



SECOND AIR DIVISION ASSOCIATION JOURNAL



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MAYBE TOMORROW

by J. T. Elias (44th)

Procrastination is a failing which seems to be very common amongst us mere mortals. "Maybe next time," we say. "I'll do it tomorrow for sure." How many times have I said to myself, "I ought to go a little out of my way and see him." Then comes a day when we are shocked by the fact that the opportunity has passed us by.

Once, on a trip across the country with my family, I went within a hundred and thirty miles of Laramie. All across the land the thought kept nagging me, and I wanted to veer north to visit my 'Skipper'. But that weakness of the will and four children's continual "How soon do we see the Rockies?" undermined my determination. That was eleven years ago.

We had kept in touch with Christmas cards since I'd left Norfolk in 1945, my thirty missions completed. Joy Smith, 'Skipper', had been my pilot on most of those missions. He stayed on for another tour and became C.O. of the 68th Squadron after Major Lenhausen left. We often expressed the hope of meeting again, and in a phone conversation five years ago we talked an hour and felt the time was ripe. "Maybe next summer". Again that word, "Maybe".

Well, I got shook up badly when the Christmas card came in 1978. Marge wrote, " 'Skipper' had a bad heart attack and has to take it easy." It just didn't seem possible — the indomitable, the unflappable, the tall and calm bronco-buster, knocked down for the count of nine! In the roughest of missions he seemed so cool and nerveless, his drawl calm and soothing as we turned after the bomb run, checking on each of us over the intercom as he joked and teased. Why had I not gone to see him sooner? Why had I not gone out of my way a little to talk with him and Marge? Why had I put it off with "Maybe tomorrow"?

Eugene 'Geno' DeWaters, our Flight Engineer was within a local telephone call. That was another case of "Maybe tomorrow". He lived only a short ferry ride from where I'd moved recently, over in Staten Island. I had his telephone number in my pocket and was going to ring him "Maybe tomorrow". It had been almost twenty years since I had. This time I didn't wait until "tomorrow". I called right after I got Marge's card. It was great to talk to 'Geno' again. He and Flo, his warm-hearted wife, insisted I come over, have dinner with them, and talk over what we should do.

"Maybe tomorrow" had kept me from enjoying the deep friendship 'Geno' and I had always had. Seeing him and Flo again, sitting together and talking, having a meal with their sons, and I realized how much I had missed over the years.

We decided to go out to Laramie in April, as soon as the worst of winter was over. So we picked up the phone and called 'Skipper's' number. No answer. Our hearts skipped beats. Finally someone picked it up. It was an employee of the funeral home that 'Skipper' and Marge owned. We were told they were away and it was not certain when they would return. Our heart beats gradually slowed down to normal.

When I got back to my apartment I wrote a letter to 'Skipper' and Marge, telling them 'Geno' and I wanted to come out for a visit. Then I wrote a letter to all the crew members of "Flak Magnet" at the old addresses I had. Another phone call to Laramie resulted in the same answer. They were away and it was not known when they would be back.

My letters to the crew of "Flak Magnet" came back with a notation by the post offices that no such person was at that address. But shortly came a letter from Marge Smith that we would be more than welcome to come for a visit. 'Skipper' had been in the V.A. Hospital in Salt Lake City, they were just returned home, and our

visit would be good medicine for him, Marge wrote. She was looking forward to our visit.

'Geno' and Flo DeWaters had dinner at my flat to discuss further action based on Marge's letter. We decided that the mission was 'Go'. The date set, we reserved tickets for early April, but limited our stay to only three days, not knowing how much 'Skipper' could take in his condition. I went to 'Geno's' house several times and Flo and he came to my place, making calls to Laramie on each occasion. If nothing else happened, we were happy that the embers of our old friendship were rekindled and warmed us all.

Two days before we were to leave in April, one of the airlines went on strike. I checked the tickets. Sure enough, we were booked on that one. Was this mission going to be aborted? I made a hurried trip to the ticket agent. The newspapers were full of stories of harried travelers trying to switch airlines. Our travel agent, however, called me the next day with new tickets. No red flare for this mission.

'Geno' and I were like two kids going for their first ride on a roller coaster as we boarded the plane. There were few words. Only the glistening in our eyes, the smiles told us what the other was thinking. We were doing, after thirty-three years, what we should have done long ago and often. Anyway, we had stopped saying "Maybe tomorrow" and were moving at 550 mph towards Laramie.

Once again we were looking down on the plains leading up to the Rockies, and then the magnificent Rockies came into view, thrilling us as they had never failed to do. Then, a few minutes after leaving the plane in Laramie, there he was, 'Skipper' Joy Smith, that familiar hint of a smile on his face, Marge beside him, welcoming us. He was a bit heavier, his face was grizzled from the sun and wind, his movements slower. His strong handshake told us it was great to be together again.

There have been millions of reunions in time, each similar, each unique. Memories revived, forgotten tales dredged from the Unconscious, faces of buddies peering out of the recesses of the mind, scenes once familiar flashing through our thoughts once more. Stories were told. Marge admitted that she had had some reservations about some of the stories 'Skipper' had told her but now was convinced of their truth. "Well, almost," she said. Once again it was related how 'Skipper' had buzzed the tiny town of Weeping Water, Nebraska to impress his sweetie, roaring down the main street at telegraph pole level, and almost scraping the edge of the wing on the road as he turned at the edge of town, how the kids came running out of the school, screaming with delight, how cars had fled out of his way, people ran for cover. More stories. Who hasn't known the excitement of reunion with an old friend? Pity him who hasn't had that experience.

Before we parted we planned to go to Norwich for the Second Air Division reunion. 'Skipper' and Marge drove out East and stayed at the DeWaters' house and there were more stories, more bottles emptied, more night hours spent in re-living half-forgotten larks in London and Hingham, Norwich, Dereham and Shipdham.

'Geno' and Flo couldn't go, but 'Skipper', Marge and I went to Norwich and Scotland and London and we enjoyed every minute of it. But in the back of our minds we missed 'Geno' and Flo. And we regretted the absence of the other members or "Flak Magnet", Cooper and Barlow and Powner, Kenny 'Di-Da' Sprowl, Bobby Burns and Johnny Shelton. We hoped that, wherever they were, all was well and they remembered us as we remembered them with love, with the hope of a grand reunion in 'The Wild Blue Yonder'.

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HOO JIVE GOES TO SWEDEN & A LITTLE MORE

by Don Olds (453rd)

Before I get to the story of Hoo Jive, I want to thank everyone who remembered Mimi and I during the holiday season. We really appreciate your thoughtfulness and wished we could've personally answered everyone, but the volume was just too heavy.

Also, I really appreciate hearing from so many of you thanking me for the newsletter attempt. I heard from people I had never received a letter from before. Even got a lot of phone calls. I've thought about doing it again next Christmas — if the postage rates don't increase. One of our members wrote asking why most of the stories are about flying and so little covering those guys who toiled all night long in freezing weather just to insure one more Circle J aircraft got off the ground the next morning. I wrote back

saying that I tend to agree with him, but called his attention to the March '80 *Journal* issue where I specifically asked for some material from ground crew people for the *Journal*. Since I wrote that column I've had not one bit of information concerning ground crews sent to me. So, once again, if you want to see something about your aspect, write it up and send it to either me or the *Journal* editor.

Ken Ferland called saying his crew arrived back in the U.S. after the war and he was sent to Fort Dix and assigned to MATS where they flew C-47's until being discharged in March '46. He was wondering if anybody else out there was assigned to Fort Dix in that capacity, and if so, would they contact him. He's in the roster.



HOO JIVE on the ground in Sweden. Notice the Stars and Bars emblem has been painted out.

HOO JIVE belonged to the 734th Sq. and on 25 Aug 44 the Charles Huntoon Crew was assigned to fly it to Wismer, Germany and the FW-190 plant. Charles Huntoon tells the following . . . We were low as we made landfall from the North Sea, the entire Group was low to perhaps save time on oxygen while over the comparative safety of the sea. Shortly after making landfall we were hit by flak under the left wing and lost #1 and #2 engines. The Group was climbing but we couldn't with our bombs, etc so we elected to stay under a bit in trail and asked for cover, which we received. Had only about half hour to target so should be OK with emergency setting and hold altitude. As we approached Kiel, to the north of us, #3 started smoking pretty bad so we had to throttle it back. Smoke cleared but then could no longer hold altitude so we bombed on Kiel docks as a target of opportunity. Started back for England and doing quite nicely, holding altitude without the bomb load even with #3 throttled back to normal cruise. As we were about back over the North Sea #3 started smoking again and soon very badly. Reduced power some more and now losing altitude again. Ed Parmentier the navigator estimated we would about make the Frisian Islands which meant ditching and a Kraut reception at best.

Ed gave us a heading for Sweden and we started throwing out all the excess weight we could. Saved the nose and tail guns and a bit of ammo for them but everything else went. As things went overboard we began to maintain altitude again.

Soon the Swedes met us, dropped wheels and we replied but then raised them immediately again as the drag would have called for a landing right then. They led us to

Malmö, a large grass field with a smoke pot. The wind was coming right at us so went straight in, all quite uneventfully. This left us with one outboard engine and on the other side of the field from the buildings. Soon a non-com arrived on a motor bike with a Tommy Gun and since we had the ship open he crawled up. Harold Call, the CP and I were trying to get our right leg straightened out after holding hard on the right rudder. After a few exchanges of 'Welcome to Sweden' we realized he was trying to get us to taxi across the field to the ramp. He couldn't understand and we couldn't make him realize there was no way with just one engine. After he jiggled his gun at us a few times a Swedish Officer arrived that spoke English and got everything organized.

We were debriefed by our U.S. Legation people and interviewed. Bob Pierce, Jack Ward and myself were asked to work with the Legation helping with interred aircraft maintenance. The rest of the crew were repatriated before Christmas. Bob and Jack were repatriated in the spring. I was acting as a test pilot and eventually had charge of maintenance of all the B-24's in Sweden. This gave me an opportunity to favor Hoo Jive a bit. She got four rebuilt engines and I flew her out on 7 Jul 45 to Burtonwood, England, the last B-24 to return.

HOO JIVE was an unusual B-24. She got old and drafty but she invariably returned to Old Buck with more gas than the rest. What other B-24 could nearly maintain altitude with one outboard engine?

There's the story of the end of her combat career. Wonder if some time someone could fill me in on her start. Who named her and how did her name come about??

8 BALL NEWS

by Pete Henry (44th)

My former Crew Chief, Felix Dunagan, heard my pleas for material and sent the following article from the Russellville, Arkansas Daily Courier-Democrat, dated September 17, 1980. Holt, Irish, Serbin, Taylor, Zgud, and Wrubleski are 2ADA members and Elmer Smith joined after I wrote to him following receipt of this article. Now, we're working on Jack Frost and George Kubes to join and try to get the whole crew to join us in San Antonio next Oct. 1, 2, 3 & 4.

B-24 crew flies missions — again

A group of men met recently for a three-day convention in a suburban Chicago, Ill., home and recalled how they swept under the enemy's radar screen decades before anyone had ever heard of STEALTH.

The eight men were members of a nine-

The first such gathering was held in 1977 at St. Louis, Mo. Just as at the first reunion, there were a lot of "remember when . . ." at the gathering.

Smith's crew served together from March 1944, when Smith picked them up at Casper, Wyo., for crew training in B-24s until March 1945, flying 30 missions. When they first got together for crew training, there were 10 men in the crew. Later the position of belly turret gunner was eliminated and Max Bigelow left the crew.

In June 1944, the men reported to Topeka, Kan., for assembly to fly overseas. In a new "just off the assembly line B-24," the crew flew to the European theater of combat, flying from Topeka for Bangor, Maine, to Goose Bay, Labrador, to Greenland and on to Valley, Wales. While their plane went to a combat modification

Smith served as a squadron operations officer and briefing officer. About three months after completing their bombing missions, all had returned to the United States.

During the reunions, the men "talk over our wartime experiences," Smith admits. They also catch up on the important things which have been happening in the lives of their friends. Smith is pleased that the men in his crew have been as successful in civilian life as they were as a team.

Arvin L. Irish, who was Smith's co-pilot, today is postmaster at Greenville, Mich. Edward Servin of Denver, Colo., navigator, is an insurance investigator and adjuster. Holt, bombardier, lives at Luthersville, Md., and is a college professor. Paul Taylor of Cincinnati, Ohio, who was the flight engineer, is a commercial artist.



As they were then — This B-24 bomber crew posed during World War II. They are, from left: Kneeling — Arthur Holt, bombardier; Albin L. Irish, co-pilot; Elmer W. Smith, pilot, and Edward Serbin, navigator. Standing — Paul L. Taylor, flight engineer; Jack Frost, waist gunner; John Zgud, waist gunner; Max Bigelow, who left the crew; George Kubes, radio operator, and Ed Wrubleski, tail gunner.



The crew turned businessmen — The B-24 crew poses as they did once before. They are, from left: Kneeling — Arthur Holt of Luthersville, Md.; Arvin L. Irish of Greenville, Mich.; Elmer W. Smith of Russellville, and Edward Servin of Denver, Colo. Standing — Paul L. Taylor of Cincinnati, Ohio; Jack Frost of Meeker, Colo.; John Zgud of Cozud, Neb.; George Kubes of Prospect Heights, Ill., and Ed Wrubleski of Pittsburgh, Pa.

man B-24 crew in World War II getting together for their second reunion. They recalled flying an entire mission to drop supplies to General George Patton's ground forces as they made their last crossing of the Rhine River. The B-24, with Captain Elmer Smith as pilot, carried the command pilot who commanded the rest of the bomber stream which flew the entire mission at altitudes from 75 to 150 feet to avoid radar detection.

"We had to pull up to 500 feet to give altitude for the (supply) parachutes to open," Smith recalled. He explained that the "minimum altitude anywhere over land was 500 feet" but the minimum was waived for that mission.

Smith and his wife, Genevieve, have returned to their home at Russellville after attending a three-day reunion of the crew held at the home of George Kubes of Prospect Heights, Ill. The Smiths remained for several days as guests of Mr. and Mrs. Kubes.

center, the crew went to Scotland for two weeks of combat indoctrination school.

The crew was then sent to join a combat group — the 44th Bomb Group at Shipdham, England. In July they started flying their combat tour. They bombed targets in France, Belgium, Holland and Germany. The Royal Air Force flew the night raids and the Americans flew in daytime.

After 16 missions, Smith's crew was made the lead crew, flying squadron, group, wing and division leads. On one mission, of course, they led the 8th Air Force.

The crew finished the 30 missions together, with only Arthur Holt, the bombardier, becoming a casualty. Holt, wounded by anti-aircraft fire, received the Purple Heart.

When the tour ended, the crew was split, with the co-pilot, navigator, flight engineer and radio operator being assigned to a weather reconnaissance squad.

Kubes, the radio operator, is vice president of a metal extrusion company at Chicago, Ill. Jack Frost of Meeker, Colo., waist gunner, has his own furniture company. He was unable to attend the convention this year.

John Zgud, waist gunner, has his own plumbing and heating business at Cozud, Neb. Ed Wrubleski, tail gunner, is a supervisor at Jones Laughlin Steel Co. at Pittsburgh, Pa.

Smith, who grew up at Little Rock, was resident engineer of the Arkansas Highway and Transportation Department for 40 years before retirement. He and his wife, the former Genevieve Burnett of Atkins, having lived in various parts of the state during this time, chose Russellville as their retirement home.

Servin will be host to the crew and their spouses at a convention in 1982 at Denver. The Smiths are looking forward to attending.

RUSSIAN HOSPITALITY!

Delmar Wangsvick (453rd)

We (Robinson's crew) again flew in "Arrowhead", #108. Our Group, The 453rd, led the 2nd Combat Wing, the 2nd Air Division, and the 8th Air Force. Our briefed primary target was the GHQ (German Army Headquarters Camp) 20 miles south of Berlin, at Zosson.

Our Group, the 453rd, was prevented from bombing when — on the bomb run — Lt. Bartelt's plane lost two engines and dropped below the rest of our formation. Our plane was so close to his that the turbulence from his sudden movement startled me. As Bombardier, I had already turned on my switches in preparation for bombing; I quickly turned them off on seeing Bartelt's "limping" plane directly below ours.

Lt. Bartelt called our "Lead" and requested a fighter escort back to "Ole Buck". Since none was available this deep in enemy territory — and since chances of getting all of the way back "home" on two engines were not the best — Lt. Bartelt was directed to head for Russia, which he did. I watched his plane as long as I could see it, and it was still flying alone.

Lt. Julian Clark, formerly Bombardier on Walt Cullen's crew, was flying with Lt. Bartelt. This was Clark's second mission since our crash landing in the pine trees on January 8. I have not seen Clark since but did have one opportunity to visit with him by telephone from his home in California (Long Beach, I believe). He told me that their reception in Russia that day was rather tragic: Two Russian fighter planes appeared to escort them in; their plane was obviously disabled. Before reaching a Russian base, the two Russian fighters left them and they flew alone for a while. Later, two other Russian fighters appeared and shot their plane down. Those of Bartelt's crew who were able parachuted from the plane before it crashed, Clark being one of the survivors. The crew's Navigator parachuted but did not survive. Those who did were interned by the Russians for the duration of the war. The Navigator, contrary to instructions, carried some money with him. Clark recovered this money from the Navigator's body and used it to "improve his circumstances" while a "guest" of the Russians. He said that they were allowed no liberty and their treatment was more like that accorded POWs rather than Allied Forces Members.

After losing our opportunity to bomb the GHQ (which was well-bombed by the 389th, 445th, and other Groups behind us) the 453rd Group continued on to bomb our

Bungay Bull . . .

by Vere McCarty (446th)



Editor Robertie invited me to use the *Journal* for my spasmodic 446th BG newsletters. Thanks, Bill. Saves typing some 300 or more address labels each time. Also Bill promised to edit, so grammar and spelling should be better. (Ed: *Want to bet?!!*)

Last Fall I asked about Col. Cutch . . . I am pleased to report that he is now a member, substituting M.D. for Colonel. He wouldn't talk about himself, but Bill Kyle told me that after retiring from the USAF, "Cutch" went to medical school and is now in private practice in Arizona. Another M.D. is former Sgt. Paul Pifer, also a new member.

How is your memory? I have a list of aircraft assigned to the 446th BG. Some with "names" and some with squadron designation (704th - FL, 705th - HN, 706th - RT and 707th - JU) and some with squadron a/c letters. Also have some pilot and crew assignments and some dates and places of combat losses. Perhaps you can help me fill in what is missing in order to recover some of our group history. To anyone who helps, I will send a copy of the finished product. Here are a few to start:

41-28628		Minnie	
41-28814		?	Lost: 24 Mar 45, Tactical
41-28843		?	
41-29124		Connie	Lost: 21 Jun 44, Berlin
41-29128		?	
41-29134		?	
41-29136	JU "Q"	El Toro (Maveety)	
41-29137	HN "F"	Dry Run	Lost: 4 Aug 44, Hamburg
41-29140		Banger ??	Lost: 29 May 44, Politz
41-29141	RT "O"	Killjoy (MInnick)	
41-29142	RT "A"	Dinky Duck (Hurr)	
41-29143	FL	Shack II	
41-29144	FL "P"	Ronnie (Casteel)	
41-29147		Sad Sack	
41-29151		?	Lost: 22 Mar 44, Oranienburg
41-29155		Picadilly Commando	
41-29160	FL	?	
41-29177		Ginger	Lost: 26 Aug 44, Ludwigshavn
41-29292		?	Lost: 8 Mar 44, Berlin
41-29411		Just One Time	

Dave Rennie, 706th Sqdn, is a HAM operator and would like any former 2nd AD man to give him a call: Montana W7TUO.

I had asked about Troy Crawford in one of my letters. Art Quattlebaum (706th Sqdn. Adjutant) writes that Colonel Crawford died several years ago.

Some new members: Duke Rizzo, Eric Sherman, Fred Freeman, E.L. Deane, Don Huff, Harold Jansen, Sam McClung, Charles Rhea, Paul Boyer, Ralph Dougherty, Wellons Homuth and Phil Balcomb. (Phil was 706th Sqdn. Ordnance Officer; later, Group 00 . . . original cadre. Also in 446th BG original cadre were Charles Rhea and Eric Sherman, both new members; and Marvin Rubin, Harold Brewer, among older members. Any others?

Among those already planning to attend the San Antonio Reunion next October, are: Frank Crook, Dale Howard, O.W. "Pappy" Henderson, Eric Sherman, Solomon Cutch, Art Quattlebaum and yours truly, Vere A. "Mac" McCarty . . . and wives, in most cases. Who else? Let's hear from you! My address is in the *Journal* masthead.

"last resort" target, the rail yard at Gardelegen, Germany. We carried 250 pound general-purpose bombs and 100 pound incendiary bombs. Gardelegen is a medieval town surrounded by a stone wall and a moat, with the railroad yard south of town and outside of the wall. Approaching from the south, we dropped our bombs on the railroad yard, some of them falling "long", inside of the wall. As we made a left turn — away from the target and over the town — we could see our bombs exploding like firecrackers on the railroad yard and the town.

NECROLOGY

Robert E. Krieger - 448th
 E. C. Krotke - 448th
 Henry J. Lawler - 445th
 Brig. Gen. Arthur J. Pierce - 466th
 Robert R. Roehl - 446th
 James J. St. Clair - 448th
 Leonard Waters - 458th
 Stewart F. Chase - 448th
 Leonard G. Earle - 466th
 Rudolph J. Birsic - 445th

445th REPORTING - - -

by Frank DiMola (445th)

It has been a very interesting first quarter for me as the Group Vice President corresponding with many new and active members. Even though we have spent so many years writing while in the service, it is nice to drop a line to each other. Letter writing has become a real burden — just ask Eddie Goldsmith, Skokie, Ill. He writes his yearly letter to the editor-in-chief and tells him all about the snow and sub-zero weather that he is getting in the Chicago area.

I received two letters from Jack Jean, San Jacinto, Calif., telling me all about his past military history. Jack is a retired Lt. Colonel with 27 years of service. He flew his 30 missions with the 702 Sqd. and had many tales to tell. His military service was spent in Brooks AFB, San Antonio, Texas. He must know all the good places to visit for the Oct. re-union. "Hey Jack, see ya in San Antonio in '81."

John Nortavage, Mary-D, Pa. and his wife Dotty are also in touch and doing a fine recruiting job in the Philly, Pa. area.

C.R. "Bud" Nelson, Phoenix, Arizona, wrote me about his experience in the Big One when he flew with Harry Funk's crew. He only flew 22 missions and it was all over. He was getting ready to go another 22. At this time Buddy is in the construction business. He should contact Paul Schwartz, Tampa, Florida and swap a few yards of cement.

Do you remember the "Crew 76" story? Well, I have some additional highlight to add to that nostalgic story. Buddy Cross,

Amarillo, Texas, received a beautiful letter from Jimmy Stewart "Thank you for your kind and thoughtful letter and the information you gave me about the GOOD OLD 445th. Say hello to every one for me."

Another crew has finally communicated among themselves and they are from the 701 Bomb Sqd., the Claude Palmer, Dave Patterson crew — The Kassel Raid gang! They found their lost Carlton Scott, New Athens, Illinois. It takes time and effort to find members of any crew, but it is well worth it. Search your files and old correspondence and see how much info you may have on your old buddies. Give me some leads and I may be able to help you. I have compiled a separate roster of all the active members of the 445th. Just let me know if any of you desire one.

I have no further information on the proposed memorial we were planning for Tibenham. My agent, Kenneth Fox, Norwich, England has been doing some research for us by seeking requirements that are needed to promote our program.

I received a few letters from Ralph McCool, Elkton, Md. telling me about his thrills and experience in the 700 BS. He also sent me a photo of his home and its looks big enough to hold our East coast reunion.

A most recent mini-reunion was planned by Mark Knapp, Bowie, Md. for nine fellows who resided in the Washington area. Attending the affair were: Albert Brown, Maurice Casey, Garrett Fox, William Kraham, Malcolm MacGregor, Walter McHugh, Ralph Whikehart, Robert White,

and of course Mark. Many reminiscent moments were exchanged during their dinner get together and then color slides were shown of the old days. Bill Kraham had a cock-pit check list made up and they played pilot and co-pilot for a while until they forgot to lower their landing gear and landed in Chesapeake Bay. Anyway they carried away a memento.

I would like to thank John F. Eden, Jessup, Ga. for writing the great story of "Crew 13" joining the caterpilla club.

Carl E. Marino, Lafayette, Colo. said hello. He is assisting me in the recruiting program. I am asking every new member and all the present ones to place an article about the 2nd AD in their local papers. The key words are "we are looking for anyone who served in the 8th AAF and worked or flew the LIBERATORS or B24's." It works. John Robinson, Memphis, Tenn., a most recent member has proven my idea with great success.

During the winter months, it is good to hear from the boys in the Florida area. Nice to hear from Will Williams and Charley Cooper.

Finally, it was with deep regret that we were informed about the passing of our WWII Group Adj. Rudolph J. Birsic on Nov. 8th, 1980. After the war Rudy compiled and published the only history of the 445th Bomb Group. An enormous task which he undertook as a volunteer project. We, as members of the 2nd AD extend our sympathy to Mrs. Bozena Birsic and two daughters, Dorothy and Linda.

THE ARMY vs NAVY FOOTBALL GAME — as an English reporter saw it.

from the London Daily Express
November 13, 1944

Sixty thousand Americans and their girls swarmed into the White City Stadium, Shepherd's Bush, yesterday to see the U.S. Army vs the U.S. Navy in what General Doolittle described during the interval as a "real old-fashioned American football game."

Girl cheerleaders from the services, pranced in front of the crowd waving megaphones, inciting yells like "A-R-M-Y, Army", or "N-A-V-Y, Navy."

Meanwhile, a free fight seemed to be going on in the centre of the Stadium. Twenty-two enormous young men in crash helmets, were locked in deadly struggle for an oval football.

They wore spiked — cleated is the word the Americans use — shoes, strange ginger shorts which cling closely to the thighs and end abruptly just below the knee, and padded jerseys.

They needed those pads, and the crash helmets.

The object of the game seems to be to pass the ball to some unfortunate player and then for everyone else to fall on him.

The only thing that moves play towards the goal posts seems to be the instinct of self preservation of the man with the ball.

He runs as far as he can before he is maimed or killed by the other players.

The program seemed sinister. It gave the names of the 11 men of each team. It then gave a list of 15 "substitutes" for each team.

The substitutes did not have long to wait for their call to battle.

First casualty went to the Navy. Horrified, I watched a G.I. scamper across the field with two buckets in his hands. But not, as I thought, to mop up the blood.

The buckets held towels and water for the players still living.

Casualties are dealt with by a doctor — who rushes out with a black bag — the umpires (splendid in white plus fours and striped shirts), and stretcher bearers if needed.

American football is played in four quar-

ters, not two halves like ours. Each team has the ball for four "downs". If by that time they have not made enough ground the other side takes over.

Before each "down", the team which has the ball goes into a huddle while the captain decides who shall be the victim to receive the ball — and the assaults.

Favorite method of assault yesterday seemed to be: 1) Springing like a tiger at the man's throat, or 2) Just shoving so that sheer weight bore him on the ground.

The attacker must keep one foot on the ground as he tackles. After the tackle he is usually all on the ground.

The Navy lost yesterday, 10-0.

During the interval-end of second quarter, as they say, bands played, and the Goat mascot of the Navy paraded with the Donkey mascot of the Army.

As the Navy did not have a band the Army lent them one.

The borrowed band put on white sailor caps, but their playing suggested they would have rather stayed in the Army where they belong.

THE PIONEERS

(PLANES WERE SUBJECT TO CHANGE)

by Will Lundy (44th)

For the past several years since joining the 2nd ADA, I have thoroughly enjoyed each episode and story printed in this Newsletter/Journal. However I have waited in vain looking for a few tales about those early few months of B-24 participation. Please don't misunderstand me, I greatly admire the courage of every person who ever flew on a combat mission. But there appears to me, at least, an almost complete void in reporting the story of those first few original, pioneering combat men. So very few of these men survived that it seems someone else must tell it for them.

At the end of 1942 each and every man in the 44th (and I'm sure the 93rd, as well) fiercely defended any and all criticism of our B-24-D's even though we knew in our hearts many improvements *must* be made as quickly as possible. The Liberator was conceived in peacetime without sufficient consideration for worldwide weather and combat conditions. So it was up to us to identify and to correct these short-comings, until modifications were completed at the factories. But for now factory improvements must wait as the war must be taken to the enemy — in daylight. At that time oxygen supply hoses to each combatman were a small, very flexible rubber hose about 1/4" in diameter. It connected each man's mask to the airplane's main supply line at a terminal. The mask itself was a rather crude contraption that covered the nose and mouth. It had a rubber devise resembling an old football bladder hanging from it. Although clumsy for every member of the crew, the waist and well gunners were particularly vulnerable to mishaps and/or death as they must be mobile and active in

Notice

This is addressed to all of our members who attended our reunion this past July in Cambridge, Mass. You will recall that all of the meals were excellent except for one and that one was a disaster. Evelyn, forever the fighter, wasn't about to let the hotel get away with that and refused to pay for that meal until an adjustment was made. After much haggling it ended with the hotel making a \$2,500 donation to our Memorial. That might not look like winning the war, but it sure beat losing the battle.

firing their guns. Let that rubber supply hose kink at higher altitudes and unconsciousness soon followed; then death if his plight is not soon discovered. In order for one of his buddies to come to his rescue, that man must disconnect his own oxygen as his hose probably isn't long enough to reach his fallen buddy. If not careful, this man easily could join the gunner on the floor, also blacked-out from lack of oxygen. It happened many times. Eventually, the large-wire reinforced supply hose with a re-designed mask solved this problem, along with the portable, quick attached oxygen bottles.

On February 6, 1943, Major Norsen (68 Sq.?) made a test flight taking a B-24 to 36,000' to test the behavior of the standard .50 caliber machine guns lubricated with a new type buffer oil — successfully! Incidentally, even on this test flight, Sgt. Krusch blacked out from oxygen starvation and never recovered. Until this new oil was developed and utilized almost every B-24 machine gun would freeze, inoperable, in temperatures -30 degrees F. and lower, unless fired regularly. As this was winter time, and missions flown at altitudes between 25,000 and 30,000 feet, temperatures lower than -50 degrees were common.

Endeavoring to prevent these freeze-ups on those early missions, the guns were fired into embankments built near the take off area; and then again frequently firing short bursts all the way to the target — and back, if the ammunition lasted. But even then, no matter how careful those gunners were, the guns still would freeze, and aborts were common.

However, dedicated men do desperate things. Knowing that each abort weakened the effective force of those continuing on with the mission, airplanes in the 67th Sq., and I believe all of the 44th, soon started carrying portable .45 cal. Thompson sub-machine guns in the waist-window area. This gun would operate in all temperatures, so we loaded it with tracers. If the regular guns froze, the waist gunners would take this sub-machine gun when any German fighters appeared and spray the tracers toward it. Our planes would continue onwards into the mission even though completely defenseless against fighter attacks, except for the sham of tracers. Of course, these tracers were not always successful. And it has been said that some of our early losses were "bad luck."

Another "accessory" problem was weather protection clothing. Until the improved electric heated suits arrived, flying in those wooly leather pants and jackets often was downright miserable. Frost bite was all too common, with death from freezing always a distinct possibility.

The four gunners in the rear section of the planes were exposed to that terrible frigid air whistling past them at 200 plus miles per hour. The chill factor must have

been unbelievable. Those outfits were just great for us working on the planes, but unsatisfactory where the temperatures were so far below zero.

One cold afternoon I was standing nearby when a combat crew was disembarking after a diversionary mission. Last to leave by the back hatch was Roy Klinger. I will never be able to forget the heart-rendering scene as that little tail gunner half fell when he hit the ground, grasping the hatch. He regained his balance, took a few short shuffling steps to clear the fuselage, and stopped. He just stood there wavering as he fought to maintain his footage. He was a mess! His eyebrows and front hair was covered white with frost. Ice sheets covered the oxygen mask that he was fumbling to remove, and icicles hung down from that football-shaped gadget part of his mask, and from his chin. The poor little guy was more dead than alive. It seemed a long time before everyone realized his plight and leaped to help him. "Damn! When will things start getting better?" It would still be many months more. All this torture must be endured without even facing the enemy! And everyone knows the enemy is more than enough. These poor souls must endure it many times in aborts, recalls and diversions without one credit for a mission.

Similarly, the nerve center of the plane, the flight deck or cockpit was completely unprotected. Only thin plexiglas served as windshields and side windows; thinner aluminum on the sides. Absolutely nothing to stop flak, bullets, empty cartridges or debris. Later airplanes were soon field modified to provide protection. With casualties mounting and few replacement gunners available, a call was made for volunteers. There were many! Can you imagine the patriotism and character of these young men who had witnessed the terrible combat conditions to step forward and ask to go to almost certain death? And they all died. Those who survived Ploesti went down over Foggia, Italy. Ernest McCabe, a close friend, and Roy Gosline were two of these brave volunteers.

PUNNERY RANGE

Road signs are frequently prophetic. For example:

- "Soft shoulders"
- "Dangerous Curves"
- "Men at work"
- "Danger"
- "Look out for children"

Sgt: "Where in hell have I seen you before?"

Pvt: "What part of hell are you from?"

Recollections

by Elmer W. Clarey (492nd, 467th)

The Duty Sergeant awakens us at 0400-breakfast at 0430-briefing at 0515-take-off at 0615.

After a light breakfast of coffee, eggs and a piece of toast, we trudge our way past the water tower at North Pickenham (still standing) to the briefing room, of course, wondering where we will be ordered to go today.

Everyone standing at attention when the Operations Officer enters the room — soon, he draws aside the curtain from over the target map and an audible gasp is heard when we see the target for today — Politz oil refinery. We begin to wonder as we look ahead to where the flak is saturated. We know we're nearing the IP and begin to sweat a little more and utter another little prayer.

Enroute from the target there is time to survey the damage done to our aircraft. There is visible flak damage near the area of number 4 engine.

About 45 minutes from the Dutch coast, our engineer reports that the fuel gauges indicate a lesser amount of fuel on board than we had planned on at that particular point. On reaching the coast line, pilot-in-command, Bill Prewitte, made the announcement about a definite loss of fuel and stated that we had better prepare for either a bail-out or a ditching. We took a straw vote and decided that we would plan to bail out if the need arose.



Top Row (left to right): E. W. Clarey, Lt. H.G. Muller, Bombardier; Lt. Ed. Grooms, Navigator; Lt. Wm. Prewitte, Pilot. Bottom Row (left to right): Sgt. Meredith, Top Turret Gunner; Sgt. Foss, Radio Opr.; Sgt. Trout, Engineer; Sgt. Darter, Crew Chief; Sgt. Cromley, Tail Gunner; Sgt. Craig, Ass't. Engineer and Gunner; Sgt. Matson (not shown), Ball Turret Gunner.

Next, Prewitte ordered all loose gear to be thrown overboard and also for the ball turret gunner to disconnect the ball turret and discharge it. This was successful up to the point where the power cable was concerned. The gunner tried to chop through it but to no avail.

During this time, our radioman had contacted Air Sea Rescue and he advised us

that a fix would be taken on our position. When we reached a descent altitude of four thousand feet, we again called ASR and they advised us that the launch was now directly in our path and almost underneath us. We advised ASR that we were going to bail out.

After the men had left the aircraft through the rear escape hatch, I was ordered to vacate the cockpit and bail out. After working my way along the cat-walk, I positioned myself so that I would leave through the right forward bomb bay door opening. I stood on my left foot for a short time and then jumped outward. The rush of wind closed my eye lids. I pulled the ripcord (I had thought that I'd like to keep it for a souvenir) but that wasn't to be. Soon there was quite a jolt as my chute opened; it was very quiet — I thought "what a nice ride this is" then I began to think about how I was going to get out of my harness before I hit the water in order to swim to the boat.

I was successful in undoing one leg strap but unable on the other because of the shifting of my body weight. I hit the water in this condition and my first thought was "I'll use my sheath knife to cut the shrouds in order to free myself." This didn't work either because every time I tried to maneuver, I felt myself going under and started to tread water. I tried to release my Mae West but the cord had tangled around the release handle. Next, I felt and heard someone beside me telling me to discard my knife — which I did, and then started to swim toward the launch landing net. I seized it and crawled aboard with the help of the launch crew.

After a change of clothing, none of which fit my 6 foot 4 inch frame, I realized that my teeth were chattering so much that it was difficult to talk. The crew member sitting next to me gave me some hot soup and brandy. It seemed a long time before I quit shivering and started to feel warm again.

This crew member of the launch, Charles Hayes-Halliday took care of my every need and I felt that he should be rewarded in some small way. We struck up a conversation and it was decided that I should send him a pair of Wings as a memento.

After waiting for two days at a WAAF base at Goreslton for transportation back to North Pickenham, our transport finally arrived and returned to base.

Bill, I'll swear on a stack of Bibles that this is the way it was. I have a copy of the letter that I wrote to Charles Halliday in 1944 when I sent the wings to him. If he hadn't been aboard, how on earth would I have gotten his address? He has the original copy of the letter as well as the postmarked and stamped box that I sent them in.

Halliday said that he was called upon to board the launch just before departure thereby he did not get his name on the roster.

In my first letter to him, a couple of years

COMBAT WAS NEVER LIKE THIS

by Glenn R. Matson (458th)

We arrived at Horsham St Faith, England 6 Feb 1944 with the original 458th Bomb Group, 755th Bomb Squadron. We flew our B-24 "Paddlefoot" from the states via the Southern route. Lt. Charles Melton was our pilot.

Our first mission was to Berlin, Germany 3 March 1944. We all completed our 30 missions and no one was hurt. We had the typical problems as everyone else. Flak, fighters, bad weather, low fuel on return trips, engine failures and so forth, but nothing to be alarmed about.

The day came we were all waiting for. We had completed our tour in the ETO. Now the question was what to do with retired combat crews. You can't let them sit around with nothing to occupy their minds, so put them to work. Find them a job.

I was assigned to the Ordinance section to help load bombs and work in the bomb dump. My first job was to load B-24's with 500 pound bombs for a mission.

We worked our tails off all night long and had the planes loaded and ready to go. Then someone said, "The mission has been scrubbed. Off load the bombs." I thought, Oh no! not after all that work.

The Sgt. in charge said, OK men, put the biscuits under her. "Now what?" I said. He replied to put these pillow like mattresses under the aircraft bomb bay, then set the bomb release on salvo and drop them. "You have to be out of your mind," I said. He said, "We do it like this all the time, it speeds up loading time." "Yea, and makes your trip to heaven faster too."

Knowing I am still in my right mind, I said "So long, I want to be miles away from here when you drop these bombs."

My next stop was to see Lt. Fisk, the Ordinance Officer. With my verbal resignation I told him I will fly another combat tour before I load any more bombs on B-24's. It is too dangerous a job for me.

ago, I told him that at the time of the incident that he was wearing a white turtle-neck sweater. In his next letter he said "Elmer, your memory is correct, I was wearing one and, too, you are a tall man.

So, no matter what anyone else thinks or construes, this is the way it was.

As far our Bombardier, Hank Muller, was concerned, it was assumed that he went down with the aircraft. He had told us earlier that his mother had had a vision that he would die by drowning.

Here's a copy of Shutts' letter, you may keep it if you wish.

Charles called me the other day to wish me Happy Retirement. Here's also a picture of the crew. I would like to have it back when you are finished with it.

KEEP IN POSITION OR ELSE!



by Charles Freudenthal (489th)

Wayne De Cou, who flew his first nine missions with the 845th, doesn't remember too many people from the 489th, but he says his CO, Pop Tanner, made a definite impression. After the 489th came home, Wayne and crew went on to the 453rd and the 458th. But let us hear from Wayne himself: "Because of this wide array of different experiences, and because the 489th was the first outfit I was with, it is unfortunate that I don't recall anybody I served with except our Sq. Commander — Pop Tanner. About the only event I remember is the 100th mission party, and the concern we all felt because Germany was building a lot of jets. Rumors were that we would be sitting ducks for them. Later on our crew got more unwanted first hand information on these jets when one shot up our 24. It may have



Among those present (from top left clockwise): Dan Blumenthal, Bud Chamberlain, Frank Morriss and Jim Davis.

cost the ME262 quite a bit to monkey around with us though, as I heard that it went down, so either our tail gunner or the tail gunner of the plane we were flying on probably got him. No other gunners were able to get in anything but snap shots as he went by just a few feet from our plane.

"The other thing that sticks in my mind is our first combat mission. I remember it because of a thousand things — a long, deep penetration to Magdeburg, and all that flak, and how would I get that B24 off the ground with a full load of gas and bombs. I always went through the bomb bay to get up on the flight deck, but I soon discovered that with four one-ton bombs, you can't make it through the bay! As we weren't the first plane to take off with that load, I was able to convince myself that if the others could get off with that load we could do it too.

"After getting up into formation and headed for Germany, I began to feel a little more comfortable, but my real frustrations

The IRS and US

Confirmation has been received from the Internal Revenue Service that the 2nd Air Division Association is exempt from Federal Income Tax under Internal Revenue Code 501(c)(19). Our identification number is 25-1327743. This means that you can deduct expenses as a delegate to our conventions and also any donations made to our Memorial. List these deductions under 'contributions'.

were just starting. I was out of position and couldn't keep up when we started on climb. In my opinion, there were two main things that determined the value of a combat pilot; his ability to fly and handle the '24 in emergency conditions, and the kind of formation he could maintain. I thought I was a pretty good formation flyer, but I wasn't too sharp; and I doubt if any pilot just starting a combat tour could do a good job of flying a B24 in a large formation. Now the lives of everybody in our crew, and even the whole group depended on a good formation. Planes scattered all over the sky never got their bombs on the target. If that wasn't enough to get a pilot in place, the knowledge that Pop Tanner wasn't kidding when he told pilots to "keep in position or plan on learning how as a co-pilot," did the job.

"So here I was; a green kid who had just spent one and a half years learning how to take orders. I already had on more power than the book allowed, and still I fell farther behind the formation. To complicate the situation, they had given us a spare co-pilot who had a few missions to help get us through this first time. Would he report me

if I exceeded power settings allowed by the book? By the time I got enough power on to keep up, I was at least a quarter mile out of position. When the group levelled off and cut power I was finally able to get back in position, and I sure didn't feel like the sharp pilot I generally figured I was.



Lou Wagner, Joe LaPierre and Tom Bouley didn't believe some of the stories they heard.

"By the time I flew my second mission I knew enough to forget all the power settings that I had spent so much time learning and was able to keep pretty close to where I was supposed to be in the formation. Though I flew most of my missions with other Groups, and have a closer attachment to the people I knew there, I remember that as a combat outfit, the 489th was tops, and the leadership was able to maintain a higher level of pride in the crews that I knew."

WRECKOVERY!

by
John Archer



In marginal weather in the circuit of RAF Woodvale the aircraft dragged a wing on final approach as the pilot tried to get lined up on the runway at the last moment, cartwheeled and blew up. It finished up on a bank near the Liverpool-Southport electric railway line, some of the airmen being thrown clear in a dazed and injured condition and in danger of being caught in the blaze. Three LMS platelayers who were working close by ran to the burning plane and, despite the fact that machinegun bullets were bursting in all directions, they succeeded in carrying four of the men to safety. One of them had his clothing on fire and was rescued in the nick of time. Meanwhile, RAF firefighters and the local NFS arrived on the scene and rescued some more. One pilot lost a wrist watch but this was returned to him in the hospital after it

was found in the wreckage. It still worked and he wore it for several years afterwards!

A photograph in a contemporary Liverpool Echo shows the wreck to carry the code H on the fins but no serial number is visible. A week earlier, on 18 October 1944, an even worse disaster happened in the Merseyside area when Liberator 42-50347 of the 445th Bomb Group disintegrated in mid-air near Birkenhead. It was flying from Greencastle in Northern Ireland to its base at Tibenham and all 24 on board were killed. Fortunately the debris fell into open farmland and there were no casualties on the ground. The explosion was thought to have been caused by a lightning strike and the scattered pieces are still turning up today in the fields. I have myself picked up a spark plug and an engine cooling gill which still has its Convair part number on it.

RELIEF TUBES

Lyndon C. Allen (former tailgunner)
(67th Sqd., 44th BG)

This is primarily of interest to tailgunners, I think. Mostly it concerns their (or our) specific dilemmas. Looking back 35 years or more the situations are downright humorous to me now, but when they happened there wasn't too much humor associated with the incidents.

My first experience with relief tubes came about when I was an Aviation Cadet, taking navigation training at Hondo, Texas. I don't remember the make of airplane we were using for aerial navigation training; either Cessna or Beech. (The type is really incidental). What I do remember, though, is that the relief tube was positioned just behind the First Pilot; attached to the back of the First Pilot's seat. You notice I didn't say "his" seat. On this particular day we had a W.A.F. flying First Pilot, with a male flying co-pilot. Well, I got in pretty dire straights and didn't know what to do, with that relief tube being positioned where it was and with a female pilot! Finally circumstances required that I do something, so I went forward and tapped the co-pilot on the shoulder and whispered my dilemma to him. Laughingly, he called over to the First Pilot, asking her to keep looking straight ahead for a few minutes, until told to do otherwise. She realized the situation and got as big a kick out of it as the co-pilot. Obliging, she kept her "eyes front" until I tapped the co-pilot on the shoulder again, informing him that things were back to normal again. At the time I had no idea relief tubes would be as significant in my future flying experiences. Incidentally, I "washed out" of navigation training (no,

no one was out to "get me"; I simply couldn't make it) and, as I had already completed aerial gunnery training, I ended up as a gunner; specifically as a tailgunner on a B-24.

My next unusual experience with relief tubes came about when we were in air crew training in Casper, Wyoming. After several practice missions I realized what was occurring when the aft relief tube was used. The aeronautical engineers who designed the B-24 didn't take into account what would transpire when the aft relief tube was used in flight. I found out! My turret was completely sprayed when that tube was used. The aerodynamics were such that the airstream simply brought everything back my way, completely covering the outside of my turret. As I am sure other tailgunners will attest, this made it such that one could see absolutely nothing through the plexiglass. So, when I realized what was happening, I told our pilot and he immediately gave the order that no one would use the aft relief tube from there on. That appeared to solve the problem.

We in the back of the plane decided to carry a can to use now that the aft relief tube was "off limits". At the conclusion of a training flight one of us would just take the can aside from the airplane and empty the contents. After doing this several times, we figured we were wasting time. We were flying over barren wasteland up there in Wyoming, so why not just pour the can out before landing, so that's what we decided to do. One of the gunners opened the bottom hatch and stood fore of the opening

and proceeded to empty the can. When I did so the contents hit the airstream, swirled up through the aft of the hatch hole in a circular motion and gave me a good drenching. Obviously, we concluded that wasn't a very good procedure and either went back to waiting until landing, or maybe we found out we could stand aft of the hatch without having that drenching problem; I really can't remember which procedure we followed. One thing I do remember, though; I never did it fore of the hatch again!

On one of our training flights my sight gun was malfunctioning, so, obviously I proceeded to try to rectify the problem. I got out of the turret and was working from the outside. As you remember, there was a space somewhere between eight and ten inches between the tail turret and the fuselage, and it was through this space I was able to get to the malfunctioning gun. I had my head almost completely out of the airplane and, logically, most of my body was completely exposed to the outside, too, as I worked on the gun. I was busy opening performing my task and didn't notice that our bombardier had come back and, ignoring the order not to use the aft relief tube, proceeded to use it. Well, I was completely covered, practically from head to toe! From this little incident our navigator gave me the nick-name I carried through the rest of our training and all through our tour of duty in England: "Small and Smelly!"

As an appendage; I'm sure that was the last time that aft relief tube was used as long as we were a crew!



by John E. McCluskey (445th)

What was supposed to be a normal mission turned into anything but. While flying around working our way into formation, doing pretty good and minding our own business, out of the blue came this other B-24 on our left side which really started things jumping.

I guess the other ship had spotted us first and started to pull up and over us. He almost made it except his nose turret folded the tip of our wing accordion style. In fact I think he lost his nose turret in the process.

His props cut through the top of our plane right over the waist gun positions and worked over some cables. His ship also put about a 45 degree bend in our left tail section which didn't help things.

After shaking around and getting my chest chute on I looked at the other waist gunner and he had his chute on. We looked at each other, mentally saying "What Now?" To answer a question as to whether

or not you would jump in a situation like this, take my word for it, you would. We were ready to go.

The "Boss" called back and asked us what it looked like back there. I told him that he had better come back and take a look for himself. When he came back and I saw how his jaw dropped, I knew we were in trouble. He went back up front and when



he took over the controls we began to make a turn using great, big wide circles. We dropped our load in the channel and headed for that big runway at Woodbridge. We made a fast, but safe landing due to the skill of the "Boss". He couldn't play with the throttles too much.



"Lieutenant—About that forward relief tube.

NORFOLK MARSHES WAR BOMBS ALERT

(from Eastern Daily Press)

For 35 years, an American Liberator bomber has lain buried deep in the mire under a remote Norfolk marsh — with twelve 500 lb. bombs on board.

The presence of the aircraft was no mystery. Its crash and location had been logged, but no-one knew about the bombs. Until yesterday.

They came to light through the activities of three groups of aircraft enthusiasts who had been given authority to recover parts of the Liberator from marshland near Acle for display in museums.

As they sought to excavate the aircraft against the constant competition of water seeping back at them, they came to the nose of a bomb and immediately stopped digging.

Police were told and an RAF bomb disposal squad from Wittering arrived to take over. It was they who recovered the clutch

need to evacuate any residents as the marshland is deserted.

The unclassified branch road from Stracey Arms to Halvergate could also be closed, he added.

Inspector Jim Hunt of Acle is leading the operation. A police Land-Rover was keeping an all-night watch on the site.

The aircraft, a Liberator B24H from 466 Bomber Group, USAAF, based at Attlebridge, crashed in the early morning of July 12th, 1944.

It was one of a force assembling over Norfolk for a bombing raid on Saabrucken in Germany.

It went into a spin and crashed in the fog into marshland near Acle, killing all the crew of nine. The American authorities spent three weeks at the scene, recovering their bodies and vital gear but not, it was learned this weekend, the bombs. The dead airmen were buried at Cambridge.

The Liberator has remained in the marsh

December 24, 1944

by Elmer W. Clarey (492nd, 467th)

The day before Christmas dawned foggy and cold.

Briefing was set for 0800 hours at the Operations Center office as there were only a small number of crews involved in this type of operation — ferrying fuel in P51 fuel tanks, carried in the bomb racks of the B24, to General George C. Patton whose tank battalion was well under way in the heart of France.

After our weather briefing was terminated, we proceeded to the hard pan for a final check on the loading of our plane. It was a strange sight to see the bomb bay filled with fighter fuel wing tanks and at the same time realize how lethal a load was being carried. We prayed for a normal take-off and landing every time.

Our orders for the day had read that we could R O N in Brussels on Christmas Eve and return to base on Christmas day. We were feeling rather elated because of the fact that we would get a few hours off to enjoy the sights and sounds of Brussels — especially on Christmas Eve.

The city was a beehive of activity, or so it seemed, because the smell of victory was in the air and all the citizenry seemed to react to it.

Before too long, we found ourselves in a bistro singing all the American songs that we knew. To our surprise, the Belgians sang right along with us in their best English.

After about the 14th?? bottle of champagne had been drunk at our table, we decided that if we were to fly the next afternoon, we'd better knock it off and get some shut-eye.

Needless to say, we got a very good nights sleep until around 7 a.m. when all hell seemed to break loose.

We were awakened to the sound of aircraft engines over our hotel interspersed with small caliber cannon fire and bombs exploding. I opened the window shutters and in looking up I could see FW190's dropping their wing tanks.

All of this activity immediately raised the question, "What the hell was going on!"

Little did we realize that the Battle Of The Bulge had started until we were back at our base.

This enemy aircraft activity had lasted about 30 minutes and when we thought that it had subsided, we made our way back to the Brussels airfield.

I'll never forget the sight that met our eyes — a rough guess would have it that 150 disabled aircraft of all types, both English and American, almost burned beyond recognition except that the unburned vertical fins were lying all in a row.

The Jerry pilots had had a field day in strafing the rows of all of the disabled aircraft. A fact substantiated by my photographs.



of 12, together with a few rounds of machine-gun ammunition.

Norfolk police said last night the bombs will be detonated singly today and each time the A47 will have to be closed.

A fairly large scale operation will be mounted, said Inspector Peter Atkins. It is planned to explode the first bomb at 10 a.m. and the 2½-mile stretch of main road between Acle and the Stracey Arms public-house will be closed.

It will be reopened immediately afterwards but closed again at intervals as the remaining 11 500 lb. bombs are detonated. The operation could run into Tuesday, said the inspector.

There will be serious delays and he was also anxious to warn the public that loud explosions will be heard. There will be no

ever since. "We knew all about the aircraft, but we had no idea there were any bombs there," said the owner of the marsh.

Cattle have regularly grazed over the area, but he thought they would have been in little danger.

"The top of the aircraft was about four feet below the surface and the bombs perhaps seven feet," he said.

The three recovery groups, working as a team on the marsh, totalled 18 men. Their spokesman said their intentions were to recover as much of the Liberator as possible, clean the parts and reassemble them "as a tribute to the American crew."

They would then go to aircraft museums in East Anglia, hopefully in time for the 1980 season. The equipment, he said, was now of historic interest.

NUMBER 20

by E. O. Cross (445th)

Our Group, the 445th was leading the 8th Air Force that day on April 12, 1944 on a raid to Zeickau, Germany and as we flew over France with no problems our crew felt confident we would be able to get this our 20th mission in without trouble.

Our crew (George Wright, P; R.W. Kroll, CP. R.T. Alexander, N; W.B. Wittman, B; J.W. VanBogelen, Radio Op.; J.H. Robinson, Left Waist; W.E. Cook, Engineer; M.E. Tyler, Right Waist; K.H. Dabbs, Tail; E.O. Cross, Ball.) had joined the Group at Sioux City just before coming to England and flew our first combat mission on Dec. 16, 1943.

We had been on a few "Milk Runs" as well as some rough ones including the Gotha raid of 2-24-44 which got our Group the Presidential Citation and by now we had jelled into a pretty good team working together.

At briefing that morning we let out with loud moans and groans as the target was announced, but we did that regardless of what the target was.

After taking off in our plane "Tennessee Dottie" loaded with 4200 lbs. of frag

bombs everyone settle into doing their own individual jobs and by the time we crossed the English Channel each of us was at our position ready for whatever fate brought us that particular day.

As we flew over France the weather rapidly began to get worse, and just as we were getting into Germany we were ordered to turn back. We made a long swinging turn and passed through heavy clouds getting separated from most of the formation and our fighter escort. Then an estimated fifty or sixty ME-109's and FW-190's attacked our small formation of nine or ten planes. Our tail gunner and waist gunner saw them first coming in at about 8:00 low and yelled the warning. As was my custom, I had been sitting in the ball turret with the door open. As we had done many times before, I closed the door and latched it while the right waist gunner lowered the turret in what seemed to be just a matter of seconds. Even so, several B-24's were already in flames and falling out of the formation. The action got hectic as the Germans continued their attack. The B-24 on our left wing had two engines on fire and I watched as the tail turret fell off and the gunner reaching back as if to get his parachute. The pilot lowered the

landing gear and no more attacks were made on them as those that were able bailed out.

By this time we were "Tail End Charlie" in the remaining formation of only four planes. My guns finally jammed and couldn't be cleared and things looked hopeless to me. I opened the ball turret door and had in mind to get my parachute and prepare to bail out. Just as I did, I could see our tail gunner opening his door apparently to do the same thing. As our eyes met we hesitated and then he told me on the intercom he had used all his ammunition and I told him of my gun problems. Then he said something, which we later agreed was stupid, that pulled us together again. He said "Let's use our trouble lights (the ones on extension cord) and flash them off and on and maybe they will think it is gun flashes." We both got back in our turrets and fortunately the opposition made only one more pass before breaking off.

Our plane had quite a number of holes in her but none of us had a scratch. We had no brakes or flaps on landing back at Tibenham and ran off the runway into the adjacent field. Everyone jumped out quick as possible and kissed the ground.

Our crew was credited with downing seven enemy aircraft. K.H. Dabbs, the tail gunner was credited with shooting down three.

Dabbs died of a heart attack in 1977 and is buried in the National Cemetery in New Bern, N.C.

I remember many things about Dabbs, but that day will always stand out in my mind.

1 "HAZARDOUS HAMBURG" REVISITED MORE TIME! by TWO SURVIVORS

by George A. Reynolds (458th BG)

I've received several comments about *Hazardous Hamburg* published in the last Journal, and if space permits in the next issue, I'd like to share some of these with the membership.

In the article, I wrote about a lead ship, No. 100433, receiving a direct hit in the open bomb bay and stated, "the wings sailed away from the fuselage, and the aircraft became a mass of flaming debris." The 458th records don't indicate anything on the crew's fate, and I just assumed that all perished.

New member, Bill Bracksieck of Tulsa, OK, wrote that his brother, SSgt. Alfred L. Bracksieck — waist gunner — died in the downed ship and sent copies of letters two survivors wrote to his dad after the war, and other related ones. From eyewitness accounts of the incident, it's almost inconceivable that anyone got out, but they did, and here are excerpts from the letters. Capt. John E. Chamberlain was the command pilot, and Lt. Thomas E. Hancock was crew pilot.

Chamberlain — "As you know, I was command pilot flying with your son to Hamburg on 6 Aug 44. It is hard to find words to explain just what happened. German AA blew off our right wing, and we went into an uncontrollable spin. Everyone was ordered to bail out. Lt. Hancock and I were in the cockpit, and left our seats to get out. We spun almost to the ground and were unable to get out, but the ship exploded and blew us clear. I awoke falling through the air and opened my parachute."

"Tom Hancock and I were captured immediately upon landing, and the next day we were taken to a cemetery in Hamburg to identify the bodies of eight crew members. Your son and one other were not among them, and we hoped they had perhaps parachuted safely and evaded capture. I was knocked unconscious when blown out of the aircraft, so I have no way of knowing how many got out. I only saw one other chute, that of Tom Hancock's."

Hancock — "A few weeks ago, (12 Jul 45) I arrived back in the States after being a POW since 6 Aug 44, and I know you're anxious to hear any news regarding your son. The information I have isn't very pleasant, and it certainly is hard to tell you this, but I believe you'll want the story just as it happened."

"We were leading the formation over Hamburg, flying at 24,000 feet. Enemy flak hit the ship, causing it to explode without any warning whatever. I was blown out of the ship, and was semi-conscious until I fell into the Elbe River. The same thing hap-

pened to Capt. Chamberlain, and he landed about 200 feet from me."

"Your son was in the plane when it exploded, but his body was not found. We learned what happened to our ship from another fellow in our formation that day. Later, he was shot down and wound up in the same prison camp with me. There he told me the story."

12 June 46, BGen. Leon W. Johnson added the bottom line to *Hazardous Hamburg* for the Bracksiecks. "In an effort to furnish the next of kin with all available details concerning casualties among our personnel, the AAF recently completed translation of several volumes of captured German records."

"In regard to Sgt. Bracksieck, these records indicate he was killed when his bomber crashed 6 Aug 44 at Hamburg, Ger. These records also state that he was interred on 9 Aug in the cemetery at Ohlsdorf, a suburb of Hamburg."

Others on the crew were: CP-Lt. Leon B. Lent, Jr., N-Lt., James O. Marburger, B-Lt. Edward O. Centola, Asst. B-N Lt. Robert A. Craig, R-TSgt. Allison E. Hart, E-TSgt. Glen E. Newcomb, G-SSgt. Charlie W. Carter, G-SSgt. Lorinio D. Charles and G-SSGT Charles Viahos.

Fred Slocum of Phoenix, AZ wrote, "That certainly was no exaggeration about flak at Hamburg, and the reason you hear so little about it, most of us are still too scared to talk or think much on that place."

ED BENNETT and BILL WILSON — Buddies at Twelve O'Clock High - 35 Years Ago

By Richard Morris (The Times-News, Hendersonville, N.C.)

War is many things to many people.

To many it is the elimination of the walk-ings and survival of the fittest. There are those who describe it as a job that has to be done if freedom is to survive. But the masses regard war as something you'll never forget once you've had a taste of it.

Ed Bennett and Bill Wilson are a couple of life-long buddies who will subscribe wholeheartedly to the latter opinion.

The Bennett-Wilson war experience is unique, to say the least. The odds against two close friends from a city as small as Hendersonville serving together on a bomber through the war unscathed defy imagination, but such was the Bennett-Wilson story.

Bennett and Wilson went through Hendersonville High together, participated in many youthful activities together, and were in the same graduation class.

Then came World War II and the two went their separate ways. Wilson, now an associate in Land of the Sky Realty, enlisted in the Air Corps, April 2, 1942. He went to San Antonio Aviation Cadet Center for preliminary and advanced preflight training, then to Briggs Field, Texas, as a co-pilot on a B-24 and finally to Tucson, Ariz., as a B-24 pilot.

Bennett, now vice president of Francis and Wright Inc., a farm supply and equipment business, enlisted in the Air Corps in Nov. 1942 at Shaw Field, Sumter, S.C.

From there he went to Keels Field, Miss., for air mechanics training. His next move was to Laredo, Texas, for training as a waist gunner. In September 1943 he was sent to Tucson, Ariz., where his path once more crossed Wilson's.

"When I learned Ed was around I asked my colonel if he could be on my crew," said Wilson, who was in B-24 Phase School to get training on a B-24 Liberator which was to be sent into action.

The request was granted and Lt. Wilson, a pilot, again had Staff Sgt. Bennett, an engineer-gunner, at his side.

"We went overseas by the Southern route," Wilson said. The trip took them from Harrington, Kans., to West Palm, Beach, Fla., to Trinidad and on to Belém, Brazil. From there they flew to Dakar, South Africa, and on to Marrakech, French Morocco.

The final leg was to St. Mawgan, England, and finally to the base of the 491st Bomb Group, a part of the 8th Air Force.

On the leg from Morocco, Bennett was told that there was a possibility he might have to use his guns if the plane encountered a German patrol. "I rode in the tail turret and it was very cold," he recalled. The trip spanned 10,500 miles into the unknown, as far as Bennett and Wilson were concerned.

Once at the English base, Wilson, Bennett and their crew, which was a part of the 853rd Squadron, were schooled in how to act if captured and how to escape from

Germany if they had to bail out.

Other sessions included training in how to use gunsights at certain ranges and lectures on flak, the heated suit they were to wear on missions. "The flak suit weighed 40 pounds and almost broke my shoulders," he asserted.

On one occasion, Ed recalled, a "red alert" was given. This meant the Germans were only four miles away. Later ammunition was distributed and they were told that German paratroopers might be coming. The purpose of German paratroopers would be to destroy planes. "We were told to shoot and then ask questions," he said.



Ed Bennett, left, and Bill Wilson, life-long friends, as they looked 35 years ago when they were flying the B-24 Liberator "Modest Maiden" over Germany in World War II.

Prior to going into action Wilson and his crew, which included five other officers and four enlisted men, had mission training from 15,000 to 25,000 feet in the air, often with oxygen, and occasionally crew members got sick.

"Once I saw 1,000 bombers in the air and the formation was so tight I couldn't see the sky for the planes," Bennett remembered.

During their overseas tour, according to Wilson, his crews flew two B-24 Liberators, one was the "Modest Maiden" and on the nose of it was a picture of "a well-covered beauty," he recalled. He couldn't remember the name of the other, but it had a cueball on its nose.

The first mission for the Wilson-Bennett plane came on June 2 and was one in which the object was to bomb an airfield 16 miles from Paris. "We had a hard time finding the element and caught hell from a major flying a P-40," said Bennett, who recalled that as they flew over London he never saw so many ships as there were on the Thames. "As we passed the French coast, they started shooting at us. It scared the hell out of me and I started praying to the Good Lord and I prayed the whole mission," Bennett recalled.

During that mission there were about 80 bombers in action with an escort of P-47, P-38 and P-51 planes, he said. "Boy, did that escort look good out there!"

After hitting the target with good results, the plane the Hendersonville duo was on flew around Paris by mistake and caught a

lot of flak that made about 11 holes in the plane. But it returned home safely.

The most memorable of the 30 missions that Bennett and Wilson flew together unsurprisingly was their D-Day assignment — June 6.

"At our briefing we were told that the second invasion of Europe had started and that our target was a railroad center east of Coutances, France," Bennett said.

Bennett remembered that there were more bombers in the air that day than he had ever seen. His ship, however, was unable to drop bombs on target because of overcast.

In the next few weeks the "Modest Maiden" was to fly over Germany, France, Belgium and Holland with targets being heavy industries, transportation marshaling yards, airfields, iron, steel and chemical plants, fuel producing plants and supply depots, Wilson recalled.

"Just like everybody in service, we had some close calls," Wilson acknowledged.

He remembered that there wasn't too much time for rest, but that when they did he and Bennett got into London and Piccadilly Circus, (not to be confused with Ringling Brothers — Barnum and Bailey Circus).

Bennett's diary revealed that while he was on a visit to London a German buzz-bomb went off two blocks from his hotel. "I thought the world had come to an end," he wrote.

Some of the other sites that the Wilson-Bennett team hit in their missions were Saarbruecken, Stuttgart, Hamburg and Munich. On one of these Bennett said he saw 1,100 bombers in action.

"Sometimes the sky would be black with flak and on some missions some of the planes would come in with wounded men, some of whom were my friends," said Bennett.

Bennett flew 30 missions, but Wilson went 31. The reason for his extra mission, Wilson said, was that his replacement was late arriving. "On some of our early missions," Wilson recalled, "Our fighter escort couldn't go all the way, but after we got the P-51 it had a reserve tank that enabled it to go all the way. Sometimes there were 800 bombers at a time on missions."

Bennett can smile, now, when he recalls his missions over Germany, France and other places. "Nobody knows how scared I was except me and the laundry," he said.

"I thanked the Lord every time we got back for getting us home safely and I prayed many times during the flights. He was always with us," said Bennett.

Bennett, who bought a partnership in Francis and Wright in 1947, credited Wilson with having much to do with many successful missions.

"Our crew felt we had the best pilot anywhere. We all had faith in him and that meant a lot. He got us out of bad trouble several times. I've seen him come in with trouble and land the plane like it was a feather," he recalled.

During their tour of duty Wilson and Bennett got the Air Medal with three Oak Leaf Clusters and the Distinguished Flying Cross in recognition for their contributions to the Allies victory.

BALLS O'FIRE OVER MISBURG

by Elwood M. Jones, Jr. (491st)

It was late in November, the 25th according to the records, and the 491st Bomb Group had been in North Pickenham long enough to feel at home. We had been forced to leave Metfield after an airman had played "bombs away" over the end of his truck with an RDX bomb and blown the dump to smithereens. I had finished my 30th mission and was working in the squadron navigator's office while waiting to see if that was enough. It was my turn to be the briefing navigator for the group mission, so I reported to group headquarters to await the TWX that would announce the mission. When the field order came, announcing that we were to strike an active oil refinery at Misburg, there was an annex which warned of a concentration of German fighters which was reported as gathering somewhere near the line of our flight plan.

Things went along very much as usual during the preparation and the briefing, although events to come would show that the fighter warning was in the minds of those who worked up the mission. I remember giving the warning to the navigators as we went over the route information. At the general briefing, there were the usual "oohs" and "ahs" when the target map was uncovered and the flak installations pointed out, then the crews headed for the flightline, and I went out in search of some breakfast.

After feasting on powdered eggs, spam and the sludge which passed for coffee, I went by the squadron office to see if anything important needed attention before I hit the sack. As I was leaving, the phone rang. The C.O., Col. Fred Miller, was saying that weather had delayed the take-off and could I give my best estimate of the latest time the group could start engines and still make the coastal departure time. Naturally, all the route information was back in group, but I picked up a pencil and did my best. Climbing on course to the coast . . . assemble on course, with the flying circus shooting flares all the way . . . subtract the time on course from the departure at coast . . . here's my best time, SIR!

NOTICE

Evelyn advises that final figures covering the cost of our Convention in San Antonio are not yet finalized (they can't give us a firm price on the meals yet) but she should have the complete package ready for the June issue. Once again the dates are October 1 through 4.

The C.O. took my estimate and hung up; and before long I heard the sound of Liberators starting engines and taxiing. I headed for the hut and by the time the last plane had lifted off, I was logging sack time with a vengeance.

Several hours later I was awakened by the stir of personnel moving toward the tower, so I quickly dressed and joined them near the tower. Radio reports had informed the brass that it had been a rough mission, but the rest of us were not ready for the scene — red flares, ambulances racing to the end of the runway to meet the planes, and out of 36 crews at briefing only 21 planes came in!

Little by little we were able to piece the story together from bits of conversation gleaned from the crews on the way to debriefing. German fighters had come up in strength, hitting first the high squadron and knocking down nearly the entire squadron, then moving in on the low unit with slightly less effect. The remainder of the two squadrons tacked on to the lead squadron (my own 855th), dropped their bombs and effectively used their combined fire to hold off the fighters until American support arrived.

When the tally was completed, 15 B-24's had failed to return, but photos showed extensive damage to the target. Returning crews were given 7 kills, 11 damaged and 3 probables and nobody could say what losses the Germans had sustained from crews who did not return.

One question, however, was not answered in official reports but in a discussion at the officers club. The question was why did the lead squadron sustain no losses and no major damage? The 855th armament officer recalled reading the FO annex and deciding to load his planes with a new "fireball" tracer which had just arrived. And pilots of that squadron described how the German fighters had broken off their passes when the tracers came at them, apparently assuming that the 855th was using a new rocket cannon. Too bad that the other two squadrons had not been similarly equipped! Maybe there would have been more crews spending the night in North Pickenham.

It was not long after this mission that I received word that my 30th mission had been flown *after* the "magic number" had gone up to 35. I was assigned to a casual pool of navigators and flew the last 5 with several different crews without incident (except running out of gas in a "tail-end Charlie" and landing at a P-47 base in Belgium). We saw no fighters but our own after the Misburg raid, probably because Jerry had lost the last source of fighter fuel!

BANDITS IN OUR FORMATION

by Glenn R. Matson (458th)

22 April 1944 was a stand down day for our crew so we did not have to fly. Not for Paddlefoot, however. Another crew flew it to Hamm, Germany. Hamm was the largest marshaling yard in Germany. Twenty-five B-24's from the 458th Bomb group took off. It was a late take off due to bad weather. Because of this they returned after dark.

I sat around all day. Went to Dome trainer for awhile and got bored. I decided to get a pass and go to Norwich. It was refused. I said to hell with them and went AWOL. I got dressed and went out the Burma road. As usual I got all drunk up. Some English sailor sold me a bottle of some very bad booze, bathtub type. At about 10:30 at night, I am staggering along a ditch at the end of the runway when I heard the darned awfulest noise. Couldn't believe what I was hearing. It was anti-aircraft guns and machine guns going off all around me. Out of the dark came this B-24 roaring down the runway on the deck and over the top of me. Pursued by a JU-88 or a ME-110. Jumping for the ditch, I lay there for awhile until it quieted down. I took off for the debriefing hut with my bottle of booze. I got there as the crews were coming in. These guys looked like ghosts, palid and drawn and scared from their dreadful experience. One guy came in carrying his popped parachute. He looked like he could use a drink, so I offered him one from my bottle. That was the last time I saw that bottle.

What had happened was that they returned after darkness and Germany fighters infiltrated the returning formations following them to their base. The gunners had removed their guns and were prepared for landing. It was at this moment the fighters struck. In the confusion the British anti-aircraft gunners also let loose and were responsible for shooting down some B-24's. B-24 718 was the one that flew over the top of me and crashed at the end of the runway. Some of the men got killed, others bailed out and died because they were too low. One other B-24 was shot down and caught fire while waiting for landing instructions. Paddlefoot was flying along side of this aircraft No. 667 when it got hit by fighters.

Our Group lost two B-24's, both were from the 752nd Bomb Sqd. Nine crewmen were killed and five wounded. Five bases were attacked by about fifteen twin engine fighters. The total loss for all bases was nine aircraft and thirty-eight men dead. One ME-110 shot down.

This is one binge I will never forget. I thought for sure I was on my way to Hell.

IT WAS NO PICNIC OVER THERE, BUT MAY BE ONE HERE

by Tom Swint
(from the Seattle Times)

When George Finch of Burien called me recently he said he had a new book about the B-24 Liberator bombers in the 8th Air Force. He said it was written by an Englishman, Jim Hoseason, who is a civilian aviator.

George said he didn't want to trust this special book to the mails, so he brought it up to my house. The title is "The 1,000 Day Battle." The book's order blank describes it as an operational history of the 2nd Air Division of the United States 8th Air Force from 1942 to 1945 in Europe. (Gillingham Publications, 89 Bridge Road, Lowestoft, Suffolk, England).

As I sat in my living room thumbing through the pages, I noted that the 448th Bombardment Group in the 20th Bomb Wing got a lot of mention. I already knew that George had been a tail gunner in the 448th. Then I spied a page of photos showing what happened at a bomb group from the time the field order (combat assignment) arrived until the last plane came staggering back from a bombing run over Nazi Germany.

That bomb group was the 467th at Rackheath, my old outfit. All of a sudden a just-average book had become a sparkling masterpiece of military strategy. The top photo had Col. Albert J. Shower and Lt. Col. Walter Smith peering over a teletype printer as the machine pecked out the fate of our group. A maximum effort could mean that 60 planes, carrying 600 young men, would drone from the concrete apron in a few hours.

Combat missions in bomber groups didn't just happen. Men like Colonel Shower and Colonel Smith had to pick crews, assign aircraft. Then the specialized departments stated executing the order by loading bombs into the yawning bays. Cooks started preparing meals. Mechanics worked all night so battle damage would be repaired. Intelligence officers worked all night gathering hot poop on the target. By 2 or 3 a.m. briefing teams would be pouring facts and pictures into sleepy heads. Gasoline trucks would be rolling in the darkness to fuel up the big bombers. Sometimes the gasoline load was so critical we topped off again after the plane taxied down the runway to our takeoff position.

And getting airborne wasn't the end of it. Squadrons had to assemble into groups; groups into wings.

Thrashing around in the English fog and several hundred aircraft was not my idea of a safe occupation. Somehow they all got lined up and flew away in giant rectangles that command pilots called boxes.

On the field-order page, just below the

group commander and operations officer, was Lt. Ted Climer, the watch officer on the night the photographers did this picture story. Ted survived 35 combat missions.

Lieutenant Climer and I made several "whiskey missions" to Scotland. It was like seeing a ghost. I didn't know the other men.

As George Finch and I talked, he asked me how much organizing it took to set up the Dixie Picnic. I confessed that it took more time and organizing than I liked to admit.

George had attended several bomb-group reunions and wondered out loud if I thought there were enough World War II flyboy types in Seattle to make a summer picnic feasible. I did.

We both agreed that the fun of any reunion picnic would be recalling the antics and the episodes while on pass in East Anglia and London.

With so many former 8th Air Force guys

working at Boeing, it should be fairly well attended. I declined to get involved in a second picnic but George Finch is a glutton for punishment (Remember, I said he was a tail gunner on a B-24).

So, for the record, George Finch, 12239 Occidental Ave. S., Seattle 98168, telephone 242-8531, is trying to organize an 8th Air Force picnic for the coming summer. That includes B-24 groups, B-17 groups, our "little friends," the escorting fighter squadrons, the ground crews and subdepot types, as well as Royal Air Force guys now living in this area.

Give George a call and he'll get you on his mailing list.

I thought of suggesting that we should bring powdered eggs, bully beef, orange marmalade and Spam to commemorate the lean pickings in our mess halls during the 1,000 Day Battle. We could top that off with warm beer but we won't.

If enough of you guys and gals respond, we might get a guest speaker and give away a door prize of a map of Norwich, England. Mostly it will give us old guys a chance to spin a few yarns and tell a few lies — and relive a few glorious moments of a misspent youth.

Poet's Corner

The Night Before Christmas

Anonymous (and a bit late!)

'Twas the night before Christmas and all through the group
'The "big wheels" and "wigs" were grinding out "poop"
The bombers were parked on their hardstands with care
Waiting for ammunition soon to be there
The fliers were nestled all snug in their beds
While visions of "milk runs" danced in their heads
When out of the darkness there came quite a knock
We cursed the O.D. and looked at the clock
Briefing will be in two hours he said
And if you're late you'll wish you were dead
Time marches on and the minutes fly by
So it's out of our beds get ready to fly
We rushed to the mess hall quick as a flash
And ate cold powdered eggs with hideous hash
Then a long bumpy ride to the group briefing room
Where the "bit wigs" preside and dish out our doom
The target is told and the first six rows faint
For lo and behold Berlin — it ain't.
The "brains" had slipped up — oh my poor aching back
We're bombing a place that throws up no flak
So it's back in the truck and off to the line
The road is now smooth and the weather is fine.
The crew is at stations — the check list is run
The engines run smooth as we give 'em the gun
Then suddenly the pilot wails in despair
'Look at the tower they just shot a flare'
We dash to the window with a heart full of dread
The pilot was right — and the darn thing is RED
So its back to the sack and we sweat out our fate
For there's a practice formation at a quarter past eight.

Submitted by: Joseph Longo



by Philip A. Manson (466th)

At the preflight briefing this morning G-2 related that the German armed forces are attempting to make a last stand in southern Germany. Enemy units and personnel are moving into the so-called Redoubt by rail and by air. It is therefore necessary to destroy all means of both types of transport and the mission today is for that purpose.

The weather is unusually bad over East Anglia in the forming area with a low rainy overcast and 10/10ths cloud coverage. For this reason the Group will form instead over C-17 at Leige Belgium. It is anticipated we will find clear skies there at 10,000 feet and since the distance is 250 miles, we will climb on course en route, arriving at the briefed altitude. Once formed, the Mission will then depart on course for the target. Goodbye and good luck. So despite the weather, the Mission was "GO".

The takeoff was the usual rumbling and straining for altitude. Nobody could or wanted to say much. We lifted off and began to climb. At 2000 feet icing began on the windows. It made some difference, but we were on instruments anyhow.

The Navigation briefing had explained that the 3.6B Gee curve passed directly over Leige from East Anglia. They said the Navigator could direct the Pilot onto the curve soon after takeoff and by continually banking to the right while climbing it would bring us in at destination. He didn't say that Pilots are not used to centering a pip on a remote scope, on verbal instructions over the intercom. It was a tidy little problem to coordinate the angle of bank of the aircraft to prevent the travelling pip from leaving the center of the GEE scope located up front in the Navigators compartment. If he overcorrected, we would be off course.

We arrived at Leige on course at 10,000

feet and in the soup. Nothing could be seen. There was nothing to do but climb more and get out of it. The 466th was up here somewhere and hopefully not in the same airspace. At this point the command radios went out and the R/O called up to say the antennae on his set was frozen or stuck and would not unreel. He could not transmit. His reception was weak. We had lost communications, but there were four good engines throbbing and plenty of gas and nobody wanted to go home after all this without mission credit. So we kept on going, climbing and weaving to find a clear area in all this soup.

At 14,000 feet there was no break and we were getting badly iced. The compass began to act crazily, as if it had a bad case of right hand vertigo, spinning continuously in that direction and never going the other way as if it were regaining some sense of direction. All the instruments quit, leaving air speed indicator, altimeter and our wrist watches. Also the Pilots magnetic compass upstairs. The thermometer was stopped against the bottom stop and read minus 60 degrees below zero. Too cold for a brisk walk.

The climb continued and very soon the ship entered a storm of very small, super-cooled ice particles. It was an old plane (identity unknown) and the forward section around the Emerson nose turret was leaky. Soon the compartment was filled with flying ice crystals. It was a miniature snow storm which covered the table, maps, ammo boxes and head and shoulders. It was like being out in a storm shovelling snow at home in Boston. In wiping off the maps the heat from the electric gloves caused the crystals to melt and blur the maps. Somehow, this seemed rankly unjust. The flak and enemy action we had to take, but this was too much. Right around

this time the right foot electric shoe shorted out and that member began to get cold. This was another insult.

Finally, at 24,000 feet we came out into the clear icy sunshine of high altitude. The sharp fingers of light tried to stab your eyes out. By rough estimating we were somewhere around Mulhouse or Strasbourg, heading southeasterly and all alone. There was nothing in sight. We were looking for somebody with blind bombing equipment which we did not have, so we could drop this load and go home. The compass continued to turn remorselessly in one direction and I was reminded of the Headless Horseman who kept "riding, riding and riding."

Then, very slowly and very majestically there came into sight a small formation of Flying Forts, a beautiful sight against the solid white undercast. They were apparently separated from the main formation also and tracking due east into Germany. This could be the help we needed and very slowly we came up alongside to get into the formation. For those who will argue the qualities of the B-24 and the B-17, it should be noted we put them both side by side that day, fully loaded, at 25,000 feet and attempted to fly together. The B-24 kept overrunning — it was too fast to slow down to the formation speed of the B-17. We pulled away and dropped ten degrees of flaps and came in again. The flaps were too much, causing the ship to mush and wallow. A stall was imminent and the risk was too high. The 17's climbed out of our altitude, so we turned away and abandoned the attempt. Nothing more could be done and it was time to go home.

After a look at the sun and an estimate of heading and time to the Belgian coast we descended into the undercast slowly, intending to go down to the deck for a check-point. We had wandered around for so long, nobody had a clear idea of position. The breakout came at 700 feet in wind, snow and sleet. The combination of low altitude, driving sleet and high speed made it impossible to identify ground features. Everything was gone before it was seen. Suddenly below there was the coastline. A brief snapshot view of sandy beaches and angry ocean. Nothing recognizable and no inclination to scout around for a checkpoint in this weather.

It was decided to fly due North for a period of fifteen minutes to get well up into the Channel or North Sea and then take a heading due West to make a landfall on the English coast. This was thought to be a generous time margin for the sea area to be covered and upon reaching land a new departure point could be used to come home. There was also another urgent consideration now. We were getting in range of British AA batteries on the coast and they were known to automatically track on sound and open fire — also automatically. It was important the IFF was operating and since we were coming in very low, the waist gunners were given Very pistols and instructed to fire the colors of the day out the waist windows — just to be sure. When this was later done, the flares were actually extinguished by the sea below.

(continued on page 16)

CONFEDERATE AIR FORCE

It has been brought to my attention that the Confederate Air Force will be holding their Confederate Air Show on October 8 to 11. This is a small gap in time between the end of our Convention and the beginning of their Air Show and many of you might want to combine the two. The Confederate Air Force has the largest collection of WW II planes and they fly all of them including a B-24. If you have the time and the money the Air Show is well worth taking in. Rebel Field is located in Harlingen, Texas about 250 miles from San Antonio.

The flight went on through the fifteen minute Northerly leg and a little more for safe margin and the turn was made due West. We continued to fly. At the end of another fifteen minutes there was no land in sight — nothing but grey green flying salt water. A slow feeling began to manifest itself that maybe there was no land out in front on this heading. The atmosphere became grim. We kept on flying. We couldn't stop.

Then the R/O came on interphone with the statement "don't look now, but my antennae is reeling out. It must have thawed from all this salt air. What can I do?" He went on the air using the emergency frequency requesting an emergency fix. It took very few minutes to get the fix coordinates and the fix plot, showing a position fifty miles southwest of Beachy Head, England and well out of the Channel, westward. Ahead was the Isle of Wight. Not very much good if it couldn't be seen and beyond that New York city. This was very wide of the estimated location as insufficient allowance had been made for the winds which that day were around fifty knots out of the northeast. It was one of the worst storms in the North Sea in fifty years.

From this fix a new course was plotted directly for the large urban sprawl of London and the very recognizable features of Thames Estuary. As we went down the new heading the welcome coastline came in view and the colors were fired from the signal gun and the waist guns. It seems we were over land. The first outstanding landmark were the spires of Canterbury Cathedral passing directly beneath. It was a good omen.

After much jinking around to stay offshore and out of AA range the track went up the east coast over Felixsowe and Lowestoft. The large fleet of destroyers there of the Royal Navy came into view and we picked up the Attlebridge buncher and homed in for a landing. Home again.

Through all this the bombs had been forgotten. I think they were brought home. There was a new policy against indiscriminate bombing and since we never saw the ground to see a target the damn things remained on board. At least I do not recall dropping them.

At debriefing it was learned five other ships from the Group had aborted and returned home. The Colonel who was very much displeased about all this placed a call to Division to inquire how their mission had gone. Eight of their ships had gone down on the deck and came home. One had gone into a spin in the soup at 18,000 feet and when the Pilot finally pulled out of it at 8,000 feet, six of his men had bailed out.

LETTERS

Dear Bill:

I learned today that two of the leaders of the 466th died in the past few weeks.

B/General Arthur J. Pierce, Commander of the 466th from December 1943 until August of 1944. Died on 5 Dec. after a long illness.

Doctor Vance Elliott, Flight Surgeon for the 466th died on 22 December. He has been sick a long long time. You may remember that he was at the Colorado Springs reunion, wearing a neck brace.

I would appreciate it very much if you would print a notice of this in a future Journal as they were both members of the 2nd AD Assn., and were known by quite a few members of the organization.

John Woolnough

P.S.: Mary and I hope that you and Hazel have a good holiday this year. We just received the Journal and notice that all those guys that promised to send you 466th stories must have fallen through the crack again. Hank Tevelin promised me that he would send something in. Maybe I'll have time in the next few months to dig something up. I have just finished my third book — that should give me more time. JHW.

Dear Bill:

Just a note of thanks for running the book photo in the last Journal, and I'm already getting response from those I wanted to reach — the ex-458th types who'd put off ordering. This *should* get the word to everyone, so if any come up short, we sure tried.

I think everyone who has written since about the 20th has made some favorable remark about how much the Journal improves with each issue, and what it means to them every quarter — take a big bow, you deserve it.

Again, many thanks for your help in winding down my project. Hope Christmas was a special one for you and yours this time, and the New Year will be loaded with goodies.

George Reynolds

(ed note: *The Journal is actually written by the members who send in their stories. Without them we are all out of business.*)

Dear Ms. Cohen:

Enclosed is my check for \$10.00 along with my application for membership in the Second Air Division Association. I enjoyed the Journal you sent me and am looking forward to receiving more.

Our crew arrived in Halesworth, England in early June 1944, and started flying practice missions with the 489th B.G. over the English countryside. I was co-pilot of the crew and on 7 July 1944 we became operational and flew our first combat mission to Aschersleben, Germany. Good fortune must have smiled on us because we flew all our missions together and successfully completed our combat tour on 9 November 1944 with a milk run to Metz, France.

I have a crew picture and a complete list of missions flown by our crew, if this would be of interest I will be happy to forward them.

Louis A. Duke

489th B.G., 846th Sqdn.

(ed note: *Write an article about one of your experiences and send the photos along with that.*)

Dear Evelyn:

Just a note to say how very proud I am to be a member of the 2 AD Assn. and also to compliment you and the other staff members for the tremendous job you all do in running the business of the association, to say nothing of the work that you all do in organizing the annual reunions. I hope that I will be able to attend one sometime in the near future.

Am enclosing my check for the dues for 1981 — sorry that I cannot add a small sum for the Memorial Fund, but will do so later.

Carl E. Epting (467th)

Dear Evelyn:

In your last Journal, December 1980 — there is an article by Glenn R. Matson (458th) about an Easter Sunday Mission, April 9, 1944.

I was a navigator with the 458th that flew Eastern Sunday — and was on a plane that got shot up badly and landed in Sweden. We were interned for six months.

Our mission that day was to Posen, Poland to bomb a plant that was making something called "heavy water".

That day was 4/9/44 — I'm wondering if Glenn Matson was referring to our plane. Reading his letter very vividly brought back that gloomy day that we took off from Horsham St. Faith. This mission resulted in our families getting War Department letters that we were M.I.A.

It's hard to realize that we're going back in memory — thirty-seven years.

We always enjoy the Journals and news items of those days.

Julius Needelman (458th)

Sir:

I am the current wing historian for the 93rd Bombardment Wing. Recently, I talked to Mr. Fagan, a former 93 Bombardment Group member, about a series of articles on the group's WWII activities that I have been writing for Castle's base newspaper. In doing my research for these stories, I am having a hard time finding pictures of missions, places, and people.

To enhance the value of my articles, which I hope to publish eventually as a monograph, I am soliciting your help in a search for wartime photos. Additionally, I would like to add the human touch by including personal accounts of different events. Perhaps you know a few people that would like to either contribute a story or loan a few pictures. Concerning the photos, I will have them reproduced in the base photo lab and will promptly return them.

Castle Air Force Base is also establishing a museum, complete with aircraft. The museum will soon be accepting donations of memorabilia. Maybe a few group members would like to donate or loan a few souvenirs from WWII to the museum to make sure the "Traveling Circus" is well represented.



I also have a request for a group patch. The requestor claims the attached patch is not the same one used during WWII. Can you verify his claim?

Harold P. Myers, TSgt, USAF
Historian
Hdq. 93D Bomb. Wing (SAC)
Castle A.F. Base, Calif. 95342

Dear Evelyn:

I was fortunate to get back to East Anglia this fall for a fabulous 6 week visit with a Rotary-sponsored businessmen's exchange program.

We traveled inclusively in Norfolk and Suffolk — and began and ended the trip in Norwich. We flew from JFK to Amsterdam to Norwich, and it is a very good way to go, especially if you wish to avoid the masses of people at Heathrow and the necessity of going through London. (I'm not anti-London, just anti-Heathrow-Gatwick).

I had five fine days in Norwich, visited Horsham St. Faith again, and the Library for the first time. The Library was indeed worthwhile and very pleasing. I was disappointed that the 2nd AD Air Force space was not specifically attended by staff, but perhaps that is a good reason for all of us to keep contributing!

Harry Croft (753rd Sq, 458th Gp)

Dear Miss Cohen:

Enclosed is membership application and check for \$10.00 to join the Second Air Division Association.

I saw a piece about the Association in a recent edition of the "Philadelphia Bulletin" and wrote Pete Henry who sent me the application and other literature.

If I can be of any service to you in regards to the Association feel free to call on me. I am a born and bred Philadelphian — Germantown and Mt. Airy, attended St. John's H.S., Manayunk (since closed) and St. Joe's College.

Thank you for your attention to this.

Joe Bolger, 1st Lt. USAF (Ret.)

Dear Evelyn:

Enclosed is my dues payment plus an additional ten dollars for the Memorial Library. This is the first time that I have written to you personally since joining our organization. I have written to other members in the past and will continue to do so through the information I obtain from our Journal.

I had no knowledge that our organization existed until about a year ago and I, like many of our members reached out for years for our organization to be a reality and not a fantasy. I would like to add that you, the staff, and all concerned with our organization sure are doing a terrific job.

From one of the very few that was lucky enough to make it back from the original 492nd Bomb Group, I remain most sincerely,

Bob Mantel (492nd B.Grp., 856th Sqdn.)

Dear Ms. Cohen:

I can't believe I have settled down at last and digging through papers realized I had never sent you a check for the annual dues after such a fantastic reunion. I must say I am very proud to be a member of the 2nd Air Div. Assn. and think it is remarkable to see such loyalty and comradeship after so many years. Just wish I had brought the huge album with me. It would be too large and bulky to take to Texas and God willing I hope to be there.

You are to be commended for your prowess in organization and production.

Linda Loring

P.S. I'm really not sure when dues are due.

Dear Evelyn:

Enclosed is a check for \$10.00 for 1981 dues. I really appreciate the Journal even though our Group, 491st B.G., has very little news.

Harold W. Colbert

(491st B.G., 855th B. Sq.)

(ed note: It's picking up Harold, but you could help by writing a 491st article.)

Dear Ms. Cohen:

Here's my 1981 dues. The Association seems to be growing rapidly, and I enjoy receiving the various "war stories" and related items of interest.

I must tell of our crew reunion in July '80 at which time 7 of the original 10 B-24 crew members met in Chicago for a hilarious 3 day weekend. We reserved rooms all in one area at the 'Pheasant Run', a tremendous motel and meeting place near Chicago, the central point for most of us. All but the crew's original bombardier and flight engineer made the reunion — the co-pilot having been deceased some 20 years ago. Did telephone the two missing crew members in Ohio and Connecticut for a lively conversation indeed. Wives also attended the event which livened it even more.

The pilot and wife drove down from upper Minnesota; the tail-gunner, now retired from the FBI, was enroute to his Virginia home from Alaska; the original top turret/waist gunner flew from Idaho; the sperry-ball gunner came from Pennsylvania; the radio operator and nose turret/waist gunner were from Chicago area; and I (navigator) drove from Kansas. The Chicago couples, more or less, hosted the reunion, and we agreed on another in two years. We tentatively decided to go to London or probably Norwich or the old North Pickenham 491st AFB site.

Don Ferguson

Dear Mr. Robertie:

Mr. Tom Allen, an ex-448th BG pilot, and air historian James Hoseason from England, told me of you as the editor of the 2nd A.D. Journal. Since I'm trying to collect as much information as possible about the U.S.A.A.F. aircraft which force-landed or crashed in Switzerland during the Second World War, I wonder if surviving interned men could be contacted through you to have them write me their recollections about the events which led them to Switzerland. Swiss official statistics show an impressive 1114 U.S. Airmen on Aug. 1, 1944. Of these at least one half flew B-24 Liberators, the majority of 82 such aircraft belonging to the 2nd Air Division.

I could list you the names of some of the crew members if this could help you to find them, but unfortunately the vast majority of them is unknown to me. I also could list most of the serial numbers and markings in chronological sequence of these 82 B-24's if this could be another clue.

However I first would like to read your advice about the feasibility of my request.

Thanking you in advance for what you will be able to do for me, I remain

Yours very truly,

Gino Kunzle
c/o Sarfati
Via Zezio 33
22100 COMO, Italy

Dear Evelyn:

There you were, right in our front yard — and we couldn't make it. I'm sure you all had a good time in the Boston area. I was in the hospital at that time recovering from surgery and a tough time breathing — Paul did go up to the hotel that Saturday, but most everyone was out on a tour or something, so he didn't get to see anyone and he didn't sign in either. Well maybe the next time — God willing.

Paul & Thelma Kuchinski, Sr. (467th)

P.S.: There has got to be a special reward someplace for you and the others that work so hard.

Dear Evelyn:

I again pay my dues to the Second Air Division with pleasure.

I greatly appreciate your unselfish work for the Association.

Every Journal I receive never fails to bring laughter, tears and pride to me.

Cloyd E. Peacock (445th B.G.)

Dear Evelyn:

As my brother, Donald Mallick, is Chief Test Pilot at the Hugh L. Dryden Flight Research Center, Lancaster, California; rather at Edwards Air Force Base, your News letters and your Journal do double duty as I forward them on to him.

An excellent aviator who pioneered in the Lunar Lander, he was one of the seven pilots who knew and flew the RX-B 70. He currently works with the YF-12 and is busy with the Space Shuttle. With all of this to keep him busy he finds time to be a World War 2 buff and constantly finds B-24 Memorabilia to send on to me.

I am forwarding a picture to you of our crew taken I believe at 'Old Buck', the 453rd B.G., 733 Squadron (?) commanded by Major Donald Heaton. I believe a Colonel Hubbard was Field Commander and we were very near Attleboro, England. We flew about 26 missions with this Group until it disbanded and we transferred to Rackheath and the 467th to finish the war.



(Back row) Frank Davidson, radio operator, Salem, Ill.; Doug Leavenworth, 1st Pilot, Anaheim, Calif.; Bob Mallick, Co-Pilot, with .45 sidearm for ballast, Ark.; Dave Parke, Navigator, Downers Grove, Ill.; Joe Edwards, Crew Chief, Franklin, Pa.

(Front row) Joe Sauper, Ball gunner or at waist, Smoke Run, Pa.; Pop Wills, Martin turret gunner, retired P.M. at Webster City, Iowa; Lane, Tail turret gunner and armorer, Regular Army; Francis Mochonery, Nose turret gunner, Illinois.

I hope you can use the letter and picture and perhaps get it into print for some of the old group.

Ask Don Heaton sometime if he remembers the crazy Co-Pilot named Mallick who made a parachute jump for practice and to see what it was like — and who was sorry later — with a stiff neck and wrenched back that lasted until he hit Picadilly Circus at London. He told me it meant Court Martial next time unless I got permission and I wouldn't get it from him.

As I look back, Evelyn, some of it was a hell of a lot of fun although it didn't seem so at the time. Lots of work and icy, rainy weather to chill off youthful spirits.

Bob Mallick

P.S.: Warm girls, yes — but Warm beer — blaaaaaahh.

Dear Evelyn:

I want to thank you and those in the organization for creating a fellowship among the former members of the Second Air Division through the Journal that we receive in the mail.

Granted that many of us don't have the gift of presenting articles that might be of interest, but I'm sure all the members, like me, are interested in reading the memoirs of those who like to share their experiences.

I am enclosing a check of \$40.00 to cover my dues, also for (2) AD Blazer Patches and one decal, if possible. The remainder of the monies can be added to the Memorial Library Fund.

Bill Woods (453rd BG, 437th Sqd.)

Dear Bill:

The Dec. 30 issue of the Journal featured a picture of three EM standing in front of "C-Charlie, The Old Veteran" and a letter from Reuben S. Hollenback wherein he states that the plane was shot down "flying supplies to Europe at the Battle of the Bulge".

I have to take exception to the timing of that statement. My article in the Dec. 78 issue showed that our crew flew the 100th mission for C-Charlie, The Old Veteran on 10 Mar. 45, a good two months after the Battle of the Bulge was over. On this there can be no doubt; I have the original navigational log for this mission (plus all my other missions) to substantiate this.

However, Reuben's phrase, "flying supplies to Europe" strikes a chord in my memory. I remember that late in the war Patten's tanks had overrun their supply system and our Group participated in a low level mission to drop supplies for them. Our crew flew on this mission (I was hospitalized with a 104 temperature) and came back with tales of a harrowing experience.

The mission was flown at low level, somewhat out of the ordinary for the "heavies". My bombardier, Frank Zitane, told me it was a never-to-be-forgotten experience, sitting in the nose of the plane as it buzzed across Europe at tree top level, climbing to avoid church steeples, watching the angry populace shaking their fists at them, seeing the German soldiers fire their rifles and pistols at them as they roared by.

Maybe, somebody who actually flew on this mission can respond and supply more details, perhaps identifying the crew that flew "C-Charlie" on her last ride.

Thaddeus C. Poprawa (389th)

Dear Bill:

A couple of years ago you published a letter of mine asking for information on my uncle Sgt. Earl R. McArthur 11017929 67th B.S., 44th B.G. crew member of a B-24 involved in a mid-aid over the North Sea.

I received many letters on where to look for more information. The following is from the Missing Air Crew report and may stir up some memories of someone who knew him.

At 0803 hours 29 July 1944 (on a mission to Bremen) in the vicinity of 52°57'N 01°30'E A/C 820 (42-109820, 67th B.S., 44th B.G.) flying in #3 position of low left element slid under center section. Lt. Eberhart in A/C 309 came down — #2 propeller chewed off tail of A/C 820 and it went into a flat spin. Four chutes were observed and air-sea rescue boats were seen heading toward spot where planes went into sea. The bodies of 2nd Lt. Douglas W. Mortensen, 2nd Lt. James D. Kenner and Sgt. Henry C. Landry were recovered by air-sea rescue. There were no survivors. This location as near as I determine is 7 or 8 miles off the coast near Cromer, England.

Any information I receive on this will be greatly appreciated.

I want to say that I really enjoy the Journal and keep up the good work.

Jack E. Thompson (44th)
South St.
South Hero, Vt. 05486

Dear Evelyn:

I received your dues statement recently for my late husband. Leonard passed away June 12, 1979 with cancer of the pancreas.

I am enclosing a check for \$10.00 for the Memorial Library in England as I feel he would want me to make this contribution.

He enjoyed receiving the communications over the years, and had looked forward to attending reunions when he retired.

He had planned to retire from public school teaching in June of 1980.

Jane Earle (Mrs. Leonard)
(466th B.G.)

Dear Evelyn:

Just a report on a Reunion of the crew of William M. Brown who flew 35 missions with the 2nd Division in the 93rd Bomb Group out of Hardwicke. After 35 years 4 of the members were able to get together for 3 days in Lockport, New York. As would be expected Burt Lenhart, our Radio Operator, acted as our Host, made all of the preparations and provided us with a most unforgettable weekend. I enclose copy of the 4 of us



that attended. They include Don Lamb, Navigator, Laramie Wyoming; J. Walter Gallagher, Jr., Engineer, Willow Grove, Pa.; Bill Brown, Pilot, Omaha, Nebraska; and Burt Lenhart, Radio Operator, Lockport, New York. Arrangements were made for the wives to get to know each other and be entertained and the whole affair was a great success.

J. Walter Gallagher, Jr.

P.S.: Congratulations on the great job you are doing with the 2nd Division Association.

Dear Mac (Vere McCarty):

Many thanks for sending me the *Bungay Bulletin*. Some knowledge of the old gang would be most welcome after all these years.

Tomorrow, Jan. 1, 1981 marks the 36th anniversary of our 10th mission when we were shot down over Trier, Germany and bailed out (lost our nose-gunner).

As far as I know, our crew was the only one that did not make it home on our return flight to the U.S.A.

We flew *Shadie Sadie*, the oldest ship in the squadron with 114 missions. We lost #3 engine 600 miles from the Azores, jettisoned everything including our musette bags, and headed for Spain.

The pilot, Edw. Markewitz (deceased) made a perfect crash-landing in a sheep pasture outside of Santiago de Compostella — empty gas tanks. As far as I know, the plane is still there, nose wheel buried up to the fuselage. We subsequently came home on the Queen Mary.

In the near future I will send names and addresses of a few crew members who still correspond.

I'm sure we all appreciate your efforts on commemorating the 446th. Hope to see you in San Antonio next October.

Paul W. Pifer (706th Sq., 446 B.G.)

Dear Evelyn:

Thank you for your 1981 Membership card. Enclosed are my dues. I know Charlie would want me to continue as a member in the 2nd A.D. It was so close to his heart. It has been a difficult 9 months for me since I lost him, but I am trying to be the co-pilot as he would want me to do. If at all possible perhaps his crew — those still remaining, will all meet in San Antonio in '81. Please keep in touch.

Marion Herbst

Dear Evelyn:

Thank you very much for the opportunity to participate in this great endeavor. As we grow older and begin to put things in perspective we realize how much our early heritage means to us.

Looking forward to meeting you and the others who have kept this organization going.

J. W. Williams

Dear Mr. Robertie:

Until recently I was not aware of your organization, the Second Air Division Association. I was introduced to your association by Clinton (Wally) Wallace, and I enjoyed my copy of the Journal. While reading the Journal I had an idea.

Why not write to the Journal and ask the "Military Fighting Men" if they would help the "Military Fighting Widows", better known as the Society of Military Widows.

Last year the Society of Military Widows succeeded in getting the Survivor's Benefit Plan, Social Security offset and other benefits for more (thousands) of our widows. This took time and money to accomplish — money that we received mostly through our memberships. We have accomplished a great deal, but we still need help to reach our goals.

We are now working hard to have Section 3 of S91 passed. This would help the "Forgotten Widows" obtain the Survivor Benefit Plan. Most of these women are 60 years and older living on Social Security and Welfare after being a military wife over 20 and 30 years.

If you could give us any publicity in your Journal it would be very likely that it would be noticed by some "Forgotten Widow" or other widows that are now entitled to benefits they are not aware of due to many changes in the laws since they became widowed. It would also help us by allowing people to respond as members or affiliate members. (Affiliate members are persons not eligible for full membership, but who are interested in helping further the objectives of the Society of Military Widows; they may act in an advisory capacity, but may not vote and hold office.)

Members of the Second Air Division Association can also help by writing to their Congressmen and Senators in Washington to support the passing of Section 3 of Bill S91.

Thank you for your attention and concern.

Mary Jo Belk VP
Society of Military Widows
P.O. Box 3622
Austin, Texas 78764

Dear Sir:

I have not had the pleasure of meeting you. Allow me then to introduce myself: Harold Edward Jansen, member of Airwar "Bulletin" 1939 - 1945", Editor Mr. H.C. Kwik, Leiden, Holland. I hope you don't mind my writing to you.

I am writing a book about the USAAF air raids on 26 September 1944 when 1,100 bombers with fighter escort were intended to fly on that particular day to Bremen, Osnabruck and Hamm.

Mainly I'm writing about two 446 Bomb Group B-24s which crashed on 26-09-1944 near Munster and Rijswijk (Holland). I have a lot of information and photos concerning the two B-24s and I am writing to see if you could give me any information or photos concerning the 446 Bomb Group of Bungay.

I also contacted Mr. Vere A. McCarty of the 456 BG but I cannot find a copy of it. Do you know a person who owns such a copy?

I also would be very pleased if I could be a member of the 2nd Air Division Association. Please write to me. I'll be happy to hear from you.

Harold E. Jansen
Beresteinlaan 14 B
2542 KA THE HAGUE
The Netherlands

Dear Evelyn:

I have had a couple of surprises since I have joined the Association several years ago. The surprises being old friends getting in touch with each other.

I'm wondering if anyone in the Association knows of or where Laurie (Rip) Van Winkle of Bemidge, Minn. settled!

Will appreciate any info at all

Bob Twyford

Hi Evelyn & All:

So nice to receive the nice greeting and thanks. Thought you might like a snapshot of Gen. Kepner. The youngster of 86 yrs. is still spry and alert with no signs of senility showing. He has probably gained a couple of ounces since 1945.



Several 2nd Air Div. people attended the Orlando reunion. George Du Pont bought some real estate close by. I think he is figuring on returning to the Palatka area next year. (Wish I could afford some).

Stay healthy gal and regards to all.
See you next year.

C. H. Hooks

Dear Evelyn:

Enclosed is 10 dollars for membership. I was Sq. Opr. for 330th at the last of the war, but in the "Flak Shack" on VE day, compliments of the doctors orders. In flying back to Hardwick one night, I got so lost that I had to call good ole' Darkie, for the first time in my career. Couldn't find my way, with all the lights on. I did wind up WWII with 784 hours of combat pilot time, which the doctor said was enough for the time being. (Memories that bless and burn).

Looking forward to Randolph.

Carroll J. Moench

Dear Evelyn:

Enclosed is check for my husband's 1981 dues. In the past we have both enjoyed reading all Second Air Division news and particularly any on the 389th.

Since his illness, I must read to him, but this still brings many memories for him.

Thank you for the benefit of your dedicated work.

George & Virginia Gammon

Greetings Evelyn:

Ambling along here, retired 10½ years now, living in a rented shack 500' from the Ocean — renting from a USAF Colonel just retired, but he is going to live in the Houston area I think.

Sorry to be continually missing the annual 2nd AD retirement functions — let me know where the next one is to be held — on second thought it will be in the 2nd AD news letters which are terrific.

Mind the lorries and a nice 1981.

John A. Dee



Hi Evelyn:

Spent a very enjoyable 10 days at Harlingen and was lucky to get an hour and a half in "Diamond Lil" the CAF B-24. Regards to everybody.

Dan Hulburd

Dear Evelyn:

You will never believe this — but, a month after the Cambridge Reunion I suffered a damaging heart attack.

Am now back to work and mending rather well. Have been thinking of writing you or Bill to inform you but, just seem to be too busy — not really.

After seeing some of the Reunion photos of myself, it's no wonder my heart gave up pushing all that excess weight. Am down about fifteen pounds and am feeling great.

Jane is great. See you in Texas.

Russ Hayes

Dear Pete (Henry):

Thanks very much for your personal note of 30 December in reply to my inquiry concerning membership in the Second Air Division Association.

I will be very happy to join and am sending my application to Evelyn Cohen.

I just might be able to get down to San Antonio in October 1981. In any event, I really plan to go back to England for your meeting in Norwich in '83 or '84. Suggest '83 since we are not getting any younger.

We did not get up to Shipdham in October last year as our tour time ran out and we opted for a run out to the R.A.F. museum in London (no B-24s, darn it!).

I don't think I remember your crew but am sure we all met for sure at the 200th Mission party in August '44.

One request — I have been over to the V.A. in Los Angeles since I noticed a problem in hearing over the past years. They tell me that I have 55% hearing loss in left ear, 10% in right ear. The V.A. doctors say gunfire (and I'm sure the drone of those Pratt Whitneys on those 10-hour missions) was a contributing factor. Our radio operator experienced a hearing loss that was evident right after the war. Do you know, or could you poll the members to find out if this is a common problem among the combat crews.

Thanks again for your letter. Hope to see you soon.

Edward J. Barton

Dear Mr. Frank DiMola:

I was born in Cochection, N.Y. on July 22, 1896, which makes me 84 years old. I am still interested in the doings in Sullivan County, so I subscribe to the Sullivan County Democrat.

On September 9th, 1980 you had an ad in the paper asking for information on World War Two B-24 Bomber Crews. When you mention B-24 Bomber, it rings a bell with me. I am a veteran of World War One. My son Billy enlisted in the Air Corps while he was still in High School and was called when he graduated. He went through the Air Corps Cadet Training, which included time at a number of Air Force Training bases and included the University of Pittsburg, Penna. When he finished his training he was commissioned a 2nd. Lieutenant, although he was only nineteen years old. He was very good at mathematics and was assigned as navigator on Bomber Crew 595. They completed their training at the Air Force Base in Charleston, South Carolina. They were waiting for assignment overseas, when on the morning of December 5th, 1944 they went up for a flight check with two instructors, a pilot instructor and a gunner instructor, the crew of course had ten men and the two instructors made twelve. Shortly after they were in the air, a P-38 fighter plane collided with them and cut off their controls. Both ships went down and the crew of the bomber and the pilot of the P-38 burned to death on the ground.

This is my story of the B-24 Bomber.

I know that this is not the information you were advertising for, but I thought you might be interested.

William R. McDermott

Dear Evelyn:

Thank you for allowing me to be associated with our Association for another year.

I received the Membership Directory put together by MY Radio Operator John deCani.

Enclosed is a photo showing John standing under the "I" of Umbriago. Next to John (l) is Sgt. Werner, Flt. Eng. and Milt Johnson, Nav. Below is yours truly Les Dahm (l) and Joe Lawson (r).



Also enclosed is a photo of our B-29 in Fairmont, Neb. Crew: Lt. Jasper Verplanke, Nav.; Lt. John Strauss, Bomb.; Lt. Les Dahm, Pilot; Lt. Joe Lawson, Airplane Commander. Sgt. Fields, Sgt. Zupamic, Sgt. Kirkman, Sgt. Becker,



Sgt. Bigham. We were still the 489th.

I'd like to have the photos returned when you are through with them.

Les Dahm

Dear Bill:

I'm in hopes that this letter finds its way to you. I came across this address in an old issue of the Liberator Club 'Briefing'. What I'm looking for, Bill, is a copy of the unit history of the 44th Bomb Group. In the issue of the 'Briefing' that I mentioned, the article said that you were working on a history of the group. Was this ever brought to completion?

My hobby is reading about WWII aviation, particularly the role played by the 8th Air Force's 2nd Air Division. While there is a great deal of reference material in print I've never been able to come across any unit history of the 44th. I'm hoping you can help me on this. If you can't, possibly you may know someone who could. Thanks for your consideration on this.

Blaine Duxbury
1000½ E. 5th
Mitchell, So. Dakota 57301

SURVIVAL

WAS THE NAME OF THE GAME

by Frank Thomas (453rd)

The common bond of ex-Air Force people is a gregarious nature. Searching for members of your group results in a rubbing of shoulders with people connected with most of the other groups composing the 2nd Air Division.

A search seems to serve as a memory prod — and things not related to your group appear. It was just such a prod that resulted in my remembrance of an article appearing in an issue of the Highland, Illinois "News Leader" some three or four years earlier. This prod occurred in April of this year. A few contacts and several phone calls uncovered a member of the old Flying Eight Balls.

W. C. (Wib) Schatte, owner of the local Gambels Store in Highland, was the end of the search. The first and only visit to Wib occurred in early April of 1977. The visit was cut short for two reasons. The policy of making each journey share multiple reasons — and Wib's health. The primary reason was to keep an appointment with a member of the Illinois General Assembly.

The time spent in exchanging amenities with Wib Schatte were certainly enlightening. Each word was uttered with extreme effort — the drain was evident. These discomforts did not diminish in any way the gracious manner in which Wib Schatte received his fellow man. A short five weeks from the April visit Wib Schatte was dead. What follows was gained in those few April minutes and the gleaning of an article by "David Volz" published in October 1973 by the "Highland News Leader."

Wib Schatte and his crew were among the early bird members of the 44th Bomb Group. Wib served as radio operator for his crew. He stated he wasn't a very good radio operator. This is believed to be modesty rather than factual in content.

You "Eight Ballers" now full well the itinerant nature of your group during the formative years of the 8th Air Force. Wib and his crew were sent back to Iceland as the 44th headed for Africa and the Romanian oil fields. Assignment to sub-patrol and shipping lane patrol was safer but not nearly as exciting as those tasks assigned the balance of the Eight Balls.

The itinerant 44th had a way of surviving all assignments, and sooner or later coming home to England. Wib's crew was part of the gathering of the clan as they came together again at Shipdham. The time had come to settle down and help write the history of the 2nd Air Division.

November 13, 1943 was a cold day and Wib and his crew were on their third mission. The target was a factory in Bremen, Germany. Bomb load was composed of magnesium fire bombs. This particular target had been bombed on three previous occasions and the hope for the 13th was to damage the target with G.P.'s and prevent immediate attempt to repair by creating a holocaust with the magnesium fire bombs.

Number four engine had been running rough prior to reaching the target and the pilot had to feather it right after bomb release. There was no doubt that the 24 could make it to England on three engines, but after leaving the target area the group encountered another flak barrage. It was at this point number two and number three engines were knocked out.

Two P-47's dropped back to protect the now fatally injured B-24. The bomber slipped into a cloud bank at 12,000 feet and it was here they lost their fighter protection. The decision was made to keep the single engine bomber airborne for as long as possible. Using every skill at his command, the pilot managed to keep her up for almost one hour. The crew decided against bailing out, as requested by the pilot, and prepared themselves for a crash landing.



The crash occurred in a pasture near Lemmer in northwestern Holland. All but one prop and one engine were ripped from the wing on contact with land. Many Dutch farmers rushed up to greet and help the crew from their plane. The V for Victory sign was given and a warm appreciation for the Americans was expressed.

The warmth of this meeting was shattered by German infantry firing over the heads of the Dutch and Americans alike. The life of a prisoner of war had begun for Wib and the other nine crew members. This life was to last until June 1945 when they were moved in advance of the Russian arrival at Stalag 17, Brannau, Austria. The prisoners removed from Stalag 17 escaped and joined with the advancing Americans shortly thereafter.

Wib and his wife Flora returned to the site of this crash in August of 1973. Almost thirty years to the day, Wib stood at the site of his crash with Albert Von der Veer. Albert was eighteen at the time Wib crashed. This eighteen year old Dutch youth convinced a German soldier he should give him a picture of the crashed American plane — a very unusual happening.

Wib was able to have this picture copied.

He had a total of ten produced — one for each of the crew members. A news account in the local Dutch paper about Wib's visit resulted in the surfacing of another nine photographs of that November 13, 1943 event. Wib and Flora had plans for visiting Holland again in May of this year.

Wib listed these unusual happenings, or coincidences, since his capture by the German army on November 13, 1943.

1. His return to almost the exact spot of impact some thirty years later. (He and the Mayor of Lemmer, Holland, missed the exact spot — but several people, including the farmer involved, knew the exact spot).
 2. The almost impossible fact that a photo of the incident was found. The odds were very high against such a thing happening.
 3. The fact that John Von der Veer, Dutch historian, had included a chapter about this crash in his book "Air War Over West Friesland."
 4. He met Sylvan Von Ruhr, also of Highland, Illinois, while he was being held a prisoner in Stalag 17.
 5. A play and later a movie was made about events that occurred in Stalag 17. Title of the play was "Stalag 17" and was written by two men who had been prisoners in Stalag 17. Mr. and Mrs. Schatte and Mr. and Mrs. Von Rohr saw the play when it appeared at the American Theatre, St. Louis in 1953. Both families were shocked to hear their names mentioned in the play. (Something to do with a card game). Back stage, after the play, they met the actors and the former P.O.W.'s.
 6. Mrs. Flora Schatte was notified that her husband was missing on December 1, 1943 — the same date the St. Louis Globe Democrat did a large picture story on the bombing mission over Bremen, Germany, November 1, 1943. Wib also visited the remains of Stalag 17 and the butcher shop in Brannau, Austria, where he worked for a short time after being freed by American troops.
- The warmth of the Dutch people and their open admiration of the Americans — not found in too many areas of the globe today.
- "A quote from the story appearing in the Reewarder Courant seemed to sum up the feeling that the Dutch had for Americans." (This above is a quote from the Highland News Leader story).
- "In those days, one would risk his soul and place in Heaven just to get a glimpse of the boys risking their lives for us."
- This statement was made by a farmer who had watched Wib's plane crash and had seen him taken prisoner.
- "It's good to know that some people still appreciate the Americans," Wib said.
- As for me? I was very happy the appointment with the Illinois Congressman wasn't later in the year.