



SECOND AIR DIVISION ASSOCIATION JOURNAL



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SECOND AIR DIVISION ASSOCIATION

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'T WAS THE WEEK BEFORE CHRISTMAS...

A STAY AT THE "FLAK HOUSE" IN CHOLSEY, BERKS

by Ed Hohman, 491st



Those of you who were flying combat on B-24's after things were well-established and under control, probably are familiar with the rest leave that most crews were given before completing all of their missions. It was a week's stay at a Rest Home, (or "Flak House", as air force slang would identify it).

Our crew, based at North Pickenham, and flying with the 491st Bomb Group, 852nd Bomb Squadron, had completed about a dozen missions or more. The week before Christmas in 1944, our turn came to "get away from it all". We were to spend a week at Cholsey in Berks County, away from even the occasional buzz bomb or V-2.

A few months earlier, in September, 1944, we had experienced the loss of our pilot, Lt. Evan L. McClung, over Karlshue, Germany. After that, we flew with a number of other pilots. (Lieutenants Fleming, Marsico and Last come to mind, as well as co-pilots Pitts, Pallor and Staggs.)

I don't know whether we deserved or needed the week's rest leave, but off we went. (Unlike many military ventures, at least *THIS TIME* we *knew* where we were going!)

We arrived at Cholsey and were taken to what must have been a English Manor, or certainly what was once the estate of someone who was far above the poverty level! It was nice. It felt good to put on the civilian clothes they gave us. (I even wound up with a pair of TENNIS SHOES!) If we were to relax and forget about being shot at over Germany, this

place was sure designed to help us do just that!

The food was far removed from the usual G.I. fare, and the addition of a drink before the evening meal, tea (and crumpets!) in the afternoon, and (get this!) juice served by a BUTLER in your bedroom in the morning, really made you aware of your being treated like "V.I.P.'s!"

Movies were shown in a large living room. I seem to recall seeing Elizabeth Taylor (when she was quite young and much slimmer looking!) in "National Velvet". There were organized games. Attractive Red Cross hostesses were part of the planned activities . . . all of which, by the way, were *strictly* legit! I can remember going to town and visiting a pub with some of the crew and coming back later in the evening and relating some of our experiences to these hostesses. They must have been good listeners. I'm sure our escapades were rather boring. Back then, and under those conditions, one would often find something quite hilarious that today would have no humor to it at all. Perhaps that was one of the good things about being young and unsophisticated. (Especially when you had to risk your neck every time you flew over Germany!)

Since Christmas was just a week away, the officer in charge of the Rest Home had planned a party for children in the area who were refugees from the London bombings. Whether orphaned or just removed from the city and the ever-present danger, I'm not sure, but

we all looked forward to seeing them at the party.

Somehow the fact that I was interested in art and cartooning became evident, and I was given all sorts of art supplies to work with during my stay. I'm not sure just how it came about so I can't take credit for initiating the idea, but I wound up making hand-painted Christmas cards for every child that came to the party! There must have been TWO DOZEN cards, each with a Santa Claus on the front saying "Merry Christmas, Jimmy" (or Sue, or Mary etc.). I'd hate to tackle the same job today, even with years of art experience, but at that time, and that place, it was a very pleasant, enjoyable assignment.

I watched the children come into the large, well-decorated dining room and take their places at the table. The joy and excitement that filled the faces of those children as they picked up their VERY OWN Christmas card was really reward enough for what I had done.

I've been fortunate since the war. I've licked a bout with cancer. I'm far from wealthy, but I have a wife, a home, a secure job, and a very profitable and interesting side-line. I'm being repaid many times over for the cards I produced for those children so many years ago in England. I now *write* greeting cards for the card publishers here in the States. (Although I've also sold a few in Canada and England, too!) At the present time, a book I've written on the subject is being considered by a publisher. But come what may, I'll never forget that week before Christmas, 1944, at Cholsey, Berks!

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The President's Corner

By the time you read this article, it is expected that the Second Air Division Association will have received IRS Exempt Organization Status. There will be more about this in other section(s) of this Journal, but we think it is important that you are all made aware of this so that your most welcome contributions to the Memorial Library fund may be deducted from your 1979 Federal Income Tax returns.

Speaking of Federal Income Tax returns, if you've ever had trouble with a 1040, you should take a crack at the 1024 to obtain Exempt Organization status. Our application consisted of 28 pages plus the Second Air Division Memorial booklet of 36 pages. (Bill Robertie still has some of these booklets available. It is an excellent story of the Memorial founding, dedication and trust. Price (tell 'em Bill).)

Also by the time you read this, your Executive Committee (13 members) will have held a meeting in Philadelphia November 17. This committee seldom meets between reunions and they deserve your plaudits for attending this meeting on their own time and at their own expense (except 2ADA paid for dinner after the meeting). The members

came from California, Indiana, Virginia, No. Carolina, Maryland, Pennsylvania and New Jersey.

Among the subjects discussed at this meeting were 1980-1981 budget, convention sites for 1981 and 1982, possible revisions to the convention package, etc. If we can complete them on time, the minutes will appear in this Journal. If not, we'll publish them in the March Journal.

As you all should know by now, the 33rd reunion of the 2ADA will be held in Cambridge, Mass. (near Boston) over the July Fourth weekend. We are changing the format slightly in that we will have the Annual Business meeting on Friday, July 4th and the Second Annual (minus 1979) Second Air Division Assn. Golf Tourney will be held Saturday, July 5. George Washburn (44th B.G.) is the Chairman of the Golf Committee and is researching the area to find a golf course that will present a challenge to the 2ADA 'Pros'. He may not be ready for your reservation sas yet, and it's much too early to provide him with your handicap, but it's something to think about over those long winter months ahead. More about this in the December and March Journals.

Howard C. Henry, Jr.
President



MERRY CHRISTMAS
HAPPY HANUKKAH
HAPPY NEW YEAR



Over the past few years our membership has increased tremendously and with this increase we have found ourselves with many, many new friends. This has delighted us and we cherish them all, but it has created a problem in our ability to send seasons greetings to everybody.

We are taking this opportunity to wish all our friends - old, new and those yet to be made - a very Merry Christmas, a happy Hanukkah and a prosperous New Year.

From all the Officers
to
All Our Members

IRISH SAFARI

by
ART CULLEN

(44th BG)



Following the highly successful 1979 reunion in Norwich, members dispersed into splinter groups for tours throughout the British Isles and/or the continent. One of these groups — Evelyn and Lillian Cohen, their niece and nephew Karen and Neal Wolf, Hazel and Bill Robertie, Hathy, Caron and Milt Veynar, and Jackie Hanify — crossed St. George's Channel from Wales, landed in the Irish port of Rosslare and began an auto tour of Southeastern Ireland highlighted by a two day stay at a medieval Norman Castle owned, restored and operated by one of our own.

Three rental cars were picked up at the ferry quay and this Irish safari headed out across the lush countryside.

None of the drivers had any recent experience in the southpaw British and Irish driving system and there was much gamesmanship displayed, and ditches explored, as the Americans dueled the Irish for the little space available on the narrow roads. All this at very high speeds, I hasten to add.

First stop was New Ross famed as the ancestral digs of the Kennedy clan. A fine meal and a nights rest at a small but comfortable hotel and the group continued on to Cork. A meal in Kelly's Kitchen, a shopping and antique spree and it was off to Blarney and the famous castle of the same name. A nearby shop specialized in hand knitted Irish wool sweaters and many wallets left the shop considerably lighter.

A strike of Postal employees was in progress and this, plus a shortage of gasoline made for a bleak outlook. My car was low on gas and with a 60 mile drive ahead I pulled into a garage to fill up. The owner dolefully explained that he would be pleased to sell me some, knowing we were tourists, however he was under an allotment and must save his supply for his local customers. I countered this with a tale of how I had squandered my gas in Cobh searching for relatives of my maternal grandmother. Having heard this he moved to the pump and doled out five gallons, at \$2.18 per imperial gallon!

Arriving in Rackheath 60 miles to the north we found the picturesque Castle Matrix, a restored and habitable Norman

castle dating back to the 13th century, whose major domo is Sean J. O'Driscoll, former gunnery officer, 14th Wing Headquarters, and a member of the 2nd Air Division.

Sean greeted the visitors and gave a short history of the castle and his 18 year effort in restoring it. A tour of the premises and assignment of quarters followed. The accommodations, while faithfully retaining the medieval atmosphere, were modern and comfortable.

A welcome feature was the stone floors, not unlike flagstone, heated throughout by electric elements embedded in the cement subflooring. All bedrooms had baths or showers and some even sported a sauna. Furnishings ranged from antique to ancient with many authentic artifacts and examples of weaponry gracing the walls of the Great Hall. The total project reflected a long and detailed effort to search out and restore authenticity to the ancient structure.



The basic castle, separate but connected to the guest quarters was filled with the imagined atmosphere of the Court of King Arthur including a spiral, stone staircase, balconied banquet hall, baronial living quarters, a chapel and a private dungeon complete with secret entrance.

The staircase, the only access to five floors of rooms, circled up to a heavy

timbered door leading out to the battlements. Serrated structures surrounded the roof and this was the main defense facility of the castle. The view of the green countryside from this point was spectacular.

The first evening meal was a reproduction of a medieval feast including lamb roasted on a spit before the huge stone fireplace. The meals and service throughout our stay at the castle were exceptional.



After leaving Squire O'Driscoll, the safari returned via Waterford (named by the Danes) where the group toured the crystal factory and were greatly impressed by the skill and craftsmanship required in turning out the famous glassware. Prior to leaving Waterford another shopping spree developed, much to the delight and profit of one Joseph Knox, Ltd., and during which many pieces of Waterford Crystal changed hands.

The most outstanding piece, and the most expensive, was purchased by Lillian Cohen who just HAD to have it. It was a beautiful and delicate porcelain two foot figure of a horse and rider. Thereafter this fragile Object D'art became the ward of the entire group, and we all heaved a sigh of relief when it reached its Philadelphia destination in one piece.

Following this six day visit, we returned to London having thoroughly enjoyed the Emerald Isle, but with our enthusiasm and affection for East Anglia in general, and Norwich in particular, not the slightest diminished.

SHIPDHAM — Spring, 1944

by Will Lundy (44th BG)

I just don't possess the words to describe the feelings inside me as I stand dejectedly here on the empty hardstand. Crushed, heartbroken, defeated, lonely, and more than a little guilty. Maybe I could have done just a little bit more, maybe —

In the cul-de-sac nearby there are the usual post mission activities of gassing up, patching flak and bullet holes, engine check, covering up, etc., fully underway. But here — my plane is missing! My pleas to the adjacent departing combat crews for any hint of its fate resulted in merely that it had been hit, feathered #2 engine, and fell behind.

Too upset to leave the line, I keep busy moving things around, making sure everything is in readiness for her return, kicking the weeds, watching the sky and then the jeeps and power wagons as they busily travel the perimeter. Then suddenly one screeches to a halt and the line chief yells "They're safe!! They landed on the Coast without too much damage." I almost needed a parachute to bring me safely back to earth. What a relief! Sweating out the safe return of all those big birds will always be tough; the failure of any to make it keeps getting worse.

About 10 days later my crew chief, George Baccash, was alerted to leave in the morning to check out the airplane — to take a command car and four of us so-called mechanics to make sure the plane is shipshape. A maintenance crew had changed an engine, repaired the other battle damage and left. They were not B-24 men, so we are to make certain all is in order, and that she is again air worthy. The airplane is in southern England on an R.A.F. fighter base.

Except for our crew chiefs and line chiefs most line personnel are buck sergeants or less, regardless of the recommended ratings. Ratings of staff sergeants and above must be reserved for combat crews in case they are captured by the enemy they can't be put on work assignments. Consequently, four of us making the trip had to scurry around to find coats with staff sergeant stripes so we could all eat better in the officer's mess on English air bases. Food just wasn't available otherwise for military personnel in cafes, etc.

The trip south through London to Brighton was long and rather slow in our command car. There was little traffic other than military and bicycles but the roads were narrow and poorly marked, for us, anyway. Brighton in peacetime is a bustling sea resort area, but now the beach is strung with rows of rolled barbed wire, land mines and other assorted hardware to protect against invasion. So we ride on past the formidable beach, turn east and follow the coastline to Eastbourne where we have hotel re-

servations for the night. Like most hotels these days there are few guests other than military. The hotel bar was open to all until 9 PM and then closed. But as soon as all non-residents left, the bar again opened for guests. And the five of us were the guests. True to the custom of all pubs each time the bar opens a fresh bottle of whiskey is opened. And, to uphold tradition we did our part to keep that bottle from getting old and spoiled. Good scotch is too hard to find. At bedtime (or was it a little later) we found it much easier and terribly funny to negotiate the stairs up to our rooms on our hands and knees.

In the morning we drove (thank goodness it wasn't on bicycles) over to the RAF fighter base situated on a bluff overlooking the Channel. There she was! Our pretty B-24 was parked near a row of trees looking fit and ready. After thorough and complete examination both inside and out, plus a run-up of all four engines, she was accepted with flying colors.

For lunch we drove to a larger base further inland, finally locating the officers mess building, then went inside. I was more than a little shocked. This was my first introduction to the officers eating quarters whether it be American or English. I knew ours were better than the enlisted man's, but this was ridiculous. The room had several long, plain tables with benches to match, and very little else. Cups for tea, milk, but no sugar, a few rough slices of brown bread and some pieces of cheese. That was it! But eat and be thankful. If this is the best food served to officers think what the poor enlisted man must get!

After lunch(?) and shortly before we were ready to drive back to Eastbourne the air raid sirens began their chilling, undulating screeching. And in a very few moments we could hear the approach of a V-1. You only have to hear one buzz bomb to instantly identify it forever more. What a terrible uproar they make. In a few seconds it was obvious that the damned thing was going to come right over us. Too late now to look for a shelter; besides it was still under full power. Also, we were unable to see it due to the low overcast, so we stood our ground and waited — momentarily. 'Cause just at that second came the chattering of machine guns, but not from any ground defenders, but from *above* us. Zip — and we were gone — all five of us in different directions, diving under any cover. A buzz bomb with machine guns? — couldn't be.

We slowly picked ourselves up and tried to get organized again as we sought to find some explanation for this bizarre experience. Some British soldiers finally explained it to us. It seems we were in the middle of one of several V-1 flyways from the continent to London. The buzz

(they do more than buzz) bombs are programmed to fly in low enough to be under the almost continuous low clouds, thereby hiding them from attack visually both from above and below. To counteract this strategy, ground stations were set up in pairs, one on each side of the flyway. Every so often another station is established all along the corridor. When a V-1 passes a station a pair of sky rockets are set off, piercing the clouds and showing the patrolling Hawker Hurricane above the exact location of the invader. He then dives down along the successive pairs of rockets to seek and destroy. Ingenious.

Next day a minimum flight crew arrived to fly our pride and joy back to home base. I quickly volunteered to go along as flight engineer — and to put her to bed when we got back.

Pre-flighted, we taxied out across the iron mat that served as a short runway for the Spitfires, then on down to the far corner of this rough grassy plateau. It was a pretty sight to see the ocean a couple hundred feet down the chalk-white cliffs. But the view back diagonally across this "airfield", the long way, wasn't all that inviting because it really wasn't long. So it doesn't take much gray matter to understand why we got as far away from those buildings as possible. I took up a position between and just behind the pilot and co-pilot as they set the brakes. Fully advance the throttles, then the supercharges until the full power of those spinning propellers shook and bounced us, straining every nut, bolt and rivet. Suddenly, brakes off and I was hanging on for dear life as we jumped forward, gaining momentum with each turn of the wheels. We are soon rapidly accelerating, crossing the metal landing strip and off, but not up. Now a bump and we are airborne. No! back on the grass again. The rough terrain keeps bouncing us up, but down we come.

With rapidly widening eyeballs, I shifted my anxious gaze from those suddenly large buildings to the instrument panel — and almost swallowed my teeth. The fuel pressure — the FUEL pressure — it isn't!! But, before I could say anything if, in fact I *could* make any sound at all, we blasted up over those buildings — and back down again. No, not quite all the way back down, but into a shallow valley where we gained sufficient flying speed, retracted the gear and banked toward home.

Why in the world do I always jump for any excuse to fly? But now all is fine, those four Pratt & Whitney engines music to my ears, even though the fuel pressure gauge on one of them says it shouldn't be. Back in our cul-de-sac, I quickly peeled off the fairing around the engine accessory section of the "ailing" pressure to find that the indicator hose line had been improperly connected. No harm done — except of course for several missed heart beats. Now, ready once again for tomorrow, *early*.

SPLICE FOR FLYING- FINE FOR TOWING!

by Morris Jones, Jr. (491st)

We arrived at Metfield in the middle of May, trained briefly on operations in the ETO, and flew our first sortie to bomb the airfield at St. Gabriel, France. We were introduced to the dangers of our mission in England when a captain on his 25th mission lost his orientation as he came out of the cloud cover — it was apparently vertigo — and spun in from 20,000 feet.

By D-day, we were just getting used to the wonder of it all when we were given our briefing for our support mission for the invasion. The invasion fleet was spread from Dover to Normandy. Groups of fighters and medium bombers were scurrying below us, and the sheer mass of the effort was overwhelming.

Between our first mission and the famous bomb-dump explosion at Metfield, our crew had a particularly exciting experience. We were bombing Villacoubly and Abbeville those days, trying to destroy what we found out later were the launching platforms for the V-1 missiles or "buzz bombs." The flak around the target was extremely accurate — I remember that the gunners, reportedly females, were the most deadly we were unlucky enough to meet. There was a strong explosion directly under our plane; after the shock, we took stock of our situation and found that the hit was just behind the pilot's seat and the only immediate effect was that we had no rudder.



Our crew was B-24, 44-40108, 6596-EZ20. P - 1st Lt. Joseph E. Forsha; CP - 2nd Lt. John I. Delamater, Jr.; N - 2nd Lt. Elwood M. Jones, Jr.; B - 2nd Lt. Mark M. Scholfield; E - S/Sgt. Edmond Kagler, Jr.; R - S/Sgt. Alfred F. McSheehy, Jr.; AG - S/Sgt. Oliver C. Redtfeldt; AAG - Sgt. Milton B. Wheatley; CG - Sgt. Robert R. Harvey; CG - Sgt. Clarence L. Hubbell.

Our model had the jump or command seat on the left behind the pilot and the rudder cable had been cut under the

DOUBLE TO THE REAR, MARCH?!

by Earl L. Zimmerman 389th

After graduation from Gunnery School at Las Vegas, Nevada, 27 Buck Sgts. were sent to the State College of Washington for 8 weeks of — you guessed it — more gunnery and radio school. The 27 Bucks were given double doses of radio school which made them very proficient in a short time, and gave them plenty of free time.

If you can remember back that far, a college campus was located nearby and a college campus in the fall of 1942 did not have too many male students. Naturally we had to take up the slack. Invitations came in by the dozens and the Commander issued orders that every one would be honored — or else!

It was mandatory to check the bulletin board each day to see where you were going that night. The lucky ones would get a dinner/dance/swim at a sorority house, or a floor show at the Elks club. The Privates would draw dinner at a professors home, a church social or a real whizbanger at the Garden Club.

The R.O.T.C. boys at the college got jealous and challenged us to a drill which took place one Saturday morning on the football field. All started well but we lost ground fast as most of our lads were just out of basic and the O.D. uniforms could not match the sharp Sam Browne belts of the R.O.T.C.

After 30 minutes or so we switched drill instructors and each tried to outfox the opponents. Our drill instructor was an old M-Sgt. who taught gunnery and he gave a command to the R.O.T.C. boys, "Double to the rear march". Well, you never saw so many

Sam Browne belts going in so many directions at the same time. You talk about head-on collisions!

That broke up the session but later that night some of our lads mixed it up with the R.O.T.C. boys at the malt shop. They claimed a foul. Anyone out there know if that was a legit command?

When we shipped out we left behind a small detachment of haggard looking language students. They had endured many weeks of 'torture' before we arrived and didn't seem to happy to see us leave. I heard that some of them even volunteered for combat to get away from the terrible grind of never ending parties.

LIB-LAFFS BY ED HOHMAN 491st



seat. We were out of formation by this time and I set a course for England. The pilot, Joe Forsha, and the engineer, Ed Kagler, proceeded to tear out the seat with a fire axe. We turned gently with aileron and got back to England to find East Anglia with a 10/10 cloud cover.

I got us over the Metfield area by using G equipment, and we flew in a large circle (determined by the force of the ailerons), while the pilot and engineer spliced the rudder cable with the arming wires left in the bomb bays. When this was finally done, we went out over the North sea to let down. We broke out of the clouds about 200

feet and at a point which I selected as being along one of the two G lines on the map.

By directing the pilot over the intercom, I managed to keep us on the line and watch the other blip which indicated the intersecting line over Metfield. The engineer was letting the splice in the cable pass over his hand to clear the pulley. Everyone was watching for sight of the runway, and a shout went up as we saw we were on line with the runway and ready to land.

The next day, the engineering officer for the 855th told us that they used the spliced rudder cable to tow our bird to the repair hangar.

FLAK MEETING FRAGS= CAN OPENER!



by Arthur L. Prichard (467th)

About 3:30 A.M. on June 12, 1944 our crew, which was a lead crew of the 791st Sqd. of the 467th Bomb Group, was awakened and told to attend a 5:00 A.M. briefing for a mission to be flown that day. We were not supposed to fly, but the lead crew that was to fly was "stood down" because the pilot was indisposed after a poker game that had lasted long into the night.

After getting into the lucky clothes that most crew members saved for missions, we went to the mess hall for a sumptuous meal of Farmers Glory and dried milk — Remember that stuff? It came in a bag like dog food. The first man at the table got the powder and the rest got diluted water.

Back to the nissen huts where we ate half of a candy bar. We always saved the other half because we knew we had to make it back to eat it.

The "field order," was in, the string had been strung on the mission board, etc. and as we sat down on the benches for briefing everything was ready. As the curtain was pulled back, we saw that the string was not a long one and sighed with relief. This was six days after D-day and they had us flying missions that would help protect the beachheads and ships offshore. Today it was to Evreux, France to destroy the airfield so German fighters could not use it as a base to harass our invasion troops.

After the briefing, weather, flock maps, etc., I picked up the escape kits and joined the others in putting on flight gear. We were transported to the hardstand of #237 a new B-24 H that had been delivered a few days before. Our original plane "Gerocko" was getting patched up, so it would stay on the ground today.

We pulled the props through, loaded up, started them up and awaited taxi instructions. When the call came, we taxied out second in line as we were deputy lead. After the customary wait, takeoff time arrived, number one started rolling and we all took off in that long line and climbed out over Splasher five. "Pete the Pom Inspector", the 467 group assembly ship, was circling and we formed on it, taking up our assigned position in the formation which slid into the slot of the groups heading out.

It was a partly cloudy day and as we passed over the French coast we could see the ships offshore and the Higgins boats shuttling from them to the shore.

On this mission, our planes were

loaded, some with high explosives, some with incendiary, some with delayed action and some with Fragmentation bombs. We were carrying frags. We encountered no opposition on the way in, but as we turned at the I.P. and started making our run we discovered that the airfield was defended by one battery of four anti-aircraft guns. They fired the familiar pattern of four bursts with little effectiveness as far as we were concerned at the time. As we opened the bomb bay doors and dropped our load, we saw the first of the black bursts of another salvo, a little ahead and high on the left. I had a feeling then that something was about to happen. The fourth burst hit our bombs, which exploded. I had been looking out at the wing before the blast, and had just glanced at the instrument panel as they blew and when I looked out again it looked like someone had been working up and down the wing with a can opener.



Kneeling (l to r) — Lt. Charles Grace, pilot; Lt. A. L. Prichard, co-pilot; Lt. W. Buchecker, navigator; Lt. A. Kirsis, bombardier. Back Row (r to l) — S/Sgt. E. Smith, tail gunner; S-Sgt. Corcheitte, killed in action; T/Sgt. R. Troy, radio operator; S/Sgt. G. Morgan, ball gunner (deceased); S/Sgt. G. Wyatt, waist gunner; T/Sgt. B. Solinsky, engineer.

All positions checked in and no one had been hit, so we were feeling pretty lucky. We had the doors closed and were heading back. Lt. Charles Grace, the pilot, had it all re-trimmed and all was going well, I thought, 'till I checked the gauges. We were losing oil pressure on number one engine. Chuck gave me the signal to feather the prop, so I roused the guard and hit the feathering button on #1, pulled off the power, etc.,

and shut it down. We had just gotten it trimmed again when I noticed the oil pressure was falling fast on #2. We conferred for a few seconds and Chuck said feather it, so I shut it down. A B-24 is not noted for flying very well on two engines, especially when they are on the same side. We had all the trim cranked in and were both standing on the left rudder to stay on course. I dropped about 10° of flaps to help keep us afloat and Chuck had advanced power on the two remaining engines when I saw that #3 was running hot and the oil pressure was fluctuating. No way were we about to feather another prop, so Chuck opened the cowl flaps and we kept plugging along.

We were dropping down and falling behind the formation and feeling just a little lonesome back there. I was monitoring the command channel on the radio and being a confirmed coward at heart, I pushed the button and said "Lincoln Green leader (our code word for the day), this is Lincoln Green deputy." After awhile he said, "Lincoln Green deputy, what is your position?" I told him we were about 5000 feet below and six or seven miles back. A no answer at that time was just like goodbye. So after a while I said, "How about some fighter support." Still no answer, but about five or six minutes later the right waist gunner reported boogies at three o'clock. All positions were alerted, but they turned out to four P-51 Mustangs and a beautiful sight they were. They stayed out of range for a couple of minutes, then slipped in closer and took up their positions — two on each side of us. We were escorted by them for the next 100 or so miles, 'till we neared the coast, then they wagged their wings, waved and flew off for more exciting duties.

On the way in over the coast, we had seen a partially built airstrip near the beach, so we decided to look for it because we knew we could never make it back to England. Near Coen, we were subjected to fire from the ground and we turned northeast, then swung left to the coast. When we spotted the strip, I instructed the crew members to prepare to bail out, which was not new to them as they had done it once before. Flying parallel to the beach, everyone except Lt. Grace, Sgt. Bernard Solinsky, the engineer and I, jumped. Solinsky then went to the waist position where he waited till the gear was lowered. He announced that they were down and locked and he to jumped.

As we approached the strip that was being built by the Royal Engineers, they started putting up a barrage balloon which forced us to make an abrupt right turn into two dead engines, then a sweeping turn to the left to come in on the opposite end of the strip. On our short final approach, I tried to put down more flaps with the wobble pump as I

found that the hydraulic system was inoperative, but I didn't have any luck. Looking ahead, we saw that there were forty or fifty men working on the strip who were apparently unaware of our approach. Finally a soldier with a "Bren" gun fired it in the air and these men scrambled to get out of the way. One guy climbed off a bulldozer and ran, leaving it on the strip. As we touched down on the sandy surface at about 100 mph, things went fine for about 200 feet, then it started to veer to the right. When it had about reached the point where we were going to lose it, the only remaining good engine hit the dozer, tearing the engine loose but it straightened us out. We applied the brakes (having only one push left), and slowed it down somewhat, 'till we hit a bump of about two feet at the end of the worked on area. This jumped us up a little and we went through a hedgerow into the next field full of cows. We stopped just short of these animals and as that B-24 stopped, I popped my safety belt, got out of the chute harness, opened the top hatch, climbed out, ran down the left wing and jumped to the ground. I heard the patter of feet and looked up in time to see Lt. Grace jump off and land beside me.

What do you say at a time like this? I said to Chuck, "That was a hell of a wild ride", and he just nodded his head in agreement.

While we were standing there, there was a shrill whistling and swishing sound followed by an explosion. Chuck said "What the hell is that?" We found out immediately — it was artillery fire.

The Germans had been unable to get planes up as spotters and probably knew a strip was being prepared, so they zeroed in on us on the way up. Luckily we had come in hot and had ended up a considerable distance off the end of the strip, so the shells fell on the strip and not on us. We had taken refuge behind a stump and when the barrage stopped, we stood up and saw several men running toward us, followed by a jeep. In that jeep was the maddest man I saw all the time I was in the ETO. He was Wing Commander Brown of the Royal Canadian Air Force who was to bring his planes in the next day. While yelling about his strip being blown up, he got to the point of being nearly distasteful.

About that time, Chuck and I felt that we were responsible only to God and Col. Albert Showers, in that order. So we told the Wing Commander that all we really wanted at the time was to get back to Rackheath — so he drove off in a huff. The 467 Bomb Group had the distinction of having the first four engined aircraft to land on freed French soil.

A picture of that plane is on page 156 of Roger Freeman's book *The Mighty Eighth*.

STARS REPLACE BARS



Stars have replaced bars for Hal C. Tyree, Jr., shown here as a lieutenant when he was an aircraft commander in the 44th Bomb Group in 1944-1945 and as he is today, commanding the Illinois Air National Guard as a brigadier general.

Brig. Gen. (soon to be Maj. Gen.) Tyree participated in 35 missions against European targets, amassing 232 combat hours. After his combat tour, he served as a ferry pilot for the Air Transport Command, then returned to civilian life in 1945, continuing as a member of the Army Air Force Reserve. In 1948, he joined the Illinois Air National Guard, with which he was recalled to active duty in 1951 during the Korean Conflict for a 22-month tour, much of it overseas.

Resuming his career in the Illinois Air Guard, he became a brigadier general in 1975. On 1 October 1978, he became commander of the entire Illinois Air National Guard, which includes more than 2,600 people, and such diverse aircraft as the F-4 Phantom jet fighter-bomber, KC-135 jet aerial refueling tanker, and O-2 propeller-driven observation plane.

In civilian life, Gen. Tyree is chemical laboratory chief, Research and Development Center, Electro-Motive Division, General Motors Corporation, LaGrange, Illinois. Gen. Tyree's first wife, Mary Theresa Hayes, is deceased, and he married Joan Elaine Fulton of Brookfield, Illinois, on 16 December 1978. He has five children from his first marriage, three of whom are members of the Illinois Air National Guard. Congratulations Hal.



HOW TO FEEL LIKE A FOOL

by Earl L. Zimmerman (389th)

As an internee in Ankara, Turkey in 1943, our group was quartered in the Yeni Hotel. To keep busy during the day I copied the BBC from London which sent out the news in CW and made up a small sheet for the boys to read.

One day General Tindall, our Military Attache, came to visit and asked me if I could set up a radio station. In due course, Ambassador Steinhardt made a trip to Cairo, Egypt and returned with the necessary, a BC 191 air cooled xmtr, if I recall, and also brought back a GI from the Signal Corp. Together we set up a radio station on the second floor of the Embassy utilizing an auxiliary power unit which was placed just outside the window on a balcony.



We had enough power to reach The Signal Corp at Cairo where our messages were related to Washington over a high speed net. Prior to that time messages were sent out by dispatch and took many days to reach Washington. I recall one message in particular concerning the massing of 400 Ju 87s on the Turkish border. This activity was kept secret of course and I had a regular schedule at the Embassy after I signed out on parole from the Yeni hotel.

During a party at one of the allied embassies I made friends with one of the security types and during the course of the evening I mentioned that we had a way to get messages out of Turkey in a hurry. He did not reply but several hours later asked me to follow him to the second floor where he unlocked a door and we stepped inside. I noticed banks of radio receivers and transmitters along one wall. He smiled, said nothing and we left the room and returned to the party on the main floor.

I mentioned that I felt like a fool and asked him to forget what I said and he replied, "Certainly". That was the first of many illusions I had destroyed during my career in the Air Force. I sometimes wonder if the same situation exists today. We seem to play by the rules and the other side doesn't even have a rule book.





by Col. Myron H. Keilman (392nd)

After his 17th mission, Harry had to be relieved of further combat duty. He lost six of his ten original crew members. He bailed out of one and crash-landed another B-24 bomber.

Harry was assigned to the 392 Bombardment Group on or about 1 May 1944. As squadron commander, I remember him quite well from a unique request and from his tough luck.

I personally flew with him and his crew on their formation and assembly procedure indoctrination flight. He was personable and his crew responded to him, as the airplane commander, in a well-coordinated manner.

It was after that flight that he made an unusual request. He asked if he and his crew could make a practice parachute jump. In my realm of two and a half years' flying experience, it was conceded that all air crew personnel were so trained and indoctrinated with the use of a parachute and bail-out procedures that an airman would automatically do the right "thing" in times of emergency. No provisions were made for practice. As I recall, I took the time to rationalize with him, but conceded that when he and his crew completed their thirty combat missions, and if they still wanted to make a parachute jump, I would endeavor to arrange it.

Then came their eighth mission, 4 June 1944. It was a late afternoon Second Bombardment Division attack on a German airfield at St. Avord, France. Take-off was at 1530 hours. Harry and crew were flying B-24H number 261. I was leading the 392nd as command pilot with Jim McGregor's lead crew. Everything went fine that day — no late engine starts, no late taxiing, no slipping off the air strip, but on the bomb-run, the anti-aircraft artillery (Ack-Ack) barrage was so intense it enveloped the formation. Harry's airplane suffered a near direct hit in the aft fuselage and empanage (tail).

The flight controls of both pilots went limp, and the airplane was without control. The Sperry automatic pilot, with separate flight controls was all ready to be clutched in on a "flak of the switch"; thus before the airplane went out of control, Harry flicked the

switch and the auto-pilot took them over the target. They dropped their bombs with the rest of the 392nd airplanes with excellent results. The hydraulic lines, too, had been severed; so the bomb-bay doors were inoperative and the bombs "busted" through them. This caused quite a draft in the airplane as well as drag, but Harry managed to follow the formation back to Wendling. Miraculously no one on the crew received an injury.

Returning to the vicinity of the air base at 2300 hours, Harry was confronted with strato-cumulous clouds and a low ceiling. The base of these clouds was too low to safely bail his crew out — and he wasn't about to try a landing on auto-pilot. He thus circled the area of the base at 3,000 feet altitude and prepared the crew for bailing out.

He and his crew had practiced the bail-out procedures many times during the combat crew phases of training, and he was not perturbed that all would not go as practiced. There would be the long ring of the alarm bell — on the right edge of the throttle quadrant, remember? — and, if time permitted, an order by the pilot to prepare for bail-out. At this signal, the nose, tail, and top turret gunners would vacate their turrets and hook on their chest pack parachutes. The bombardier and navigator would open the nose wheel doors; the waist gunners the rear escape hatch; and the radio operator the bomb-bay doors. In this case there were none. At the sound of a series of short rings everyone should bail out in quick, designated order. The last to go would be the pilot.

At about 2315 hours — just at twilight — Harry headed off 261 toward the North Sea and rang the bail-out signal and awaited his turn. The co-pilot was in the process of leaving his seat when over the interphone came a frantic voice: "Dunbar won't go!" Hard luck had struck another blow. What could you do for a fellow that wouldn't bail out of a crippled airplane that was unsafe to land?

With night coming on, Harry found himself in a real quandary as he adjusted the auto-pilot controls to circle back toward Wendling. Dunbar was to

be the first of the three rear gunners to go and he balked. After due deliberation and some "yakking" with the waist gunner, the sequence of bail-out was changed and the reluctant one followed someone else to safety. With this delay, it was dark when Harry "hit the silk" somewhere over northern Norfolk County near the North Sea.

Harry landed hard and jarred in a horse pasture. The horses came prancing and snorting to see what the great, white parachute was meant to be. Not being a farm boy, Harry didn't know but what they would attack him. They didn't; so Harry gathered up his parachute and started walking. It was well after midnight when he reached a farm home and knocked on the door. No one answered. He rapped longer and harder. With that, the door opened about two inches, and as Harry says, "I was staring at the muzzle of the biggest double barrel gun in the world." Words — especially the right ones — didn't come easy, and his legs were too weary to run. The elderly farmer was skeptical of Harry's predicament, allowing that he might be a German paratrooper. After much explaining of who, when, and how, the old gent lowered those big double barrels and beckoned Harry in. While relating more details of his ordeal, the good wife served him some milk and bread which Harry recalls was extremely welcomed. He had not eaten nor drunk since before the combat mission briefing, over twelve long, tough hours ago. This was more like English hospitality, and he couldn't blame the man for being alert for clandestine Nazi efforts.

So enthused was the farmer to help Harry in his plight, he insisted on driving him back to the base rather than arrange by telephone for someone from the base to come. Using precious rationed petrol, they made their way along the dark, narrow road in the tiny little car with its dim black-out lights. When they came to the parish center, the old man pulled in by the pub, woke up the keeper, and Harry was toasted with rounds of stout, half and half, and nut brown ale. It was morning before Harry arrived at his Nissen hut and was reunited with his crew — each of which had similarly interesting experiences but no disabling injuries.

Of course, the question of why Dunbar wouldn't "go" was quite paramount in Harry's mind. It turned out that the young man had a fixation. Because the airplane was seemingly flying so good, he honestly and firmly believed the crew was playing a practical joke on him. He had it fixed in his mind that as soon as he bailed out, Harry would go ahead and land the airplane without him. How about that?

After debriefing and medical checks, the crew was granted a seven-day rest and recuperation (R and R). Then tough luck struck again.

With pleasant thoughts and dreams of the sights and thrills, including Buzz Bomb explosions, in London casting out the moments of stark terror, Harry and his crew were suddenly awakened. "Wake up! Wake up! Briefing in one hour!" Harry was really shaken. It was midnight. There must be a mistake. We are on R and R. "No!", says Sergeant Vivian. "Everybody flies. It's D-Day!" 6 June 1944, remember?

The 8th Air Force maximum effort missions following D-Day required the availability of every combat crew; thus Harry and his crew flew five more missions before they were allowed any rest and recuperation.

Then there was the mission when Harry and his crew were lackadaisical about promptness in taking stations to meet their start-engines and taxi times. As Harry recalls it, he and his crew were standing by their airplane having their last smoke when the "Old Man" — their twenty-age squadron commander — came by in his jeep, and in a loud, clear voice told them to get their ass-in-gear; it was start-engines time. Harry erupted into action so fast he forgot to set the brakes. When the engines were started he nearly ran over the crew chief. Having missed his taxi time, he was hurrying to catch up. While rounding a turn, he ran a wheel off the paved taxi-way and the airplane, 74,000 pounds of it, bogged down in the soft sod. Promptly — there was the "friendly" squadron commander again. Without wasting choice words or valuable time, Harry and crew were hustled onto the CO's jeep and rushed to the spare airplane, while the group effort proceeded with the scheduled take-off and assembly of airplanes.

By the time Harry and his crew went roaring down the runway, the rest of the group was "long gone". He climbed to the group assembly area, but no one was there. He headed out on the wing and division departure course and spotted groups of B-24s over the English Channel. With "max cruise" power he hurried to catch up to the 392nd. Passing one group after another, he couldn't find tail markings to match his — but he wasn't about to turn back. Realizing that he wouldn't last mission if he continued to use so much fuel with the high power setting, he "tacked" on to the rear of another group formation and settled down to fly out the mission.

Harry wasn't very long with his new

group when the waist gunners reported they were low on oxygen. Well, at 20,000 feet a person can't function long without oxygen — but Harry was determined, and he didn't want to face the "music" (third-degree type interrogation) that went with the conclusion of an aborted mission.

Carrying on, the best fix Harry could contrive for his new bit of hard luck was to let down to 15,000 feet and follow the group through the target, drop his bombs, and hope he wouldn't be picked-off by German fighter airplanes — so on he flew. Eventually his navigator "screwed-up" enough courage to put Harry "wise" as to how deep into enemy territory they were penetrating all by themselves. This "rang a bell", and Harry realized that if they didn't turn back they would really be vulnerable and probably would never get back; thus his fear of German Folke-Wolfe 109s and Messerschmitt 190s overcame the fear of facing the Old Man, and he turned back.

Returning to Wendling without incident, there was just one more thing Harry didn't do right that day, and it cost him some more precious luck. It never occurred to him to get rid of his bomb load, either in enemy territory or in the English Channel. With the extra weight aboard, he brought the airplane in for the landing with additional speed and landed a little longer than he should have. There wasn't enough runway, and Harry ran off the end and bogged down. What a way to end a rough day. What did the Old Man do? I'll swear that I gave Harry an "E" for effort, and the crew did receive credit for a combat mission.

Then came the mission to bomb the railroad bridge at LeFrilliere on 15 June. Harry was flying in the "coffin corner" of the second squadron; that is, the number three position of the low element of the twelve-airplane formation. For some reason, that element was hard to hold in position, and it was often lagging behind, making it vulnerable to attack. The German fighter pilots always took advantage of stragglers and promptly dispatched them. That is why it was called the "coffin corner".

Shortly before the initial point for the bombing run, the German fighters struck from the rear. They singled out Harry, and their twenty millimeter exploding shells ripped into the empennage and fuselage. They killed the tail turret gunner outright and cut the rudder cables. The explosion of these shells in the Oxygen tanks blew out the whole upper side of the fuselage aft the waist gunner's window, and one burst

in the top turret severely wounded the flight engineer/gunner. To complicate the situation, the inter-communication wires to the rear of the airplane were severed, and Harry had no idea how much damage occurred. With such damage, no communications, and no oxygen to breathe, the two waist-gunners declared themselves in such peril that they bailed out.

Harry knew he was hit hard, but the airplane responded to control except for the rudder, and the engines were running faithfully; so he carried on into the bombing run. When the signal was given to open the bomb-bay doors, nothing happened. This indicated that the main hydraulic system had been cut, and there was no pressure to actuate the doors; thus when the bombs-away signal was given, the bombs (eight 1,000 pounders) were dropped through the closed doors. With the doors torn away, Harry had to carry high power settings to keep up with the formation — and worse yet, he couldn't send anyone back to the rear to see what had happened. There was great danger of slipping off or being blown off of the cat-walk and being lost through the open bomb-bay.



Harry landed it anyway. 15 June 1944.

Returning to England, Harry's fuel was running low and he knew that his men in the rear must be wounded and needing medical attention as soon as possible; so he elected to land at one of the first airbases he came to. As he came in for the landing, he compensated for a cross-wind by holding his wing low — but at touch-down there was no way to "kick-out the crab" without rudder control. The hydraulic lines having been shot out, there were no brakes to straighten the airplane; thus it "weathered veined" into the wind and went out of control, skidding along sideways until one of the main landing-gear struts collapsed. The wing then dug into the runway, and a great crunching ground-loop ensued. The once mighty B-24 came to rest with a twisted fuselage, smashed nose compartment, bent back propellers,

(continued on page 10)

UNLUCKY HARRY

(continued from page 9)

crunched engine nacelles, and the open bomb-bay tilted sideways — through which the crew made their hasty exit.

What a shock it was to Harry to find his tail gunner dead in his turret, his waist gunners missing, and his engineer wounded. His co-pilot, too, injured an ankle in leaving the airplane to such an extent he had to be relieved of further combat duty.

The long truck ride back to his home base made the situation even more horrendous. You can be assured that Harry and the remainder of his crew (the bombardier, navigator and radio operator) were taken off of the available combat roster and sent on a ten-day "flak-leave" to Scotland.

Then came a mission to Saurbruken on 13 July '44, exactly two months after Harry's first mission. This would be his eighteenth. The weather over England was "lousy", with a low ceiling, drizzle, and freezing moisture-laden clouds at 10,000 to 12,000 feet. Harry made his take-off on time with a make-up crew. There in the clouds over The Wash (the shallow bay northwest of Wendling), he ran into icing conditions. Ice built up on the leading edges of his wings to such a degree that the airplane stalled. Harry dropped the nose to pick up speed but was concerned that the heavy airplane might go out of control; so he rang the alarm bell to alert the crew to get prepared to bail out. Diving the airplane to a lower altitude, the icing condition was alleviated, and Harry leveled off — only to find that both the navigator and the bombardier had gone ahead and bailed out. Harry returned to Wendling, and a search effort was immediately established for the two aviators. About 1100 hours a search airplane located them floating in their yellow Mae West life preservers in the shallow waters of The Wash. Both had perished from exposure.

With only a fragment of his crew left and being quite shaken-up mentally, Harry was declared "war weary" by the flight surgeon. He was relieved of further combat duty and returned to the ZI (Zone of Interior) — the US of A.

Despite these harrowing experiences, Harry more than flew again. For eight and one half years he flew as an RB-47 aircraft commander in the Strategic Air Command, and finally in combat again as a commander of a C-119 gun-ship in Vietnam.

In retrospect, Harry's luck was bad — and it was good. He didn't get shot down, and he survived — to play golf and reminisce with his ol' squadron commander thirty-three years later.

SHAVE AND A HAIRCUT ...WITH A PROPELLER?!



by John L. Boyle (445th BG)

My job with the 53rd Station Complement Group attached to the 445th BG was to maintain the radios in the control tower. The Tower, as it was in all Groups, was a very busy place and involved many different jobs.

One foggy, foggy morning I was assigned the job of sitting in the radio jeep on the hardstand near the end of the runway to jot down the plane numbers as they took off. I could hear the pilots call the tower that they were on their way.

Everything was routine until I heard this one pilot call to say that he was off the runway but going anyway. Because of the fog I could not see him, but I could hear him coming closer.

I think the pilot and I saw each other about the same moment. He hauled back on the yoke and I dived out of the jeep. He just cleared the jeep with his inboard prop clipping off the flag. I couldn't talk for awhile, and for an Irishman that's something!

Needless to say I didn't get the number of his plane.



One summer evening, a couple of years ago, when everyone else had left the airfield, I spent an hour in the hangar trying to release the wheel of our Oly (Olympia 2b) which had squeezed through the ring of the lifting-trolley. The problem seemed impossible and I eventually reached that point of solitary despair when I knew that I should have to admit defeat. It was then that I heard a quiet American voice beside me offering assistance and advice — and almost immediately afterwards we levered the tyre free of the trolley. He stayed awhile and talked of B-24s and Jimmy Stewart, but I neither saw him arrive nor depart, and certainly neither heard nor saw a car.

Having removed the crumpled wheel fairing, I took it to the workshop and set to work with the hammer. Minutes later I heard someone whistling a tune and obviously approaching along the corridor.

Hammer poised, I waited to greet the visitor, but the whistling passed the open door — though no one appeared. Puzzled, I looked out along the empty corridor, then into each of the rooms, before doing a circuit outside the build-

ing. Without a doubt, there was nobody else in or near the building, so I tried to convince myself that I had imagined it all and went back to the bench.

Three times I heard that whistling and three times I searched the building to no avail.

Weeks later, I was told how one night a Ju 88 followed the Liberators back to their base, shot down three in the circuit and caused two more to collide. I also heard that there was supposed to be a ridiculous tale about the ghost of one of the navigators who was known to haunt the control tower.

Like you, I don't believe in ghosts, but I hope one day that some real, living person will come to Tibenham and tell me it was he who helped with the Oly's wheel that evening.



445th B.G. control tower — 1975.

THE PX PAGE

458TH BOARDBOARDMENT GROUP II

This unit history REPRINT has all of the original material plus new additions, such as the Azon Bomb Project, losses and serial/name links. It is hardcover, 8 x 10½, 72 pages (2 in color), a capsuled but complete daily mission summary for the entire 14 months of combat operations and more. There are about 250 photos of nose art, Horsham, Norwich, crashes and other Group highlights. The price of \$12.95 includes postage and packaging. Available in late November, '79, and, as before, it's on a first-come basis for sales. Write: George A. Reynolds, 848 South 86th Street, Birmingham, Ala. 35206.

2nd AD BLAZER PATCHES



Evelyn Cohen informs me that she still has a large supply of 2nd AD Blazer patches on hand so if you missed ordering one the last time around DO IT NOW.

I wish we could show you this in the original colors but printing costs forbid Tthis. Just take my word for it that they are beautiful and made a brilliant display at the reunion where everyone seemed to have one.

Cost is \$3.00 and send your check or money order to Evelyn Cohen, 610 Plaza Towers, 2350 Tremont St., Philadelphia, PA. 19115.

8-BALL NEWS

by Pete Henry (44th BG)

In the September Journal Bulletin Board, Bill Robertie listed five Ham operators who are making great strides contacting other 2ADA members. The 44th has it's own HAM operator in the person of Art 'Red' Hand who lives in Paris, Illinois. Red's call letters are K9HWP and he has located eight or ten potential new members. He visited one in person, Jack Shepherd, who gave him a dues check on the spot. Jack flew the low level Ploesti mission and was shot down on the Weiner Neustadt mission 1 October 43. Jack was the only survivor and was a prisoner for 19 months.

We know that a lot of you who have been attending the 2ADA reunions since 1974 know Emma and Al Franklin. Al became ill the day after our reunion in Norwich and they had to fly back home right away missing a two-week tour around the Southern part of England. Al was quite sick upon his return and even had a brief stint in the hospital. As soon as he got out, Emma had to go in for 24-hour observation but we are happy to report that they are both okay now.

One new 2ADA member, James W. Holliday, sent me a list of everyone who served in the 93rd B.G. in WWII and I forwarded same to Charles Weiss who is Group V.P. for the 93rd. In answer to an inquiry, I sent back to Jim, he suggested that I write to Headquarters AAF at Randolph A.F.B., Texas for Group History of 44th B.G. The answer came back from Randolph to contact the Albert F. Simpson Historical Research Center at Maxwell AFB, Ala., which I did 22 September. Hopefully, we will receive a copy of the 44th B.G. History and a list of all the personnel who served with the 44th B.G. in WWII. This should answer some of your questions about a master list of 44th people.

In the September Journal on page 9 there is a paragraph about a reprint of "Liberators Over Europe" which deals exclusively with the 44th B.G. Red Hand advised me that he has already received orders for 30 books and is going ahead with the reprinting order (minimum 200 books). The price of \$15 plus \$1 postage and handling (Journal quoted \$18 plus \$1 postage) will only apply to this printing.

Red plans to send a brochure about this book to all 44th members of the 2ADA. If you don't get your order in for this initial reprinting, you may have to pay a higher price later on or not receive a copy at all.

This column is only as good as you make it. If you have stories that you think would be of interest to the other members, send them to Bill Robertie for him to print over your by-line or send them to me for inclusion in 8-Ball News.

LIB-LAFFS BY ED HONMAN 44th



The CARPETBAGGERS

by Frank Townsend, Jr. 453rd-492nd

On one night mission, 3 planes were assigned to the target. From the flight plans, the takeoff times were staggered so that plane #1 would arrive at the target and have 30 minutes in the target area (say 2300-2330), #2 plane would arrive as #1 was leaving (2330), and #3 would arrive at 2400. In theory this is fine and only one plane should be over the target area at a time. As plane #2, we arrived in the target area 5 minutes late and swung around to make our run into the wind. A complete drop was made at 400 feet and the pilot started to pull up and head home when the plane felt tail heavy. About this time, the tail gunner reported a large can hanging under the tail of the plane. After a long minute the can fell off and our plane returned to normal flight characteristics. It seemed that the tail skid had hooked into the parachute attached to the can which had been dropped by one of the other planes. We never found out which plane was responsible, whether #1 was late dropping or #3 was early as both planes carried 5 gallon cans of plastic explosive, and we didn't.

One of our long missions was made to the southeast of Bordeaux and about 100 miles from the French Spanish

border. We crossed the enemy coastline at the moment of complete darkness but due to the short nights we elected to return over the Atlantic Ocean to Lands End and back to our base (in daylight). On the way home from the target we crossed the French coast at 5000 feet just south of Bordeaux. The enemy started hunting our plane with 3 searchlights criss-crossing the sky several times. Finally one caught us for a few seconds and moved on still searching. Truthfully, I don't believe they could distinguish the plane in the light. The bombardier later stated the light was so bright he could have read a paper.

One night we had a rough mission in which we dropped a 4 man French unit, southeast of Paris. To keep away from the Paris area, we headed east and then south, passing over Belgium and then France. Everything went fine, the drop was made from 600 feet and we headed home at 5000 feet.

Here we had made a mistake and used the same check point over Belgium as we had used on the outbound flight. Shortly after passing the checkpoint, the tail gunner and the drop man were changing positions for relief when a German night fighter at-

tacked from 5 o'clock low and passed under our left wing. The enemy guns sounded like stones on a tin roof and our plane shuddered slightly as if hit. Lt. Goldsmith, the pilot immediately peeled right into a dive and I informed him no lower than 500 feet.

On the way down everyone grabbed chutes, but on leveling out at 1000 feet no major damage was visible or could be determined. On leaving the enemy coastline, we requested an emergency landing. We were directed to a British airfield on the east coast. When close to the airfield we received landing instructions. Proceeding down the base leg and turning into the final approach we stared down, but at this moment we heard someone in the tower say "arry, the big ones on top and the little one is on the bottom." We pulled up and looking down saw a small plane land.

After going around and finally landing we saw an American night fighter plane sitting on the far end of the runway, completely out of gas. Examination of our plane showed 2 round 20mm holes and a 6x9 inch hole where an explosive 20mm shell hit the leading edge of the left wing. All the holes were less than a foot from the fuel cells.

FLASHBACKS

by ED HOHMAN · 491st

WHEN A PRANKSTER PUT LIGHTER FLUID IN THE STOVE, IT WAS ALWAYS SURE TO LIVEN THINGS UP!



CLOSE ENCOUNTER...



THOSE TRUCK TRIPS TO TOWN WERE GREAT! CROWDED AS THEY WERE, THERE WAS ALWAYS A WAY TO CLEAR A PATH FOR A "SICKIE" WHO HAD OVERINDULGED.

SUGGESTED BY BOB COLEMAN

DOUBLE DOUBLE REPRIEVE

by Donald L. Kessler (467th BG)

It seems many of us had memorable experiences over the Continent, and they are well reported, so I thought it might be of interest to give the inside story of what happened to our crew on what was to have been our fourth mission.

Mission day, 17 August, '44, started out like any other with the cold sweats waiting for the wake-up officer. Remember how you could hear him coming down the row of Quonsets? Something like the footsteps on the stairs. Then the door slammed open and the waiting was over. Stumbling and swearing, we made it through breakfast, briefing and preflight with no more than the usual confusion of a new replacement crew. Engine start and taxi out was uneventful as was the takeoff roll, and then it started.

Just after breaking ground, I began to have difficulty with the interphone. Looking across at Joe Casey, I tried to talk with him, but finally gave it up, took off my mask and yelled at him that I was having difficulty, and he acknowledged that he was also. Neither of us had interphone or radio. All the switches were dead.

At this time I became aware of some commotion behind us on the flight deck and I turned just in time to see a crew member standing in the flight deck well and when he saw me looking he hollered, "The airplane is on fire." As this was no time to get real detailed information before making a decision, I gave him the best I could by saying, "Put it out." That face disappeared and I turned back to my flying while Jones, the engineer, came storming down from the turret and started aft with his chest chute in his hand. He was *moving!* Within seconds another face appeared in the deck well with the now too familiar information, which got the same response from me. This was probably Dick Randle, our bombardier, and he, too, took off for the waist.

At this time Casey said, "Why don't I go back and see what gives?" I said that would be helpful so he took off. As he said later, it was crowded in the waist, particularly because Jones' chute had popped open and was somewhat in the way. According to later reports, things were really heating up.

Meanwhile, back on the flight deck, it was pretty roomy, but I was not alone. Sitting off my wing was Col. Shower in the Jug. I could tell by the

way he was looking at me he wanted to talk to me; badly. I was in the mood for some dialogue, too, but all I could do was to fly and fidget. My attempts to indicate radio failure to Col. Shower must have gotten through, because he soon left us. I continued to circle Rackheath at about 1500 feet.

About this time Casey returned and reported that our tail turret was out, thanks to the gunners, one man had superficial facial burns, but other than that, things seemed to have settled down. I decided that radio contact was not really necessary, that inoperative tail guns were not all that important, and the description of the burn injuries didn't sound too bad. (2nd Lt., fourth combat mission) so I told Casey we might as well try to catch up with the formation and complete the mission. This surprised him, as he had been back to survey the thing, and when he continued to discuss the situation, ending with a strong recommendation that we land, I concurred.

Now that that was settled, I squared away to land. Downwind, turn base, turn final, right? Downwind I managed real well, but when I turned base, things kinda got out of hand. I suppose I was thinking of the steep turns we practiced on over-the-field breaks, but I forgot that I still had most of that 2700 gallons and all the bombs. But, obviously I remembered all these things and

a hell of a lot more when she paid off on the turn to final. The dialogue with Casey resumed at an increased pace. Full throttle, max turbo, pray. Somehow, we skirted *past* a farmhouse and came droning back up to traffic altitude. To this day I don't remember getting the gear or flaps up, but I suppose it was done. My next pattern took in all of East Anglia.

After landing and letting the burn victim out at the proper pad, we taxied on back to our own pad and on the way I polled the crew on the possibility of taking the spare and catching the mission over the channel. The response was typified by one who said, "Sir, I'm scared as hell, but let's go."

When we got shut down and after climbing down through the bombs, loaded with our chutes and other gear, I noticed the flying safety officer sitting alongside in a jeep. He asked where we were going in such a hurry, so I began my flag waving speech. He listened for a bit and then said, "I think you all have used up all your luck for the day. Look here." That was the first time I knew that the turret was not only out, but it was *gone*. All that remained was a black hole festooned with charred pulleys and control wires. When I thought about how Casey and I had been kicking rudders, I turned to the safety officer and acknowledged that he was dead right. We scrubbed.

Crew members on this mission were Joe Casey, Co-pilot; Colin Garrity, Nav.; Dick Randall, Bomb.; James Jones, Engineer; David Kurtz, Radio operator; and Achiel Samyn, Louis Richardson, Philip Saliba, and Ralph Davidson were gunners.

U.S. Postal Service
Citizens Stamp Advisory Committee
Administration Group
Washington, D.C. 20260

Gentlemen:

It has come to our attention that a former B-17 combat pilot has proposed that the U.S. Postal Service issue a Commemorative Stamp or Postal Card featuring the B-17 Flying Fortress.

We most heartily agree that recognition of WWII bombers is in order but we do not see how you can do this without including the B-24 Liberator. If any of your members are old enough to recall the events that transpired between September 1942 and June 1945 in the European Theatre of Operations, they will remember that our B-24 played as important a roll as the B-17. Case in point — the Ploesti oil fields — 1 Aug. 43. The Liberator also played a very important part in the war against the Japanese.

There will probably be others who feel that their bomber needs to be included in any commemorative activity. We ask that you review the matter thoroughly before deciding on any one, two or three aircraft for the proposed Commemorative Stamp.

Yours truly,
H.C. 'Pete' Henry
Vice-President
Second Air Division Association

(ed: Fire away Pete. They can't do this to us again. Maybe we should give them a buzz job with one of the remaining, flyable Liberators. That would shake them out of their overstuffed chairs!)

PHANTOM AIR FORCE

355th FIGHTER GROUP



GOTTERDAMMIT! WE'RE
RIGHTINZEE OVERIN
MEIN HOMETOWNIN!



The bomber formation was somewhere over the Zuider Zee, the heavies spaced out in squadrons, groups and divisions, and the fighter escort stooging about the big birds, when three Mustangs passed by above and streaked on ahead.

The three Mustangs were Weather Scouts, unofficially known as the Red Raiders, the Wet Waders and — because in the past their work had been highly secret and they had appeared unpredictably at odd hours in any weather — the Phantom Air Force.



Lt. Col. Frank Elliott (left) and Lt. William H. Bancroft, Jr. Bancroft flew cover for the Scouts.

It was routine for the pilots of these will-o-the-wisp Mustangs to meet Luftwaffe interceptors. It was practically S.O.P. If the Luftwaffe was coming up at all, its planes would almost invariably be in the air, forming for combat, by the time the Weather Scouts reached the target.

The destruction of the Luftwaffe, however, was not the primary purpose of the Scouts. They flew out ahead of the bombers to give last-minute information about clouds, haze, smoke-screens, and any other factors that would affect the bombing mission.

The idea of a Scouting Force was hatched in the brain of Col. Budd J. Peaslee, a West Pointer with a passion for riding crops and six inch cigarette holders, known to all as "Uncle Budd" despite the Colonel's chickens on his shoulders.

Peaslee first got his idea for the Scout-

ing Force in 1943 during a bomber attack on Heroya, Norway. The briefed course for the bomb-run was covered by a low overcast and the heavies had to make two runs over the target. The flak was terrific on the first run. It was even worse on the second. Every plane that got back showed battle damage. Peaslee climbed out of his plane, put a cigarette in his holder and did some thinking. If somebody had been up ahead of the bombers a few minutes before they got there, he reasoned, a report could have been flashed back that alternate runs on the target were free of clouds. With this thought in mind he began his climb into the hair of the high brass. He got results and the official 'go ahead' to form his Scouting Force.

Peaslee decided that the need was for bomber men to fly the Mustangs, experienced bomber men who had been lead pilots and command pilots and had gone through a tour of operations.

How to get them was another problem. Peaslee had scrounged some P-51 fighter planes, but he had no T/O. Lead and command bomber pilots on finishing a tour were ripe for promotion and desk jobs. Peaslee could offer no promotion, no recognition, no glamor — and, besides, the whole project was on the secret list. Men who joined up wouldn't



Capt. Gordon W. Lamers and Capt. Richard W. Hyman. Both were veteran Liberator lead pilots before joining the Scouts.

even get their names in the papers. The job meant trouble. Sometimes there would be four Scouts, sometimes eight, sometimes a dozen, and sometimes just one. They were to fly out there ahead of the bombers, after the Germans had been alerted and the Luftwaffe had risen to repel the assault. They were to take off at night so as to be over the proposed target at dawn. They were to gun their

Mustangs down the runway in any visibility to see what it looked like upstairs. They were to scoot across the Channel at 200 feet through fog to get a look at what the clouds were like over Europe.

All in all, it was not a particularly inviting prospect to hold out to lead bomber pilots. Yet Peaslee got his men. In fact he had a waiting list. Why? "Rocks in the head," said Capt. Harry R. Hayes, Jr. of New Canaan, Conn., an ex-bomber pilot and then a Scout. Another Scout, Capt. Charles W. Getz of Fort Wayne, Indiana defined it as "a bad case of the clanks." Lt. Col. Frank Elliott of Riverton, N.J. said that he got into Scout work because "I was upside-down at 30,000 feet at the time."

The Scouting Force of the Second Air Division laid claim to the most colorful character of all the Scouts. William E. Whalen (nick-named Gooney Bird) was a lanky pilot with a big grin who claimed the town of Hamilton, N.Y. for a home. He was the first flier to become an ace in the Scouting Force, but he was known among his conferees principally as the only man known to light a cigarette in the prop-wash of a Jerry fighter.

As he told it, the bulb in his gunsight was haywire and he didn't have time to put in the spare. Only four of his guns were working when he shot down his first Kraut for the day. He bounced another, lost his wingman, and almost rammed the Jerry plane before it exploded. By this time he was alone and only two guns were operating. He bounced another Jerry, which hit for the deck and Gooney Bird followed him all the way down. There was a smokescreen over Hanover and the Jerry dived into it. So did Gooney Bird. The Jerry came right down on the deck, barreling along the main drag of Hanover full-bore down the center of the street with Gooney Bird on his tail, close enough to be lurching back and forth between the buildings in the prop-wash.

"I could have put in that spare bulb then," said Gooney Bird. "It's a simple matter. But, hell, I knew that Kraut couldn't get away. And I sure did need a cigarette."

So Gooney Bird lit up the cigarette while barreling down the main drag of Hanover. The Jerry broke out of town and started a climbing turn. "I knew he would, sooner or later," Gooney Bird related. "So I rammed lead up his tail. That butt helped a lot."



by D. V. Chase (44th BG)

B-17 or B-24, which was the better heavy? We flew both. Assigned from one to the other — and then back again — we endured a frustrating two-month period in the spring of '43 as the AAF played yo-yo with our bomber allegiance.

Prior to our first frustration, we ten eager airmen lined up in a hangar near Lincoln, Nebraska, and received our Pacific gear: shark repellent, machetes, netting, quinine, 45s. We were scheduled to leave Lincoln the next morning for points west — far west.

But the following morning found us again lined up in the hangar. Disheartened, we returned all the gear. Our pilot, Charles "Whit" Whitlock, had received new orders. Our B-24 summarily taken, we were sent to Salina, Kansas, for a month of transitional B-17 training. What a blow! We cursed the U.S. Army and reviled the stupid Pentagoners. Oh, how we bitched! Finally, Harold Schwab, our bombardier, had his fill of the gripers, and he said something to the effect that, "If you don't like the transfer, go home to your mummies." He stressed the word "mummies."

The transition wasn't all that bad. We adjusted okay. In fact, the 17s proved to be good ships; didn't have the speed, range nor bomb capacity of the 24s, but they were readily maneuverable, reliable, airworthy craft. Their empennages, at least, were sturdy, a feature that some early-model 24s lacked.

Checked out - more or less - in our 17, we left Kansas for Prestwick, Scotland, with a refueling stop and weather briefing at Gander, Newfoundland, before crossing the Pond. However, reports of heavy Atlantic weather and unfavorable winds kept us grounded for about two weeks. Finally, we got the green light and headed east.

The weather prog had called for altocumulus along our route, tops eight or nine thousand, with an assisting light tail wind. Some 300 miles out, however, the clouds sloped upward. We ascended lazily at first, as on a smooth-riding escalator, twelve, fifteen, seventeen thousand. Then swelling cumulus popped through the level tops. Light turbulence persuaded us to seek smoother air. To stay above the flowering cu's we nosed up through twenty-four thousand. No problem yet, even though we were heavily weighted with various supplies. But still the non-forecasted clouds continued to puff and mushroom and the 17s climbed, twenty-six, twenty-eight thousand, and the roiling cu's became

cumulonimbus with accompanying moderate turbulence. It was getting rough, and higher clouds loomed ahead.

An adjacent 17 left our company, nosing downward; then another; another (we counted five of them). They disappeared into the undercast, apparently heading for the deck. We reached the point-of-no-return about the time we touched twenty-nine thousand feet above sea level. It was a time of momentous decision for Whit. Should we descend through the turbulence and embedded thunderstorms and take our chances of reaching Scotland with the other low-landers, possibly wave-hopping while fighting unpredicted headwinds? Stay on top? Can we? Return to Gander? Whit asked the radio operator if radio silence had been broken and if any pilots had indicated they were returning to Gander. None had. "Okay, we don't either," Whit said on intercom. "We'll stay on top."

Lordy, just how high will this bird fly before her wings run out of supportive air? Oxygen: enough to get us through? Fuel enough? God, it's cold. We've got to make it. These and other prayerful thoughts filled our minds and further chilled our bodies, sedentary to conserve oxygen. And still our 17 strained upward.

"Pilot to crew," Whit called on intercom, "We're at thirty thousand one hundred and fifty, if our altimeter is correct. Oatmeal stick; high as she'll go . . . but we'll be okay."

We prayed he was right.

Ahead and to the sides, flat-topped anvils now crowned the cumulonimbus. Some towered far above as we snaked around them. To the north and south, other 17s likewise avoided the higher thunderstorm cells. The 17s looked like a disorganized flock of ducks preparing for a water landing: heads held high, outstretched wings canted into the horizon, tails low and dragging.

Slowly the anvils dissipated. The mountainous clouds gradually relaxed and merged with the altos, allowing us to leave the tail-dragging heights for more tolerable altitudes. Our oxygen supply was depleted somewhere between twelve and ten thousand on our downward slide. Ah, but now we could breathe nature's oxygen.

Little more than fumes powered the engines as we entered Scottish airspace. After landing at Prestwick we performed the half-serious, half-frivolous ritual of testing earth's solidity and affectionately patting the plane's fuselage, a natural

follow-up to the end of a scary flight. Our 17 was like a giant friend incarnate; a beautiful, high-soaring, life-saving sweetheart. Confidently, we knew she'd carry us safely through our combat tour. No sir, average-weighted 24s never could have topped those clouds!

Unexpectedly, our exuberance was short-lived. The first ominous news we heard was that only one of the five low-roader 17s made it safely across the water. Apparently the other four, in their battle against turbulence and headwinds, ran out of fuel before reaching Ireland or Scotland. A second blow assaulted us when we learned of our new orders: Leave the 17 at Prestwick, proceed to a base near Shipdham and prepare to reorient ourselves with the flight characteristics of the B-24. Shafted again! Over the past two months we had gained confidence in the 17. We had rationalized her bomb-carrying and flight range limitations, coped with her all-electrical system, respected her sturdiness, and were at ease with her overall performance. 24s? They were like some long-lost dream, a pleasant but fading memory.

It was bomb aimer Harold Schwab again — God rest his soul — unflappable, wry-humored Schwab, who arrested our mutinous stirrings. "Navigator," he addressed Robert Ricks, "which way is west?" Ricks pointed. Deadpan and wordless, Schwab picked up his B4 bag and started to walk away. "Hey, where you going, Schwab?" someone asked. "Home," he answered. "I'm just not interested in this war any more." Perhaps it was the humor, sardonic or genuine, that helped us through several unpleasant incidents both in training and, for awhile, in combat.

With more reluctance than enthusiasm, we reported to the 44th BG and came full circle, back to our 24s. Unbeknown to us at the time, the Ploesti low-level mission was less than two months away and the 24s, in preparation, were hedgehopping over the English countryside. So, from recently testing the ultimate height of a 17, we soon found ourselves in the company of dozens of 24s, nestled wing to wing, skimming the greenery like speedy fighter bombers. Schwab pretty well summed up our feelings one day when he said, "This war is one hell of a puzzlement."

But after several missions from North Africa, flying pre-invasion strikes at Sicily and Italy, and especially after that historic day of 1 August 1943, our bomber allegiance truly belonged to the versatile B-24. A 17 just didn't have the range to make a Libya-Ploesti round trip. Nor could the 17 match our Lib's bombload; low-altitude speed either. And wasn't that the name of the strategic air war? Range and Payload?

And yet, for 36 years we few survivors of Whit's crew have been indebted to a gracious lady, a sleek B-17 for cradling us above thirty thousand feet over the Atlantic and to safety so that we could help in the war effort — in a B-24.

So which was the better heavy? How many other Catch-22 imponderables did WW II evoke?

LETTERS

Dear Bill:

Although my schedule did not permit me to take in the entire festivities at Norwich in June, Elvira and I very much enjoyed participation in the banquet at St. Andrews Hall. Our only regret was that there were so few from the 467th and none from the old Medical Detachment and Station Sick Quarters at Rackheath.

It was also saddening to learn of the passing of Doc. Joe Mann who was so helpful to a young medical sergeant major so many years ago.

We made a tour of Rackheath entering through the "Golden Gates" and with a declassified aerial photograph of the original air base, located most of the remaining essential features of the old place so redolent with memories.

I did not travel with the charter group because London is just over the pole from us here in Anchorage and it costs as little to go to Europe as to go to the East Coast and is closer in terms of time — 8½ hours versus 10-12 through Seattle.

Here in Alaska I am with the Alyeska Pipeline Service Company and during the construction of the trans-Alaska pipeline, I could not help comparing those experiences with the ones of the "real" War.

If any member passes through Anchorage, be sure to give me a call and you will receive a guided tour of the most beautiful city in North America.

Frank Stokes

Dear Bill:

I sent you some negatives of our reunion in Norwich which you returned with an explanation.



I had some prints made and if you can use them fine. If not use file 13. Thanks again for your wonderful Newsletter.

Most respectfully,

Dal Howard

(ed: Couldn't use all those photos Dal because of space problems, but thought I would run the one of the bus just so those who could not make the trip will know that those old double deckers are still in service.)

Dear Bill:

The entire crew is doing a fine job on the 2nd AD paper. I can't understand why more 93rd BG people aren't finding out about the 2nd AD Association.

Vernon J. Harriman

(ed: Could it be because not enough 93rd BG members are trying to find them?)

Dear Evelyn:

Where were you all these years — I looked for some sort of an organization relating to my old groups, both the 389th and the 491st.

Visited Hethel in 1969 and stayed in Wymondam at the Abbey Inn, met some old friends and visited the "King's Head" at Ashwellthorpe and the "Bird in Hand" at Wreningham.

Still corresponding with old friends thru the years — Mrs. Buxton (owner of "King's Head") died two years ago at age of 94 — I am now corresponding with her daughter Joan who now lives in Rustington, Sussex.

Enclosed \$20.00 for membership — Roster and whatever you want to do with the rest. I understand you have some project.

Sorry I missed going to Norwich — I was told that a great time was had by the returning group.

I am retired at 60 years of age because of several coronaries (last one Dec. '78) for five years and so will look forward to hearing from you and some of my old section.

Tamer J. Ellis

Air Craft Armorer (911)

P.S.: The 24's were beautiful in the air.

Dear Evelyn:

Roger Freeman has sent on to me your letter to him of 15th July and your association's most generous donation of \$100, for use in connection with the exhibition we are preparing on the 8th Air Force. The amount will be paid into the Imperial War Museum Trust and earmarked for this purpose.

We all very much enjoyed your visit and hope we will see you here again before too long.

Once again, very many thanks, and all best wishes.

Edward Inman

Bill:

Part 2 of our Russian story has got me all atwitter with pride and vanity again, seeing my name in print! I would again like about 4 extra copies (as you did for me with part 1) to bore my brother, kids, in-laws, etc. etc. etc. with how great I am (was?) (wasn't?) (aint?).

Back to reality: It appears that you are successfully cracking the barrier of getting more contributions about ground situations instead of flying stories. As you and I discussed last year, this is really great for the Newsletter, as the ground guys far outnumber the flyboys, and have lots more stories to tell — about the bases, the English communities, the Group happenings, etc. (Not only did they outnumber, but they also typically were in England, and at the bases, for a much longer period of time than the flying types, and thus knew far more about these things). The story "A Voyage" and "How not to install a Heating System" are two good stories exemplifying this thrust — I think these are fine examples — Good show, Bill!!

Dave Patterson (445th)

Dear Evelyn:

I just have to thank you very much for your quick, beautiful, generous response to my applying for membership in our great Association.

It is heart warming to say the least. — Best news I've received in years.

A greatful Ex B-24 Tail Gunner.

George O. Kearney

453rd B.G., 733rd Sqdn.

Dear Evelyn:

Enclosed find check for (4) ADA Blazer Patches. I recently received a June '79 Newsletter and membership card, in response to Bill Cetlin's article in DAV Magazine. The articles and stories were fantastic and brought back many memories. I do not have a copy of your roster and wonder if one is available. I was a Lead Bombardier on Capt. Haggerty's crew, 445th BG from activation in Scribner, Nebraska, and went over to Tibenham U.K. in Nov. 1943. On our 18th mission over Wizernes, France, we took a direct hit in nose section and cut off the turret in front of me. I was severely injured and have been retired on physical disability since then. Would be glad to hear from friends of 445th and others.

Capt. Ralph W. Whitehart

Dear Ms. Cohen:

Enclosed you will find a check for my membership dues in the Second Air Division Organization.

I've wanted to join the organization ever since my father became a member several years ago. I wish more of the second generation of this group would learn to appreciate how much our fathers and mothers contributed in W.W. II. I'm extremely proud of their accomplishments. I doubt if my generation will be able to say as much for themselves.

The reunion in Norwich was wonderful and I had a marvelous time. Thank you for all of your help.

If you need any further information, please feel free to contact me.

Katherine A. Gigstad

Father: George Gigstad (446th)

Dear Evelyn:

Enclosed find my personal check in the amount of \$75.00. This payment represents my 1980 dues and the rest may be used for the library fund. Plan to make the scene in Massachusetts next year.

John E. Kirby

Dear Evelyn:

Enclosed you will find my check for \$15.00. This is to cover my dues for 1979 and two 2nd A.D. Blazer Patches and the balance you can add to the postage fund. I joined the 2nd A.D. Association at the 1978 convention in San Diego, and at that time I didn't know there was ever such a bird, if it hadn't been for an outstanding person by the name of Roy Jonasson. One fine outstanding person.

Kenneth L. Timmons
(392nd BG, 578th BS)

Dear Mr. Strong (Hdq.):

I am endeavoring to contact members of the 93rd Bomber Group who were stationed in Norfolk during the war, and who more specifically knew Daisy Elmar of the Three Nags, Fritton.

Those who knew Daisy are not likely to forget her kindness to the "troops". This year she celebrates her 80th birthday on November 5th and I am organizing a party to mark the occasion.

A number of members of the British forces will be attending and it occurred to me that those of the 93rd Bomber Group who knew her could possibly attend, or failing that wire their congratulations.

I look forward to receiving your reply.

F. T. Elliott

Dear Bill:

Thanks for sending the March and June News Letter. After reading them thoroughly, I find I have a problem which is that I do not remember which SQUADRON I was attached to. How do I find out? My full name, rank and serial number were as follows: Nathan Solomson, 2nd Lt. 0 1080749 (navigator). I was shot down over Germany, January 16, 1945, taken prisoner and that was the last of my association with the 93rd Bomb Group. There were two others that survived (Pilot and Radio Operator) but they were sent to other POW camps. I was at Stalag 4A (Luckenwald) until liberated by the Russians and returned to the US forces in May of 1945.

Nathan Solomson
18 Charlotte Road
Swampscott, Mass. 01907

Dear Evelyn Cohen:

Please enroll Geoffrey Goreham as an Associate member. I enclose a check in payment of annual dues (my pleasure!). Mr. Goreham is a historian of stature, with a specialization in Norwich history; he was most kind and helpful to our Association members during our recent Norwich trip; it is a pleasure to submit his name for membership.



GEOFFREY GOREHAM

David G. Patterson

P.S.: I'm sending him a copy of this application for his information.

Dear Bill:

Your letter of April 19 left me with mixed feelings: Joy, Enlightenment, Envy.

Joy, because you were pleased with my article comparing the attributes (and frailties) of 17s and 24s.

Enlightenment, because you took a few minutes from your busy schedule to visit long distance with me and to explain a few of the problems you encounter while preparing the 2d AD Assn. News Letter for publication.

But Envy, consuming envy, that's the feeling that lasted, Bill. Here you are on the eve of departure to the land of our ancestors, Merrie England; to that island where mellifluous names were born: Westminster Abbey, Heather, Knightsbridge, Landsdowne Mews, Warwickshire. Hell, all kinds of descriptive, ear-pleasing words. I'm plumb envious of your pending return to the haunts of our youth; to the magical kingdom of bicycles, darts, fish and chips, Piccadilly, mild-and-bitter, haymarkets, kidney pie, bedroom fireplaces, bay windows, thatched roofs, unlittered lanes. (And, oh, how relieved we were to view those White Cliffs — or the Norfolk-Suffolk coast reaching out into the North Sea like a huge swollen thumb — on our return from bombing missions.) Yeah, Bill, guess I'm an Anglophile.

The thought occurs to me that many of us not only have forebears buried in the British Isles but also many of our youthful comrades remained behind, "Forever Nineteen," as one author called them. It's certainly understandable why you are revisiting England. We 2d ADs left part of us there in the early 40s, didn't we?

Maybe next time. Maybe I can make the next Norwich homecoming. Sure hope so.

Bon voyage, Bill. And take care not to drink too much of that exotic English tea. Hard on the kidneys, don't you know!

Don Chase (44th)

Dear Bill:

Recently joined the Association. Heard about it from John L. Predgen (my pilot) and from Charlie Freudenthal. Would you believe that I until then never knew we had such an organization!

Hearing from "Predge" has stirred up things! At last the crew is getting together! We have made contact with 8 of the 10. Missing are John F. Homan (co-pilot) and John K. Dagleish (bomb/nav.).

I'm enclosing our "roster". I have indicated the last known addresses of Homan and "Pup".

The only sad news our crew has found out, was that one of our gunners, George W. (Bill) Puska was deceased. A boating accident claimed him in the early fifties. We are in touch with his son, Gary.

The Newsletters are outstanding! They are enjoyed by me immensely. How's the chances of getting back copies? I have June '78, Dec. '78, Mar. '79 and June '79. Would appreciate any and all!!

Now that our crew is getting together I'll send in anything we gather. Already memories are being stirred up. Thirty-five years is a lot to capture, but we're trying!

I was the top turret gunner and flight engineer of "Crew 2937" out of Casper, Wyoming and of the 845th Bomb Sq., 489th Bomb Group out of Halesworth, England.

Missed this year's reunion, but will really try to make next year's!

Looking forward to hearing from you, I remain,

Louis J. Wagner

Dear Ms. Evelyn Cohen:

I read of the patches in the Newsletter. Please send me two 2nd ADA Blazer Patches. Enclosed is a check for \$10 to cover cost and handling. What is left is for the Memorial Fund if there is one.

I was with the 392 BG and 522 Squadron. I was shot down on 6 August 1944 and taken prisoner. Come home on the last sailing of the Gripshon. Woody Myers told me that the Squadron was disbanded due to the loss of many planes in our Squadron.

Thanks for any info you may obtain for me.
Stanley C. Zybort

Dear Rick (Rokicki):

Thank you very much for your letter and application for membership in the association.

The truth of the matter is that I was a member, but somehow failed to renew membership for 1979. I am therefore enclosing a check in the amount of ten dollars — the extra will probably come in handy for stamps, or something.

I appreciate receiving the News Letter, and going through it's pages I notice a lot of interesting material — tonight I shall give it a thorough once over.

My wife and I returned to our house here in Florida, and I am also retired from industry. I worked on the Apollo program from beginning to end, and then the firm transferred me back to the Gaithersburg area, and from there I retired.

I find myself extremely busy — mostly working on a book I am hoping to complete this year — first draft that is. I am writing about civil American aviation history, the book is titled "Echoes from Kitty Hawk".

Here is hoping you will enjoy increased membership in the association, and I promise to be on time when it's renewal time.

Jens P. Johnsen

Dear Roy:

I'm sorry to say that I don't know any of the men in the picture except that they were from the 564th ground crews. However, I can tell you the circumstances leading up to the photo.

On Dec. 30, 1943, my crew and I took off from Hethel at 08:45 for Ludwigshafen and over France we had an engine shot out by two ME 109s who came out of the sun and dove headon through our formation without anyone even seeing them to fire back at them. They hit an oil line which pumped oil onto the hot engine leaving a smoke trail behind us for many miles. Since it was such a clear, sunny day, we stayed with the group letting the engine run and bombed our target. On the way home, we ran out of oil and had to feather #2. In order to stay in formation on 3 engines, we burned up fuel at a higher rate than we could transfer out of the #2 tank to the other engines, so when we finally saw the Channel, we dropped down and reduced power to save gas which was getting very low. The fog was settling in fast and when our navigator, Joe Calonde, found us an R.A.F. summer fighter strip (closed for the winter) at New Rumley, we landed there amid a flock of sheep, just at dusk. A good feeling.

We were picked up and spent the night at an RAF base (fighter, grass runways). Next day we were taken to a bomber base nearby where an airplane from the 564th picked us up for the return trip to Hethel.

They sent mechanics and our engineer back down to repair the airplane. And now about the photo —



While repairing the damage the boys just happened to find an out of the way pub which had a good supply of Johnny Walker Scotch at the legal price of about \$4 a fifth. These sly Americans very casually bought a bottle or two at a time until they had nearly bought up his whole stock and realizing that something was amiss he stopped selling to them. Hence the picture of the men with their trophies!!

A few days later Bob Wright and I flew it out of there with a crew of three and little fuel, back to the 389th.

I'm sorry that we will not be going to Norwich this year as badly as I would like to. But hope to be able to make some of the reunions in the future. Everything for me seems to be "in the future".

Had a nice visit last summer with Ben Walsh and Bob Hyde.

Col. Ardery has a book out now about our group. It's called *Bomber Pilot* and is very interesting to me. It recalls to my mind many times, places and people that I had at least partly forgotten.

Maybe C. P. Quinlan could help out on the picture since he was one of the "bootleggers".

Thanks for your letter

Andrew J. Opsata (389th)



93rd BG

Dear Bill:

This is to let you know I have a new address. I've already notified Hathy and Evelyn. However, in my packing to move, I ran across the enclosed snapshot of our then young, happy warriors. Don't they look great? If you post this picture at the Reunion, perhaps someone or two or more will recognize themselves.

I shall be looking forward to the accounts

of your happy reunion in the next issue of our 2d Air Division Newsletter.

We have a nice library here at Emerson House. I will bind all these many Newsletters in a binder and put it on the shelf. *Someone* may recognize *someone* in good old 2nd A.D. 8th A.F.

I shall be thinking of all of you as you fly into the blue yonder toward England.

Bertha Dahm (Hdq.)

Dear Bill:

Thanks for your prompt answer to my previous letter.

If my memory serves me correctly, the station Compliment Squadrons were 60th thru 70th and they were organized in So. Carolina and when trained were shipped to Camp Patrick Henry in Virginia where they embarked on the "General Pope" which made history as being the first transport to leave the U.S.A. without convoy. Also aboard was a black Quarter Master Truck Co. who delivered bombs to our bases. It was part of this unit that was killed when unloading bombs at Metfield.

We had a rough crossing, stopped at Iceland to pick up a shipwrecked Navy crew and we landed in Glasgow, Scotland, where we took a train to England.

Has the Air Force released their study on the effective results of our bombing? They sent teams into Germany to inspect and evaluate the success of our mission.

I was perhaps the only member of the 2nd Air Division to be wounded on a Liberty run. I was Convoy Officer one evening and while delivering a film to the movie house in Norwich, I was caught in a raid and received a bullet through my left knee. The British police picked me up and turned me over to the M.D. M.Ps who took me to the station hospital in Seething.

Keep up the good job.
Newton McLaughlin
Maj. U.S.A.F. Res. Ret.

Dear Evelyn Cohen:

I am writing to you for two reasons. One is to determine the status of my membership in the Second Air Division. I am enclosing the only means of contact with you, and as you can see it has expired. Please let me know what the yearly dues are, and where to send them, and I will send a check by return mail. Don't you have a Bulletin of some sort; I had to obtain your address from Aida Kaye of the 8th AFHS.

Second, will you please send me two (2) 2nd AD car decals, as my only one went with my old car when it was sold for a new Olds. As Engineer and top gunner on the "Agony Wagon", a B-24 from the 489th BG, I am very interested in maintaining contact with your fine organization. Keep up the good work, and I hope to hear from you soon.

Richard O. Butler

Dear Bill:

I am sending you a check to cover the cost of a roster if and when you get enough purchasers. I am just joining the SADA, having gotten a letter from Michael Fagen asking me if I were the same man who went to England by way of South America and Africa with him in 1944. I will never know how I managed to go so long without hearing about the association, even when you came to San Diego to meet. I just retired from teaching this fall, after 34 years, so I may have been concentrating on not going to work when the convention was being held!

I was a navigator with the 855th Squadron, 491 Group from the time it left Blythe until my tour was completed in January, 1945. I have written a letter to Evelyn along with my check and plan to enclose a couple of pictures as soon as I can get decent copies made. One shot is our crew in front of our plane (typical shot) and the other is of the Bombshells, a dance band which we had to while away our free time.

I must compliment you on your newsletter! It has a very professional look and the stories in the December '78 issue which Mike sent me have already brought back a lot of good and bad memories. Since my retirement, I have been the "full-time" president of the San Diego Federation of Teachers, AFT, AFL-CIO; first project was a monthly newsletter called the "Classroom Teacher" and we just put out our 4th issue in April. So I can appreciate some of the effort which it takes to go to press.

Thanks again for what you have been and are doing.

Elwood M. Jones, Jr. (491st)

Dear Bill:

You must be kidding about your "Identify Please" photo in the June Newsletter.

That motly group is (was) the Hq. 2AD Stat Section, and the mystery man is — (envelope, please!) Maj. Jordan Uttal. A.K.A. the 'Mewk & Cwackers' (milk & crackers) kid.

Arthur Bernstein (Hdq.)

(ed: We were kidding, but thought we would shake Jordan up a bit. But what's with this 'Mewk & Cwackers' business. Sounds like another good story!)

Dear Evelyn:

Please find enclosed my check #287 for \$7.00 for Membership in Second Air Division Assn.

Am looking forward to receiving your Newsletter.

Mr. Odell Dobson of Somerville, Alabama has recommended that I join this Assn. since I am interested in the 8th AF and was a member of the 44th Bomb. Gp., 2nd Air Division, located at Shipham, England. I was a First Lt. and flew as a Bombardier-Navigator — shot down on my 18th mission — became POW — Serial number #2 — became American Commander of Dulag Luft — and later adjutant to Col. Chas. Stark at same camp.

Gerald G. Gille

Dear Evelyn:

Bet you have already heard all of the things, real or imagined, wrong with our 32nd Convention. This has been our most expensive meeting to date and within our limited experience, the most enjoyable. Standing up while eating is not our idea of exciting things to do — however when coupled with the company and location, it resulted in a very memorable occasion.

We left Norwich on June 6th, took a train to London and flew to Brussels — rented a car and drove to Lille, France. After experiencing some difficulty locating a hotel — suddenly there was a Holiday Inn. When we called Jackie's cousin the next morning, we found that we were only ten minutes from his home. Spent a wonderful three days visiting her relatives in France and Belgium. These days were full of surprises, as we had never met any of her relatives — including her 90-year-old Grandmother. That meeting of Grandmother and Granddaughter was worth the entire cost of the journey.

Russ Harriman and I visited the old German fighter base in Vitry. We were forced to land there in September, 1944. The base had been closed to the public since January 17, 1959 — we ignored the sign and went in. We were rewarded for our trouble with a free plane ride, and were able to view that part of France from the air once again. This bit of luck really set the tempo for our entire trip.

On our second day in Lille, France, we had two events which are most memorable. First, we learned that the 93rd Bomb group had missed their target and had dropped a bomb in the cousin's backyard. It was a strange feeling sitting across the breakfast table hearing a story like that.

The second event occurred when a French lady came to talk with us. She was interested in locating a bombardier from the 392nd. He had bailed out in June of 1944 — and her family found him badly burned and in the need of help. The family hid him in their garden and nursed him back to health. Later he was picked up by the underground.

We located the missing bombardier on July 13th and his benefactor will receive a letter from a very grateful man. She had moved so our returned bombardier was unable to contact her through all these years.

That was not the end of our luck on the 13th — Jackie and I located our long lost right waist gunner — Martin K. Boone. Incidentally, we will be getting two new members for the Association — plus a 492nd'er we met in Norwich.

Our visit to Sweden was as great as the rest of our holiday. We met a few old friends of 35 years ago — were promised a complete list of all American Airmen interned in Sweden. The luck of the Tourists still is in force.

Thanks for all your efforts, Evelyn, and our thanks to all that had a part in this great experience.

Frank Thomas (453rd BG)

P.S. Whitehead's Tourists will have a crew reunion this fall — the first since 1947!

Dear Roy "Jon":

Please let me apologize for the delay in answering your letter.

I knew Gil would have welcomed the idea and the opportunity to join all his buddies in a reunion.

It saddens me to tell you Gil passed away April 30th, 1973 due to a heart attack.

I and the family miss him more and more as time goes on. We had a good life and family of 2 sons, 1 daughter and 4 grandchildren.

Gil was a very successful businessman with his own insurance agency and building and loan association. I could go on and on.

I am enclosing a photo as Gil appeared in uniform. He was with Capt. Wright's crew and perhaps some of the fellows will remember.

I also hold a lot of fond memories of the war years.

Again, I say I'm sorry and I sincerely hope that all the hard work and planning is appreciated by all that attend the reunion.

Congratulations to you for your efforts and a most memorable occasion to all in the Spring.

Mrs. Gilbert (Irene) Wagner



Dear Evelyn:

Imagine my chagrin! After looking for my Dues Statement all winter, I finally found it in my front yard after the tons of snow had melted.

Anyway, please accept my check in the amount of \$25.00; \$7.00 for dues, \$15.00 for the Memorial Library, and \$3.00 for three more of the Second Division decals, if they are still available. If not, just add the remainder to the kitty.

Jim Cooper

(ed: Shows our dues statements are indestructible!)

Dear Bill:

I am writing to thank you for printing my letter and picture of the Massilon Tiger in your Sept. issue. Since then I have had quite a few enjoyable minutes reading and writing letters triggered by that letter.

The one letter that started a chain reaction was written by L.T. Piland in the March issue. He raised the question of a reunion in Dallas, as I questioned the whereabouts of Jack Kutz, who I knew lived in the Dallas area. So I wrote Piland and he was kind enough to help and was successful in his search.

When I wrote Kutz, I enclosed a copy of the space where my letter appeared. In his answer to me he called my attention to the pictures of El Lobo on that page, pointing out that he was in that picture. You can imagine how astonished I was by that piece of news. It proves how near sighted a person can be if he feels he has no particular reason to be involved.

That picture was taken at Wendling when Kutz and I were on D.S. from a Signal Co. (1080th) at Horsham St. Faith and we were moving from one base to another establishing Comm. shops in the early stage of the formation of the 2AD.

Now for additional question, why have I not noticed any news or addresses from that Sig. Co. Jack and I transferred to the 467th approx. Jan. '44 and I lost track of the personnel and I sure wish I could make some contacts.

I was not able to plan on the Division's trip to Norwich, but my thoughts and best wishes will travel with all that make the trip.

Cheers

James F. Kennedy (467 BG)

Dear Bill:

I was very pleased with the way my "Brunswick story" was set up in the June Newsletter, as I was with my previous story in the March Newsletter. Also, I think that you are to be commended for getting this June issue out early — rather than after our forthcoming Norwich trip.

I am sending Don Olds another story which I hope that he and you will like. It refers to the same mission described in David Patterson's "Russian Excursion" story in the March Newsletter.

My ego now requires that I get some extra copies of the March Newsletter and also the June Newsletter. Enclosed is a check for \$3.00, which I hope will cover the trouble and expense of sending me some copies. Thanks, Bill. Looking forward to seeing you in Norwich.

Del Wangsvick (453rd)

(ed: I sent your check back Del because while we can't pay our authors anything, we don't charge them for extra copies. Now that your ego is in full bloom how about some stories?)

Dear Evelyn:

The March News Letter arrived and after reading the front page article, "She Flies Again — With An Assist", by Capt. David O. Miller, I decided that perhaps I could help Colonel Goff in his appeal (ed. note) so got busy and want to brief you on what is in the mill in response to the article: Since I had the day off on Monday, 26 March, I telephoned attempting to contact Lt. Col. Goff, who is in the process of retiring and was advised that the Colonel was in Dallas. After many calls to various offices, I reached Colonel Bob Straughan (318 - 456 - 3021), who is with the 2BMW/CCE, and evidently the project officer, to see what can be done to rebuild exterior and interior of the B-24J. First, I let him know that a close friend of mine, living in the area, was a former Crew Chief and had at one time presented me with the complete set of all seven (7) manuals, which are in mint shape. He was elated! Second, I told him that my friend, being retired, would most likely be available to come to Barksdale AFB and assist in restoring the plane and that I would talk to him and then get back in touch. This I did, and Colonel Straughan is going to work on providing housing and meals for my friend. He was very happy when I called again and put my friend on the telephone who offered his services without cost and shocked Colonel Straughan when he said he could stay as long as he was needed. My friend is William Patrick, MSgt (Ret.), who was with the 392 Bomb Squadron, 30 Bomb Group, and at one time stationed at Barksdale. I do believe that he and Colonel Straughan will be getting together within a month or so, and I will relinquish the manuals, hopeful that the newly authorized annex for an Air Force Museum at Barksdale will become a reality. I write this letter only to tell you that it "pays to advertise" as we may eventually be able to show our children and grandchildren that there really was such an aircraft.

My wife and I enjoyed the article on "The American Memorial Library 1963-1978", by W. Joan Benns. Last year in March we stopped by the library and had a nice visit with Ms. Benns. She is a dedicated and lovely lady!

Thomas V. Noland, Sr. (491st)



Dear Evelyn:

I am writing for my brother, Joseph Demay, who served with the 453rd BG and is presently in the N.Y. Veterans Hospital, 1st Ave. and 23rd St., N.Y. City. He had to have his leg amputated and keeps talking about his friends in the service. I thought that if he could hear from some, it might boost his morale. I am enclosing a photo of the crew he flew with.

Mrs. F. L. Obremski
51 Christmas St.
No. Babylon, N.Y. 11703

I would like to offer my heartfelt thanks to you, and the other association officers, because of your unselfish labors thousands of us are able to spend many enjoyable hours reliving what now seems to have been a rather enjoyable experience.

Keep up the excellent work.

Mike Weber (Co Pilot-Adsits crew)
392 Bomb Grp.

BULLETIN BOARD

"Big Joe"

The question this year among 44th participants at the reunion was 'where is Big Joe Avila'. News out of California is that Big Joe suffered a heart attack and this was followed by the amputation of his left leg. I recently talked with Joe and I am happy to report that he is coming along in great shape. He's having a little difficulty 'flying' that new wheel but he figures to be checked out by the time next year's reunion rolls around.

I know Joe would like to hear from his many friends in the 44th so why not drop him a note or a card. The address is 818 E. 5th St., Santa Ana, CA. 92701.

ALL "WOULD BE" AUTHORS REPORT

In order to keep our Journal the biggest and the best (so we brag a little!) we need more stories of personal experiences of our members. Now don't give me that bit about "nobody would be interested in my experience". Every experience, no matter what it was, is important and once it is printed in the Journal it will always be available for future historians who will be trying to find out all they can about that big bang during 1941-1945. And don't worry about crossing the 'Is' and dotting the 'Ts' (just wanted to see if you were paying attention!) as we will take care of that for you. Now let's get cracking. Dismissed.

DEDUCT

Over the past few years several attempts have been made to have the 2nd Air Division Association put on the IRS approved list of non-profit Veterans organizations so that our members could deduct the cost of attending our conventions as delegates.

HAIL COLUMBIA — Pete Henry has accomplished that very thing and approval is expected by December 1 at the latest. Our members can now take advantage of this when they file their 1979 returns.

One word of caution. You, as a member and delegate, can deduct your expenses only. Expenses for wives or other members of the family are not allowed.

I think we all owe Pete a 'well done'.

TOTALS OF GROUPS TO DATE

| | |
|--------|-----|
| 44th | 350 |
| 93rd | 208 |
| 389th | 389 |
| 392nd | 264 |
| 445th | 174 |
| 446th | 165 |
| 448th | 251 |
| 453rd | 234 |
| 458th | 228 |
| 466th | 332 |
| 467th | 238 |
| 489th | 122 |
| 491st | 105 |
| 492nd | 28 |
| 65th | 1 |
| 2 CW | 1 |
| Hdq. | 103 |
| Assoc. | 106 |
| 361st | 22 |
| SM | 54 |
| 3 SD | 6 |
| 56th | 5 |
| 4th | 12 |
| 96th | 1 |
| 14th | 4 |
| 355th | 8 |
| HM | 16 |
| B.G. | 11 |
| 479th | 5 |
| BAD2 | 3 |

Total 3446

MOVING?

It would save the association a lot of money if you would notify us when you are making a move to another address. Each notification sent to us by the Post Office costs us an additional twenty-five cents. Our members are constantly on the move and these quarters do add up. Give us a break and let us know as soon as you move. Preferably before you move.