco (SM)

The story started on May 29, 1944 in a B-24 returning to England from a raid on Politz.

The B-24 was from the 859th Bomb Squadron of the 492nd Group and concerns 2nd Lt. Elmer W. Clarey, co-pilot.

In the English Channel below, there was a British launch cruising on the look out for ditches, bail outs and whatever, or whomever needed help.

The radio operator of the launch picked up a May-Day signal from the B-24 and; within seconds Mr. Charles Halliday on the launch spotted the plane and the crew bailing out.

Nine chutes were spotted, and with typical British thoroughness the nine crew members were picked up out of the water. Either the tenth man never left the aircraft or his chute never opened. However, for an hour the launch performed a square search without success.

One of the men picked up had a tangle problem and was going under with his chute when Mr. Halliday reached him, and in Mr. Halliday's words: "The airman was entangled in his chute which was dragging him under, and in his distress he was cutting himself trying to free the harness. When I reached him he was in a pool of his own blood; but like the well trained airman he was, he gave himself up to me and I soon had him aboard the ASR launch."

That happened 33 years ago. Now let me up date the story by 30 years.

In December at Christmas time in 1974 in the village of Woodborough near Nottingham, England while spending the holiday in England at my wife's home, I chanced into an old English pub called, the Four Bells, with my brother-in-law. In the course of having a drink I was introduced to a Mr. Charles Halliday, a prominent contractor in Nottingham. As always, when an American of my age meets an Englishman of the same age, the conversation inevitably will turn to World War II and "Where were you stationed? How did you like England?" etc.

During our conversation Charles Halliday, in a typically modest English fashion, mentioned to me that he had done a "small favor" for an American pilot and in June of 1944, from an unknown APO, had received a small handwritten note thanking Mr. Halliday for the favor, and enclosed with the note were the Lt.'s silver flight wings.

The note read: "Dear Halliday: A little late but here are your wings.

*Hope they serve the purpose as I know it's almost impossible to do anything to thank you enough for what you did for our crew. However, we appreciate everything you people did for us. Hope we meet again sometime but under different circumstances. Thank you. Respectfully, Elmer W. Clarey 859th, Sq., 492 Grp. APO 558."*

Mr. Halliday then informed me that he had kept those wings in his safe deposit vault for all those years and thought it would be a nice thing to return them to Lt. Clarey if he could be located.

When Charles Halliday became aware of the fact that I was a retired Air Force pilot, he asked if there was anything I could do.

I took up the challenge and on my return home wrote to the record center of the Air Force. Nothing to it, it would be a cup of tea. Wrong. It turned up that there were no records from those early dates. Many had gone up in smoke in the fire at St. Louis.

I contacted veterans administration with no luck and as always, read the "bulletin section" in the Air Force Association Magazine. I lucked out because there was a notice to the effect of Clareys' old group having a reunion.

I wrote to Mr. William G. Robertie, who was president of Second Air Division Association at the time, and he took up the challenge, publishing a notice in the Association paper. No line yet on Clarey; but through Bill Robertie I heard from Allen Blue, who helped in the search looking at KIA and MIA records. Again no information.

Bob Shaffer of Oceanside, California, met Charles Halliday in England, and he contacted me. I met him and he went to a retired General in Washington, D.C. for assistance ... but with no luck.

I contacted Social Security and on and on but no luck.

I was about to give up when I wrote one last letter to the editor of Air Force Association Magazine and low and behold, within two days after the December 1977 issue came out, I received two calls. One from the Colonel Oaks of Woodland Hills, California, to see how he could help, and the next day I received a call from Ken Barmor saying: "I think I have found Clarey for you." Ken Barmor is a Flight Dispatcher with United Airlines in Los Angeles and told me there was an Elmer W. Clarey who was a flight dispatcher in San Francisco with United Airlines.

I called San Francisco and tracked down Clarey, and he was astounded to say the least.

I called England to let Halliday know the search was over and he called me back the next morning. He was delighted!!!

He is flying over here in July to attend the reunion of the 2nd division in Coronado and I am sure that at that time Clarey will be there to receive his wings.

I have written this in detail because I think it is a great human interest story and should make us all feel good especially at this time of the year.

Mr. Halliday said to me it is the most enjoyable Christmas he can remember.

I know I would like to be at the presentation and shall come, hell or high water.

I know I only mentioned a few people who assisted me in the search for Lt. Clarey, but want to thank all of the people who took an interest in this project. And of course, a special thanks to the Air Force Association for printing my letter that became the vehicle that brought this story to a happy ending.

Bill Robertie has been more than kind in his interest and efforts, and I know that everyone who assisted must be very happy that it has all turned out to be a happy ending.

It will be especially a happy occasion for Lt. Clarey, whose crew was later lost while he was in the hospital.

## LAST CALL

This is 'it' folks. The next Newsletter will be full of photos and what happened at the convention in San Diego. If you plan to attend but haven't sent in your reservation yet please do so — even before you finish reading this notice!

Keep in mind what we have said in recent issues. Unannounced arrivals will have a problem. We have reserved 240 rooms and we have been told by the Hotel Del Coronado that we cannot get any more. The Del Coronado is a popular site for conventions, and getting a room there any time is always a problem. If your going to act, please act now. See you in San Diego.

## BOOST FOR US TRUST AT CENTRAL LIBRARY

from Eastern Daily Press

The files of the American Memorial Trust were boosted yesterday by a collection of photographs and material for an exhibition.

The photographs were given to the trust by Norwich author, Mr. Martin Bowman, who collected about 700 prints when he was compiling a book called "The Fields of Little America," illustrating the history of the Second Air Division (8th USAAF).

The exhibition material was lent by the John Judkyn Memorial, which deals in American history.

Both the photographs and the material, which were accepted by the chairman of the trust, Mr. Tom Eaton, will be housed at Norwich Central Library.

Mr. Eaton said the exhibition was being financed through the trust's fund, which is due for a big fillup later this year when members of the Second Air Division in America are hoping to hand over 10,000 dollars.



Mr. Tom Eaton (left) and Mr. Martin Bowman looking at the photographs.

### The Airman's Lore

*How touched of magic are the souls  
Of some, the very few.*

*Who have removed their earthly bonds  
And leaped into the blue.*

*Who've felt with tender finger tips,  
The roll of graceful wings,*

*Supported by a sea of air  
That round the rigging sings.*

*While watching sunlight gaily dance  
On field and lake below,*

*And gliding deep through chasms carved  
In clouds as white as snow.*

*Then basking in the crimson glow  
Which heralds in the night,*

*While mother earth adorns herself  
In jewels of manmade light.*

*Who've pitted all their puny might  
Against the storm cloud's wrath,*

*Then known the humble feeling  
That is victory's aftermath.*

*Let's pity then the groundling  
For his is a dismal plight.*

*He's ne'er to taste the wine of fear,  
Nor toast the joy of flight.*

*And when the final landing comes,  
And we must leave our realm,*

*I'm sure that on another day  
Our maker at the helm,*

*Will guide us through familiar skies  
Where we have been before,*

*Reaching out to grasp His hand.  
This is the Airman's Lore.*

—Harry Bishop (489th BG)  
(Deceased)

## BIG BANG AT METFIELD

by Ted Parker (491st)

By July 15, 1944 the 491st BG had settled in at Metfield. The combat crews had completed their first eleven missions with sister Groups in the 2nd Air Division, and the ground elements were perfecting their skills every day. For the 'Ringmasters' July 15 promised to be just another day. It was not to be.

Early that morning a tremendous explosion shook the base. Everyone ducked and headed for cover thinking that the Germans were paying them a retaliatory visit. As heads cautiously emerged from hiding it was noted that a single column of smoke and flame was coming from the direction of the bomb dump. It was the dump which had exploded with such a deafening roar.

Later investigation determined that three trucks loaded with bombs were being delivered to replenish the Group's supply. Up until this time bombs were delivered simply by rolling them off the truck. This was all right with the old bombs we had been using, but this time they were delivering the new RDX bomb which could explode on contact without being fused. Evidently the drivers and their helpers were not aware of this and unloaded the bombs as they had in the past. Scratch one bomb dump.

The damage was confined to the dump and the 854th Squadron dispersal area so it was decided that the Group could get back into operation. They did on July 19th dispatching 34 planes to Sindelfingen. The 'Ringmasters' were back in action.

☆☆☆☆☆☆

As your Group Vice-President, I urge all 491st members to attend the reunion this year in San Diego. I will be there to greet you with any problems you might have. Let's make this year our Group's largest turnout.

## UPDATE — NORWICH 1979

As of this writing we have firmed up the following on our Norwich reunion next year.

We have chartered a stretched DC 8 with 242 seats. Advance reservations as requested in the last issue of the Newsletter have exceeded our expectations and we are now two thirds full.

**DATES:** We will arrive in Norwich on May 25th and will remain in Norwich through May 30th. Everything during this period will be included in

your package price. From May 31st until June 9th you are free to take your own side trips to wherever you want to go, be it in England or on the continent. On June 9th we will join our charter flight at Gatwick Airport; London for the return trip.

**COST:** We are still negotiating with hotels in Norwich so we cannot give you a total cost at this time. Total cost and a listing of all the planned events

will appear in the Newsletter as soon as they are finalized. Stay tuned.

One other thing. I think I should repeat Evelyn's correct address. It is Evelyn Cohen, 610 Plaza Towers, 2350 Tremont St., Philadelphia, Pa. 19115. Her telephone number remains the same at 215-OR3-7699. Call her if you have pressing questions concerning the trip. Right now you know as much as we do.

## MISTAKES WILL HAPPEN

Secure in the knowledge that everybody who reads this cannot lay claim to never having made a mistake, I duly confess to having made a beaut.

In the March issue of the Newsletter Evelyn Cohen's address appeared in three different places. That would have been all right if it were not for the fact that in two places the address was incorrect.

Evelyn's correct address is 610 Plaza Towers, 2350 Tremont St., Philadelphia, Pa. 19115. *Got that everybody?* So YE brave souls who sent in your reservations for the reunion this year and a deposit for the Norwich trip next year only to have your letter returned try again. Tenacious Vickie Warning sent her letter out three times only to have it returned each time. She refused to quit. Good show Vickie, and you will have to admit that when I goof I do so with class and élan — and completely!

Sorry folks.

Bill Robertie

## DOESN'T SEEM LIKE 34 YEARS

by C. Freudenthal (489th)

Thirty-four years ago this month — June 1944. D-Day. Remember where you were, and what happened to you?

It was a frustrating sort of high/low day for the 489th. Somewhere between 0200 and 0300 that morning there was a crowd of us in Group Ops, waiting for the mission frag orders to come through. If I remember it rightly, I wasn't the only one a little bit edgy either. Nobody knew for sure (at our level anyway), but the latrine rumors were spreading, and it figured that the invasion would be coming up soon. Then all of a sudden the words came tumbling out, impersonally black on yellow paper; and mixed in with the usual instructions for engine start time, take-off, bomb load, fusing, IP and the like, were the ones that made this day different. I don't recall exactly, but the substance was that because allied troops would be anywhere from 100 yards to a mile or so off-shore, it was important that no bombs fall short. And that, it turned out, was just about the high point for the day.



How come coffee and cocoa come out of the same jug? Red Cross girls Dorothy Ogden and Ann Trimble serving sandwiches and ? in the post-mission interrogation room. Anybody recognize the customer? Maybe George Smith of the 847th?

Take-off was briefed for about 0500, but was delayed for nearly two hours; partly because of weather, but mainly because of congestion over the target

area. For the 489th that was highway junctions at St. Lo. According to navigator Chet Weaks' notes: "We received word that 1200 other planes were in the air over the invasion coast, and that traffic was congested. . . They told us at briefing to concentrate on ground observation, and to ignore enemy fighters — that any aircraft in the air would be our own. We didn't believe it, but it turned out right. There wasn't room for anyone else. All available RAF planes were there too. In any event, both ground observation and bombing turned out to be impossible due to solid cloud cover over the target area. Carl Hillstrom and crew flew Group lead, with Colonel Napier as Command Pilot. A. J. Gaczi and crew led the 844th, Bob Mitchell the 846th, and Harry Wagnon the 847th. Forty-four aircraft were out and back, and the ordnance and armament people had a long day, defusing and downloading.

Luckily, the disappointments of D Day didn't set a pattern for the rest of the month. We flew 30 missions, led the 2d Division in bombing accuracy (percent of bombs within 2000' of MPI), and Prince Bernhard of the Netherlands with us on the 21st. He flew with Lt. Irwin Rumler and crew (847th) to bomb construction works at Siracourt. It was really a mini-mission, with only 5 aircraft going, led by Lt. Laurence Culkin of the 844th. The 2000 lb. demos they carried disappeared through solid undercast, and that was the name of that tune, as they say on TV. We also suffered the loss of ten aircraft and most of their crews.

So who has a memory for June 1944? Rob Coburn (846th) will remember the 2d, when he put #4860 down safely at Metfield in the dark, in bad weather, and with the left main tire shot out. Rich Linn will remember it too. He was the Radio Operator, and was wounded by flak. And Charles Bouchard (847th), will remember that was the day he and his crew were shot

## ATTENTION ALL CONVENTION-BOUND TRAVELERS!

The two-year old Pima Air Museum, located 12 miles southeast of Tucson, Arizona, should be a planned stop on your itinerary. Of the 70 aircraft on display, the Museum's #1 pride and joy is the 'Pima Paisano' — a B-24J! This Liberator, #AAF 44-44175, performed duty on coastal patrol with the Indian Air Force from 1945 to 1968. In March/April 1969 it was flown from Poona, India, to Tucson, Arizona, by a volunteer U.S. Air Force crew on permissive TDY. Their 12-stop, 31-day flight was financed by individual subscription and generous contributions from Shell Oil Co., TWA, PANAM, Pratt Whitney, etc.



The Pima Air Museum is seeking tax deductible donations of aviation memorabilia, (uniforms, shoulder patches, insignia, photographs, etc.) for display in their presently small indoor museum. Plans for the future include a large hangar to house older, more fragile, aircraft; a half-million dollar F-100 flight simulator; cut-away engines; and increased exhibits of aviation artifacts.

Write to Robert E. Fawver, Director, Pima Air Museum, P.O. Box 17298, Tucson, Arizona 85731.

down. Two evaded capture (Warren Markle and Eugene Anderson), one was killed, and Charlie and the rest saw the war out as guests of the Third Reich. Ray Beights (846th) might recall the 20th, when he suffered a head wound from flak but was able to bring his aircraft back.

Tom Baker, assigned to Base Defense, remembered the big day this way:

"I could hardly sleep last night for the planes overhead. They were roaring overhead all night. When I woke up our planes were taking off. They went to France, but it was so cloudy they couldn't see to drop their bombs. . . Our gunners said . . . they could see landing barges by the thousands and said the sky was filled with planes. We didn't know for sure the invasion was on until we went to chow this morning. I'm glad it is."

What's your memory?

## IRISH MASHED POTATOES-AMERICAN STYLE

by John McCloskey (445th BG)

Upon our arrival in England our crew was told that we would be going to Ireland for a refresher course. That was all right with us because we had never been to Ireland and it would be another experience to carry home with us when the time came.

In due time our crew with about a dozen others piled into the bomb bay of a converted B-24 used for hauling cargo, which in this case was us. We had a great flight up to and until we came in for a landing. I believe the field was located in Shannon.

For some reason we came in pretty hot and the brakes failed. Off the runway we went and skidded into an Irish potato field on our belly. This not only demolished the plane but also did a thorough job of mashing a good portion of the potatoes growing in the field. Luckily no one was hurt. Just shook up, bruised and battered around a bit.

We were checked out at the first aid clinic and given a big glass of rum. This went a long way towards easing the aches and pains. Maybe another of our members was on this trip and remembers our novel entry into Ireland.

## MORE ON THE DUNEBERG RAID

by Jim Kratoska (389th)

In the March, 1978 Newsletter, Earl Zimmerman was telling his story of the loss of both the lead and deputy lead aircraft by collision with an enemy fighter on April 7, 1945. I would like to add my observations and experience.

Earl did not indicate his plane's position in the squadron, but we would have had different stories to tell the debriefing people. My recollection after 33 years to the day (I received the newsletter April 7, 1978) are as follows:

The time, place and group was as follows:

April 7, 1945, approximately 12:00 hours, 40 miles north of Hanover on the way to Duneberg.

2nd Air Division lead, 389th Group, 567th Sqn, Aircraft K-

Command: Col. John Herboth

Crew: Pilot, 1st Lt. Bob Dallas; Engineer, T/Sgt. Bill Strange; Nav. 1st Lt. W. Grolig; Radio, T/Sgt. Bob Flannery; Bomb., 1st Lt. A. J. Contra; LW, S/Sgt. Jim Kratoska; PFF, Lt. P. L. Michalk; RW, S/Sgt. Bob Gilloon; P-Nav., Dicky; Tail, S/Sgt. Mark Straus.

As you can see, I was L waist on K- and three of us did survive. LW, RW and tail. There are many facets of this mission, the snafu before takeoff (maps forgotten), getting knocked down, meeting on the ground later and not knowing it, capture, escape, meeting two Candians and Russian escapees in the woods, watching British Typhoons attacking a German Armored Column and finally getting through the British Lines north of Hanover. Obviously all of this can't be covered.

When the German attack started, there was a fighter encounter at 9 o'clock high about 1,000 feet above us. Dallas, our pilot, cautioned us to be sure of our target before shooting. Almost simultaneously Strauss, the tail

gunner, started firing very heavy, so I leaned back to look through his turret to see what he was shooting at. I picked up the German fighter coming straight and level and firing at us. He broke off to his left outside the number three aircraft in our formation.

He was in such a position that I could not shoot at him without hitting number three and he continued to turn at about our same altitude. I did not see any other fighter, American or German, in the immediate area.

The German was now heading at us from about 11 o'clock slightly above us on his right side perpendicular to our plane of flight. He could have missed us if he had leveled out, but there wasn't time because of our closing speed. I instinctively ducked and he hit in the pilot's lap shearing off the front of our plane.

Gilloon, the R. waist and I bounced off the top of the fuselage as we went into a spin. I cannot remember who opened the escape hatch, but I do remember my chute was next to it and I caught the chute before it fell out. Because of the spin it was difficult to get out.

We were at 22,000 feet when we collided and I would guess we got out at about 5,000 feet. This is probably why Earl didn't see any chutes. I recall my chute opened at about 3,000 feet and two 51's buzzed me. I waved and they wagged their wings in recognition. I came down through tall evergreens and landed in a marsh area about three miles Northeast of Soltau. Burying my chute, the process of escape started which is another long story.

After the war, I learned number two had also gone down because of the collision and that supposedly everyone got out. The original co-pilot on our crew was flying co-pilot on number three

## BROTHER, CAN YOU SPARE...

by George A. Reynolds (458th BG)

Fred Slocum, 752nd Sq., had acquired the ultimate in flying footwear — Australian boots with sheepskin lining and zippers coming and going. He had whiled away many free hours applying and preserving a spit shine thereon second to none. His pride of ownership was exceeded only by the tinsel glitter of that exquisite leather.

Naturally, when the Group began gas truckin' operations in Sept. '44, those beautiful boots went on a run to St. Dizier. After the crew got out of their Lib, (Bachelor's Bedlam) a sad sack-type GI approached Slocum for conversation. Immediately, he fixed a glassy-eyed stare on those shiny boots. Fred felt a tingle of prestige.

While they were talking, Slocum could hardly help noticing that Sack had a grubby toe exposed and another not far behind in his other shoe. Prestige quickly became pity. Finally, he said, "Looking for special souvenirs?" Fred guessed he was, everyone wanted something from the front.

"How'd you like to have a bayonet I personally wrestled from a SS trooper at Brest?"

"How much do you want for it?"

"Money's no good to me, I need something here against the elements, another bayonet I can get — how about swapping your boots for my knife?" Slocum knew they would be back in England shortly, he had other boots and really felt sorry for the poor slob. What the hell, he would just trade with him.

They made the exchange and Sack fled.

Just before the B-24 was ready to leave, an infantry officer came up to Fred, noticed his stocking feet and asked, "Sergeant, did you swap your boots for a bayonet?"

"Yes, sir, I did."

"A Joe and Willie-type with toes sticking out of his shoes?"

"That's right."

"The guy has a barracks bag full of bayonets and a duffle bag full of flying boots he's suckered from gas running crews."

A dash of salt — the bayonet disappeared from Horsham faster than AWOL GIs at the fence.

that day and was just opposite my left waist position on the lead aircraft. We had waved shortly before the attack started.

Oh yes, Earl, I never got a shot at the guy, either.

# DUNEBERG- APRIL 7, 1945

by John B. (Buff) Maguire  
(389th BG)

My crew also flew that particular mission to Duneberg on April 7, 1945. In fact that target was an ammunition and dynamite dump, and we carried 12-500 lb. GP bombs, and I flew D+ plane that day. This particular mission was my 11th mission, and it was my 3rd mission as a deputy lead pilot. As stated in the Earl Zimmerman article, the 389th BG was leading the entire 2nd Air Division to Duneberg, and the 566th Bomb Squadron was flying the low left position. I do not recall the other two squadrons on that day myself, since we always had one of our four squadrons in the group stood down when missions were flown.

This particular mission is still very vivid in my mind — I guess it is because of the importance of our leading the entire 2nd Air Division on the mission that day, and we still were able to completely destroy the target and I had a ringside seat for the action. At the time, and during interrogation, I was never able to figure out how the ME-109 was able to get through the P-51 fighter cover. I remember the ME-109 diving from above at almost a 180° angle between our three squadrons in the 389th BG, then pulling up into formation so that it was flying off of the right wing of the lead plane and the left wing of the deputy lead plane. The ME-109 just sat there firing its guns until it was put out of commission, at which time it did a roll over and smashed into the cockpit area of the lead plane and then into the deputy lead ship.

The Zimmerman article stated that one of the P-51s was hit by our fire and the pilot bailed out. I remember that. The one thing I was most afraid of during this action was being hit by fire from our own guns, because the ME-109 attacked us at the IP and just flew in formation at the beginning of the bomb-run until the ME-109 pilot apparently was killed. We then used the bombardiers of the high right squadron and the low left squadron to still make the bomb run, drop the bombs, and destroy the target.

Even being so close to all of this action, we went over our plane with a fine-toothed comb after landing, and nowhere could we find any holes or hits from any guns, I guess the Old Boy upstairs was looking out for us since we did not even receive a

# GRAND THEFT - COMMAND CAR????

Crew Chiefs had a reputation of 'appropriating' anything that wasn't tied down if what they were 'appropriating' would make their airplane fly a little better and thus insure the safe return of their crew. But a command car!!!!

Probably the greatest 'appropriator' in the entire 8th Air Force was one T/Sgt. Howard (Butterball) Hill of the 752nd Squadron, 458th Bomb Group and crew chief for "Final Approach", a plane which amassed 131 missions before being shot down on April 9, 1945.

When the Brass from Headquarters decided to fly on a particular mission they invariably chose a plane which had 'been there and back' many, many times. You might say it was a confidence builder. So it came about that one day (old Butterball is mum on the exact date) a two star General, complete with staff, pulled up at the hardstand where "Final Approach" and her crew were getting ready for that day's mission. Off they went with the blessings of the ground crew.

With the departure of the plane the General's command car sporting its two star flag on the front fenders sat silent and neglected. But not for long. Ever enterprising 'Butterball' decided to make the best of a promising situation.

Those of the ground crew who dared piled into the back seat and donned the caps left behind by the Colonels accompanying the General. 'Butterball' donned the General's cap and took the wheel. Tooling through the gate leading

to town the M.P. on duty spotted the two star flag and snapped a salute with his eyeballs rigidly fixed straight ahead. "Butterball" nonchalantly returned the salute and floored the gas peddle.

Several hours later, after visiting their favorite Pub, and slightly the worse for wear, the pseudo General with his motley crew of pseudo Colonels raced back through the same gate. If the M.P. noticed that the path of the command car was a bit erratic on its return he kept silent, probably preferring to remain out of the guard house for the remainder of the war.

When "Final Approach" returned from the mission the command car was sitting exactly where it had been left. Quickly the General and his Staff departed leaving the 'Butterball' Hill gang wondering what to do for an encore.

I am happy to report that time has mellowed T/Sgt. Hill and he now confines his 'appropriating' to most of the commercial buildings in down-town Ipswich, Mass. (legally of course) where he owns several buildings comprising a single clothing store in partnership with his brother Wendell — who constantly wonders what old 'Butterball' will dream up next. So does the town!

I'm sure that the Pentagon will be happy to know that the aging leader of the 'Butterball' Hill gang currently collects license plates as a hobby. Now, however, without the command cars attached. The Pentagon gives thanks.

## NOTICE

Dues paying time has come and gone, but we still have some members who have not paid as yet. It is only by paying your dues that we can continue to put out the type of Newsletter we do, and which you seem to enjoy. The cost is heavy and promises to get heavier, so prompt payment of dues is a 'must'.

I will reiterate what we have said before. If you cannot pay your dues for any reason please give the facts to Evelyn Cohen (610 Plaza Towers, 2350 Tremont St., Philadelphia, Pa. 19115) and she will see to it that your membership is continued. This will remain confidential between thee and she.

scratch.

Another thing which is very vivid in my memory is the talk or speech that James N. "Jimmy" Stewart gave at our interrogation, telling us what a fine job we did of destroying the target when the lead plane and the deputy lead plane were both lost at the IP commencing the bomb run. At the time, Jimmy Stewart was either a Lieutenant or full Colonel and was the Deputy Wing Commander. I remember that his remarks were just as impressive as any movie I have seen him in.

The article in the March News Letter is accurate. My notes further say that we were also attacked by jet fighters coming down the bomber stream, and that the 389th BG lost two crews and three planes. One of the planes had the crew bail out.

The Zimmerman article stated that he was doing nothing with the waist gun because he was so busy watching all of the action. I just want him to know that my ringside seat was so close to the action, when we returned to base I had to change my underwear.

# FRANCE TO ENGLAND IN A LIFE RAFT

by Harold Benvenuti (448th)

April 1, 1944 was both my 13th mission and my lucky day. Passing over the French coast on our way to the target we lost our first engine from flak. While making our bomb run, another engine was knocked out. Leaving the target, our third engine ceased to function.

The Pilot, Lt. Jack Black, (our plane was named 'Blacks's Widow') decided to go on as long as he could knowing that eventually we would have to ditch. We all agreed that ditching was better than a P.O.W. camp for the remainder of the war.

As 'Black's Widow' settled toward the water, we threw out everything that wasn't nailed down, including both waist guns.

The order to prepare to ditch finally came. When we hit the water the ball turret dropped out and water came rushing in. It picked me up and whipped me against the right waist window. Dick Campbell and Wilfred Haschke went out the left waist window and I followed.

When we got to the left wing, the rubber boats were out. I got in one with Dick Campbell, Lt. Burkhartsmeir and Tex Dweaczyk. Lt. Jack Black, Wilfred Haschke, Charles Nissen, Mike Curran and Pete Wermert were in the other. We never did see Joe Pompert, the Co-pilot. We moved away from the plane waiting for it to go under. To our amazement the plane floated for an hour before pointing her nose down, her tail up and going under. When she was gone, we buried Charles Nissen who had died in our arms from serious injuries.

Being only 10 miles off the French Coast (Dunkirk), it was logical to go there and give ourselves up. It was 60 miles to England. We took a vote and paddling to England won. Having made this decision we checked the rafts for survival equipment. Nothing. There wasn't a thing! The only things we had were a few chocolate bars and a couple of compasses. So be it. We set our heading and paddled.



That night the water was really rough, and even though we used a couple of the parachutes to protect us from the wind everybody was soaked and cold. We could hear planes flying overhead, but without a flashlight there was nothing we could do. Just wish them luck if they were ours and hope they didn't spot us if they were German.

Dawn broke with an overcast sky and all we could see was water in every direction. Lacking food and water we tried not to think about eating. We just continued to scan the water hoping to see land or some boats. After a few hours we did see an object coming toward us, and the closer it got the faster it seemed to be going. It turned out to be one of those buoys with food and a radio inside. I wanted to make a swim for it but I was over-ruled. The current was very fast and it went by us, or we it, before we knew it. It would have been impossible to swim against that current.

As the day went on, we heard airplane motors, but we never saw them as it was still overcast. Night came again with the water still rough and all of us wet and cold. As the night wore on we heard airplane engines, but this time we also saw anti-aircraft flashes and heard bombs exploding. We knew then that we were nearing land.

As it began to get light, a few minesweepers crossed our path off in the distance. We waved but they did not see us. By this time we were certain that the land we were heading towards was England and we began to paddle faster. Finally we came close to some fishing boats and started to yell and wave our arms. It first appeared that they didn't see us either and some of us started cussing as loud as we could.

Suddenly one fishing boat headed our way. The name of the boat was 'The Three Brothers', and the crew quickly hauled us aboard. Another boat came along and was sent to shore to notify the authorities. The Captain of our boat told us that we were seen but they thought we were Germans. It wasn't until they heard our cussing that they knew we were 'Yanks'.

We came ashore in Folkstone and as soon as we landed, Tex went to his knees and kissed the good old English soil! A waiting ambulance took us to the Folkstone hospital. I was never so glad to get into a bed again and I have no idea how long we slept.

A few days later our new Colonel, Col. Mason, came to see us and told

us that a base ambulance would be coming to pick us up. I kind of hated to leave that hospital as they were all so great to us, but it was good to get back to the base again and see familiar faces.



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

## THE MEMORIAL TRUST OF THE SECOND AIR DIVISION U.S.A.A.F.

Castle Chambers,  
Opie Street,  
Norwich,  
NR1 3DP,  
England.

30th December, 1977.

Dear Mr. and Mrs. Albert Gordon,

I write on behalf of the Chairman and Governors of the 2nd Air Division Memorial Trust to express their grateful thanks and warm appreciation of your latest donation of \$500 to the Memorial Library for the purchase of books in memory of your son. Miss Bennis, the Librarian, tells me that this now makes the total of your donations \$5,100 since November 1966.

With your approval I trust, I am sending a copy of this letter to Mr. Robertie the editor of the 2nd Air Division newsletter because it is such a generous act on your part. The Memorial Library is able to keep up to date and be the living memory that we would all wish it to be because of such acts of generosity.

May I express my personal thanks to you both and best wishes for 1978.

Yours sincerely,

N.J.D. Walter

Clerk to the Governors.



# TO THE RESCUE - ENGLISH STYLE

by Chris Gotts (S.M.)

Those who have visited the Second Air Division Memorial Room in the Central Library at Norwich will no doubt recall seeing at the entrance to the room the fine painting, by English artist Mike Bailey, of a B-24 Liberator called "Hookem Cow", but I wonder how many know the story of the tragic crash of this aircraft just six miles from where this painting can be seen.

This is how, on the 14th, April 1945, Mr. and Mrs. Walter Giles and their family, living in a small village just outside Norwich, became involved with "Hookem Cow" and her crew of the 458th B.G., and were probably the last people to see this aircraft flying.



On left — Capt. John L. Ollum, original pilot of "Hookem Cow", (now deceased). On right — Sgt. James McGinn, Crew Chief. On day of crash, pilot was Lt. David R. Totten, who was killed. Photo credit — Harold Johnston.

"Very early one morning, about 5 a.m. my wife and I were awakened by an aircraft passing so low over our house that I thought it had struck part of the roof. I jumped out of bed and looked out of the window but could see nothing because of the darkness and thick fog. Shortly afterwards we heard another aircraft approaching and this time, quickly looking out of the window, I could see what looked like two lights coming through the darkness. These lights, we were later informed, were flames from the aircraft's engines.

"Within seconds the aircraft hit the ground on our neighbors property with a tremendous crash. I shouted to my son in the next room, which also awakened my daughter, and we hurriedly dressed. Grabbing my son's bicycle I rode off down the road with the two of them running close behind, but I had not gone more than a hundred yards when the wheel of my cycle struck something and I sprawled on to the ground. Upon recovery I noticed, by the light of a torch, that I had run headlong into a very large bomb which was lying in the road. A few feet further on was another bomb of similar size. Giving the torch to my daughter I told her to sit on one of the

bombs and warn any traffic that came along of the danger.

"My son and I carried on to what we could now see was quite a fire and we entered our neighbor's gateway to find that the trees in front of his house were well alight and blocking our way. We then went back to the road to try and get behind the crashed aircraft and entered through a field gate further on. Running across the field we saw parts of aircraft strewn all around, and also the bodies of some of the crew, which I found most distressing.

"We thought that all on board the aircraft had been killed, but on going closer to the flames we found a badly injured airman lying helpless on his back about fifteen feet away from the fire. He was conscious and as we knelt down to see if we could help him, another airman suddenly came staggering through the smoke saying "Have we taken off yet?". We realized he was suffering from concussion and I asked my son to lead him away from the fire and also endeavour to find something flat on which we could shift the badly injured man away from the flames, which were getting steadily closer.

"I knew that moving him with such serious injuries could have proved fatal so I stayed at his side as he asked me not to leave him or let him die. Just then my son returned with a door, but as the fire was now not so intense we decided not to move the airman, so we sat it out.

"While we waited for further help to arrive I asked our friend how many bombs were on the aircraft when it crashed. He replied that there were four, which made us wonder where the other two were besides the two we had already come across in the road.

"The wait seemed endless until the local doctor arrived and gave the injured airman an injection to relieve the pain, as by then he was not feeling too well. By the time the ambulance and American fire fighting crews arrived the fire was dying down and our injured friend was taken away on a stretcher to the hospital."

Meanwhile, back down the road, Mr. Giles' daughter was still at her post. "As father had told me, I sat on one of the bombs with my torch at the ready. After only a few minutes one of our local air raid wardens came along and asked me what I was doing. "Sitting on a bomb", was my reply. The same question was asked by my mother as she struggled down the road with blankets. It was a long and cold wait which seemed like eternity until the rescue services came."

# OLD AT 17

by John A. Miller (100th)

In a little less than two months after joining my Group, I was the oldest gunner in my Squadron at age 17. Worse than that I was in the 'spare gunners' hut, and after the March 6, 1944 mission to Berlin (bloody Monday) I was ALONE in that hut for 15 days.

Those empty bunks were driving me to the 'tapioca farm' because everyone I knew was either killed or taken prisoner that day. We lost 16 out of 18.

Unable to stare at the empty bunks any longer, I saw our C.O. and told him I couldn't take it. "Take what", he asked. I told him my story and he said, "Take a 48 hour pass. Go to London, have a good time and forget about all this for awhile." So off I went to London for the first time. The CO said have a good time and have a good time I did! I hung one on like never before.

On the final night of my pass I caught the last train out of London and arrived back at my squadron about four or five in the A.M. When I turned in my pass the CQ greeted me with the news that I was flying that day. Being really wiped out I took a cold shower, dressed and grabbed a bike.

Too late for breakfast. Too late for briefing. I was really sweating. I got into my flying clothes, grabbed a chute and oxygen mask, flagged down a jeep and made it to the hardstand just in time.

There was not time for 'chit chat' so I just went about my job checking everything out and installing my gun. That done, I put on my oxygen mask, turned it to pure oxygen and laid down in the waist. My head was really throbbing. War is hell!

Flying never did bother me and I could always lay down and fall asleep. That morning it was no problem at all so I did get a little sleep until we reached altitude and started forming.

We test fired our guns and in a short time the Bombardier called on the interphone "Enemy coast in sight." It was then I introduced myself on the interphone and explained that I had just got back from a leave in London, had missed briefing and would somebody tell me what the target was that day. The answer was not long in coming. "Berlin, and this is our first mission". Berlin? New crew? God have mercy!

We did, however, make it there and back with no problem., and upon returning I learned that this crew had moved into my hut. I was no longer alone and as they were short a gunner I had found a new crew. We eventually completed 35 missions together.

# 453rd BOMB GROUP POT POURRI

by Don Olds (S.M.)

Because I don't have an article to deliver to the newsletter editor this quarter, I'm just submitting a smorgasbord of news on the 453rd BG.

By cross checking several different wartime orders it came to my attention that some of the people from the group who were listed as KIA did not have their names listed in the Roll of Honor at the Memorial Library in Norwich, England. To begin with, I thought there were 16 names involved. I sent these 16 names, serial numbers and any other pertinent information I had to the Military Record Center in St. Louis to try and get these names verified as definitely being KIA. After some delay I received a report saying that all 16 were indeed KIA. I sent this information to Bill Robertie who forwarded it on to the Memorial Library in Norwich. They have assured us that the names will be added to the Roll of Honor at the next updating. Since then I have discovered about 15 more names I think should also be included. Right now I'm awaiting word from the Record Center as to the status of the 15 in question.

☆☆☆☆

In late February, I received a surprise visit from Dick and Millie Rollo who were passing through on their way to Toledo. Many of you will remember Dick as the Group Navigator who was flying with Mark Neary's Crew on 9 April '44 when they were shot up and had to opt for Sweden. Below is a photo of Dick after a mission in March of '44. Left to right are Lt. Wendell Faulkner, pilot of Crew #49, Col. Ted Timberlake, Col. Ramsay Potts, CO of the 453rd and Dick Rollo, Group Navigator. My wife and I enjoyed the visit from the Rollos and hope that more of the members will pay us a visit on their way across the country on I-44.



☆☆☆☆

On the June 21st, '44 mission to Berlin the group had as its target the

diesel engine works at Nordban. The plant was believed to be manufacturing the engines for the flying bombs. Seventy one tons of bombs were carried by the 34 planes attacking the plant and the great majority of them hit as briefed. Lt. Melvin Williams of the 735th SQ went down on this mission, thankfully with no loss of life. After a day of rest, attention was drawn to the Juvencourt Airfield, northeast of Paris. Two squadrons of 12 ships each attacked carrying a mixed cargo of GP and fragmentation bombs. The target was well covered but Lt. John Raiser of the 732nd SQ fell victim to flak on the way home and went down with only three survivors. The 24th was another two mission day as the group hit an airfield and power station. The second mission of the day was against the power station at Pont-A-Vendin, France, supposedly a milk run. It was on this raid that Capt. George Baatz, a lead crew of the 732nd SQ and Major Edward Kemp, the Group Adjutant, who was flying with him were lost to flak. Capt. Baatz was on his 26th mission and Major Kemp had been with the group since its inception. Tail gunner Sgt. Gordon Adey was the only survivor from the Baatz Crew.

☆☆☆☆

Wonder how many remember the Halloween Party in October '44, complete with jack o'lanterns and pumpkin pie. A big dance was held, the third of the month, and red and purple cellophane over the lights gave a spooky look while big cardboard witches and black cats dangled from the ceiling. A rather effective ghost in the entrance, made with flour sacks and a sheet, was spoiled when someone stole the sheet! A lot of hay around the floor completed the picture and all the neighborhood children came to peek. Apparently Halloween is a purely American institution. In October of '44 the S-2's War Review was the most popular weekly event averaging about 125 each Tuesday. The bingo parties were gaining in popularity and the free waffles were consumed in numbers hovering around the 700 mark each Saturday night.

☆☆☆☆

Hopefully looking forward to seeing many of you in San Diego in July. Lots of letters have been written, especially to non 2nd ADA members in the southern California area, urging them to pay us a visit that weekend. I want to thank those of you who have responded to my requests for help in locating former 453rd men. Funny thing

# U.S.A.F. PHOTOS OF 2ND. A.D. B.24's

(Part 5)

Compiled by Tony North  
(Associate Member)

51638 and A-51638 — Parachutes being used as brakes on a 702 B.S. B.24H (42.95308) - 28th. May, 1944. Pilot James M. Dodson.

62391 — Crash landing of "Fearless Fosdick" a B.24H (41.29604) of the 702 B.S. near Newmarket, Suffolk - 8th. March. 1944.



62396 — Crash landing of a B.24H (42.95020; X+ of the 701 B.S. at Beccles, Suffolk - 14th. July, 1944.

62400 — Crash landing of B.24J (42.51250) of the 701 B.S. near Tibenham, Norfolk - 10th. November, 1944. Pilot Lt. Keith L. Frost.

62419 and 62421 — Crash landing of B.24J (42.100353) near Metfield, Suffolk - 3rd. November, 1944.

A.62577 — An excellent ground shot of the group assembly ship B.24D (41.24215)

70920 — In flight photo of B.24H (41.29126 V+ of the 703 B.S.

70940 — Maintenance crew at work on an engine of a 445th. B.G. aircraft

Copies of photos in various sizes and prices can be obtained from 1361ST. Photo Squadron, Aerospace Audio-Visual Service (M.A.C.), 1221 South Fern Street, Arlington, Virginia 22202.

I would welcome any queries, comments or additions to these listings, addressed to 9, Irving Road, Norwich NR4 6RA, England. I would also be most grateful for the loan of any material to add to my collection. Photos would be copied and returned immediately in good condition.

though, many of our 453rd members will not answer my letters asking them for information that might lead to finding potential members. Even sending a stamped envelope for reply doesn't always do the trick. If everyone helped the way my faithful few always do, I feel we could have a record turnout in San Diego. Maybe we will anyway. Time will tell. My mode of transportation to San Diego has not yet been decided and if anyone going through Rolla on I-44 has room for a rider to share expenses, driving, etc., let me know. Otherwise I'll probably go Greyhound.

# THAT SPECIALLY REMEMBERED MISSION FOR THE 445th

by David G. Patterson

From: *The History of the 445th Bombardment Group (H)*, by Rudolph J. Birsic

Thursday, February 24, 1944

To the 445th Bomb Group veteran that date stands out above other dates. The mission was Gotha; the results were a Presidential Citation for the Group, but the cost was a black day in the Group's history in terms of casualties. Total casualties amounted to 123; of these, later reports officially listed 54 men as Prisoners of War. The 702nd Squadron lost its Commander, Major Evans, and practically its entire Operations Staff. The 700th Operations Officer, Captain Waldher, was also lost.

Here follows the official descriptive narration of the 445th's participation as recorded in the Presidential Citation:

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"The 445th Bombardment Group (H), 2d Air Division, is cited for outstanding performance of duty in action against the enemy. On 24 February 1944 this group participated, with other heavy bombardment groups of the 2d Bombardment Division, in an attack on the Gothaer Waggonfabrik, A.G. located at Gotha, Germany. On this occasion the attacking bombers met and overcame the fiercest and most determined resistance the enemy was able to muster in defense of this target, so vital to his ability to wage war. Unprotected by friendly fighter cover the 445th Bombardment Group (H) was under almost continuous attack from enemy aircraft for a period of 2 hours and 20 minutes. Although antiaircraft fire was hurled at the formation along the route to and from the target as well as at the target itself, the most deadly opposition was given by enemy aircraft. For 1 hour and 20 minutes before "bombs away" savage attacks were made by single and twin-engined enemy fighters in a vain attempt to keep the bombers from reaching their target. On the actual bombing run, that critical period of each bombardment mission, fierce and relentless attacks were unable to keep the bombers from accomplishing their task. For another hour after bombing, the group continued to be the object of ferocious fighter attacks. Of this group's 25 aircraft which penetrated enemy territory, 13 were lost to these fierce fighter attacks, which number is approximately twice the loss suffered by any of the other groups participating in this mission. In addition, 9 of the

surviving 12 aircraft returned from the mission with battle damage. With heroic determination the 445th Bombardment Group (H) flew its assigned course, destroying 21 enemy attackers, probably destroying 2 more, and damaging 7 during the long running battle. The target was located and bombed with extreme accuracy and devastating results. This target, the most important source of ME. 110's, was so well hit that the enemy airforce suffered a most telling blow. The courage, zeal, and perseverance shown by the crew members of the 445th Bombardment Group (H), 2d Air Division, on this occasion were in accordance with the highest traditions of the military service of the United States and reflect great credit on themselves and the group, and the Army Air Forces."

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*Note to members of the 445th:* Were you there, either on ground or in the air? How about a personal "I was there" story to share with us all via the Newsletter; to fill in with the human and personal touch that no War Dept. memo can ever contain. Send it (even in rough draft form, if you prefer) to David Patterson or Bill Robertie.

## AZON BOMB PROJECT

by George A. Reynolds (458th)

Several requests on the Azon Bomb Project. All missions were flown in '44, but records do not list results. However, I've seen photo evidence of the first strike at Tours, Fr., and 377 yards of bridge were turned to rubble — courtesy of Bombardier Jack Halverson's three hits from 20,000 feet. The official 13 missions: 31 May—four bridges in the Paris area; 4 Jun—bridge, Melun, Fr.; 8 Jun—bridge, Melun; 8 Jun—Melun (afternoon strike, lousy weather for both); 14 Jun—bridges at Corbie, Personne, Somme, Etaples, Frevent and Doullens, Fr.; 15 Jun — same as the day before; 22 Jun—bridges at Saumur and Tours; 17 Aug—bridge, Les Folons (Esternay); 25 Aug—RR bridge, Moerdijk, Neth. secondary bridge at Tours; 26 Aug—Moerdijk bridge; 1 Sep—bridge, Ravenstein, Neth.; 5 Sep—RR bridge, near Mulheim, Ger.; 13 Sep—oil refinery, Flensburg, Ger.

A preliminary Azon mission was flown 23 May before the official ones began. A single B-24, "Lorelie" piloted by L/C O'Neal and Capt. DeNeffe was escorted by eight P-51s to hit several bridges in France as pre-invasion work. A crew member, Carl Valentine, says the mission was a complete success, and the entire crew was awarded the DFC in that action. Other 2nd ADA members, ("Buck Rogers Boys") who took part in the Project are: Bob Vincent, Mel Fields, J. R. Butler, Waldo Butler, Bob Morford and newcomer, Fred Slocum.

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Speaking of target-bridges, a news item dated 10 April 78 told how the Wilson Bridge (18th Century vintage) at Tours collapsed into the Loire River all by itself. Just think, if "the brass" had had a little more patience way back when, all that work would have been saved and the troops not awakened during those gosh-awful hours when it was so darned cold. Also, the mayor of Remagen, Ger. announced on 8 March 78 that he was selling stones encased in plastic from that famous bridge at 20 bucks a throw. See, "democracy" really is working in a conquered country after all.

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There is some question on the actual aircraft Lt. Dooley was flying in the Heigham-Baker Sts. crash. One source states #42-45133 crashed 7 Nov rather than the 24th. And that Dooley actually struck the Cathedral and crashed 24 Nov while flying "Miss Used," #44-40277. Another pilot states that Dooley was flying "Bad Girl," #44-40288 during the latter part of Nov. #40288 crashed, but the photo indicates the bird made it to the field, bellied in and damage was so mild the fuselage didn't buckle. The ten original Azon ships were: "Howlin' Banshee," "A Dog's Life," "Table Stuff," "Lassie Come Home," "Bachelor's Bedlam," "Royal Flush," "Bad Girl," "Miss Used," "Shack Time," and #44-40264. "Silver Chief," #44-40201 was not an Azon aircraft.

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Requests for the unit history are still coming occasionally — most are from those who've seen another ex's copy. Cost of printing hasn't allowed a reprint so far, but I'm still checking, and if able to get the purchase price down to a reasonable one, reprint I will. Meantime, Evelyn or Clint would like to have the names and addresses of former Group members. Why not send those names when you make a contact? Someone else told nearly all of us about the association.

# MEN OF GALLANTRY

by H. C. 'Pete' Henry (44th B.G.)

A story of WWII heroism has appeared in several publications (The Mighty Eighth — Fields of Little America — etc.) but it would appear that there was more than one hero on this particular mission.

Reference is made to the mission flown to V-1 sites on the French coast, 5 Jun 44, the eve of D-Day, with Lt. Col Leon R. Vance, of the 489th B.G. in command. Following is the story as told by the Radar Navigator of that mission, Lt. Bernard W. Bail, now a practicing physician in Beverly Hills, Calif.

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One June 5, 1944 the 44th Bomb group flew a mission to the coast of France. The target was V-1 sites, near Boulogne\*, I believe, though my memory after so many years may be faulty. Earlier that week we had all been briefed and we knew that D-Day was very near: the High Command was waiting for the proper weather. On the day of our mission the sky was cloudless, yet this was not D-Day. The target was apparently important enough to merit a strike being levelled upon it.

Lt. Col. Vance, who was to accompany us as command pilot in our lead plane, had been introduced to me earlier, and I had learned somehow that he was West Point. I can recall to this day the military bearing of this tall, rangy man. He left no question in my mind that he was "all business" — a fact which suited me perfectly as he was precisely the sort of leader one wants.

The details of the briefing, our take-off, the slow circular climb to altitude and, finally, the departure from the English coast — all this requires no description (it was routine). I liked my fellow members and Captain L. Mozure, with whom I had flown two previous missions, was a man who knew what he was about.

The day, as I said, was clear, the sky bright blue. I used the radar ("Micky") to maneuver the plane to where the bombardier could take over — at the I.P. He began the bomb run. At its conclusion he yelled "Bombs away!" but nothing happened. Due to some mechanical defect, all our bombs hung up. As a result, no bombs were dropped by the other squadron and groups, either since — as may be recalled — the latter only "dropped" when the lead plane gave its easily visible signal.

In a matter of seconds the failure of our bombs to drop had become apparent and Colonel Vance immediately gave the order to circle and approach the target again. The complaints — and the language in which they were couched — coming over the intercom I think you can imagine! By now the German 88's were

pretty much zeroed in on us and by the time we got on target again and let our bombs drop, we had caught it. Almost immediately the plane was hit and started to fall; Captain Mozure was killed instantly.

The Colonel, who was standing between pilot and co-pilot, directly in front of me, looked down to see his foot hanging by a shred of skin.

Our bomb bay was still open and I could see a couple of bombs still hung up. The co-pilot cut all the engines and turned the plane toward the English shore. On calling the various members of the crew I was relieved to discover that no one was badly injured. Meanwhile, however, we were nearing the coast on no engines since we feared the plane might catch fire and blow up. When the shore line came into view I instructed the crew to bail out: they all did, including the co-pilot. Only Captain Vance and I remained behind in the plane. I managed to get him down in my seat. Then I took off my belt and wound it around his thigh in order to stop the blood from spurting. I said we'd have to jump. There was no way to land the plane, especially since the bombs hung up in the back were ready to go off on impact.

Not being a doctor then, I wasn't fully aware that the Colonel was in shock and that I, too, was probably in a state of some shock on account of the events and the rapidity with which they had occurred. At any rate, when the Colonel shook his head and said he wouldn't jump, I knew by looking at him that there was no way I could drag him to the bomb bay and push him out. I knew, too, that the plane was losing altitude fast. I hadn't much time. I checked the tourniquet one last time, shook his hand and plunged from the open bomb bay.

When I next saw Colonel Vance — for I did see him again — I was on my way to a "Flak Home" for a week. While the other members of the crew went on ahead, I stopped by the hospital where, when he saw me, the Colonel smiled and related what seemed a miraculous tale to me. After I had bailed out, he had gotten into the cockpit and succeeded in putting the plane down in the Channel. The impact had blown him clear of the plane. He had been picked up quickly and had received immediate medical attention. The Colonel told me moreover that he was eager to get back into combat and that once he was well he would. He then expressed his gratitude to me for having saved his life, promising to put me in for a very high decoration once he returned to his group. We shook hands on parting and I said I was glad we was essentially all right and that I hoped we would meet again.

The end of the story came to me later. I heard that the Colonel was flown home by a hospital plane which was lost over the Atlantic.

When Lt. Bevalacqua — the Decorations Officer of the 44th Bomb Group — offered me and O.L.C. for my part in saving the Colonel's life, I refused it. My reasons were not complex: I felt I had done what I had done not for a medal, certainly not for an oak leaf cluster, but in order to save a gallant man.

The story's epilogue occurred several years later while I was attending my first year of medical school, if memory serves me. I was invited to Washington, D.C., to witness the awarding of the Medal of Honor to Col. Vance, whose widow was to accept it. The Colonel had merited the Medal of Honor for the usual reasons, I suppose, that one is awarded this highest decoration by our country with its greatest appreciation.

I recall that I was too poor at the time to travel to Washington to witness the ceremony. As a postscript to this short reminiscence of Col. Vance, I might add that, of the crew that survived that ill-fated mission, none was able to fly more than one or two subsequent missions. They couldn't cope with the anxiety.

I went on to fly the rest of my tour of combat, however, until the 25th mission when our plane was jumped by a couple of ME-109's. The entire crew, with the exception of four of us, was killed over Germany near Stuttgart. The tail gunner sustained leg injuries that necessitated amputation of his leg, which I witnessed. I myself was wounded in my head and neck, for which I later received a Purple Heart. The young tail gunner later died of gangrene; I was present at his burial in the little town of Goppingen, near Stuttgart, where we were being held prisoner. He was buried between an unknown Polish and unknown Russian soldier.

The following day Easter services were held by the Germans and the three of us — my radio man, my waist gunner and I — were permitted to attend. We were eventually set free by the 10th Armored Division, but that is quite another story.

\*"The Mighty Eighth" lists target near Wimereaux

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It is most unfortunate that Col Vance later lost his life, both because he indeed was a hero deserving of the Medal of Honor, and because he most assuredly would have corroborated Lt. Bail's story and seen to it that the man who may have saved his life received something more rewarding than an Oak Leaf Cluster to the Air Medal.

If there are any members of Captain Mazure's crew on this mission reading this article, your recollections would be much appreciated.

# LETTERS

Dear Bill:

I don't know if you can use this or not for the 389th column in the Newsletter but I'll send it along anyway.

This is a picture of a tail gunner and pilot getting together at Lake Geneva after 33 years. Tail gunner George F. "Red" Clark on the left and pilot Frank J. Schwermin, 389th, 567 Squadron. We flew 19 missions before being shot down on July 25, 1944.



The man on the far right is John Kemp, also of the 389th. This picture was taken on the first night at Lake Geneva when we enjoyed that good dinner. Keep up the good work.

Sincerely,

George F. Clark, 389th

(ed: Always happy to oblige George, and that was a good dinner.)

Dear Evelyn:

Today we received our March Newsletter and only glanced thru it planning to read it more thoroughly at a later date. "Norwich 1979" caught our eye immediately so we are at this date sending in our \$50. deposit. In 1975 we were 25th, but after all the good times then I hope we're within the 240.

I am contacting Rainwater in Oklahoma (the Chief), the Youngs (the friendly undertaker) in Perryville, Mo. and the Wagners in Indiana so we can all make plans together. These are people we met on our charter out of Chicago in 1975. These are great people we wouldn't have met otherwise. We hope that the reservations are so great that another stretched DC8 will depart from the Midwest.

Bless you for your untiring efforts along with a splendid Newsletter Staff to make the 2nd ADA so great. Also have an order in for "Fields of Little America" as Chief Rainwater wrote that it's tremendous. I would hope that Hilda (Gold Star Mother in Norwich) will make it along with us.

Respectfully,

Dal Howard, 389th

(ed: Staff? Staff? Where are you hiding staff? Come out, come out wherever you are. Man, do we need help!)

Hi Evelyn:

Please accept my reservation for 1 single occupancy in the main building.

I am looking forward to this reunion with great expectations and pleasure!

Now I have some very sad news to report; a recent fire has totally destroyed the San Diego Aero-Space Museum and the adjacent Aviation Hall of Fame! The museum was located in Balboa Park near the zoo and other interesting attractions. I had hoped to arrange guided tours to this facility during the forthcoming reunion.

However all is not lost as far as entertainment is concerned, what with Sea World, the famous Zoo, the harbour shops, and Mexico nearby. So I'm sure you Easterners will have a most enjoyable vacation and reunion.

Welcome to So. California!

Sincerely yours,

Richard W. Ford, 467th

To Evelyn Cohen:

Enclosed will find a check for my membership dues, which is a new one.

My sister saw the article in the paper that Pete had put in and sent it to me. I am sure glad she did.

Thanking you,

John E. McCloskey, 445th BG

Dear Pete (Henry):

Last night the Elgin Courier News quite prominently featured your Letter to the Editor regarding your efforts to contact members of the 2nd Air Division. That noble attempt has elicited this response.

I was a member of the Hq & Hq Squadron of the 2AD serving in the A-1 section (Personnel) for most of my 2½ years in England, having been stationed at Hethel, Old Catton, Horsham St. Faith and Ketteringham Hall. I was a corporal working in the files section.

I would very much like to have my name listed on your roster and become a dues paying member of your organization. And I hope most sincerely that circumstance would allow me to join you in Norwich in 1979. Some years ago I ran into Jordan Uttal who attended a Norwich reunion back in the early 60's. His narration of your reception by the people of Norwich caused us both to have tears in our eyes.

Last month while registering at the Holiday Inn at Warsaw, Indiana the desk clerk happened to be a former citizen of Norwich who married an American airman. We spent a pleasant 20 minutes talking about the old days and about her visit on a vacation with her family some 6 years ago.

My best wishes for a fruitful search. Looking forward to hearing from you and the possibility of renewing some old acquaintances.

Sincerely yours,

Walter E. Hilberg, Hdq

Dear Evelyn:

The December News Letter was interesting and informative. My check for 1978 dues and Memorial Fund is enclosed.

My Group was the 458th, 755th Sq., Horsham St. Faith, Norwich. Members of the crew included Capt. B. Brumby, Pilot; Lt. E. Wilcox, Co-Pilot and Lt. E. Gepelt, Navigator, all 2nd Air Div. members I believe. As Bombardier I was the "Sack Time Kid".

Just thought I'd let you know we have high hopes of all being together for "Norwich '79". Will also try to contact other crew members.

Your work is much appreciated.

Sincerely,

Don Fraser

Dear Ms. Cohen:

Enclosed please find my check for \$7.00 covering membership dues for the Second Air Division.

The reunion notice in January's issue of the VFW Magazine triggered my immediate communication with Don Olds, Group Chairman of the 453rd Bomb Group.

I was co-pilot of John McKay's crew in the 453rd Bomb Group in April and May, 1944. We were shot down on May 8, 1944 and spent the rest of the war in Stalag Luft III & other P.O.W. camps.

Would appreciate hearing from old buddies of the West Compound, Stalag Luft III, Nuremberg and Moosburg.

Cordially,

John Murphy, 453rd

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, 392nd

Dear Evelyn:

Please find enclosed my check for \$12.00 for enrollment as a member and \$5.00 for the Memorial Fund. I was the navigator on Miller's crew in the 733rd Sq. of the 453rd BG from July '44 through Jan. '45.

My old friend and Co-pilot of our crew, Frank Ekas, visited us in January and left several copies of your Newsletter. It is an excellently written and edited letter and I found many names and events that recalled fond memories of England.

Guy R. Dutcher, 453rd

Dear Evelyn:

I got my Newsletter and it made me think, did I pay my dues? I checked my checkbook and found that I hadn't. The dues are enclosed.

We are looking forward to going to Norwich in '79 as we have two daughters and two grandsons there at Gt. Yarmouth.

I see my old friend Earl Zimmerman wrote a story about my plane and pilot. I flew six missions with Lt. Foley. That was the night that two G.I.'s took me to the base hospital in the Generals staff car and I got it all bloody. I never did find out who the G.I.s were nor did I find out who the General was. If I can get the info I will send Bill a letter.

Clifford Behee, 389th

(ed: Better that the General never finds out who you were!)

Dear Ms. Cohen:

Thank you so much for the application to join the 2nd A.D. Assn.

While speaking with George Reynolds by phone 2 weeks or so ago he mentioned he would see to it that I received such. I can't help but mention now while writing you, that while speaking with George, I found him to be one of the most interesting, pleasant people to converse with about B-24s in years. He must be able to display these same qualities on most any other subject as well I'm sure. Indeed it was a most enjoyable experience.

Sorry I'm so late in joining up, but like so many others caught up in today's "rat race" never seemed to have time to stop and smell the flowers.

Best wishes to all members.

Frederick D. Slocum, 458th, 467th

(ed: Can't agree with you more about George.)

Dear Evelyn:

Enclosed you will find my check in the amount of 7 dollars for membership in the Second Air Division Association. I would have done this at an earlier date but I unfortunately misplaced the nice letter Pete Henry had sent me from Jamesburg, New Jersey last August.

I would be grateful as hell if you could send me any pertinent facts regarding the reunion coming up in San Diego, and I am absolutely thrilled thinking about the Norwich, England reunion. Imagine after all these years, a chance to go back and relive those wonderful hazardous, everything years. I sound like a poet don't I. Anyway, I am eagerly awaiting any information you send me, and am looking forward to renewing old friendships.

My warmest regards,

Big Bernie Kirschner, 467th

Dear Ms. Cohen:

W. K. Frye M.D. 467th lost his life in a drowning accident Feb. 11, 1978 on Lake Parrish, Parrish, Florida.

I do not know what procedure you follow concerning death notices. We would appreciate a notice of his death being printed in your publications. My daughters and I would like to hear from any of his former air force friends.

Sincerely,

Patsy L. Frye  
3410 Riverview Bldg.  
Bradenton, Florida 33505

Dear Bill:

Many thanks for the latest 2nd Air Division Newsletter that arrived safely yesterday and which helped me a great deal to forget about some fearsome fuel bills that arrived by the same post.

So Mahlon F. Dempewolf would like to know where Coombe House is. Well it's a long way from Old Buck, that is British standards, being situated in the town of Shaftesbury, which is about one hundred miles west of London, in the County of Dorset. I understand that Coombe House, or A.A.F. Station No. 523, A.S.C. 70th. Repl. Depot as it was known during the latter part of the war, is now a girls school.

I may have given Harold Hutchcroft the only item of wreckage recently recovered from his crashed aircraft, as mentioned in the story on page 11 of the Newsletter, but I certainly got the best of the deal with Harold's full story of his incredible escape from the crash for inclusion in a book I am currently preparing about Allied airmen who escaped from crashing or crashed aircraft in the County of Norfolk during the Second World War.

Should any more of your troops have similar interesting stories to tell of escapes from crashes and would like them included in my book, could you please inform them that I would be extremely pleased to hear from them. Also, if the exact location of a crash in Norfolk can be pin-pointed I might just be able to find a piece or two of B-24 wreckage to send back to the story-teller. Even after over thirty years the Norfolk countryside is still littered with fragments of WW2 aircraft wreckage the salvage crews left behind.

Big disappointment! I was intending to send you a snow-plough but the postman said my letter was over weight, so I had to leave it out.

Hoping that you are keeping fit and well and looking forward to seeing you in Norwich for the '79 Reunion. Mike Bailey and Tony North send their regards.

Sincerely,

Christopher Gotts

(ed: *Shoot the Postman. I could have used that plow!*)

Dear Ms. Cohen:

I am interested in belonging to the Second Air Division Association. I am enclosing my dues for \$7.00.

While I was associated with three different Groups in the 2nd Division I wish to be put into the 392nd with which I spent the greater part of my time in England. The other two groups with which I had some association were: 389th at Hethel and the 453 at Old Buckingham.

I learned of the organization through an article in a trade magazine for Funeral Directors submitted by a Mr. Edward C. Young of Perryville, Missouri.

Thank you.

Sincerely yours,

Edward M. Brewster

(ed: *And thank you Ed Young.*)

Ms. Cohen:

Request information for membership to the 2nd Air Division Association. I was with the 446th Bomb Gp. when I first went to England near Norwich, and later was assigned to the 491st Bomb Gp. near Kings Lynn.

Recently in a Buffalo newspaper I read about the 2nd Air Division Association and would like to know more about it.

Enclosed is a money order to take care of any expenses. Also am enclosing the article that I read, and I am sure it will be of interest to you.

I have been given your name and address by Mr. LaRussa — whom the article is about.

Sincerely,

Stanley Dombkowski, 491st

(ed: *It does pay to advertise.*)

Dear Ms. Cohen:

Many thanks for your quick action on my subscription. Enclosed you will find a check to cover the \$2.00 difference on my subscription and \$7.00 for a subscription in the name of Joy Smith, 2133 Rainbow, Laramie, Wyoming, 82070. "Skipper" Smith was my pilot on "Flak Magnet" in the 68th Bomb Squadron, and when we finished our tour at the end of 1944, he volunteered for another tour, becoming Squadron Commander eventually.

The News Letter is extremely interesting, setting juices going that have been latent for many a year. In the issue you sent me I found a letter from one of the men I knew well at Shipdham.

You, William G. Robertie, and whoever else are responsible for the News Letter and organizing activities should get the appropriate medal with three Oak Leaf clusters.

Sincerely,

Jacob T. Elias

(ed: *Would you go for four Jacob. I'm greedy!*)

Dear Bill:

We were on a mission in 1944 flying with the 445th BG. While over enemy territory one of our engines conked out so we called for fighter support to get us back. After a little sweating on our part we looked out and saw this beautiful P-51 pop up out of nowhere.

He would not come close to us and we were puzzled until we found out that one of our gunners being leery of him would not lower his guns. After a few words the guns went down and then he socked it in close.



Above is the picture we took of him and you will notice on the engine cowling the name "Georgia Peach". I have often wondered who he was and after checking my book on "The Mighty Eighth" I think he belonged to the 355th FG. I hope somebody in the Association can identify him.

Thanking you,

John E. McCloskey, 445th

(ed: *Where are you Roger Freeman?*)

Dear Evelyn:

Here is the address for Michael Carrigan you asked me for. He came down here and bought a house. I was selling him the insurance on it and he kept looking at me rather oddly. Finally he asked if I had been a pilot with the 389th who was shot down in Sweden. I answered yes. He said "I was with you. I was your ball turret gunner!" I had just received the Newsletter and showed it to him. Funny things do happen!

Sincerely,

John Forsyth, 389th

(ed: *Funny things do indeed happen. Selling Real Estate instead of blowing it up has to rank as one!*)

Dear Evelyn:

John and I want to take time to thank you for all of your time and hard work spent each year selecting a reunion site. We sincerely appreciate the excellent accommodations and festivities resulting from your many long hours of planning. Each year we look forward with much enthusiasm to receiving reservation news about the reunion.

Enclosed is our check and reservation information. We hope to be assigned near other 93rd members. Please do not hesitate to notify us if any change is necessary. We will arrive July 11th. We understand we will be responsible to the hotel for the extra days. Again many thanks.

John & Bee Sullivan, 93rd

Dear Evelyn:

I received my News Letter today and it struck me that I hadn't paid my dues. Enclosed is my check for \$32.00: \$7.00 for dues and the balance as you see fit to either make up for someone unable to pay dues or to go to the Norwich Memorial Fund.

Congratulations on the News Letter. It is truly an outstanding piece of work. The only change I could hope for now is more frequent publication. But then, of course, I'm only kidding.

I am now the proud owner of two beautiful books: "The Mighty Eighth" and "Fields of Little America". Both were ordered through the Liberator Club located in San Diego, Ca. I have had Allan Blue's Pictorial History of the Lib. on order since a year ago last March but the Club says that chances of ever getting this book are mighty slim. Some kind of a publishers foul up I'm told.

And, before I forget, which I do a lot of lately it seems, thanks for the decal. It's a great work of art and I hope everyone else appreciates it as much as I do.

Sincerely,

Gene F. Gabriel, 458 BG - 754 BS

(ed: *More frequent publication? Certainly. Your elected!*)

Dear Evelyn:

I was recently reading the June 2nd Air Division News letter and I came across the article written by Joseph T. Michalczyk from the 448th BG.

Joe mentioned a booklet being written about our group 448th, I would sure like to get one of the booklets.

To further enlighten you about my stint as a Pilot in the 2nd Air Division, I flew right seat with a Pilot named Jim Conrad, our first airplane was named "Abie's Irish Rose". This airplane was shot down somewhere near La Havre. I and my crew were on stand down that day and another crew took the bird out. Our next plane was named No Name Jive (I think). We were shot down in this bird at the end of August 1944. We all must have a year as a unwelcome guest of the Fatherland. "Kriegsge fagnen". As far as I know there were two people from No Name Jive who survived and they were Royal D. Grumbach and Albert De Lorenzo.

If any of the members of the 714th Bomb Squadron are among your members please feel free to contact me.

Thank You.

Joseph R. Gonzales, 448th

Dear Bill:

I have just received the current News Letter and read Mr. Earl Zimmerman's interesting article concerning the ramming during the Duneberg raid on April 7, 1945. This is the same instance on which I sent my recollections. In rechecking my notes, I must agree with Mr. Zimmerman's identification of the type of German fighter involved. It was a ME109. My article incorrectly stated that the attacking and ramming plane was a FW190.

Sincerely,

Robert S. Ramsay, Jr.

Dear Bill:

With regard to John Hildebran's letter in the last News Letter asking if anyone might have completed a tour in less than 78 days, I would like to submit the name of Lt. Charles C. Griffin of the 491st BG. "Griff" flew 30 missions between 2 June and 2 August 1944 — 62 days.

Sincerely,

Al Blue, S.M.

(ed: *Anyone for 60 days? The winner gets to do it all over again!*)

Dear Evelyn:

Your newsletter of March, 1978, had special interest for me.

First, Thomas E. Bowman lives about eight miles away and I am happy to see that he was "found." The letter from Robert L. Salzarulo, Col. USAF (Ret.) makes me curious if he was the Major Salzarulo in charge of a barracks at Langwasser 13-D prison camp near Norwich. If so, I would like to hear from him about the peanutbutter theft episode about February, 1945. It is included in a yet unpublished sequel to my book, "Elusive Horizons." The incident, "Scorpion Eggs," by Earl Zimmerman, describes his experience on a mission that is part of the story in the aforementioned published book. (A. S. Barnes — 1969). And, I was flying with the 67th Squadron, 44th BG, which was the subject of a note and photo, by Howard Brunner, when I bought it on my tenth trip.

Incidentally, does anyone know what happened to the B-24, Sweet Eloise, 29511, which I flew to England and which was sent on to an experience crew while we collected our smarts before getting into combat?

Thanks for listening. And, best regards.

Sincerely,

Keith C. Schuyler, 44th

Dear Roy (Jonasson):

I was pleased to see your article in the Santa Maria Times on 18 Mar 78. We have for some time, been looking for former members of the 564th Heavy Bomb Squadron.

The 564th Strategic Missile Squadron is presently at Malmstrom Air Force Base, Montana, with launch control facilities and missiles located 50-95 miles north of Great Falls. You can be justly proud of your squadron as it has progressed from B-24 heavy bombers in 1943 through B-36 very heavy bombers, Atlas ICBMs, Minuteman II ICBMs to Minuteman III ICBMs. Currently, the 564 SMS is the most modern Minuteman squadron in the United States Air Force and is equipped and operates with the latest technology available.

We are proud of our heritage and as an expression of that pride we are incorporating a historical memorabilia section in our squadron display. We would be pleased to display appropriate items from the Bomb Squadron days with proper credit being given on the captions. Likewise, we would like to inform other former members of our current status and invite you all to stop by and visit the squadron and its facilities when you are in Montana.

The enclosed squadron patch is a small token of our appreciation for your dedication during "The Big War," and for helping to keep our squadron heritage alive.

Sincerely,

Clark W. Ward  
Lt. Colonel, USAF  
Commander  
Dept. of the Air Force  
564th Strategic Missile Sqdn. (SAC)  
Malmstrom Air Force Base  
Montana, 59402

Dear Evelyn:

In the Roster I am listed only in the 467th BG. I also belong to the 492nd and 801st. Would you please rectify this in the next Roster?

I am enclosing check for \$100.00 as a down payment on the hotel room as per our phone conversation. Will send the remainder June 1st.

Thank you,

Arcade J. Boisselle, 467th, 492nd, 801st  
*(ed: Keep it up Archie and you'll belong to the Luftwaffe also!)*

Dear Evelyn:

GREETINGS FROM THE PRAIRIES OF SOUTH DAKOTA!! I have just finished reading several articles in the "News Letter" for March 1978. How I wish it were possible for Gladys and I to be with you in San Diego this coming July; however, business conditions just make it impossible to make this reunion. You can rest assured our thoughts and prayers are with you as you will gather on the West Coast.

I am herewith enclosing my check for \$50 towards the return to Norwich in 1979. The two excursions that I have made with 2 A.D. back to Norwich have been highlights of my life. We will be making plans during the coming year to be with you on this 1979 reunion.

I sincerely hope you can fill two or three planes with members of 2 A.D. for this rendezvous in the Norwich area.

With personal regards, I remain.

Sincerely yours,

Lenard Ludwig, 44th, Hdq.  
*(ed: Mention two planes to Evelyn again Lenard and you will be handed your head!)*

Dear Evelyn:

Interest item — Please see last page of March 78 Newsletter, "Looking Back". I flew B-24, tail marking "V" as co-pilot on August 3, 1944. Target was Mery-Sur-Oise, France. According to the mission diary kept by Sgt. Robert Ferrell, one of our waist gunners, this B-24 had the unambiguous name of "Practical Bitch". You will recall the original diary was presented to the Memorial Library during the 1975 reunion. Not sure I agree with the caption "Nice tight formation", but it is a fine action photograph. Wonder if anyone knows the date that the picture was taken? Maybe that was the day I flew!

Best regards,

Bob Dubowsky, 44th

Dear Evelyn:

Please find enclosed check #3461, in the amount of \$7.00, payable for the Second Air Division Association for Carl F. Bau, Sr. This man accomplished all the arranging for the 562nd Air Force Band 17 piece jazz band and without him, we would have been next to nothing in my opinion. Although we had some very fine musicians, I'm sure that all will agree arranging was very essential.

With the membership of Carl Baum, I have now been able to bring our total membership up to eight. I have the names and addresses of five more and won't rest until I have 100% membership.

Cheers,

Earl D. Brown, Hdq.  
*(ed: Right on Earl. Maybe that band will play at one of our reunions yet.)*

Dear Evelyn Cohen:

Enclosed find a check in the amount of \$14.00, which covers my dues for 1978 and for the dues of a new member. It is odd how you meet people, especially in my business. While serving on a committee of our local Board of Realtors, I got into a conversation with another member and we started talking about the BIG WAR. Lo and behold, we had served in the same Bomb Group, in England, and had missed each other there by days. He had been shot down not more than two weeks of the date I joined the Group.

So, if you send acknowledgements to the new members, you can tell Roy "this drink's on me".

The other \$7.00 is for dues for a new member; Roy J. Fulco, 810 Cardinal Street, Shreveport, Louisiana 71105, 1-318-861-3502. Roy was a Pilot, 1st Lt., 93rd Bomb Gp (H). Originally with 328th sq., later with 329th Sq., left U.S., July 4, 1944, shot down, Sept. 11, 1944.

I'll meet you on the Buncher!

Edward L. McGuire Jr.

Dear Evelyn:

Through the article in the Second Air Division News Letter, "Lost and Found Department — 562nd Air Force Band", December 1977 issue, I am pleased to report that I have several contacts and I feel that it is now my job to enlist as many as possible into the Association.

At this time, it gives me great satisfaction to forward the personal checks of the following men in the amount of \$7.00 for membership in the Association.

Mr. William O. Shelton, Jr.  
Post Office Box 36  
Coloma, California 95613

Mr. Joseph A. Hruby  
1364 Yellowstone Road  
Cleveland Heights, Ohio 44121

When you forward the membership cards, By-Laws, etc., it would be appreciated, if possible, that a copy of the December 1977 - News Letter be included.

Through correspondence, I have been in touch with Mr. Bill Robertie advising him of the progress being made in my contacts for which all was made possible by the December 1977 News Letter.

I want to thank you and the Association for the immediate attention received in all matters.

All the best,

Earl D. Brown

*(ed: We aim to please Earl. Good luck in your search.)*

Dear Bill:

I have just finished reading both the December '77 and March '78 newsletters. The former was the best ever. The March issue I was very pleased to receive because it carried some very heartening comments from those who have already purchased copies of my book. I greatly appreciate all their help over a number of years. Your correspondence and tremendous help constantly maintained my hopes that "Fields" would some day be published.

I would like to thank each and every contributor without whom there would be no book. Many thanks for all your very kind and generous helpings of material. I have already had the very great pleasure of meeting many contributors and I look forward to meeting many more 2nd AD members when they are in Norwich. My door is open any time.

I would be pleased to continue to receive correspondence from members. I am now working on one or two other projects. My main one at the moment concerns crews shot down over enemy territory and their subsequent escape/evasion or imprisonment. I look forward very much to hearing from any ex-"Kriegies" and evadees.

Any loan of material will be very carefully handled and promptly returned. I'd also be glad to receive comments on the book. Any mistakes to be pointed out, please send under plain wrapper!

Once again many congratulations on such an outstanding newsletter. "Looking Back" by Bob Coleman is enough to make me wish I was still collecting photos for "Fields". I particularly liked the "rodeo" photos. If you are out there Bob please get in touch. The rodeo was held at Norwich City Football ground, the home of the "Canaries".

Many thanks for the decal — it's great. I look forward to seeing you and all the other 2nd AD members who will be winging their way to Norwich next year. Sorry that Paula and I cannot make the San Diego reunion.

Best wishes to you and all the great people in the 2nd AD.

Martin Bowman, S.M.  
*(ed: The book was great Martin. Kept me awake all one night!)*

# Looking Back—Nose Art

by

Bob Coleman

(from the Roy Houghton Collection—446 BG)

