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## Stewart and Low – The Buzzin Twins!!!

by Andy Low

Somewhere on a bomber base in England. Late in the afternoon of an April day, 1944. The Operations Control Room of the 453rd Bombardment Group (H) under the direction of the Group Operations Officer, the Major, and his assistant, the Captain—that was me—was slowing its activity. The Major, winding up last-minute operations reports to higher headquarters of the results on the morning mission to Hitler's Fortress. The Capt. was anticipating the next day's mission. The call would come for a maximum effort—every available air-crew and every available aircraft. There would be a short interlude in group operations activity as the Staff awaited target intelligence and arming instructions.

With hardly a break in shuffling the mound of paperwork, the Major, in his low-key manner simply said, "Andy, find us a minimum crew and an airplane and we'll go shoot some landings."

With a quick, "Yes, Sir," I headed for Base Operations. Staff pilots, who generally flew in the Co-pilots' position of the lead aircraft during our combat missions, getting to "shoot some landings" was indeed a welcome break.



Captain Andrew S. Low (R) undergoes intelligence debriefing by Lieutenant Eugene Verier upon his return from leading air operations.

At Base Operations I filed an aircraft clearance form and questioned the regulation which specified a minimum crew for any training operator. It was a poor time of day to locate crew members. Both the Major and I were "green card" and instructor pilots on the B-24 Liberator aircraft.

Both of us had many flying hours as instructors in both B-17 and B-24 aircraft in the U.S., thus my rationalization on finding additional crew members for a local area training mission was simple—make up some names. I listed the Major as pilot, myself as co-pilot. Using combinations of our names, I filled out the remainder of the crew positions. I signed the authorization. We were cleared! No questions!

I phoned the Major to indicate the parking hard-stand where our aircraft was located. The aircraft was coming out of major maintenance and the crew chief had systems that he wanted us to operate and check during our flight. I gave the aircraft a quick inspection, kicked the tires, signed the paperwork, and confirmed the aircraft was ready for flight.

Soon the Major pulled up in his jeep. He first asked about the minimum aircrew requirements. I ran over my rationalization on this subject. The old barracks proverb, "the exigencies of the situation being such as to preclude compliance with appropriate regulations, etc." could apply. The Major was a very silent guy. Without comment we mounted up with him in the pilot's position and myself as co-pilot. We cranked the engines, received our clearance by radio from the Control Tower, taxied out and were on our way. Exhilarating!! Off we went into the "wild blue yonder!!!" The B-24 liberator responded like a homesick angel.

We could not have been up to 1000 ft. on the climb when the Major pulled back on the power. He looked over at me with a wry smile and above the noise of the aircraft engines he shouted "My former Group Commander always has his nap about now. Let's go and wake him up!"

The Major had just come to our group from a base less than 10 miles away. Before I could comprehend the Major's intentions we were in a gentle dive toward his former base. We swooped below the surrounding tree-tops, below the ridge-lines of the barracks. The Major then deftly pulled up in a beautiful "Chandelle" maneuver to his left.

"Well, that will wake him up. Now let's get him UP!" said the Major as he rolled expertly into another dive. Again we dipped below the tree-tops, the barracks

ridge-lines, and then up again into another "Chandelle" maneuver, this time to the right. As a normal thing, the Major had a very subtle smile, but by this time he was broadly smiling, even a steely glint in his eye.

"He's up now and will want our aircraft tail number, so let's go up one more time!"

The Control Tower Operator at the base continually called to inquire why we were flying in his control area without a clearance, and below specified altitude minimums. Handling the radio, I had looked to the Major for guidance. "Ignore them, don't answer," the Major instructed.



Major James M. Stewart being met on return from leading air operations by Colonel Ramsay D. Potts, Commander, 453rd Bombardment Group (H), Brigadier General E. J. "Ted" Timberlake, Commanding, Second Combat Wing, and Lt. Colonel Robert Harris, Air Executive, 453rd.

At each dive, the control tower operator became more adamant. He wanted the name, rank and serial number of the pilot. We were reminded they had our aircraft serial markings. The bureaucracy would soon know who we were.

After the third swoop, the Major looked over at me with an almost mad twinkle in his eye and with his taciturn drawl said calmly, "I could make those operators get out of that tower!" We rolled into another dive. The control tower was mounted on an elevated platform above the aircraft maintenance hangar. Access was by an external ladder for the last twenty feet. Down to the tower level we dove and around the tower we zoomed. Transmissions from the tower became more rapid, almost

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## President's Corner

I've been lucky to get to two of three Area dinners that have been held since I've been President, and I hope (the Good Lord willin', etc.) to be at the Princeton shindig in June.



These one-night get togethers are the best thing since either sliced bread or canned beer! If you've had an opportunity to go to one of these affairs and didn't, you really and truly missed something outstanding.

If I'm not mistaken, there are now about 5000 Association members, regular and associate, and our annual reunion attendance runs 600-800. Obviously, cost, conflicting family plans, distance, and the capacity of the convention site all serve to limit the number attending. And so the idea of the area dinners—and the San Antonio luncheons—was born. There isn't

any better way to renew old friendships or to get to know other B24 types than to have one of these one-day programs. It does take planning, and it does take effort; someone, initially, with enough drive to get the ball rolling, and enough "smarts" to get some help.

While the area events right now generally have an attendance of 150-200, you can, and probably will, start out with a much lower figure, maybe 50 or less. Maybe that will be the number your particular area can support. Don't be unwilling to get going with just a few people. When the word gets around, and it will if you help it, your attendance will increase. Ask the people who've done one! Pete Henry has films available for your program, and J. Fred Thomas and Clint Wallace can give you lots of good advice on plans and arrangements.

A little publicity always helps, so let your local news media know about the event. And when it's all over, I guarantee you'll be wondering why you waited so long to get started.

L/C CHARLES FREUDENTHAL (RET.)

## Thoughts About the Memorial Room

by Charles M. Parker (Shack Rabbitt Crew, 453rd BG)

Many years ago when I first began receiving the *Journal*, I was immediately intrigued at the somewhat unusual way many of our members made donations to the Memorial Trust Fund. I've never before or since encountered a group that so regularly sent unsolicited funds to a cause of any sort. It seems that just about every issue (including the March one) carried letters that went something like: "I can't remember how much I owe, but here's \$25.00 (or whatever). Please take out my dues and put the rest to the Memorial," or . . . "Here's my dues check. If I've already paid just put it to the Memorial".

It occurs to me that a lot of members who make such donations may never take the opportunity to get to Norwich to see firsthand the results of their financial support. My work (I am an artist) took me on a two month trip into the Norwich area last year and I was fortunate to be there for the Convention. I think perhaps my reactions to regularly visiting and using the Memorial Room over that period might be of interest to many of our members who have not or cannot make the journey.

On first entering the 2nd Air Division (USAAF) Memorial Room, I was strongly impressed with how very well suited it was for its intended purpose. I had the feeling that if only there were some way that our lost friends could see what had been done for them they would be well pleased, honored, and gratified. Next, I felt the sense of life continuity, in that this room is a warm, living, ongoing educational facility and is constantly used on a day-to-day basis by our English (and other) friends, and to a high purpose.

My congratulations go to all the British and American participants who have given, and continue to give their time and talent to the planning, execution, construction and

management of this important undertaking. As we have heard often, it really is unique!!!

From a personal use standpoint, I found the Memorial and all the library space to be a cozy haven from famous English weather when I would be driven indoors from my work (sketching) and needed a place to continue what I had commenced around Norwich. I was able to do a lot of good work in these pleasant surroundings.

Much of what I do is intensely detailed, and I must frequently take a break to rest my eyes. It was during these little breaks that I began to notice the kinds of people who use the Room. Many came in, went to a specific shelf and book, and settled down for a lengthy period. I saw young, college age people, obviously doing research for papers they were writing. There were grade school teachers who brought their students to see the room and show them how to use it. Many came to read U.S. newspapers. Often there were visitors who came just to see the room, who looked long and carefully at every part, object, and explanatory document. After a bit, I began to see some people again and again. There was a constant flow of users.

The Room was closed only once during my stay, and that was a week or so prior to the beginning of our Convention, and for the purpose of installing new carpet. Mr. Colin Sleath, the Deputy Divisional Librarian, responsible for liaison with the Trust and the Association, was in constant attendance. He was extremely kind and helpful to visitors, and to me when I needed assistance.

Space prevents my going into detail. Suffice to say that if ever you have donated for the building and support of our Memorial and have had a passing doubt about what's done with your money, forget it, and join me in being proud of the accomplishment.

## Stewart and Low

(continued from page 1)

frenzied and staccato. Would the pilot of the B-24 kindly report his name, rank and serial number. We remained silent. The second diving pass was from the opposite direction but just as close to the tower. On the third pass, the transmission from the tower ceased. The three occupants of the tower could be seen scrambling down the ladder. The Major broke into a broad grin.

We returned to our home base. The Major practiced some take-offs and landings. We ran through the systems checks requested by the crew-chief. We changed seats and I then had an opportunity to check my proficiency. Our mission was over. We came to a stop on landing, taxied in and parked the aircraft. We made necessary entries in the flight logs, reported to the crew chief and returned to our office. It had been a most satisfying and relaxing training mission.

An hour later, we went to the Officers Mess for our evening meal. Suddenly the Group Commander strode into the mess and came directly to where we were seated. We jumped smartly to our feet and the Commander immediately began to regale the two of us, pity the poor example set by his Operations Officers, those charged with developing and enforcing safe air operations.

Here in this story I have difficulty recalling the exact details of what happened next. So I defer to the Major—Major James M. Stewart, Group Operations Officer. Major Stewart was known to us principally as a talented pilot and inspirational combat leader. To the rest of the world, he was Jimmy Stewart, already an acknowledged movie star. So, Jimmy continues:

by Jimmy Stewart

Well, its been forty years!

I recall the incident. In fact, I recall when I wished I could have forgotten it. It happened much as Andy has written. In his telling, perhaps the airspeed seems a little faster, the altitude a little lower and the chandelles more perfect, given the passage of so much time. So, there may be some embellishment.

It fairly relates what happened on a late afternoon in April 1944, just forty years ago. He's right, the Col. strode into the Mess. Normally he was a most mild-mannered man. Highly decorated, he had already been through much of the air war. Though much younger than I, his combat experiences induced a maturity far beyond his years. Obviously he had recently been severely chastized and I guessed immediately he had been called by the Brig. Gen. commanding our Combat Wing. The word of our training mission—our escapade—had been reported to higher headquarters. Well, I tried the explanation that we were highly qualified instructor pilots who

had been cooped up too long in a stuffy headquarters. Suddenly, we had a chance to fly, and were momentarily carried away with the exhilaration of being free. We did nothing dangerous, only getting a feel of the airplane. So, we tried to explain. The more I struggled for words, (the Col. did not give me much opportunity to speak), the more I realized that what we thought was a grand idea some three hours earlier now seemed pretty dumb. So, we switched rationale. I say "we". Andy just stood there. He did try to remind the Col. we were very experienced pilots and did nothing dangerous.

Then I remembered the old Barracks Proverb, "When you are at the bottom of a hole, don't dig." I assured the Col. that there had been a momentary lapse in good judgment. This we regretted and that such a lapse would not happen again.



Brigadier General James M. Stewart (USAF-Ret.) and Major General Andrew S. Low (USAF-Ret.) are joined by wives Gloria and Helen, on their return to Old Buckenham, England, from which they flew in 1944.

Flushed and upset, the Col. strode out of the Mess without stopping for his evening meal. After all that, our evening meal didn't taste very good either. We returned to the office. Shortly after arriving, a telephone call came from Wing Hdq. for me, it was the Commanding General. As a Major I was pleased to be called by the General, but it soon turned out to be a continuation of our encounter with the Col. How could we do such a dumb thing? Weren't we supposed to be setting a proper example to younger crews? Supposing they were tempted to repeat our mission and kill themselves in a high speed stall.

I had learned from our session with the Col. to limit explanations. Now they did not make too much sense. I assured the Gen. that a lapse of good discipline and training would not occur again. At least, not by us."

Finally, he hung up.

It wasn't over yet. The phone rang again. It was my former Col. He was most upset, particularly about his Control Tower Operators. I was humble and of contrite heart. I assured him we regretted the stir we had caused. We were convinced it was unprofessional. Reluctantly, we listened and hung up.

I was glad the Operations instructions for the mission the following day began to come in. At least, it changed the subject.

As I now recall the incident, and the furor we provoked, I recall I was fortunate to have had so much theatrical training behind me. I was called on to play many different roles in a very short time. But the air war went on.

A month later, in May 1944, I was promoted to Lt. Col. and Andy was promoted to Major. Obviously, the Bureau-

cracy had not taken a vengeful stance. I was moved up to Combat Wing Hdq. Assigned as Exec. Officer to the Commanding General. Andy moved up in the Bomb Group to replace me as Operations officer. Somehow, I guess the bureaucracy has forgiven our iniquity.

As a post-script to our war story, I can report that one of my early tasks was to publish, in the General's name, a memorandum calling attention to the regulations requiring a minimum aircrew, which forbids flying without proper clearance in a control zone and descending below safe operating altitudes for any reason.

Another post-script. In reflection, over the past forty years, I have done a lot of flying in many kinds of aircraft, and for many diverse reasons. As I look back on that training mission, I remember it as a real fun flight.

# How I Learned to Love the B24

by Bill Olmsted (489th)

First off, don't forget that this is a forty year old story, and a forty year old memory! Our crew was in the 846th squadron. We'd been formed at Gowen Field and gone through the phases at Wendover. Captain John Elliott was our pilot; Lt. Doug Strong, the co-pilot; Lt. Rubin Kaplan the navigator, and Lt. Hughey Smith, the Bombardier; Sgt. Ace Green, waist gunner; Bill Burcham, nose turret; John Foster, radio operator; Marvin Glassman, tail gunner; Sgt. Bruno, ball turret, and yours truly, Bill Olmsted, Engineer-Top turret gunner. Our ship we'd named Cover Girl, after the movie of the same name.

On this particular mission we were to bomb an airfield somewhere near Orleans, France. On the bomb run we ran into intense flak, which had our flight dead to rights. I remember the "Womp, Womp, Womp" sound of shells bursting much too close for comfort. There were sounds like hail on a tin roof. Then came a BIG bang. Foster is standing at the front of the bomb bay, hollering "Purple flash! Purple flash! Bomb bay fluid — bomb bay fluid!" over the interphone. Pilot Pappy Elliott says "Olmsted, get down there and see what's going on." Foster got back up to his radio table, and I discovered damage to the right side of the bomb bay, in the hydraulic system. Fluid was all over the bay; and worse, there was gas streaming out of the booster pump housing. We had taken a good hit in one of our tanks. That was extremely bad news; no way could the doors be shut now, and that added considerable drag to the ship. I reported my findings to Pappy, and he wasn't too thrilled. The sight glasses showed the leak to be in #2 tank. Checking with our navigator Rubin, it looked like the rate of leak might let us make England before we lost number two. We couldn't transfer fuel for fear of sparks.

As we cleared the French coast and started letting down, the formation began opening up; it seemed like nobody wanted to fly near us. Later, on the ground, other crews told us that they thought we were on fire. The gas vaporizing in the slipstream looked like smoke.

It was nearing sundown as we approached Halesworth. We still showed accumulator pressure for brakes, and so long as number three engine gave us no trouble we had electric and hydraulic power for gear, flap and instruments. We didn't dare to use the booster pump, APU, fuel boosters or any electrical stuff such as running lights, etc. Finally we were at the field, circling and waiting to land. It was getting darker and darker. Normally, when the gear comes down, I went to the waist to visually check the main gear lock, but as I started toward the waist the wind was howling at about 150 mph, and the cat-

walk was like greased lightning. I got as far as the last bomb stanchion and chickened out.

Back on the flight deck, I said we would have to hope that the gear light wasn't lying. Darker ever as we turned onto final, when suddenly a set of blue lights slid right out from under our noses! Another B24 on final hadn't seen us. There was nothing to do but pull up and go around, and now there was the worry that maybe #2 would quit and we'd be turning into a dead engine. I was looking at an empty fuel glass, but the cylinder temperature said the engine was still running.

As we came onto final again, I shouted to the pilots that we might very well have two flats. It was too dark to see any deflection on the tires, and we didn't dare use the Aldis lamp. As we got near to landing, it looked as though we were dropping into a dark hole. I don't see how Pappy and Doug could tell ground from no ground. Here again I chickened out and hit the landing light switch. My thought was we might as well blow as dive into the ground. But the lights came on OK, and then we touched the runway. Then came the fun. The right tire was flat, so Pappy and Doug both had to get on full left rudder and brake. I ran up #3 and #4 to help against drag, and we were slowly coming back to a straight heading when suddenly the left tire blew. Now we headed to port. I pulled back on 3 and 4 and hit 1 and 2, watching the rpm change accordingly; not realizing until later that #2 must have sucked fumes from somewhere. About this time Pappy hit my hands, pulling the throttles to idle, as he knew we were down to a survivable

ground speed. However, we were drifting out of control, and gradually turning broadside to the runway. There was a hell of a lot of weird noises! We ended up half off the runway. It was darker than the inside of a barrel, and there was a mad scramble by all to get out, everybody still thinking she's going to blow up.

We all got together in the middle of a hay field. The main switches being pulled, Cover Girl was totally dark. Then came a jeep tearing down the runway with a voice hollering "Get that damn ship off the runway!" Doug Strong called back and told whoever it was where to go. That was never mentioned the next morning.

I think we were the last ship to land. Looking back on events the next day, we kind of figured that the go-around used enough fuel so the leak had stopped by the time we laid a shower of sparks beneath us. I've always wondered why we didn't blow up in the air; there were so many things to touch it off. Anyway, I suddenly had a healthy respect for the B24. Here she slid—all 16 tons—sideways, and the gear held up. And that was on two rims.

Our hard working ground crew changed tanks, (which is a hell of a job), put on new wheels, fixed the hydraulic system and patched a whole lot of holes, and had us in the air in a couple of days.

We left Cover Girl after 15 missions, and as Fred Meyers reported in the January 1983 *Journal*, she went down near Hamburg, with all crew members surviving as POWs. A member of that crew, Tom McGory, the Engineer, lives about 18 miles from my home. Know him now, didn't then.

## About the Memorial

You are doing it again. BLESS YOU!!! Your contributions to the Memorial Trust accompanying your dues are flowing in, and according to Evelyn Cohen who receives them, and Dean Moyer, who banks them, I will be able to tell the Board of Governors next month (May) that we will have in excess of another \$10,000 to hand over at our banquet in Palm Springs.

Again, thank you, each of you for whatever you have sent in. You should be proud of what your contributions created in the first place, what is being accomplished with current income from the enlarged Trust Fund, and most important for the growing assurance of the ongoing existence of the 2nd Air Division (USAAF) Memorial Room.

I am happy to report that after our announcement in the March issue of the details about the Individual Endowment program we have received one more such contribution. We have also been led to believe that many of you are considering it. As we said in that article, and was also stated in the very excellent guide that was published about "Who to Ask What", I am ready at any time to answer any questions you may have about anything relative to the Memorial.

As a result of working with our colleagues in England, I can now report that the revised official count of names in the Roll of Honor is 6,082. The Individual Group Rolls of Honor should be ready and in place in the Memorial Room by early fall, 1984. At that time each Group VP will receive a photo copy of the list of names for his group.

I look forward to reporting to you at Palm Springs (and in these pages) about the 1984 Annual Governors Meeting of your 2nd Air Division Memorial Trust. Until then, I send my warmest greetings and best wishes to each of you.

GORDON R. UTTAL

# 445th News

by Frank DiMola (445th)

One of the greatest newspaper stories of any event was the parachute jump by George Lynburn. Bill Robertie may publish more details of this event in a future issue. I received 12 copies of this famous jump from all parts of the country.

After 34 years with the New York telephone company, I finally retired on March 9, 1948. Now I can devote more time to my correspondence.

I spent the coldest week of this winter in Orlando, Florida, when the temperature was 40 to 50 degrees all week long. I should have been in Dallas! You were right, Elaine Stephan, I am still receiving mail on "What happened to Glenn Miller?" Still a mystery to all.

I want to thank everyone who sent me various diagrams of our Squadron and Group insignia. The best, and more authentic, records of the insignia were sent to me by Tony North, Norwich, England. In reading my request he went searching and found the insignia in a book titled "Combat Squadrons of the Air Force of WWII" by M. Maurer. It was this book that gave the complete history of all our squadrons and their present locations. Tony North is publishing a history of the 2nd Combat Wing which was made up of the 389th, 445th and the 453rd Groups. At this printing he doesn't have too many

photos of our aircraft on the ground, in flight, crashes and nose art. We don't want this book published without our Group represented. Any prints borrowed will be carefully handled and returned after copying. Kindly send them to me and I will insure the packages and mail them directly to Tony.

Buddy Cross and I are still hunting down William L. Lance, Jr. (701). Don't give up, Judy Vance Garren. We will get some info on "Chubs" eventually. I am getting a great amount of help from May Beth (Kennedy) Bernard. She purchased from Maxwell AFB, The Research Center, three reels of 16mm microfilm. These films contain a daily log of events concerning all our squadrons. Again, these films show some of the Squadron insignia, but not all are official. I should have a complete publication at the Palm Springs Reunion.

Once again Baldwin Avery, who is now retired to Florida, and his entire crew will hold their mini-mini reunion in June, 1984. They have been in touch with each other since 1945. This time it will be held at Cliff Syverud's home in Wisconsin. Let us hear all about it, Avery.

On April 7th, I was honored with an invitation to attend the changing of command of the 702nd Military Airlift Sqd. of the 514th Military Airlift Wing, located at McGuire AFB, New Jersey. It was indeed a very impressive occasion.

As I previously reported, I found the locations of the four squadrons of the

Group. The 700th is in Dobbins AFB, Georgia flying C-130s; the 701st in Charleston AFB, S.C. flying C-141s; and the 703rd in Shaw AFB, S.C. flying helicopters. I contacted each squadron commander and asked him to get in touch with me.

I must relate a story connected with this event. One of the past commanders, Col. J.C. Kirshbaum, flew in from Little Rock, Ark. He became very curious about the cockpit of the C-141, and went up front to see what interesting features it had. Well, he found out. The pilot of the aircraft was a young lady, a captain, only 24 years old. He just gulped, sat down, and prayed. Before we get women's lib on our backs, let it be known that she handled that 160 ton aircraft like a feather.

We are in full swing for the Dayton tree planting ceremony, and at the next publication it will be history. On May 6-8 we plan to have about 150 people at the ceremony.

Our next mini-reunion is planned for June 9th, 1984 and will be held at Princeton, New Jersey. The committee contacted all members living within a 100 mile radius. Plans for our 37th reunion were in the last issue. We suggest that you make your reservation as early as possible. 'Till then, have a nice summer.

One last word. Buddy Cross and I want to thank all the members for the great contribution that was made toward the Memorial Tree Planting Fund. It has been a huge success.

## Poop From Group

by Jim Coffey (467th)

The 467th Bombardment Group (Heavy) was unique in having been trained since November 1, 1943 (almost since its beginning), brought to England, completed its combat missions (212) and returned home, all under one Commanding Officer. Col. Albert J. Shower, West Point, Class of 1935, led the 467th with dedication. He required the highest standards of performance, from training days through the great days of accomplishment in the E.T.O. (early 1944), through our return home in June, 1945. Replacement crews such as ours quickly caught the spirit of the Group.

Col. Shower not only survives, but is a faithful attendee and strong contributor to 467th reunions. Those of you who attended the 467th's stateside reunion, this past October, will remember Col. Shower's warm and moving address at the dedication ceremony for the tree and bronze memorial at the Air Force Museum.

If you attended the Nashville reunion, you may have met David J. Hastings. David is a member of the Board of Governors of the Second Air Division Memorial Library in Norwich. He has a special interest in keeping alive, in the minds of the people of Norfolk, their heritage of the

contribution of the Second Air Division to allied victory in World War II. His projects include presentations to school children in the area. He is trying to restore links between the 2nd AD and RAF.

David wrote Mike Benarcik, 453rd BG, who sent a copy of his letter to Phillip Day, our Editor and Scribe, and to me, with this astonishing news: "The actual hut which is now their mess (at a very important RAF station at Neatishead) was originally 2nd AD at Rackheath." (I interpret this to mean that somehow one of our Nissens was moved to Neatishead and is now an Officer's Club.) David said he wanted to give them "a picture or something to serve as a constant reminder of ... links which must NEVER BE FORGOTTEN." Philip is sending a copy of the 467th plaque (featured in the *March Journal*). I asked "Andy" DeBiasse to send, as a gift from our crew, a copy of a painting of *Witchcraft*, the B-24 with 130 consecutive missions, an all-time record. Al Muller took the photo of the painting and Andy arranged for production.

You can obtain a copy for yourself by writing A.E. De Biasse, 58 Hillside Ave., Madison, NJ 07940. Matted in Air Force blue, ready to frame and hang, the cost is: 8 x 10 photo with 12 x 14 matting — \$18; 11 x 14 photo with 15 x 18 matting — \$28. Either size will make a handsome addition

to any room, den, office, workshop, you name it. All profits go to the Group and the 2nd ADA.

I think you will be interested in this letter I received from Norm Burns, a veteran of the 492nd, 44th and 389th.

January 14, 1984

Dear Jim,

I thought you, who were at Rackheath, would want to know that Major Charles Lowe passed away October 10, 1983. He was, I believe, 86 years old and had been retired from the military over twenty years.

Charles and his wife, the former Ann Rogers of Norwich, lived here in the Santa Barbara area until about two years ago when Charles' deteriorating health forced a decision to move to San Diego.

I imagine many of the 467th will remember Major Lowe. He was in the ground echelon, and he came to Rackheath early and remained to close the base.

Expressions of sympathy may be directed to Mrs. Charles Lowe, 5961 Caminito Elegante, San Diego, Calif. 92108. I was stationed at Hethel for about six months, so like Charles and many others at Rackheath, had fond memories of many excursions to nearby Norwich. Charles and I had enjoyable discussions of those memories even though we had not known each other in England. — Norm Burns

# 8-Ball-Y-Hoo

by Pete Henry 44th B.G.

On January 4, 1984, Wally Balla was requested by Headquarters, Civil Air Patrol, to present to his wife, the former Lt. Ethel A. Jarrett, the coveted National Commander's Commendation Award, the Commander's Commendation Medal, and the Civil Air Patrol Wartime Service Medal.

Wally and Ethel, both C.A.P. members, with the help of Senator Dodd and Congressman McKinney, were finally able to get these much belated awards for Ethel, for active duty up in Bar Harbor, Me., with the C.A.P. on anti-submarine patrol, some hundred miles off shore during WWII. It was during the period when U-boats were sinking cargo and oil tankers all along the Eastern Seaboard because our defenses were so weak. The C.A.P. squadrons helped to make up for the shortage and are finally receiving some recognition. Our congratulations to both Ethel and Wally.

Back on February 26, 1943, a New York journalist named Robert Post, flew a mission to Wilhelmshaven in a 66th squadron aircraft that didn't return. On April 9, 1943, his father wrote to the family of Lt. Wayne H. Gotke passed away in 1979).



Col. Wallace J. Balla (Ret.) congratulates his wife Ethel Balla.

Wayne's reply of August 6, 1945, was recently obtained from his mother, and is quoted, in part, as follows:

"The only person I can be positive about during the flight, was Bill Hannan, the Bombardier, who was riding in the nose of the ship with me. I'm completely at a loss to understand his fate after the ship blew up. He was standing by me when (I believe) the ship blew up. He was not injured at the time. He had passed out twice from lack of oxygen and I had replaced his mask and brought him back to normal.

Our ship was under constant fighter attack, from the time we reached the island of Texel until we were shot down. We had fought off the planes with very minor damage until we were almost to Oldenburg. Then, all hell broke loose. I spent most of my time with position reports trying to get short cuts filed into the flight to allow us to gain and catch the rest of the formation. However, I'm reasonably sure no one was injured up to this point, except Sgt. Welch, the Belly gunner. He had passed

out from lack of oxygen and, as far as I know, never regained his senses. When we were almost to Oldenburg, fighters hit us from all sides. Sgt. Vought, the Engineer and Top Turret operator, shot the first fighter down and I shot the next down, however, not until he had sent 20mms into the nose and cockpit. Sgt. Mifflin shot down the third from his waist gun position. At this point my left waist gun jammed, and I know at least two planes made direct hits on the nose and flight deck. I'm sure someone was hurt on the flight deck, and I was hit twice in the nose of the ship operating a jammed gun. Engines #3 and #4 had been hit and were on fire. I believe fire spread to the wing tank and caused the ship to explode. I was working on my guns when all at once it seemed someone pushed me from behind and all went black. I woke up falling through space and pulled my rip cord. No results. So I reached back and tore the back of my chute out. My last look at the altimeter showed 26,000 feet and the Germans claim they saw my chute open at 5,000 feet. They picked me up after I sat between two trees about 20 feet in the air for about 25 minutes. They took me to a first aid station for treatment of cuts around the head and 20mm wounds. It was here I saw Sgt. Mifflin. The Co-Pilot of the ship that was shot down at the same time that we were, said he saw Capt. Adams leather jacket, and it appeared the man had been killed. The ships loading

list was removed from the jacket by the Germans. The Germans asked me about your son, as they could not identify him from the loading list. I gave them no information whatsoever, as my orders were to say nothing, in hopes that if men were at large, their chances of getting home would be better. The Germans asked questions about Bowie and Hannan, and from that, I believe these two men could not be identified. They asked questions about Johnson because they could not find any information on him. My belief is that your son was wearing his "Mae West", and perhaps through that lead you may get some information. I'm under the impression that all bodies were not found, and if found, they could not be identified."

Lt. Gotke concluded his letter by saying that he would advise Mr. Post if any further information surfaced. He praised Robert Post for performing above and beyond the call of duty, and said that all the men on the mission held him in highest respect.

I'm sure you all know that the 2ADA Convention this year will be in Palm Springs, Calif. from October 4-7. If you haven't made your reservations by now, you'd better get a move on. This promises to be 'a really big one' and I'd like to see a lot of 8-Ballers there. Also, we'll be having our Fifth Annual 2ADA Golf Tournament on October 3rd, and we'd like to have a couple of foresomes of 44thers. Drop me a line if you're interested.

This photo is of several items which I have for sale. A part of all profits go to the Memorial Library, Norwich.



Belt buckle, size 2"x2 1/4" with your name .....	\$12.00
3"x3"x1" thick lucite block with B-24J and personal name tag with a light blue background .....	\$21.00
Larger lucite embedment 4 1/4"x4 3/4" having all the planes of the 8th AF with name tag .....	\$51.00
8th AF lapel emblem .....	\$4.25
Not shown, but similar, having 2nd Air Division Associates in bright silver around the edge against blue background and red enamel ..	\$4.00
U.S. Flag lapel ornament .....	\$4.00
Smaller B-24 shown in front is silver plated 3/8" wide, available as lapel ornament or tie-tac or ladies charm .....	each \$7.00
Same, but as ear rings (specify for pierced or non-pierced ears) ..	pair \$12.00
Standard pewter tie-tac (center front) is 1 3/4" long .....	\$6.00

Postage is included in all prices.

Send orders to Leroy J. Engdahl, 1785 Wexford Drive, Vidor, Texas 77662

## 453rd BG Corner

by Don Olds

Lee Quesnel, Assistant Crew Chief to Joe Miele on *Hattiebelle* of the 735th Squadron, recalled in a recent letter that on a slow day in the 735th he went to another squadron and helped change out a left wing on a B-24. He doesn't remember which squadron but does remember the ship having a large flak hole through the wing. They used stands to hold the wing in place until they got the bolts to hold it up. It was raised using only handpower. Lee was very small and was able to get inside to hook up the control cables and wires. It wasn't an easy job and took about four hours. He thinks that squadron was the only one to change out an entire wing at Old Buck. Lee hasn't been able to get to any of the reunions but wants to say hello to all his old friends in the 453rd BG.

Clair Miller, armor-gunner on the original crew #1 of the 732nd SQ, (Basil Costos, pilot) also wrote a nice letter. He remembers the B-24 with great fondness and feels it was the top plane at that time. Some time in Feb. of '44, Crew #1 was transferred to the 482nd BG at Alconbury.



Living site of 467th Sub-Depot (l to r): S/Sgt. George Riley, S/Sgt. Paul Poitras, S/Sgt. Holmes Burton.

There, they trained Mickey Operators, and on occasion flew lead ship missions utilizing a Mickey Operator. Clair was a pianist at the time and was able to form a five piece band and played engagements at various clubs.

In late May of '44, he went against the old military axiom and volunteered for a special assignment. He was sent to school, conducted by intelligence personnel from the British Air Ministry. In late July '44, he was transferred to the 351st BG, a B-17 outfit at Polebrook. On his second mission with that outfit, he was shot down on Aug. 9, 1944, bailing out over the West Freician islands. He spent the next nine months as a POW. About two months of the time was in interrogation centers, because the Germans suspected he was involved in intelligence. His plane choice—the B-24. It always brought him back. The B-17 didn't!

Plans are underway to hold a 2nd ADA mini reunion in the St. Louis area on Saturday, July 28th. All 453rd people in the area and from elsewhere are encouraged to attend. Many of you have been unable to attend the 2nd ADA annual reunions and this will give you a chance to have an evening of hangar flying and reminiscing. Details will be worked out in the near future. We do plan to have a reception room, cash bar and dinner. It should come in at around \$20 per person. This will be a first time experiment for us and if it works out we will try to do it yearly. Drop me a line if you're interested, and I'll send you a flyer. My address is inside the front page of the *Journal*.

By the time you read this, the dedication ceremony in Dayton will be history. We will have planted a tree and unveiled a plaque/marker in the Memorial Park section of the AF Museum honoring the 453rd Bomb Group. As I write this, the dedication is a couple of months away, but already we're assured of an excellent turnout. There will be more about it, and hopefully a photo in the next *Journal*.

William Barden, a crew member on 734th SQ Crew #48, passed away on Dec. 21, 1983, in Akron, Ohio. Bill was a POW after being downed on the Brunswick raid on May 8, 1944. He had planned to attend our memorial dedication in Dayton on May 8, 1984. We have extended our sincere sympathy to Mrs. Viola Barden by letter.

I hope everyone who ordered a group history has received his copy by now. They were mailed out in late March and the supply is exhausted. We don't know if we can get any more printed. Frank Kyle did most of the leg work on this project and had a lot of it done at cost. But, he fears he's worn out his welcome at the firms where he did business.

The 467th Sub Depot was a vital part of the operation at Old Buckenham during the war years and Paul Poitras is trying to get the guys from that outfit to become a little more active in the 2nd ADA. He wrote a lot of letters urging them to come to Palm Springs. In the photo, left to right, are S/Sgt. George Riley, S/Sgt. Paul Poitras and S/Sgt. Holmes Burton. I hope all of you 467th Sub Depot folks will come out to Palm Springs and make Paul feel that his efforts were worthwhile.

Speaking of Palm Springs, all of you originals who spent a couple of months at March Field in late 1943, should be looking forward to the bus trip from Palm Springs to March Field as part of the reunion package. Certainly many things will have changed in 40 years, but it should still be fun to return.

Bob Bietling has promised me a listing of 453rd BG aircraft and what their final status was . . . scrapped, shot down, salvaged, hangar queen, etc. He has a fairly complete list of a/c, so if you have often

## Looking Ahead— Review of the Past

by Jim Reeves (Hdqs)

It is amazing how 2AD continues to grow in membership. Each month I receive an information sheet on new members. This is great! Personally I am not satisfied with the growth of headquarters personnel. I want us to do more! Again, let me insist that each of you secure one new member before convention time. If you know of someone who is eligible and not a member, send me his name and address. I will contact him at once. Eleanor Storms and her WAC Group are making progress.

The big news and the good news is the Palm Springs Convention, October 4th through the 7th. Please get your reservations to Evelyn ASAP. I talked with her recently and she states that reservations are coming in rapidly. We are looking forward to and planning on a great time at our mini reunion of Hdqs Personnel. Let's get moving. Any good thoughts regarding our mini? Send ideas to Evelyn or myself.

As we look over our shoulders—can you believe it's been forty years (June 6, 1944) since "D" Day. I am sure all of us in 2AD remember this historic date. Recently I have reviewed Roger Freeman's *Mighty Eighth War Diary*. In his book, Roger states that the Eighth Air Force, in the three months of April, May and June 1944, lost 1,452 aircraft and 9,511 airmen missing in action. Of the number lost, 575 were B-17's, 314 B-24's, 296 Mustangs, 143 Thunderbolts, and 124 Lightnings. I do not know what percent of these aircraft belonged to 2AD. Roger did state that 20% of 8th AF casualties during WWII were lost in this three month period.

Many services and ceremonies are being planned in Europe to commemorate the 40th Anniversary of "D" Day. My wife (Edna) and I will be in Europe in late April and part of May, but unfortunately our schedule will not line up with the planned ceremonies. I am sure we will have personnel of 2AD attending these services. And I am sure each of us will pause for a few moments on June 6th in gratitude and appreciation for the significance of this day forty years ago.

Individually and together, we should work to keep America strong. When President Eisenhower was once asked the value of freedom and liberty. . . His answer: "In the final choice, a soldier's pack is not so heavy a burden as a prisoner's chain."

wondered what became of old so and so, perhaps we can find out.

I'm out of my allotted space, so will end this by asking everyone to make an extra effort to make Palm Springs. Especially you West Coast people. Come to Palm Springs, I'm certain you'll enjoy it.

# 458th BG Report

by Rick Rokicki (458th)

The March *Journal* reported the signing up of 12 new 458th members. I thought it best that I keep you posted on what's been happening since. I went back through my files of almost 10 years and pulled out names of known 458th personnel. Most of these had been contacted at one time or another, but hadn't joined us. I also dug out an alphabetical listing I received from Evelyn some time ago. Altogether, I came up with 239 names and addresses. Mailed each one my latest recruiting info . . . the last "bundle" went out on Tax day, April 16th. "School isn't out yet" for final results, because it will be about ten days before I get the results on the last 42 mailed, but I can give you this: (1) Forty-three (43) new 458th members sent in their completed applications and dues checks. (2) Thirty-eight (38) "kits" were returned because of address changes or forwarding order expiration.

Simple math shows that there are 158 guys out there who have now been informed of the existence of the Second Air Division

Association and the 458th Bomb Group. I feel confident that more will sign up after receiving their information kits.

Since Ceil and I have the Association computer and input new names for all Bomb Group and Headquarters, the 458th member additions have been tops over the last few months. Our Group Roster now shows 370 members and I hope to have 400 "on the books" by Palm Springs Reunion time. I remember when the group reached 150, then 200 with "Wally" Wallace's great efforts in the mid '70's, and the thought of 400 could be looked at as a wild dream. Now, we have a chance to really give a few Groups a "run-for-the-money" with 3rd place a distinct possibility. Once again, if you know someone who should belong, but in spite of all your efforts, hasn't joined, please send me his name and address on a postcard and let me have a try. Lest I forget, here are a few that have helped in this effort: Evelyn Cohen, Charlie Pool, Mal Shealy, Stan Lent, Herm Hetzel, Harvey Beasley, Stan Lentowicz, Leo Sparkman, Pete Henry (44th V.P.) and J. Fred Thomas, Executive V.P. and 392nd Group V.P. Now that we're "on-a-roll", help me keep it going with a name or two (postcard

will do). Many, many thanks to all others that I may have failed to mention, who have helped over the years.

I plan to restock the small lapel-sized pewter B-24. I paint the 458th Group colors on the vertical stabilizer. These go very quickly after the *Journal* "hits the streets", and those of you who have requested but not received, hang in there, more are coming. I still have miniature airman's wings and 8th A.F. cloisonné pins for lapel or tie tac wear. I also have tie tac's of most WWII aircraft (polished pewter) and would be happy to send you a brochure if you send a stamped, self-addressed envelope. You don't have to pay museum prices for the best, believe me. As always, profits will be donated to the Association treasury. Check elsewhere in this issue for that dollar figure regarding plaque sales. Most of the above are sold for \$6.00 plus 54¢ packing and postage.

Don't forget the Palm Springs Convention. If you haven't already done so, get your deposit in to Evelyn Cohen. This one promises to be a top-notch affair, so please don't wait until the last minute and run the risk of being disappointed. We're planning on it . . . hope to see you all there.

# 389th Memorabilia

by Bud Koorndyke (389th)

Another few months have passed by since our last musings on the activities of the 389th Bomb Group. At this writing I'm sure that you all enjoyed Roy Jonasson's newsy letters in the March issue of our *Journal*. I thought it no more than fitting, that all of our Group would get to read Roy's issue that he sends out to various members of the 389th. Thanks again Roy for taking such an active part in the building up of the 389th.

I also would like to take this opportunity to express my thanks for the response to my request for articles on your wartime experiences for our *Journal*. These articles have been forwarded to Bill Robertie and he will run them as space permits.

Our goal of signing up 100 or more members in the 389th Bomb Group, has now reached a halfway point of 51 members. Keep up the good work of sending me names and addresses and I'll pick it up from there.

Many of you have written me about locating men of your crews or of ground personnel of your wartime years. I do have rosters of the 389th and also old orders that many times pick up old addresses. I would suggest that you at least look up the names in the old rosters, contact the phone company if there is a listing, and then send for a directory of that city. Many times the old addresses are wrong, but the last names are still useful, either as a relative or the party you're seeking.

Last week I found Tony Petruccione's pilot in Kalamazoo, Mich. Only about 40 miles from my home and he was delighted to have someone reestablish the tie of an old crew mate.

At this writing, our list of Folded Wings has its share of fallen comrades. Especially close to me was the passing away of our engineer Walter Gibson. Looking back in my old letter file, I found a request that I join the 2nd Air Div. Assoc., dated July 9, 1955. Thanks to Walt, June and I have had 29 years of the most wonderful memories of companionship, with the greatest people in the world.

I also would like to report that in Walt's memory, over \$300 has been contributed to our library fund. I'm sure that a heartfelt expression of loss to the Gibson family, is shared by all the members of the 389th Bomb Group.

The plans for our reunion in Palm Springs on Oct. 4th through the 7th are going ahead at full speed. We will be having our 389th Mini Reunion, so come prepared with pictures and time for sharing of experiences. Bob Nicely, our group pictorial contact, would appreciate photos for an album he is preparing for us.

During the past month, I have been contacted twice by NBC Television and spent some three hours discussing a documentary they are going to prepare for the fall, on the activities of the 8th Air Force. From the jist of the conversation, it will be centered around the Vegasack and first Berlin missions. I gave them names and addresses of the 389th crews, so some of you might be getting calls from NBC.

I received another call from Russell Strong, Kalamazoo, Mich. Russ has written two books on the 8th Air Force and is now working on his third book. He was particularly interested in the 389th, so I have been supplying him with background information. He has contacted other members, in particular Phil Ardery, for further data.

Correspondence in this job, never ceases. Letters from England, Switzerland, Germany and France have been part of my portfolio this past month.

As a final note, so that Bill can use some of our allotted space for your stories, I would suggest that you get your reservations for Palm Springs in early. From all indications it will be the largest gathering we've ever had. I do know from my letters, the 389th will have its largest contingent. So write in early.

## NOTICE

2nd ADA MINI REUNION  
planned for  
St. Louis Vicinity  
July 28, 1984

For further info contact either  
Ed Myers  
1317 St. Louis St.  
Pacific, MO. 63069  
OR  
Don Olds  
1403 Highland  
Rolla, MO 65401



# BUNGAY BULL

446th BOMB GROUP  
by  
Vere A. McCarty



I received this challenging letter. Can anyone help by responding to Mr. Polak? "My name is Tomas Polak and I am of Czechoslovakia. I am interested in history of war aviation, especially, I collect statements about fighter pilots and air gunners. Please send me . . . a list of 5 best air gunners of the 446th Bombardment Group with statements about their score, Squadron and distinctions . . ." Address: Tomáš Polák, Sidliste K.G. 1198, 744 01 FRENSTAT, p.R., Czechoslovakia.

Another: An historical research group from a small village in Holland seeks information about the crew of Satan's Little Sister that crashed in Holland and whose crew bailed out over the IJsselmeer, November 21, 1944. Lts. John Quinn and Melburn Simmons were hidden by local residents until the end of hostilities. If you have information about the crew, please let me know, especially addresses of Quinn and Simmons.

Those who contributed to the Memorial Project remember funds remained after we met our goal. Residue was donated to the book fund of the 2nd ADA Memorial Library. On behalf of the donors, I received a letter of thanks from librarian, Colin Sleath, who reported that six titles were purchased, each identified by a bookplate, "Presented to 2nd Air Division (USAAF) Memorial Room, Norwich Central Library, by members of the 446th Bomb Group Association (Bungay) in memory of all



I to r back row: Hurshell Cordell, Pilot; Wm Harris, Co-pilot; Wm DePutron, Navigator; Seymour Alexander, Bombardier  
front row: Harry Kreibel, Engineer; Paul Ananian, Radio; Clifford Lane, Ball Gunner; Leon Synfelt, Nose Gunner; Darrel Humphries, Gunner; Howard Henderson, Tail gunner

members of the Group who gave their lives in action against the enemy 1942-45."

I placed 446th BG "reunion" notices in both the V.F.W. and D.A.V. national magazines. One brought a response from Cal White, gunner of Federici's crew, who in turn knew the address of another crew member, Joe Drucker. Another . . . Alden Moyer, in my own backyard, hopes to be in Palm Springs for the 1984 reunion. Still another . . . Harry Kreibel sent a photo of his crew.

Eugene Thurston was ball turret gunner on Donald Ramsey's crew in a 1944 incident that I vividly remember. He writes, "It occurred June 29th. We hit Bernberg, Germany, a JU-88 repair and assembly depot. The flak was intense and on the bomb run we were hit as we dropped our bombs. An 88mm had penetrated the wing and had exploded just above us. We were knocked out of formation and out of control for what seemed an eternity — probably only a few seconds — before the pilots had us under control again. The tail gunner came rushing forward to the waist hatch escape door, threw it open and started to bail out. The waist gunners and I restrained him. He had seen two crew members go by his position and presumed we were all jumping. The two men were the bombardier and the navigator, who had gone out the nose door. From their position in front they had evidently seen or felt the explosion and thought we were mortally hit. The bomb bay doors locked open, the wing was damaged and I think we lost an engine. We were out of formation and alone over Germany. The pilots kept their cool, got their bearings, and returned at tree-top



Ramsey's crew: (Standing) Ready, Stan-kowski, Thurston, Bryant, Garron and Gabriel; (kneeling) Ramsey, Gillespie, Olstein and Friend.

level across Northern Germany . . ." Thurston asks whether anyone can tell him what happened to Lts. Irving Olstein and John Friend, navigator and bombardier. (Note: our crew flew Squadron lead on that mission and witnessed the bail-out. Mac).

New member Paul Stueber wrote that he was pleased to contact former pilot and bombardier, Bill Sypher and Joe Hogue; in fact, said he was "elated!" (That's what we are here for, Paul). Another new member, Don Livengood, was co-pilot for George Kougiyas. His crew and ours (Pappy Henderson's) struggled through phase training together and shared a peat burning "heater?" during our first winter at Flixton airfield. Don is building his own airplane which should have had its test flight by publication time, a Long Ez. He would like to fly it to the reunion in October, but is not sure that his wife, Delores, would accompany him if he travels this way.

Durward Raley was radio operator on the "Joker", 705th Squadron. Raley was the artist who painted the emblem on the fuselage of B-24H 41-29151, using a joker from a deck of playing cards as his model. He reports on Joker's last day: "On March 22, 1944, we had an engine failure. Unable to feather the prop, we lost altitude and had to leave the formation. A Fockwulf attacked and after shooting us up, collided with us in mid-air. All but the navigator (Foster Harbin) parachuted to safety as the "Joker" went into a dive, crashed and burned north of Gustrow, Germany. We scattered over a wide area but were all captured the same day, except for the co-pilot (Morris) who managed to remain free for several days." ("Joker's" bombardier on that mission, Jim Marsh, is also a 2nd ADA member).

Chaplain John Gannon reported, just too late for last issue's deadline, he had cut back on Christmas mailing last year, but appreciated the cards received . . . so he sent a "Happy Valentine" greeting to the Group instead. (We'll get the word out by the Fourth of July, Chaplain!).

When Harold Roach joined the Association he told me that his pilot, Maurice "Bud" Willis lived in Portland, Ore., so with the help of a phone book Bud was found and is now a member, also. Harold and Margaret Roach are planning to attend the reunion this year.

Speaking of that, the 37th Annual Reunion of the 2nd Air Division Association — and the 446th Bomb Group — will evidently be a big one. I have had more inquiries this year than ever before. All my responses include this admonition, "Get your reservations in early!" A \$50 bill (checks please) to Evelyn Cohen with a Reunion Reservation slip (page 23 of your March *Journal*) will hold your place in the chow line and a room. Read pages 23 and 24 of your last *Journal* carefully. Your Reunion package costs cover everything listed in the program on page 23.

# 392nd Bomb Group Report

by J. Fred Thomas (392nd)

April 12 — If we wrote in detail of our activities for the 392nd and the Association for the past three months, it would be a reply, to some degree, of the past two reports we have made. The letter writing, phone calls, and the sending of packets of information goes on. That comes with the territory, so it isn't news. We will continue, however, with a couple items we mentioned.

One thing. Our obelisk at Wendling has been polished. We had a very nice letter from our friend, Mr. Denis Duffield, who lives near Derham. He reports that the job was well done, and a great improvement in the appearance of the monument. We had checks from Myron Keilman, Mel Eller, Howard Haywood, and Harold Prouse in addition to those previously reported from Bob Powers and Don Whitford. So, the job is done and the bill paid. We certainly appreciate the financial help, gentlemen. You will recall, we mentioned that our obelisk came to us through the efforts of Joe Bush, our Group Executive Officer. Well, Joe wrote us last week and sent some photos made when the obelisk was dedicated; he also sent a check to be used if we have further expense regarding the obelisk. He pointed out, and we are aware that he set up a trust fund to take care of the obelisk, but we aren't sure how much the trust pays the caretakers at this point. Mr. Duffield sent us the name and

address of the couple who cares for the monument, but we haven't written them yet to learn the state of the trust. While the obelisk is not completely our concern, we intend to continue to be interested in its maintenance. We will report further in the next issue.

While on the subject of memorials, Mr. Duffield wrote of an occasion held on March 31st, when a formal presentation of a commemorative plaque was to be made on behalf of the 392nd Bomb Group at the Plowshare Inn at Beeston. That event was organized by Mrs. Pauline V. Neale and other friends of the 392nd. Mrs. Neale arranged to have Mr. Hedley, original proprietor of the Inn, attend. Perhaps some members remember him. We hope you will visit the Plowshare Inn when you return to Wendling. And, speaking of returning to Wendling, we refer you again to the December issue of the *Journal* and the article "The English Connection" by Mr. Tony North. We add the address of Mr. Denis Duffield: Jubilee Cottage, Rushmeadow Road, Scarning, NR192NW Derham, Norfolk, England. Phone Derham 67440. Take Mr. North's advice and contact some of them before your visit. You will be making a mistake otherwise.

We were able to attend the area reunion at Dallas on January 21. It was well

handled and a pleasure to attend. I'm sure it will be reported elsewhere. The next weekend, Jan. 28, we here in Southern California had our area reunion in Tustin. Nineteen 392nd people attended. We will write a short report on that in another article. Just to be sure I didn't get too at ease between the two affairs—just a week apart—I was sent on a three-day flight to Tokyo. Talk about changing scenes!

Since you have received the March issue of the *Journal* with the program for our reunion and convention at Palm Springs, we hope a great many of you plan to meet us there. Please make reservations with Evelyn Cohen. To show up as a walk-on would be uncomfortable for you, us, Evelyn, and the hotel. We have several important subjects to discuss at our mini-reunion. Please refer to our report in the December issue of the *Journal* and our remarks on our election of officers. In addition to that, we need your thoughts and expressions as to whether the 392nd Bomb Group should have a tree and marker at the Air Force Museum at Dayton, Ohio. I'm sure you have noted that other of our Groups have already, or will be dedicating markers and trees there.

We add some tales given us by Myron Keilman; he says we have had it if we don't publish them. Remember, I need you at Palm Springs!

## Unlikely Tales

by Myron Keilman (392nd)

Charlie Neundorf lead one of the 392nd Squadrons on the Arnheim low level supply mission in support of General Montgomery's attempted "break through". One of the planes, flown by a Lt. Sewell, was lost. About a week after the mission, Charlie was on his way to the mess hall on his bike and passed a fellow walking along with a big white bandage on his head. He glanced at him and rode on, but then realized that the fellow looked like Lt. Sewell. He did a quick 180 and met the man; sure enough it was Lt. Sewell. What had happened was that Lt. Sewell had flown his plane too high in the formation and it was hit by ground fire and damaged, so that it was necessary to climb to a thousand feet, bail the crew out, and then crash land the plane. While crash landing, his subconscious told him he had to quickly run away from the plane to prevent his capture by the Germans; this he did. While running madly, he felt something flapping against the side of his face. He reached up to find out what it was and found it was his scalp hanging loose and flapping in the breeze. Luckily, he was taken by a Belgian family to a hospital, where the scalp was sewn back on his head. He was

then returned to the Allied army, which returned him to the 392nd Bomb Group.

Then, there is another "Unlucky Harry White" story. It seems Harry flew another mission where he was shot up so badly he couldn't drop his bombs. He managed to get the plane and bombs back to the 392nd at Wendling. He landed on the short runway, ran off the end, but managed to keep the plane moving so as not to get stuck, and taxied back to the parking area. He was promptly "chewed out" by an anonymous Squadron CO. Harry says that, to this day, he doesn't know why.

Ed Holmes is supposed to have been ready to fly his last mission when his navigator got sick and couldn't go. One of his gunners, who had washed out of navigators' school, was promptly designated as Navigator. After take-off, the "Gunnigator" gave Ed a heading to catch the rest of the 392nd, but instead they caught up with a B-17 formation. Ed tried to join that formation, but after a while he had to give up because the B-17s were flying too slowly. By that time, Ed's plane and crew were well into enemy territory, so Ed aborted the mission, dropped his bombs in the Channel, and returned to Wendling to claim credit for their *last mission*????

He relays a tale about Milt Henderson's stay in a PW camp. It seems that they had a prison-built radio that was installed

in the walls of their barracks. The antenna was their clothes line, and the outfit was never discovered by the Germans, despite all their spying. Also, they published a news bulletin, in spite of the Germans. It had a comic character named Klim (milk spelled backwards) Kregge. In the winter of 1945, Adolph Hitler sent the order to the PW camp commanders to shoot all the prisoners. This presented the PW camp commanders with two problems: a place to carry out the dastardly deed, and a shortage of manpower to carry out the orders. They reasoned that the prisoners could possibly revolt and overpower their guards, then turn the guns on the Germans. As a result, the German camp commandants delayed until the Allies overran the PW camp, thus the lives of the prisoners were spared.

It was a great war, eh Myron?

## DUES 1984

For those of you who have not yet paid your dues for 1984, this will be the last issue of the *Journal* you will receive. Remember, if there are problems, contact me.

Evelyn Cohen

# The 448th Speaks

by Leroy J. Engdahl (448th)

By the time this article is read, many ambassadors of the 448th will have participated in the dedication ceremonies of two granite memorials back in England — one at our old airbase at Seething and the other at the village churchyard in Seething.

I am sorry that everyone who served with the 448th during the war could not attend this occasion, the celebration of the 40th anniversary of "D" Day, and to pay honor to the 350 men from our Group who died while fighting for freedom.

I don't know how many of you ever saw or read the inspiring message that was passed out to every allied soldier, sailor and airman participating in the June 6th, 1944 "D" Day invasion, but I found my copy in my scrapbook.

Forty years have gone by and to me its hard to believe, but when I see others our age and then see these young people who are now the age we were when we were serving our country, I realize it must be so. I hope you will join me and our living buddies everywhere and give thanks to

God for the freedoms we fought for and have preserved, and give a little prayer for our buddies who gave their lives for this freedom we enjoy.

As of this writing we have had 118 contributors to our memorials, out of 373 members. I'm sure many have just forgotten or put it off, but it still isn't too late.

Several people have suggested we of the 448th consider other memorials, perhaps in the states. Ideas thus far have been: 1) To establish a memorial for the 448th at the Barksdale AFB in Shreveport, La, which is now the headquarters of the 8th Air Force. A 10 acre site has been set aside for a museum and for individual group or unit memorials. 2) To join with hundreds of other units and establish a memorial at the Air Force Museum at Dayton, Ohio and thirdly to establish an endowment for the 448th Group at the Memorial Library at Norwich. Three Groups have already done this and the interest from these endowments will assure preservation and continuity of the Memorial Library after we are all gone. These endowments could be in honor of men from our group who were killed while fighting for freedom.

Please give these and other ideas your

sincere thought and we will discuss this at our Palm Springs mini-reunion Oct. 4-7th. All contributions are tax deductible and your cancelled check is your receipt. Make contributions to 448th Bomb Group, 2nd Air Division and mark your check "For 448th" Memorial. We have a special bank account in Beaumont, Texas.

We need help in expanding our membership. We haven't done too badly, but I know we can do much better. Several of you have sent me names of former crew members who were not paid members and some have asked for a quantity of 2nd Air Division membership application forms. All of these are good ideas. If you need application forms, please let me know. Evelyn Cohen keeps me supplied. Please don't write Evelyn, she has so many other things to do, believe me. Sending a past issue of the 2nd A.D. *Journal* often is helpful, along with your personal letter and application form. Let's all work to enlarge our membership.

Also I need your stories of any unusual events you experienced during WWII. By reading each groups stories, I'm sure many of you could provide me with interesting stories we would all like to read.

# Metfield Musings

by Carl Alexanderson (491st)

It's that time again, Ringmasters — column writing time! Sometimes it's easy — lots of feedback and info — other timers sparse. Need some communication from you guys. Even if only to say hello.

Have had only two notes inquiring about membership — John D. Leppert Jr., Reading, Mass., who was with our Group all the way from Tuscon to Washington State — and Bob Rosendahl, Milwaukee, Wis., who joined us at North Pickenham in Nov. '44.

This morning's mail brought a letter from Donald Prytulak, Virginia Beach, Va. Don was an original 492nd BG Pilot, and recalls when we took over North Pick in August of '44. He goes on to say, a distant relative of his — a Capt. Keck — was in our outfit. Anyone recall him? Sometimes I entertain this mad idea, that we should make anyone who served with the 492nd BG an honorary member of the 491st — and maybe vice versa! The fate of both Groups was so cosely meshed.

I received a letter from Colin Sleath, Deputy Divisional Librarian of the Norwich Central Library. He thanks us on behalf of the people of Norfolk for our donation toward the purchase of books for the Library, all of which are in memory of our fallen comrades.

Thirteen titles have been purchased so far. You may recall, the original goal of \$750.00 for the Group Memorial fund was exceeded, and these are the monies being used for this purpose. I believe the over-subscription amounted to \$250.00.

Last January I was in receipt of a letter from Doctor Jean Pierre Ducellier posted from Doullens, France. Doullens, it seems, was our third or fourth mission, Airfield, I believe! He is writing, "The Air History over Picardie, North of France, 1942-1943". Anyone remember that song, "The Roses are Blooming in Picardie? No? Well, anyhow, the Doctor says he has researched the "Public Record Office" in Kew Gardens, London, but the records are incomplete. He is very specific in listing the information he needs. I shall do what I can for him. If any of you would care to help, I can send a copy of his particular needs.

From the, "It's a Small World" department. Ever since January 1945, when I last saw him at the Miami Beach Reclassification Center, I have periodically tried to locate my Navigator, Leon Baumer, then of Kendall, New York. Well, it seems (this

really is one for Ripley), my daughter-in-law who hails from Rochester, has an aunt who was a high school classmate of Leon's, and through her I finally made contact with my former crew member. I think even Sherlock Holmes would be envious of that.

Tom Rodgers still remains my best correspondent! Can't keep up with that boy — must have been vaccinated with a phonograph needle. Just kidding, Tom!

Back in the second paragraph of this column, I mentioned a note from Bob Rosendahl seeking membership. Five minutes ago my granddaughter walked in with today's mail, and in it is a letter from Frank Lewis of Dublin, Ga. (that darn kid said it was from Dublin, Ireland — had me all excited). Among other things, Frank asks, "Do you have Bob Rosendahl's address? Truth is, indeed, stranger than fiction!

## HELP

## ROLL OF HONOR

## HELP

While preparing for the Individual Group Rolls of Honor we discovered 10 names incorrectly identified as to Group. Some of the serial numbers also look wrong. Please look over these names, and if you recognize any, word from you would be appreciated, so these men can be listed with the Groups with which they served.

F/O Bernard J. Banas, T65103, 48th BG  
T/Sgt. Stephen J. Bolger, 33596911, 53rd BG  
F/O Carl M. Carlson, T 1686, 48th BG  
T/Sgt. Olaf A. Coburn, 31012933, 53rd BG  
T/Sgt. James B. Dick, Jr., 19181027, 53rd BG  
F/O Morgan T. Goodpasture, T 61188, 48th BG  
F/O Saverio J. Juliano, T 134418, 48th BG  
F/O Aram G. Kahdehjian, T-132946, 48th BG  
T/Sgt. Louis N. Kase, 3059883, 89th BG  
T/Sgt. Thomas L. Shaver, 4120849, 89th BG

Your assistance will be much appreciated.

JORDAN R. UTTAL

# "The Comanche" The Double American — The Chief

by Stuart K. Barr (448th)

My wife Gladys and I had just arrived home from the Nashville 2nd AD reunion when the phone rang with the most distressful news, Larry Reep, our Radio Operator during the war, informed me of the death of my close friend and wartime leader, Meyers Wahnee. I was quite depressed by the bad news. I surely felt as though I had lost a family member.

It was August of 1943 when I received my wings and appointment as Flight Officer (AUS). I had also been shipped to Boise, Idaho for assignment to a combat unit for training. Here at Boise is where I first met Meyers Wahnee, The Chief, as he was called by all his fellow officers.

Orders had been issued assigning myself and nine others to a crew assigned to the 714th Bomb Sqdn, 448th Bomb Group, under a 1st Lt. Meyers Wahnee, as Pilot and Air Crew Commander.

I heard my pilot was looking for me and that he was last seen at the Officers Club playing poker. Since I had been told that he looked like a "Jap", I looked for an oriental when I got there. I saw no orientals, but I did spot this dark skinned, stocky fellow, sitting at a card table with a hand full of cards held just below his chin, with his arm stretched out onto the table with his ante. I figured this must be the man looking for me. I approached him, introduced myself and asked if he was looking for me. 'Yes', was the reply, so I waited for him to finish his hand.



Meyers Wahnee

He came to his feet, and looking me straight in the eyes extended his hand to shake, and said, "I am Meyers Wahnee. You and I are going to see a lot of each other from now on." he continued, "I'm an Injun, a Comanche from Anadarko, Okla." I replied, "Well, I don't know what in the hell I am: Scotch, Swiss, and Airdale, I think, from Pennsylvania. Plain people

stock, raised in Florida."

We had dinner that night at the officers mess and continued our introduction. He told me that he had been an instructor in B-26s at Tampa, Fla. Then had transitioned into the B-24. It didn't take me long to appreciate this guy's accomplishments in the USAC and I found him to be a man with a unique sense of pride, devotion and integrity.

We had finally assembled the crew and the introductions had gone the gambit, so to speak, and it had been announced that we, as a crew, would be training with the rest of the 448th BG at Sioux City, Iowa. The Chief closed our initial assembly with a short, but clear, statement. He said, "You are all good people, it seems, and I am pleased to be your pilot. You will all know your jobs and assignments when we are through training at Sioux City or you will not be with us."

It was the Chief's job to train me, and to that end, so far as I'm concerned, he did a good job. After 20 hours in the B-24, he had checked me out, to the satisfaction of the Group Operations Officer, as a qualified Pilot. I had never had a more exacting instructor in all my life. And too, I appreciated his honest interest in me and in my proficiency as his alternate, should the situation ever demand.

Sioux City, Iowa was an intense experience. We trained day and night, until it was time to head for our destination to do combat for our country. From the time we met, the Chief and I were always together. We had no time off for pleasurable things, except for a leave of absence prior to embarkation. Consequently our interests, now that we were a trained crew, were on updating assignments and familiarizing ourselves with our newly assigned B-24.

At the POE in West Palm Beach, Fla., orders were cut appointing myself as the crew; Finance Officer, Engineering Officer, Medical Records Officer, and Officer in charge of Military Property and Mosquito Control. (I don't know what the others had to do). On Nov. 5, 1944, our beautiful bird, loaded 'til her tires looked flat, took on the crew and four others for the trans-Atlantic flight that took us over the southern route to the UK. Then to East Anglia to join the 448th BG and the 2nd AD.

The Chief and I were equally very proud of our crew after we had tasted the salt of combat in the skies over Europe. However, after several missions, our beautiful bird was rapidly becoming war weary. The Chief and I sat side by side in training, the long flight from the States, and now through 150 hours of combat. We also spent our free time, between missions, together. We had become as close as brothers.

On the 20th of March, 1944, the crew was on 'stand-by', in the event there happened to be an abort by one of the other planes scheduled for the day's mission. As destiny would have it, the Chief and his crew were roused as the other aircraft were starting their engines. I recall, it was very cold and damp in the early morning light, and we had to hustle to get our personal gear together and head for the plane.

All the crew was assembled at the plane with the exception of the navigator, Dick Hager. The Chief decided to do this mission without the navigator and told us to take our positions for take-off. While taxiing to the end of the runway, a jeep with a navigator pulled along side with the man to fill the crew vacancy. With twelve 500 lb. General Purpose bombs in the bomb-bays, the war weary 'Comanche' took to the blue to catch up to the rest of the Group and fill the empty slot in the formation.

We made our rendezvous with the Group midway across the channel and took our position in the formation. At 23,000 feet, the ground was clearly visible and the weather unusually clear. However, far ahead, the weather looked less inviting. The morning sun felt good coming into the cockpit until it was blocked by the oncoming clouds. The Group Leader had turned his formation onto the I.P. when an abort of the mission was called. So on this day, Frankfurt, Germany was spared 84 tons of high explosives.



Meyers Wahnee and Stuart K. Barr

The return to our Base in East Anglia was interrupted by anti-aircraft fire over northern France. A quartet of 155mm rounds exploded near the Comanche, severely crippling her ability to stay aloft. We could feel the compression of the shells on our bodies, and the plane seemed to ring from the blasts.

(continued on next page)

To recover control of the plane, the bombs and other ordinance was released, the crew ordered to "Bail Out", leaving the Chief and myself alone in the dying Comanche. A purple screen of 100/135 grade fuel clouded the inside of the plane, and streamed down the instrument panel, windshield and the walls of the cockpit.

The following few moments seemed like an eternity to me. The Chief finally decided the plane was out of our control, and we would have to abandon our gallant Comanche, with the chalk cliffs of the U.K. on the distant horizon. The Chief waved me to bail out. At my exit position on the catwalk in the bomb bay, I looked back into the cockpit to see that the Chief

was following me. He was still in his seat, battling to control the plane. Was he injured? I asked myself, and headed back into the cockpit to assist. At this moment I saw him release his safety belt and turn toward his exit. I could see in his face, he was unhappy to leave the Comanche, now a derelict mass of machinery, jumping around the sky over northern France, headed for its rendezvous with the earth and inevitable destruction.

This was the last I was to see of the Chief until 1951. He was a POW for the next 14 months until the invading forces of the American and British recaptured his prison camp. He was then reassigned to the U.S. Our trails didn't cross again

until 1951, in Roswell, New Mexico. I was overjoyed to see the Chief again. Even though our get together was short lived, he took me to his home in Mountainview, Okla., where I met his wonderful wife Maggie, his now growing family, and a son named for me, Stuart Barr Wahnee. He took me to an Indian Pow-Wow while we were there and explained all the Indian traditions taking place.

The Chief was a very real person in my life, and he, among all the others I've met, had a greater philosophical influence on my continued existence than anyone since I had left my parents.

I often think of him, and I will always be proud to have known him and to have gained his respect.

## Cloak and Dagger

by Julius M. Klinkbeil (389th)

I've noticed that the last two issues of the *Journal* have had articles pertaining to some of the covert operations during WWII they bring back many memories.

After finishing my missions with the 389th, I was assigned to the 466th as Group Training Officer and Squadron Navigator. This group had recently arrived in England and needed help. After working with them for about six months, I was asked to report to London for a briefing at the Cumberland Hotel.

Arriving at the Cumberland, I met three former 389th people. After a night on the town, we went to the meeting and were asked to fly to Sweden. After a night on the town, we went to the meeting and were asked to fly to Sweden. On hearing all the details, we agreed, and formed as a crew.

Our next step was to go down to Brooks Brothers on Regent Street and pick up three complete outfits of civilian clothes. We then went to the American Embassy and picked up passports which showed we were employees of American Airlines. We were then flown to Langford Lodge in Ireland to pick up an old, stripped down B-24, and then it was off to Dundee, Scotland. Leuchese, a British Airforce Base, was to be our new home.

We were assigned quarters in the British Officers Club, and then the fun began. Two men to a room, our own Batwomen, tea in the morning at wake up time, clothes cleaned and pressed, shoes shined, no lines at the mess hall, and plenty of booze. We thought we were in heaven.

There were five crews originally assigned to do these missions. Two crews were from the Air Transport Command, one from the 93rd, and the other two were from the 389th. Since our mission was top secret, we also had a C.I.C. man assigned to us.

None of the combat navigators had ever

used the 'Gee Box' and we really were concerned about our first flight to Stockholm. We could only fly at night and only when the cloud cover was 10/10ths up to 10,000 feet.

Our first trip was on the night of 'D' Day. We took off about 10:00 p.m., heading for the coast of Norway. Using the 'Gee Box', we had to cross the coast between two fiords. Otherwise, the German flack guns would pick us up. Once we crossed the coast, we hugged the clouds and were guided by a radio beacon on the Swedish-Norwegian border.

We then flew a 15 mile wide corridor into Bromma Airport in Stockholm. On our first trip, Burndt Balchen rode in the jump seat between the pilot and co-pilot. We also had a load of machine tools, and a lady from Syracuse N.Y., who was returning to our Embassy in Stockholm. We landed, passed through Swedish customs, and were on our way to a posh Swedish Hotel.

During the flight over, we listened to the invasion on the German radio and had the pleasure of being picked up constantly by German fighters. We would duck in the clouds and they would break off.

Americans were a novelty in Stockholm, and we attracted a considerable amount of attention in the hotel and in the restaurant. I'm not sure which attracted the more newspaper space, Burndt Balchen and his arrival, or the invasion. Burndt was King in Sweden and Norway.

Since all flights depended on the weather, we had a standard routine. Get up in the morning, have breakfast, go over to BOAC, pick up \$28.00 expense money, our ration coupons (needed for meals), and be back to the British Embassy at 6 P.M. for a weather briefing. At that time we pretty much knew whether we would fly that night or not. If not, it was a "night on the town." Occasionally, someone would not show up for the briefing—a bike would break down, a train would be missed, or some other distraction. Then the fun would

begin, because we would scurry all over in an attempt to find our last crew man. It always worked out, but it did lead to a great deal of excitement.

Sweden, for us, was a paradise. Good food, very clean, and well-stocked stores. We were constantly followed and always were offered drinks in the restaurants by complete strangers. Some of the people did accept an offer to have dinner at a country estate and ended up in Norway as German prisoners.

Our return flights were always exciting. We would bring back Norwegian freedom fighters, escapees and internees. We would crowd 60 to 70 people in the back of the B-24, give them enough G.I. blankets so they wouldn't freeze, and take off. We were always airborne when we hit the hump on the runway at Bromma.

Since the shops in Stockholm were well-stocked, we managed to spend a small fortune buying the things we could not purchase in England. We had to clear both Swedish and British customs, and while the Swedes liked cigarettes, the British were a bit more particular. We would have to alert British customs about an hour before our arrival, so we made sure we were parked at the flight line before we called them.

I remember bringing back 3 cases of cognac, which helped enliven the 100 mission party at the 466th. Glenn Miller was the star attraction and he loved that cognac.

Because of weather problems we would either be in Sweden for a period of 3 to 6 weeks or in Scotland the same length of time. Stockholm provided enough excitement. Card games were a must. There were eight of us who played a little poker each evening. While I usually won in the evening, the ground crew managed to get it back the next day.

Late in 1945, a B.O.Q. was opened in Stockholm, and after 27 of those flights I decided to go back to the peace and quiet of the 466th.

# PLAQUES

As of this date (4/15/84), 66% of the plaques shown in the March *Journal* are "spoken for". I'm a bit behind in production because of a 10 day vacation that Ceil and I took in the Caribbean. I was welcomed back into the "real world" by 26 letters from my mail box.

Again, I have ordered more material to continue making the plaques as long as there is a demand. Unfortunately, I was only able to get half as many .50 cal. shells as I was previously able to buy. Also, the reject rate is now about 20%. I suppose it couldn't last forever, but all were made in 1943-1944 at the Frankford Armory in Kentucky, and the well may finally be running dry.

Must admit that even I was a bit confused after reading the text in the March issue. Not entirely my fault, though, since the typesetter dropped some "key" words and a sentence or two. Bill Robertie missed it on the proofreading and hopefully, we will all get it right this time.

Basically, the plaques are made with either the large logo of the 8th A.F. or the .50 cal. shells. Walnut, sized 6½" by 10, 10½ or 11 inches long, depending on the need (whether ribbons are used or not).

Repeating the photographs, #1 is \$39.00 whether the B-24 OR wings are used. #2, where the airplane AND small 8th A.F. cloisonne is used, is \$44.00, #3 is also \$44.00. #4 costs \$50.00. #5 and #6 are made with Service Ribbons and the costs VARY with the number of ribbons and devices (O.L.C., Battle Stars) used. Ribbons with brass mounts cost \$1.75 each. The devices are 75¢ each. EXAMPLE: 6 ribbons 3 O.L.C. and 2 battle stars cost you \$14.25. #5 photo costs then are: \$39.00 (basic plaque), plus \$14.25, comes to \$53.25. #6 photo basically costs \$6.00 more because of the large logo (cost: \$45.00 plus ribbon and device costs). Again, #6 as shown with the large logo, 5 ribbons 1 battlestar on the E.T.O. ribbon, would cost: \$45.00 plus \$9.50 for a total of \$54.50. Please do not forget the postage costs: \$2.00 Chicago-East, using an arc with Baltimore as the shipping point, and \$3.00 West of the Windy City.

Will need to know:

- NAME, as you would like it engraved
- RANK, if desired
- DUTY, pilot, gunner, aircraft mechanic, armorer, etc.
- BOMB GROUP & SQDN
- LOCATION
- MISSIONS, decorations, aircraft name or number, etc.
- ANYTHING ELSE you may consider important.



Have mailed another check to Dean Moyer, treasurer of the Association, for \$125.00 bringing the total now to \$1,152.00 since starting this plaque making operation. Many thanks for your participation and support. Mail your request (and check) to:

Rick Rokicki  
P.O. Box 8767  
B.W.I. Airport, MD 21240

## Folded Wings

### Headquarters

Burton R. Cohn

### 4th FG

Clarence P. Trump

### 44th BG

Samuel I. Berkowitz

Horace H. Grissom

Robert Jason

### 93rd BG

Arthur L. DePasquale

Edward J. McGuire, Jr.

Max H. Smelser

### 389th BG

William R. Sively

James F. Tolleson

### 392nd BG

Milton L. Whitehill

### 445th BG

William J. Luce

### 446th BG

T. G. Brown

### 448th BG

Franklin Holtmeier

Herbert M. Johnson

Robert G. Scott

John R. Spiers III

### 458th BG

Richard K. Brush

Richard C. Julian

### 453rd BG

John E. Murphy

Ulma Perry

### 466th BG

W. Robert Flannery

Albert J. Mauzy

### 467th BG

Adam Soccio

Lawrence H. Uebele

Clair C. Worch

### 489th BG

Rubin Kaplan

Irving Schildkneet

### 491st BG

Donald W. Morrow

### 492nd BG

Donald L. Paulson

# First WAAC Training Center Opens at Des Moines, Iowa

by Eleanor Storms (Hdq.)

According to the book written by Mattie E. Treadwell, *U.S. Army World War II—The Women's Army Corps*, published by the Department of the Army, 1954, frantic and swift action took place in Washington, DC, after President Roosevelt signed the new WAAC bill legislating the formation of a Women's Army Auxiliary Corps. On May 16, 1942, Mrs. Oveta Culp Hobby was inducted into active service as a Lt. Colonel and as the first Director of the Corps. The press and other writers had long been keeping track of the passage of this new law and they immediately interviewed Colonel Hobby. She made a good impression on the press and the country with her calm, sensible answers to some very silly questions about the role of the women. She remarked at one point in an interview that "the WAACs would neither be an Amazon rushing to battle nor a butterfly fluttering about." Slander and prejudiced remarks about women joining the Women's Corps was one of the worst obstacles affecting the recruiting program. The Army Public Relations was quick to try and change the public image of the "giddy and feather-brained—engaged in powder puff wars" and women "with no interest other than cosmetics, clothes and dates" and then "the sainted wife and mother until she left the kitchen." It was a nagging problem that at several points hindered recruiting efforts. Months before, in Washington, DC, much effort had gone into the pre-planning stages of the new WAAC Corps. The plans called for recruiting centers to be set up and for a basic training center for the incoming WAACs. Quotas for personnel had already been requested by United States military bases and posts . . . overseas personnel was still in the planning stages. Colonel Faith, a very tall, pencil-thin ex-Cavalry officer, was sent from Washington to see if the closed Cavalry Post at Ft. Des Moines, Iowa could be made suitable for a women's training center. The administrative buildings were intact. Army tanks and machinery had replaced the valiant men and their horses, and the empty stables were suitable for housing after renovation. It was agreed to go ahead with the necessary work. Cadres of men were immediately sought to train the women and to instruct the military courses to be given. Men and women had to learn to work together and the training center was to be the start. It opened on July 20, 1942, with much fanfare and publicity with the acceptance of the first officer candidates, and a stirring speech by Director Oveta Hobby . . . "History will record this date with destiny, and a free future will credit your contribution. You have a debt to democracy, a date with destiny." Recruiting applications poured in. The women reported in to Ft. Des Moines from

all parts of the country, mainly by train, the common mode of transportation in 1942. They came—teachers, administrators, supervisors, telephone operators, office workers, and other career areas. Irene Noble, Rena Owen, Helen Hansen Sheppard and Bonnie Paulhamus—(all longtime members of 2nd Air Division Association) received their basic training at Ft. Des Moines, Iowa. Irene wrote to me saying that she was on the staff at Purdue University in 1942 and recalled watching with great interest when Colonel Hobby and the Women's Dean at Purdue set up the WAAC program. "On paper, it looked very exciting—those who were to be accepted were to be specialists and administrative. I was granted leave of absence July, 1942, packed up and headed for Des Moines, Iowa. A few days later I was offered OCS or overseas and I opted for the latter. We were moved into the huge, rebuilt stables complete with pigeons, which added to our "gi-ing" chores to keep the blankets on bunks clean and all else



Unidentified basic trainee (left) and Cleo McClure (right) take a break from their labors.

spic and span. We didn't have complete uniforms as yet, so we marched in civvies and high heeled shoes. I had to write home for extra clothing and shoes. Drills in high heels ruined many a foot. Processing and shots were endless. Everywhere we went, we marched. Class subjects included military organization, customs, Articles of War, company administration, other military subjects, and training films. Messhall marches included hundreds lining up to eat—then a test might be given. At night, after chow-time, study time for next day's classes was available except when the irons

brought from home blew out the overloaded fuse, leaving the barracks in total darkness. Keeping one's uniform (what there was of it) neat and clean for inspections was a must, but only a few WAACs could get into the laundry room for lack of tubs. In the mornings, it was a race to get to the showers and dressed in time for reveille. Women despised getting giggered. Irene recalls, "Colonel Faith's favorite sport was catching unaware WAACs who had hair touching their collars. The victims were taken to the post barber shop for GI haircuts. Early, August 1942, a deep snow fell on the post." Women became ill for lack of proper clothing. Higher headquarters issued orders to obtain men's GI long overcoats for the WAACs to wear. Irene recalls, "I was particularly fetching in my blue scarf on my head and long overcoat dragging in the snow and covering my sandals."

September, 1942, found Rena Owen and her group arriving from Texas for training at Ft. Des Moines. The post had grown and a Transportation and Bakers and Cook School had been added. Rena says the center was now called "Boomtown". She graduated as 1st Cook and was transferred to Daytona Beach, Florida, January, 1943, brought in 88 West Coast WAACs, Bonnie Paulhamus and I among them. On arrival, the winter was bitter cold. We were better clothed. Added to the GI overcoat were buckled men's overboots, wool gloves, and an olive green men's helmet liner. April 1943, Helen Hansen Sheppard arrived and after basic training was sent to an Administrative School.

Basic training at Des Moines was a once in a lifetime event. Who could forget the women who came from all corners of America, each bringing with her her own dialect and customs, and being molded into a viable women's military unit in such a short time. Comraderie and infectious humor prevailed then, as the picture shows, with Cleo McClure and another unidentified WAAC taking time off from their assigned duties, and it still remains among the members of the 2nd Air Division Association.

## Attention Golfers

The Fifth Annual 2ADA Golf Tournament will be held October 4, 1984 in Palm Springs (course yet to be determined). Starting times will begin at 900 hours. We must finish by 1500 hours to get everyone back to the hotel for the mini-reunions. Anyone interested advise the undersigned as soon as possible, including your 1984 handicap or average score. I will send all your names to Col. Harry L. Orthman in Mission Viejo, Calif. as he is going to be the Chairman of the Golf Committee. If you have not heard from him already, he will be advising you shortly about costs, foresomes, golf course, etc.

Pete Henry (44 BG)  
164 B Portland Lane  
Jamesburg, N.J. 08831

# To Feather or Not to Feather

by James L. Whittle, Jr. (44th)

I was the co-pilot of a crew that was assigned to the 506th Bomb Sqd. in early November 1944. About halfway through our tour I was checked out as an Aircraft Commander (1st pilot) and flew the remaining missions with either my own crew or my original crew. We flew either 25 or 28 missions (depending on which crew we were talking about) with that squadron through the end of the war in Europe. After our last combat mission and before the 44th returned to the U.S., we were required to make several training flights to fulfill the ATC requirements for an over water flight.

On one such flight, on which I went along as the co-pilot with my original crew, we spent 4 or 5 hours accomplishing some of those requirements and were returning to Shipdham from a flight to south England when it was decided that practicing some emergency procedures would fulfill part of those requirements. One of the drills was to practice feathering procedure to test the pilot's reaction to engine failure and the subsequent change in flying characteristics, etc. We were probably at 4000 or 5000 feet, with lots of airspeed since we were descending to our base at Shipdham, so that the loss of one engine would create no danger at all. One outboard engine was feathered with nothing more than a slight drop in airspeed. As soon as that simulated emergency was under control, the opposite outboard engine was feathered.

That simulated emergency too was handled with no difficulty because of the experience of the pilot and the higher than normal airspeed due to our descent. From that point on, things get a little vague, but I believe that a pretense was made of feathering one of the two remaining engines and in fact, I think that the feathering button was momentarily depressed but without any intent of actually feathering it.

Everything happened very quickly and unexpectedly. When the feathering button was pulled out, which should have either stopped the feathering and returned it to normal, or if it had actually feathered, it should have immediately unfeathered. Neither of those things happened, which caused us to reach for an outboard button to unfeather them. Neither of those worked either (Murphy's Law). After a few futile attempts to unfeather them, our attention turned to finding the nearest airfield.

From the co-pilot's seat, I remember seeing an airfield off our right wing. I took over the controls since I was in the best position to see the field. We were rapidly losing both airspeed and altitude, and in a matter of minutes we would be on the ground—airfield or not. The events happened so fast that there was no time to alert the three airmen in the rear of the aircraft, nor did we even have time to broadcast a "MAYDAY".

Fortunately our flight engineer, radio

operator and one gunner who were in the back, realized there was an emergency when they saw the feathered props and took up the appropriate positions for a crash landing. We now had emergency military power on the one remaining engine (#3) and though I'm certain we exceeded the max boost limit, it was a constant fight to keep from stalling.

I had managed to get lined up with the runway, and since the field had been off the right wing, it meant making two turns into the one good engine. Although we were lined up with the runway, it was a question whether we would make it before our altitude and airspeed ran out.

One of the last things I remember was wondering whether we would be able to top the big trees which loomed between us and the overrun. The airspeed was just slightly above stalling speed and my last thought was that if I hauled back on the yoke at the very last moment in hopes of zooming over the tree tops, would I be able to get the nose back down quickly enough to keep from stalling. None of us remember what happened in those last few moments, but we obviously had not gotten over the trees because my very next recollection was that we were on the ground.

Through a haze I can remember seeing our navigator walking—or trying to walk—and complaining about his back. He had been standing between the pilot's seats and things happened so fast that he was still in that position when we impacted and was propelled through the bullet proof glass that surrounded the cockpit.



My next hazy recollection was opening my eyes in a hospital bed and feeling as though every bone in my body was broken. Fortunately the only broken things were a rib and a tooth. With considerable effort, I turned my head enough to see that the patient next to me was our navigator who had broken his back and was encased in plaster of paris from his neck to his hips and would remain in that cast through his ocean voyage back to the States. The 1st Pilot sustained the most severe injuries, which included the shattering of most of the bones in his face, and head injuries which were life threatening at that time. Injuries to the three airmen in the rear of the plane were limited to cuts and bruises

and did not require hospitalization.

It seems hardly possible that any of us survived, especially since the trees had sheered off our outer wings between #1 and #2 engines on the one side and between #3 and #4 on the other. This "short wing" modification has a tendency to be very unstable. Since the B-24 had a "wet wing", the ruptured fuel cells allowed 115/145 fuel to drop precariously onto the white-hot #3 supercharger impeller from the moment of impact with the trees until the arrival of the crash crew, who had no warning of our impending crash. To further complicate matters, the crushed cockpit necessitated delay while the 1st Pilot and myself were extricated from the aircraft.

To this day, no one has been able to explain why none of the props would unfeather although probably somewhere there is an accident report on file which made an attempt at it. More important, though, at this time, is that none of us has ever been able to determine just which field we crashed on. All we know is that it was near, but not at Shipdham. Neither our medical records, nor the official Air Force photos of the crash (enclosed), gives any clue to the name of that field. The accident occurred on the afternoon of May 11, 1945, and the plane was a new "M" model which we had been scheduled to return to the States. The tail marking was C and the aircraft number was 450698 with the letters "GJ" on the side of the fuselage. Surely someone amongst your readers can shed light on the location or name of the field where the crash took place. Those of us who survived would appreciate information to complete the story.

Although Don Edkins (1st Pilot), Ed Smith (navigator), and I, all recovered from our injuries to the extent that we were able to carry on a normal life, we all suffered various degrees of physical incapacity. Don Edkins, now retired in Boise, Idaho, spent most of his career with Sears, as store manager in various locations, and we have seen each other frequently over the years. Ed Smith, who passed away a few years ago from causes not the result of the accident, spent his career as an Engineer, living in Pennsylvania. Charles Jones, our flight engineer, who was one of the three airmen in the rear, is currently living on Maui, after spending most of his career as a heavy equipment operator in Utah. We have gotten together several times over the years. Although I've not had the opportunity to personally visit with our radio operator, Bill Heyburn, who was another of the crew in the rear of the aircraft, I've corresponded with him at his home in Louisville, Kentucky. Unfortunately, I have had no contact with Victor Czarnecki, who was the other airman involved. Except for a short period of about four years, I spent my entire career in the Air Force and retired in Sacramento in 1966 where I still reside.



# Down Over Berlin

by Earl L. Zimmerman (389th)

The first day of summer, June 21, 1944. Briefing was at 0230 hours and the string stretched all the way to Berlin. The 389th was assigned to "Purple Heart Corner," the last Group in an aerial armada of thirteen hundred planes.

Lt. E. H. Patterson's crew were assigned to plane #42-50579 and flew in the low squadron in the last element, truly tail-end Charlie. Just south of Berlin, the Kraut fighters, ME-210s and ME-410s, came down through the formation firing their cannon. Lt. Kissling's plane and Lt. Patterson's plane were hit during the first pass. Patterson had to drop back as his co-pilot, Lt. Toczko feathered #4.

The decision was made to drop their bombs over Berlin although they were being attacked by FW-190s and ME-109s, and took a beating. No. 4 caught fire, power to no. 2 was dropping off, and the oxygen bottle to the ball turret caught fire, trapping the gunner inside.

times, but he landed about fifty feet from his plane, which was burning. Sgt. Dodd landed a short distance away, but his chute never fully opened and he died. Sgt. Edgar was found dead in the ball turret.

In the rear of the plane, Sgt. Don Serradell, the right waist gunner, heard the bail-out bell as flames raced through the waist section. He noticed Sgt. Web Brown leave the plane but the tail turret gunner, Higgs, was not coming out of his turret. Higg's parachute was on fire and Serradell sprayed the area with a fire extinguisher but the chute could not be used so he pulled Higg's from the turret, strapped a spare chest chute to his harness and shoved him out of the camera hatch.

During all of this activity, Serradell discovered that he had been without oxygen, lost his gloves, and had been hit in the left leg by shrapnel. After leaving the plane, he had a free fall, and when he pulled his rip cord he was over an area which was burning, and bombs were still exploding. The heat from the fires caused severe oscillation and he landed on the roof of a house with such force that he

# Change of Address

When you move please send your change of address to:

Evelyn Cohen  
06-410 Delaire Ldg. Rd.  
Philadelphia, PA 19114

on the form below, as soon as possible. To send the change to anyone else (Bill Robertie or Group VP) simply delays the change appearing on our records. This could mean that the next issue of the *Journal* will go to your old address and could be lost in the great jaws of the Post Office.

## CHANGE OF ADDRESS

name
address
group

# Searching— Please Help

Dear Members of the  
445th Bombardment Group:

I am writing in the hopes of locating someone who might have information, or who might have known my father, Sgt. William L. Vance, Jr. (Nickname—"Chub").

My father was in the 445th Bomb Group, 701st Bomb Sqdn., stationed at Tibenham, England, from approximately Sept. 1st, 1944, until his death on Nov. 26, 1944. He was a tail gunner on a B-24 which was shot down on a mission to Misburg, Germany, on Nov. 26, 1944. The pilot of his B-24 was 1st Lt. John D. Barringer, Jr., of Nashville, Tenn.

"Chub" played the guitar and was an amateur boxer during high school and prior to entering the service in 1943.

He was killed when I was 16 months old. His mother raised me, but it was too painful for her to discuss my father, or give me any details. She saved a small amount of information and mementos for me, which I was to receive in the event of her death. She passed away January 4, 1984, and I am trying to piece together the events of his life.

If you have any information concerning my father, or if you remember him—even small details would be appreciated; I would be deeply grateful to hear from you.

Thank you for any information you might provide me, and I wish the very best to you and your family.

Judy Vance Garren  
Box 427, Lake Wildwood  
Macon, Georgia 31210



(L to R standing) — Lt. W. J. Toczko, co-pilot; Lt. E. H. Patterson, pilot; Lt. K. W. Verhagne, navigator; Lt. Doug Reid, bombardier.  
(Kneeling) — T/Sgt. H. Dodd, engineer; Sgt. Web Brown, gunner; S/Sgt. Serradell w/gunner; S/Sgt. Higgs, tail gunner; S/Sgt. Edgar, radio; S/Sgt. Holcomb, nose gunner.

The bombardier sighted the target, the BMW factory, opened the doors and salvoed the bombs. About this time every ack-ack gun in Berlin was sighted in on the lone B-24 and the plane shuddered after being hit in the left wing, which caught fire. Toczko helped the engineer, Sgt. Dodd, out of the upper turret as he was wounded in the face and head, snapped on his chest pack and pushed him out of the bomb bay. He jumped immediately after Dodd and after waiting to clear the plane, pulled the rip cord and discovered he was over an airfield, Johanisthal-now. Gunners on the field were firing small caliber guns and holed his parachute a few

broke through the tiles.

After jumping off the roof and being beaten by civilians until rescued by an officer, he was taken to the Luftwaffe Hospital where he was reunited with Toczko, Brown and Higgs.

Toczko finished the war in Stalag Luft III but never saw Lt. Patterson again. Any of you lads ever run into Patterson, Higgs or Web Brown? Toczko found Serradell a short while ago, and that's how we got his version.

I just sent another batch of photos to Bob Nicely who is putting together the 389th photo album. Have you sent your contribution?

# MEMORIES OF A MISSION — Kiel, Germany, 14 May 1943

by Lt. Col. R. L. Fisher (44th)

Late in the afternoon of 13 May 1943 at Station 115, Shipdham, England, the base of a B-24 unit, the 44th Heavy Bombardment Group, the weather was typical for an English spring day, clear but cool. I remember coming out of the officers mess after the evening meal and upon seeing the late spring sun still well above the western horizon, I borrowed one of the bicycles that had been conveniently left leaning against the mess, to make a trip to the Kings Head pub just off the west end of the runway in the little village of Shipdham.

Cycling down the lane bordered by a mixture of hedgerows, trees, and rock walls, I could see from a section that ran close to the perimeter taxi way connecting the dispersal parking sites of the bombers, the late afternoon activity about the aircraft. Ground crewmen were working on and about the aircraft; some planes had cowlings off engines on which work was being done; at other aircraft, refueling trucks were putting fuel in the "big birds"; at others, armament trucks were delivering the assigned loads to be put into the bombbays of the ready aircraft. And I thought, "Already with the sun still up today, tomorrow's mission begins." I felt personally involved with what I saw because before mess I had checked the squadron assignment board for crews for the next day's mission and knew that my crew was on it.

Some of the zest for a cycle off base and a pint at the nearest "local" was lost. After a quick one at the Kings Head, I cycled back to base to return the "borrowed" bike to the mess and to find the lounge almost deserted even though the evening's darkness had just settled in.

Word must have got around, so off I trundled to the nissen hut where I bunked with seven other crew officers — the officers of two crews having been assigned one open bayed hut as quarters. In the center of the hut there was a small coal burning heater with a stove pipe going up through the sloping ceiling. The hut was made of one layer of corrugated iron formed into a tunnel shape and set upon a concrete floor. The eight beds were set four on a side with the feet to the walls and the heads set out toward what could be thought of as the center aisle, which started at the door at each end of the hut and proceeded past the center spot of the coal stove. This was the natural point of congregation of the hut members on cold nights.

Along each side of the hut, there was a shelf and pole fixed so that we had a place for personal items and a place to hang clothes. Footlockers and denim clothing bags were placed under the beds. And that was home! When I got there, I found

it was dark, all the others having already turned in. I slipped in and got ready for bed in the dark, placing clothes and boots so that I could find them easily in the morning — whenever that would come. After settling down between GI wool blankets laid across the horsehair "biscuits" that passed for a mattress, I heard my pilot in the next bed whisper from only a distance of several feet, "There's one on for tomorrow, and we're up for it." I told him I knew and stretched out to sleep. I knew; I was the navigator on the crew; I had done five; this was to be number six, and like all other crewmen I lived with that ever present knowledge.

Long before light the next morning, 14 May, the enlisted man in charge of quarters opened the end door of the hut, gave the time and said that breakfast was in half an hour, and briefing an hour later. Someone put on the overhead bare electric light and we all began to grope for clothes and boots with no talking except for an occasional word or grunt. We straggled out of the hut into the chill night air to walk the country lane from the living site to the mess site in groups of ones, twos and threes. At the mess there was a short line of men at the cooking range waiting for the cook to finish a batch of whatever he was cooking; most times it was dehydrated eggs that usually came off the grill looking like pancakes. In fact, the first time I'd had dehydrated eggs, I thought they were pancakes, and completely spoiled a breakfast of something that had started out marginally edible by pouring a big serving of Karo syrup on it. On rare occasions we were given fresh eggs, but these were very rare, indeed.

As he did his job, the cook did not look at the men and rarely spoke, and then in a low mumble. And from all the times I ate early breakfasts before missions, I got the impression that he would like this whole line of drowsy, sleepy eyed men who were responsible for him being up and working this early, to go away and leave him alone. And, indeed, many did — permanently.

There was little talk at breakfast, each man seemingly occupied with his own thoughts, but in retrospect, we were probably all occupied with about the same pattern of thoughts — a blankness of feeling, unformed questions of what the day would hold, a turn off of everything except the present.

When the men finished breakfast, they went outside to where shuttles of GI trucks stopped to give them, and the enlisted men who had eaten in a nearby messhall, a ride to the technical site near the runways where the group briefing room was. By this time the total black of the night had been broken by a translucent grayness on

the eastern horizon, the start of the long dawn of the northern latitudes.

As the groups of men arrived at the briefing room by separate trucks, they went inside exchanging the half light of the dawn for the chill, and little better lighted, atmosphere of the briefing room, the officers taking the chairs near the front and the enlisted taking those toward the center and rear. By this time they were all more awake, and there was a level of conversation going on between all the men. They sat in the folding camp chairs and wore various combinations of uniforms and flying gear and caps or helmets as each felt inclined.

Enough of them smoked to cause a blue haze to form in the upper reaches of the dimly lit room. The only well lighted area of the room was the rostrum and the rear wall covered by the large briefing map of the European theater of operations — from the British Isles east to Russia and from the northern reaches of Norway to Italy. Before the flying crews had arrived, someone from group operations had placed the route of today's mission on the map with yarn and map tacks. The map was then screened off from all eyes by a pull curtain made from white sheeting. And that's what the crews viewed as we all waited for the briefing to begin — a white sheet covering our mission for today! And as usual, remarks and speculation, many of them to ease the tension of the speakers, were rampant.

On the rostrum and to the side of it, the group operations officers were also waiting and making last minute revues of briefing information: operations, weather, intelligence, navigation and bombing. And through all this subdued activity there seemed to be a growing feeling of anticipation.

Someone in the rear of the room gave the command, "ATTENTION," and all in the room "popped to." Down the aisle to a seat waiting for him in the front row moved Colonel Leon W. Johnson, the group commander, saying as he did, "Seats, gentlemen."

We sat, the room was quiet — anticipation was replaced by rapt attention. One of the briefing officers pulled the white curtain back to the edge of the rostrum, uncovering the wall map. The group operations officer stood with pointer in hand waiting to begin the briefing.

The moving curtain first uncovered the British Isles, and as it did the men could see the red yarn string that began at the base and departed land on the northeast coast of East Anglia and extended out into the North Sea. As the curtain moved the route was further seen to turn east toward Germany, enter the northwest German

coast east of the Island of Helgoland, thence feint southeastward before turning north to the target — KIEL.

The operations officer hadn't spoken yet, and before he could, some wag in the rear of the room was heard to comment, not too loudly, "This will only lead to bloodshed." And I felt that probably all of us who heard him were thinking, "Hopefully, not mine!"

The group operations officer named the target, the Krupp submarine building works, and told of its importance as a construction and repair facility for submarines that had been making havoc with the North Atlantic convoys bringing supplies and men to Britain as a major support to the war effort. He said that our group of B-24's would be in addition to a force of several groups of B-17's who would bomb first with 500 pound high explosive general purpose bombs.

We would follow, carrying in some aircraft the same type 500 pound high explosive general purpose bomb, but in others, magnesium incendiary bombs — the first time the American force had penetrated Germany to bomb with incendiaries. All this had an impact on us, especially the part that we were to be the only B-24 unit on the mission, and the idea that we were to be on the end of the bomber force. Yes, somebody had to do it, but there it was — the 17's stir them up, and we catch it!

Next the group intelligence officer projected maps and photographs on a film screen and pointed out the IP (initial point) or last turning point before hitting the target. It was at this point that the bomb run began and all evasive action for flak or enemy fighter attacks would cease, giving a nice stable platform for the bombardiers to sight from and thus creating the time of greatest vulnerability of the bomber force to enemy action—a nice predictable target for enemy anti-aircraft gunners and fighters.

He suggested some points on the ground that bombardiers might use for identification from the IP to the target, and, of course, indicated the aiming point in the target area. Then the weather officer told what the expected weather at base, en route, at the target, and at base on return was forecast to be — today, clear all the way, a rarity in Europe. He reminded the navigators that they would be given predicted winds aloft charts to be used in computing flight plans in their specialized briefing to follow this generalized one. Then in turn the group navigator and bombardier each gave very brief remarks as each would have a later specialized briefing.

Then the group commander stood up and made some short, terse comments on the importance of this mission and the fact that it was the first time that American bombers were carrying incendiary bombs into the heart of Germany — the quiet

direction of a commander sending his force to combat the enemy.

Finally, the Protestant chaplain was called on for a prayer, and I remember he ended his prayer in a pattern he used for all briefings, "... and may there happy landings be, here and in eternity." And as usual, I had an almost reflexive selfish thought that concentrated on a happy landing back here at the base, leaving the one for eternity for some indefinite time in the future.

Then I went to the navigator's briefing, got the winds aloft chart, the route laid out by the group navigator from the field order received by teletype the night before, and computed the flight plan and drew the route on my maps.

Any special comments the group navigator thought necessary were made then, and we all left to get our special flight equipment and go out to the aircraft. The other specialists on the crew were at their own meetings, the radio operator to reaffirm frequencies and procedures, the bombardier to clear up any last minute details on bombing procedures.

As we completed the specialized briefings, we went individually to the special equipment building to pick up our own parachutes, escape kits (maps, money, small compasses etc.), flying boots and altitude flying suits. Outside the special equipment building, again GI trucks were shuttling the men to their aircraft parked at dispersal sites all around the perimeter taxi way.

When I arrived at the aircraft, the sun had come above the horizon. The morning was clear with no chill in the air. I stowed my equipment in the nose compartment of the aircraft and got out to savor the open air for the time left, and because the rest of the crew was there.

The pilot I had flown overseas with had for the first several missions been moved to the right seat and an experienced pilot assigned the left seat (later this experienced pilot regained his crew, completed his missions, and he and his crew were killed on an extra mission for which he had volunteered because it was important and the group was short of pilots). These two were talking together in low tones — they asked some questions about the flight, and I filled them in from the flight plan.

Then the pilot announced it was time to get on board and get ready. I climbed into the nose compartment by way of the nose wheel doors, put on my parachute harness and stowed the chest pack of the chute on the side of the compartment in a spot that I hoped would keep it most secure from being unintentionally spilled. I opened up flight log and maps and placed them on the small navigation plotting table on the left and rear of the compartment.

Ammunition had been dumped into the nose for the two flexible 50 caliber machine guns I was to man out of the left and right side of the nose, and the one mounted directly in front of the bombardier's position firing directly ahead that he would man when he wasn't engaged with the bombsight.

I broke the belts of ammunition up into lengths of 20-30 because it had been found that longer lengths would not feed easily and too often could cause the gun to jam. About the floor of the compartment I distributed the lengths of ammunition so that they would be within easy reach any time they were needed. The guns would not be loaded and charged ready for action until we were at altitude and heading out from the coast on departure over the North Sea.

*(to be continued)*

## Mid-States Mini-Reunion Set

The Second Annual Mini-Reunion of the Second Air Division Association, Mid-State area, has been set for the weekend of August 18th, 1984 at Lansing, Michigan. The format will be the same as last year's get-together. Howard Johnson Motor Lodge will be our headquarters and Long's Convention Center will cater our dinner and banquet activities. Our informal program will be directed toward leisure time, lots of conversation, good food, refreshments and fun. Come one — Come All.

For information regarding details, send a stamped envelope to:

Al Mohny  
205 W. 7th Street  
Clare, Michigan 48617

# Combat With a Hat

by Robert Dubowsky, Lt. Col., USAF (Ret.)

We were initially assigned to Stone, England. From there we were sent to Northern Ireland for training. I don't remember where in Ireland, but I remember putting in some hours in a link trainer and being briefed by experienced combat flyers. This lasted for about two weeks. I shall never forget the day a B-24 came in to airlift about 50 of us back to England. We thought only some of us would go in this B-24. Like hell, they made all 50 of us get into the B-24 with our B-4 bags and all. We really sweated out the takeoff. There were people all over that B-24. No seat belts, no nothing. I often thought what a waste of lives that would have been if that B-24 didn't get airborne.

I flew 35 missions over the continent of Europe. Mostly over Germany. I completed my last mission on 21 March 1945.

I'll never forget St. Lo, Hamburg, Best, Holland (we dropped medical supplies to the paratroopers from a flight level of 250 ft.), and of course, Dresden, the mission that ended up in my being shot down.

On the 16th of January, 1945, I flew as co-pilot with Captain Joe Testa and our Group Commander, Col. Eugene F. Snavelly, aboard a B-24H. It was my 33rd mission. We were to lead the 8th Air Force that day. The target was Berlin, but it was changed to the alternate target, Dresden, before we took off. We came within 14 miles of Berlin which was our IP (Initial Point) and then flew south towards Dresden. Up until then, only moderate flak was encountered and no enemy fighters attacked us. On the bomb run, flak was heavy and accurate. Before bombs away we took a hit in the number two engine which caught fire immediately.

We left the formation and the deputy lead took over. The flames from the number two engine were severe and reached back as far as the port waist window. Joe Testa put the aircraft in a steep dive in an attempt to smother the flames. At about 16 thousand feet, the prop froze — it couldn't be feathered because all the oil in the feathering system was gone due to the flak. But, the fire went out. Up until that moment things were pretty hectic, and any one who said we didn't experience shuddering fear, just didn't understand our predicament. Some of the crew members became panicky and were screaming over the intercom for Joe Testa to feather the engine. He couldn't of course. When we leveled off at 16 thousand feet, things were not so bad.

Joe was able to hold altitude on the three engines until we passed near Nuremberg when number four engine suffered an oil pressure drop and had to be feathered. The situation now changed from not too bad to desperate. With only two good

engines, one feathered and one with a frozen prop, the B-24 could not maintain altitude and we dropped to ten thousand feet where Joe was able to hold the aircraft at 120 miles per hour. However, this was not until just about everything removable was thrown out of the aircraft. This included all the 50 calibre ammunition, all the 50 calibre guns, bombsight, radios, flak suits, escape kits and God knows what else. Incidentally, all through this encounter, from the time we left the formation until we bailed out, we were alone in the blue skies over Germany and lucky for us, we did not run into any flak or fighters until later.

We still had a long way to go to reach friendly territory, over 150 miles. We finally crossed the Rhine River, but due to the confusion and excitement about our predicament, we didn't immediately know exactly where we crossed the Rhine. And we had two navigators aboard! Actually we crossed the Rhine at 10,000 ft. between Strasbourg and Haguenau. Until that time the situation was precarious, but fairly stable — the B-24 was holding at 10,000 ft. But then all hell broke loose again. Seems that we ran into a gun emplacement as we crossed the Rhine. We were being peppered with flak. The B-24 reeked like a gas station. There was a large hole in the right wing flap. That meant that a shell had pierced the flap and did not explode. The only reason that could be put forward for this event was that the shells were time fused, that is, they were preset to go off at a certain altitude. They were not contact fused, nor were they proximity fused. If they were, the B-24 would have exploded. And that would have been it. We also took a hit in number one engine. That left just number three engine.

The world's best pilot with the world's best B-24 couldn't hold altitude under those conditions. The B-24 proceeded down. People were bailing out of the bombays, but those in the aft section didn't know it because the intercom system was not working. There were thirteen of us, and luckily we all got out. A few were injured, but none very seriously. Capt. Joe Testa and Col. Snavelly were the last two out.

There is humor attached to this story even though it was a very dangerous experience. Seems that Joe and Col. Snavelly were arguing in the bombbay as to who would be last out of the airplane. Joe won and Snavelly dove out followed by Joe.

A unique story evolved from the Snavelly-Testa bombbay affair. Seems that Col. Snavelly did not know what to do with his "fifty-mission" hat when he was about to bail out. At the last minute he decided to leave his hat in the airplane and just tossed it aside. When the B-24 later crashed in

France, the ground troops who surveyed the damaged aircraft, found Snavelly's hat intact in the airplane which had not completely burned. Snavelly's name was in his hat and, believe it or not, the hat was returned to him in England! Adding a little more impetus to the incident was the appearance of the story about the hat in the *Stars and Stripes* newspaper!

Getting back to the bailout . . . We all landed inside allied lines, but did not know it at the time. During my descent I could hear small arms fire, but couldn't tell where it was coming from. I could see our B-24 descending with wings level. I also saw two other parachutes. I landed pretty hard as one of the parachute panels of my chute was ripped and I could see daylight thru the ripped fabric! I also landed drifting sideways. I was hesitant to turn myself around as I descended due to the ripped panel. I estimate my bailout was performed between 2500 and 3000 ft. As I approached the ground I could see quite a few people, but I didn't know what they were or who they were. When I stood up there were about 100 people, civilians, men, women and children in a circle, looking at me.

It was January 1945, lots of snow on the ground. I was wearing an English electric flying suit and heavy boots. I couldn't have "escaped" if I tried. We were always told to get moving right away and head for the woods and keep going for 24 hours to minimize being captured. That was out of the question in this situation. Since there were no aggressive gestures, I thought I may as well ask them who they were and where the hell I was. I knew we had crossed the Rhine, I ought to be in France.

I decided to exercise my high school French and said "Qui etez-vous?" (Who are you?) They responded, "Franzosen" which is German for Frenchman. Well, I didn't know what was going on. I knew that "Franzosen" was a German word but were these people German or French? I pointed to the ground and said "Ici Americaine?" (Is this American territory?) (They said "oui"). I then thought I would take the final plunge into this investigation as to who they were. I asked them, "Etez-vous Nazi?" (Are you a Nazi?) They responded vigorously "non, non" and then showed me a medalion with "FFI" stamped on it. (FFI stood for "Free French of the Interior"). Needless to say that made me feel pretty good. It turned out that they were Alsations. I was in Alsace-Lorraine, just recently liberated by the Americans.

They then pointed to their village and gestured if I wanted to go with them and have a "schnaps". For those who do not know, schnaps is a strong alcoholic liquor. My immediate reaction was "hell yes". But at about that time, the radio operator

and one of the navigators came on the scene. Seems that the radio operator hit his head on the hatch when he bailed out and he was bleeding, but not profusely. So I couldn't leave him. Amidst all this excitement, the French women were tearing at my parachute and fighting among themselves. They wanted the nylon to make undergarments, etc. I thought it would be a good idea to take a piece of that chute with me. I took out my GI knife and approached the parachute. The women all became frightened and scattered. I cut out several sections from the main chute and the pilot chute. I also took the packing history card that was placed in a small pocket on the inside of the backpack type of chute I used. The women then continued their fight over the nylon.

About that time, a jeep approached us with two American soldiers in it. To be more precise, they were two American Indians. They told us that they were alerted to pick us up and take us to the 95th Evacuation Hospital in a small town nearby by the name of Saverne. We all climbed into the jeep and the driver then proceeded to follow the tire tracks he had made in the snow on the way in.

On the way out I noticed red flags scattered about in the ground. I asked the driver what the red flags were for, and he turned around and said, "Those are for mines, Lieutenant!" Seems that the area was taken so recently that the land mines hadn't been removed. Wow! I had landed in the middle of a bunch of land mines! Glad we had a couple of experienced GIs who could find their way around.

The 95th Evacuation Hospital was located in buildings recently occupied by German troops. The hospital was commanded by a gentleman named Col. Sauer. Col. Sauer was an Army medical officer who had practiced medicine in New York City before the war. On a map in his office, Col. Sauer measured our point of landing from the front lines and said, "You guys made it by about 15 miles!"

The staff in the hospital were absolutely fabulous. They were so crowded and busy operating on the wounded that I was given a doctor's bed to sleep in while he was in the operating room. There were American and German wounded being treated. Some of the young German wounded displayed much bitterness towards their captors, medical attention notwithstanding. The medical people in the hospital were great. They gave me a pair of shoes and a hat. I lost my hat sometime during the mission and I didn't have any shoes with me as I was wearing heavy boots, the kind lined with sheepskin and leather outsides. I was supposed to take shoes with me and tie them to my flying suit so I would have them when I needed them. Well, I didn't want to be loaded down with any extra baggage. (good thing I didn't lose the boots during the jump and be faced with escape and evasion.)

As a friendly gesture, I gave my leather gloves to the Chaplain and my boots to one of the doctors. All of our wounds were attended to and I was even invited to observe a minor operation where the doctors were removing a piece of shrapnel from a young soldier's arm. After the operation, the doctors told me (kiddingly, I hope) that they were more worried about me than the patient! Seems I turned a little pale when they started to cut into the patient's arm to get the piece of cloth and a piece of shrapnel out.

We stayed in the hospital two nights, as I recall. The second day we went into the village and found a cafe that had beer for sale. The place was full of off-duty soldiers. We asked a brand new 2nd Lt. (he had just received a battlefield commission) where we could change English pounds into local currency so we could buy a drink. The Lt. reached into his pocket and pulled out a handful of paper money and gave it to me. I asked him how much I owed him and he said, "Hell, we took this stuff from dead Krauts, forget it!" We did, and we had a lot of fun and needed relaxation.

The next day we were taken to Nancy in a 6 x 6 truck. Boy, was it ever cold! Every bridge had guards on it. I felt sorry for the GIs who had to pull guard duty in that terrible weather. We stayed overnight in a private home requisitioned by the US Army. There was no heat at all. We about froze to death! It was in this house that I was first introduced to a bidet. I won't say here what I used it for! The next morning we boarded a C-47 and were flown back to Shipdham in England.

In spite of the fact that a message was sent from France saying we were all more-or-less in one piece and that everyone survived — seems that we beat the message back. The people in the 44th Bomb Group apparently didn't know we made it to France. We learned that MIA (Missing in Action) messages were prepared on all of us, but were not yet dispatched because it was policy that MIA messages would not be sent out until 72 hours had elapsed without word of survival being received.

When we landed at Shipdham in that C-47, 70 hours had passed since we left the formation with an engine fire over Dresden. People looked at us as if we returned from the dead! The MIA messages did not go out, but unbeknown to me, the 95th Evacuation Hospital in Saverne, France sent out a telegram to my parents stating that "the War Department regrets to inform you that your son 1st Lt. Robert Dubowsky was seriously injured in combat on 16 January 1945".

Fact of the matter is that my injuries were not serious. I had a heck of a time convincing my parents that I was OK. It wasn't until I got home the following June that my mother was finally satisfied that I had both legs after she lifted the blankets off me during my first night at home to see

for herself. That's the way mothers are, I guess.

The MIA messages were prepared because the returning 44th Bomb Group crews told the intelligence people that "we went down in flames over the target". That's true, we did. However we leveled off at 16,000 ft., but the rest of our formation didn't see us level off and assumed we had gone down. Also, a fighter pilot erroneously reported that "he saw us crash in Germany". Maybe the fighter pilot saw our B-24 crash in France after we bailed out and the story got mixed up, I don't know.

The next day, I went into the base parachute room and asked the Sergeant in charge if the person whose initials were on the parachute packing card that I retrieved from my chute in France was present. I was told, "That's him over there". Seems that the fellow who packed my chute was an Englishman who worked for the USAAF as a parachute rigger. I approached the Englishman and while pointing to the last initials in the card, asked him if those were his initials. He responded affirmatively. I then reached into my pocket and pulled out four English pounds and gave it to him and said, "I used your chute the other day, thank you very much." We were mutually happy over this event. Four English pounds in those days was about \$16.00 in American currency. He probably didn't make more than \$20.00 a week, so that was a pretty good thank you for him.

Since the Dresden raid was my thirty-third mission, and since I was shot down, I really thought they would say that's enough and send me home. No way. I had to fly two more missions and complete my tour of 35 missions. I flew the last two on 19 and 21 March 1945, respectively. The last one was a "milk run" (a milk run was a bombing mission where enemy resistance was forecast to be light).

My pilot chute incidentally, is now in the American Memorial Room of the Norwich City Library. I gave the chute to the library during my visit to England for the 1979 reunion. A plastic card accompanies the chute and explains its purpose and how it was used. It is where it should be.

We did not fly a particular aircraft on each mission.

All of our crews were notable.

As far as unusual or extraordinary happenings on combat missions, I think I have covered this.

I wish to add to this account of my flying experiences during World War II: After we were hit on the bomb run to Dresden, we left the formation and the deputy lead took over. Pilot of the Deputy Lead was my good friend "Pete" Henry presently living in Jamesburg, New Jersey and former President of the "2nd Air Division Association". "Pete" and his crew were diverted to Orly Field, near Paris due to weather in England and the long mission . . . those lucky guys!

# Letters



Dear Bill:

Referring to George Greiff's article in the December 1983 *Journal* ("What Happened to the 856th"), in which he noted his September, 1944 transfer from the 859th to the 856th... for reasons that [he] never quite understood...

In all probability, the reason was that the 859th was getting ready to be transferred to the MTO, where they arrived on Dec. 17, 1944. In Italy, the squadron separated with the 15th Special Group (Provisional) and later with the 2641st Special Group (Provisional). The special nature of the squadron's MTO missions was described in the book *Secret Air Missions* by a man named MacCloskey, who, as I recall, was the CO of the 15th Special Group.

I wonder if it is generally known that the 492nd Group was awarded a Distinguished Unit Citation for operations during the period from March 20th to April 25th, 1945, and that all four squadrons of the 492nd (856, 857, 858, and 859) were given the French Croix de Guerre with Palm?

Allan Blue

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Dear Pete (Henry):

Just read in the latest *Journal* you have rosters available. Seems like \$3.00 is a very nominal fee for xeroxing and mailing, so sending \$5.00. One day I am going to sit and write a letter to the *Journal* of all my experiences in 2nd AD, 18th Weather—always "attached" to one group or another. Watton was my last assignment. Spent two years there and 39 years ago married an English nurse who was working there at Kings Lynn.

Stayed in "Weather" and now retired. Came to Alaska in '53 on a two year assignment and we never left.

Keep up the good work.

John Nowak

□ □ □ □ □

Dear Evelyn:

After looking over my 2nd AD files, I discovered 2 photos of some 466th members at a 2nd AD meeting at the Congress in Chicago 1956.



I put #1 on me and #2 on Col. John Jacobowitz. I have forgotten the names of the others.

When was the 1st meeting of the 2nd AD Association.

Sorry to have missed the last few reunions. I feel old age creeping on. Just hit 80.

George H. Parker (466)

Dear Bill:

I wonder if you can help me? The incident I refer to took place on 3rd Jan. 1943, when eight aircraft of the 44th Group, 2nd Air Division attacked the docks at St. Nazaire. On their return trip the crews found themselves over West Wales and short of fuel. There was an attempt to reach RAF Talbenny — some succeeded. Some, unfortunately, crashed in the area. This incident is still vividly remembered by eyewitnesses. Mr. Bowman, in his book, states that a Lt. John Long in his aircraft *Texan* found Talbenny, but crashed on approach and two other Liberators crashed in the area. *Little Beaver* captained by the late 1st Lt. C. Phillips also landed at Talbenny.

I am aware of two B-24s which crashed in the area and my details are thus:

(1) Aircraft serial number C12/3771 of 66 Squadron captained, I believe, by the late 2nd Lt. D. K. Cawfield, who unfortunately died of his injuries.

(2) Aircraft serial number 123806 of 68 Squadron captained by the late Lt. C. Swanson who also died of his injuries.

A number of injured aircrew spent some time at a hospital in the nearby town of Haverfordwest before returning to Talbenny. Aircrews returned to their base at Shipdham on 8th January.

RAF Talbenny Operational Record Book records for that date (3rd Jan.) six Liberators landed at Talbenny and Dale (a satellite airfield to Talbenny) from operations.

I would like to know:

(1) more of the crews experiences both on the operational flight and of their stay at Talbenny;

(2) aircrew names;

(3) aircraft details—serial numbers, names, etc.

and I would be grateful if any ex-members of the 44th Group are prepared to loan originals or forward copies of any photographs of crews or aircraft that were at Talbenny on that day.

I am also interested:

(1) in obtaining copies of the badges of the 2nd Air Division and 44th Group.

(2) in knowing what were the routines before, during and after missions? How did aircrew feed themselves on long flights?

On completion of my project, I intend giving it to the RAF Museum, Hendon, London — perhaps there will be enough information to compile a book—either way acknowledgements will be duly recorded regarding any help given.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Malcolm Cullen  
Runwyskiln  
Marloes  
Haverfordwest  
Dyfed, Wales  
Great Britain

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Dear Bill:

I had previously contacted my VP (Bill Clarey) about this problem, but without success. I have utilized other sources, but still no luck. I am anxious to locate my co-pilot, Raymond Suchiu. The rest of my former bomber crew has been contacted. We plan a mini-reunion in August. Can you insert this request in the next *Second Air Division Association Journal*?

As long as I'm asking favors, I might as well ask another. I possess *Aircraft In Profile* series (14 volumes), but I am still missing volumes #2, #5, and #8 to complete the series. If any of your members know where I can obtain any or all of these volumes, please call, collect, 804-340-4480.

Donald Prytulak (492nd BG)  
3857 Thalia Drive  
Virginia beach, Va. 23452

Dear Bud (Koorndyk):

Re - Cumiskey's Crew, 389th Bomb Group, 564 Bomb Sqdn. A crew reunion was held Oct. 1 and 2, 1983 at Oglebay Park in Wheeling, W.V., a beautiful place with much activity. Seven crew members and wives came, and after 40 years, we flew all of our missions again and had a wonderful time reliving our past experiences.

James Cooper from Hawley, Texas couldn't make it and Bill Davis from Calif. we can't find. Enclosed is a photo of the seven of us 40 years later.



Top row from left are: Alex Rolison, Bombardier, Miami, Fla.; LaVern Arns, Navigator, M. St. Paul, Minn.; Col (Ret.) William T. Cumiskey, Pilot, South Orleans, Mass.

Bottom Row from left: William (Bill) Richards, Radio Operator, Columbus, Ohio; Stanley (Shibby) Shibovich, Asst. Eng. Gunner, Chicago, Ill.; Russell C. Dell, Engineer, Indianapolis, Ind.; Harry Boos, Tail Gunner, Castleton, N.Y.

Stanley L. (Shibby) Shibovich

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Dear Bill:

In the October-November issue of the *American Heritage Magazine*, Lew Ellis had his story of Poesti published.

He tells the story of a crew assigned to the 389th BG which was sent to the 98th Group to fly the Poesti mission. Good and must reading for everyone.

We were assigned to fly probably the oldest B-24 in Africa, the "Daisy Mae". The 4 engines on the plane were changed the night before the flight. We took off in the morning not knowing if they would work or not. Fortunately, due to the skill of the ground crew, everything worked out fine.

On the way home over Carfu we were hit hard by German fighters and lost controls. Switching to automatic pilot we eventually returned to Benghazi.

We landed using the automatic pilot with no nose wheel. We were the last crew in.

Julius M. Klinkbein (389th BG)

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Dear Bill:

I was a pilot in the 445th B.G. While rummaging through some old scrapbooks, I came upon a copy of the *Group History of the 467th B.G.* How I got it I'll never know.

However, if you will publish this letter, I will gladly mail this beautifully bound, hard-cover book to the first person who writes me at the address below.

I must have a poor memory, but since I've received the *Journal* I have never recognized a name from the 445th or even one name from the many friends made during pilot training. Most of my close friends at the 445th were lost on the September 27, 1944 raid on Kassel. I was one of 10 crews that didn't fly that day, but as you probably know, it was one of the greatest single mission losses of any group in the E.T.O.

I sure would like to hear from anybody that might remember me!

Donald F. Baumler  
5070 Hillcrest Drive  
Clarence, N.Y. 14031  
Tel: 716-759-6766

Dear Evelyn Cohen:

I have recently learned about the existence of the 2nd Air Division Association through Ed Johnson who lives close by, and it was he who gave me your address, also a copy (June 1981) of the association's *Journal*. As well, he tells me that the 448th Bomb Group of the U.S. 8th Air Force was the one stationed at Seething in Norfolk, England, during the Second World War.

As I write, I have before me a photograph of my mother and myself taken, I imagine, during either 1943 or 1944. We are standing in front of a mobile canteen ('tea wagon' to the American thousands who lined up once or twice a day for refreshment) run by the Church Army. There is no clue as to when or where the picture was taken, no reference to the taker. But it exists, I have it, and it is my last surviving memento of a period in my life which was certainly significant in many ways. In particular, of course, was the experience of being allowed onto the base (initially to assist my mother, but after only a few days to leave her in 'Caremna' while I, at 13 or 14 years of age, roamed around the place under the watchful eyes of special friends) to meet and eat with, talk and listen to, look at and be looked back at by hundreds, perhaps thousands of servicemen who spoke American rather than English.

That was forty years ago, wasn't it? Where, I wonder, did they all go? What happened to them? No doubt as much has happened to most of them as has happened to myself. In those days, I don't think I anticipated living in Australia for most of my life, anymore than I would have been aware that I was to spend nearly four years on my back after the same period at sea in the merchant marine, that I would eventually get to university or write a book for children.

But that is not the purpose of this letter unless, of course, the information is of interest to anyone from Seething who remembers me either by name or from the photograph.

No, the real reason is much more important. It is to say to anyone, to everyone who knew her only as the tea ma'am who supplied them with coffee, a newspaper, cookies, aspirin tablets and the like or, as those who



came to our home quickly realized, a delightfully warm and sensitive lady, that she grew to love 'her boys' as much as they obviously loved her.

Some of them, through contact with my sister Sheila—still alive and living in Norwich—know that our mother died less than five years after the war ended. Those who did not know of her passing should be aware that she often reminisced about the base. I cannot recall exactly what, of course, but I'm sure her memories would have included some of mine: the time she drove the tea-wagon around the perimeter without notifying the control tower where she was

going (I was with her that day and clearly remember the Verey lights, a landing B-24 seemingly coming from nowhere almost on top of us, jeeps and sirens and flashing lights and a mix of anger at near disaster, relief that no one had been hurt, concern that such a thing could happen and disbelief that the base's tea ma'am genuinely thought she was exempt from the huge sign "All vehicles must report before proceeding..."; sharing our Christmas with Savvy and Rev with all of us getting the giggles about a tiny peanut, and our pleasure that they could be with us; a typed pass on base notepaper, signed by Frank X. Cruikshank, Colonel, which allowed me not only entry onto the base, but authorized me to stay there for intervals of twenty-four hours; my anxiety, inner sadness and at times, tears, when watching and counting a mission coming back, some sound, others safe, several not at all... I knew hardly any of the fliers, but I felt very strongly that each and every one of those silver Liberators with their diagonally black-striped yellow tails were mine; gifts... a portable, pocket-sized chess set, a blue fountain pen; little waxed slid-cartons of candy thrust at me by weary tail-gunners; 'Buddy' Teale, so overweight that he hung over the sides of a jeep; white starred trucks depositing their load of human cargo in town for the last night; white helmeted MP's on Harley Davidsons.

There are probably many more memories if I cared to dig them up, sifting around in retrospection. But I don't think I shall do much more as some of them are best left where they have lain, by which I do not mean to imply that any are unpleasant, but rather that there are occasions when the softness of obscurity is better by far than the harsh light of reality.

On the other hand, should you care to publish this letter and photograph, I would be pleased to hear from anyone who genuinely remembers their tea ma'am, my mother, and her helper who, for reasons which he never really did understand, came to be known as 'Stinkie' to some, 'Junior' to others, and by his given name, Bryan, to only a few. Not that it matters now, anyway. My perception tells me, overall, that the meeting was good from where I was. I do hope the reverse holds true.

Bryan Mellonie  
P.O. Box 171  
Belair, South Australia 5052

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Dear Bill:

What you could do for me is perhaps help me locate the bombardier and pilot of our crew. They both made a career in the Air Force. The bombardier's name was Joseph Earl McDonald and the pilot was James Keith Zimmerman.

If you know how I could go about locating them I would appreciate it.

I hope we can meet at some future meeting. Best regards to Taffy (if you speak to him!).

Joe Linsk  
9 Lake Drive  
Lake Intervale  
Boonton, N.J. 07005  
Tel. (201) 334-9260

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Dear Bill:

I flew my first mission bombing Magdesburg on March 3, 1945 which was also my 19th birthday. We took off at 1:00 p.m. and returned at 9 p.m. Unfortunately we returned with about 400 holes in our plane and this brought tears to the eyes of our crew chief.

This was not an isolated incident as we always returned full of holes and became the 'lame ducks' of the Group. We flew 15 missions but in terms of hours it was 25 at least. The name of our plane? JIGGS.

Edward A. Balga, Sr. (93rd BG)

Dear Bill:

I would appreciate it if you would publish this letter in order to correct what appears to be a growing misunderstanding for which I am indirectly responsible. I refer to the use of the name RINGMASTERS to describe the 491st Bomb Group.

When I wrote a short history of this group for the *American Aviation Historical Society Journal*, I submitted it under the title "Last to the Eighth," inasmuch as the 491st was indeed the final 8th AF group to reach England. The assignment of group letter "Z" to the 491st seemed to fit in with the idea of finality.

The editor of the *Journal* at the time took exception to the use of the title because the 491st, although the last group to arrive in England, was not the last group to go operational. (The 493rd was.) The editor picked the RINGMASTERS idea from the insignia that I had sent him and which was reproduced in the first installment of the history. Because of a printing deadline, I was, as I recall, presented with a *fait accompli* and the article appeared under the RINGMASTERS title.

Now, to the best of my knowledge, the 491st never used this appellation. None of the many people I interviewed ever referred to it; in fact, most, if not all, saw the insignia for the first time when I showed it to them in the early 1960's. I was never able to find out just where the insignia came from, or at what exact point in time it surfaced. It had to be during the time the group was at Metfield, since it incorporates the horizontal tail stripe that was assigned while the 491st was stationed there.

In any case, I thought I should get this on the record before a post-war idea becomes generally accepted as wartime fact. Of course if the group *did* use the name, so much the better. If anyone can confirm this, I'd sure like to hear about it.

Allan Blue

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Dear Evelyn:

Late with my dues as I was away for awhile. Enclosed is my check for the same.



Also a photograph of Bunny Rabbit astride a streak of lightning, operating a machine gun. Does the insignia ring a bell? I can't seem to recall whose insignia that was. It is an old wallet that I have.

Harold Nordlicht

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Dear Ms. Cohen:

During a visit to the Queen Mary this past January, I came across the notice posted by J. Fred Thomas spelling out the existence of the Second Air Division Association. Until that moment, going back forty years, I have had no contact whatever with my friends and associates from the 453rd BG. Surely a bonus to that trip was the revelation that contact could be restored.

I am very pleased to join the association and will look forward to receiving whatever notices are sent. I am contemplating joining the group at Palm Springs this coming October.

Carl Powell

# THE PX PAGE

*"Liberators Under Attack"*



FREDERICK T. SEARLE, T.D., A.G.A.A.  
45, Stoke Road, Poringland,  
Norwich, Norfolk

*Commissions Undertaken for  
Aircraft and Bird Paintings*

## EIGHTH AIR FORCE NEEDLECRAFT DESIGNS

For Counted Cross Stitch

	Kits	Graph
	\$10	\$2.50
B24 Silver/Grey (229x91 stitches)	- <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
B24 OD Shades (99x31) - - - - -	- <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
B17 Silver/Grey (139x38) - - - - -	- <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
B17 OD Shades (139x38) - - - - -	- <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P47 Silver/Grey (93x58) - - - - -	- <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P51 Silver/Grey (100x45) - - - - -	- <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8AF Curved Wing Insignia(26x30) - -	- <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8AF Straight Wing Insignia(50x50) -	- <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P38 OD Shades (174 x 68) - - - - -	- <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Shipping & Handling	\$2.00	
Total		

ORDER FROM: Country Stitchin' 347 Fairview Rd.  
Ellenwood, GA 30049. Ph. (404) 474 1044.

Your Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Street \_\_\_\_\_  
City, State, ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

