

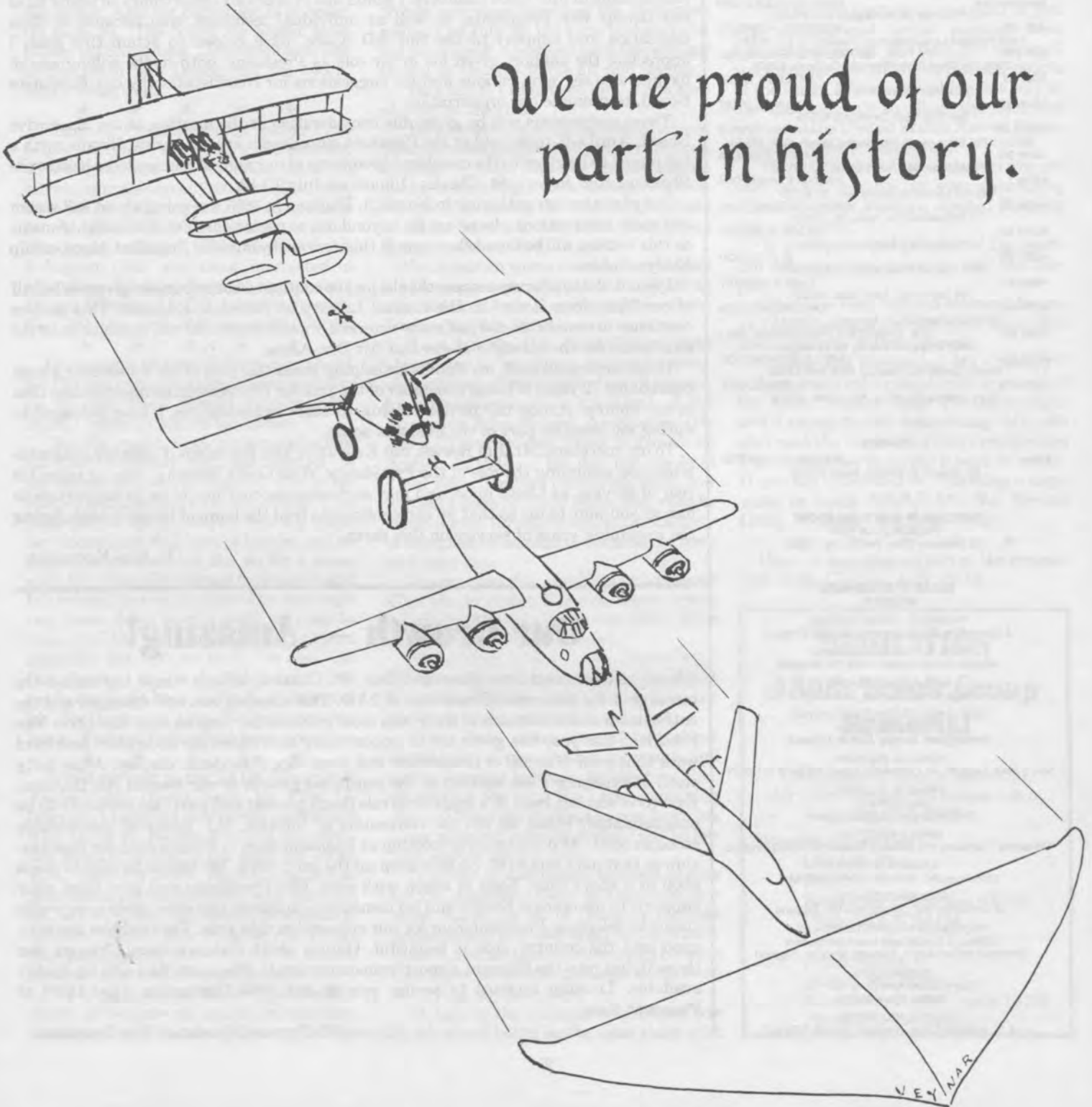
JOURNAL

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SECOND AIR DIVISION ASSOCIATION

June 1986

We are proud of our
part in history.



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President's Message



As I look out of my den window and see the gradual disappearing of our winter snows and begin to see the first signs of a new spring season again confronting us, with the first robins making their presence felt in a bird sanctuary behind our home, I am also reminded that the time has arrived for me to write my final message of thanks as your President of the 2nd Air Div. 8th Air Force for the years 1985-1986. The deadline for our June issue of the *Journal* always seems to sneak up on you in the month of March.

Mine has been a year of service on your behalf and of much satisfaction. A year in which we witnessed a growth in numbers. We have reached a membership of over 6,000 members. I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of our Group Vice Presidents, as well as individual members, who because of their dedication and support to the 2nd AD Assoc. have helped to attain this goal. I appreciate the support given me in my role as President, both in the willingness of members to serve on various and for suggestions for consideration by our Executive Board, to promote our organization.

These suggestions will be given due consideration at the meeting of our Executive Board, April 4-5, to be held at the Pheasant Run Resort in St. Charles, Illinois, with a full report to be given to the membership-at-large at our annual reunion to be held at the Pheasant Run Resort, St. Charles, Illinois on July 10-13.

Our plans for our gathering in Norwich, England in 1987 are going ahead full steam and early reservations placed are far beyond our expectations. Further enlightenment on this reunion will be found elsewhere in this *Journal* by our Vice President-Membership Evelyn Cohen.

I would like to offer my sincere thanks for the continued contributions given on behalf of our "American Room" in the Central Library at Norwich, England. This project continues to remain the envy of many veterans organizations and will continue to be the focal point for the strength of our 2nd Air Div. Assoc.

To our dedicated staff, my thanks for helping make this year of my Presidency a high point of my 32 years of being a member of the 2nd Air Div. Assoc., an organization that in my opinion stands tall in relationship to other organizations I have belonged to during my years as part of the business scene.

To my successor, Mr. Jim Reeves, our Executive Vice President, I offer my congratulations on assuming the role of the Presidency. With God's blessing, may he enjoy his year of service, as I have mine, and may each member continue to be as supportive to him as you were to me so that we can continue to hold the lamp of freedom high during the remaining years of service on this earth.

E. BUD KOORNDYK

Our Growth — Amazing!

I have just returned from Pheasant Run, St. Charles, Illinois where I attended the meeting of the Executive Committee of 2AD. This meeting was well attended and the enthusiasm and dedication of duty was most evident. Serving as your executive Vice President this year has given me an opportunity to witness the dedication and hard work that your Executive Committee and your Vice Presidents display. After forty years of existence I am amazed at the continued growth of our Second Air Division. Everyone who has been in a leadership role (both present and past) are certainly to be congratulated. When we left the convention at McAfee, N.J. last year membership stood at 5601. At our executive meeting at Pheasant Run — Evelyn said our membership at that date was 6150. So let's keep up the good work. We should be able to reach 6500 in a short time. Keep in touch with your Vice Presidents and give them your support. In my opinion Evelyn and her committee on convention sites made a very wise choice in selecting Pheasant Run for our convention this year. The facilities are very good and the country side is beautiful. Only a short distance from Chicago. For those flying into the Chicago airport transportation to Pheasant Run will be readily available. Looking forward to seeing you at our 1986 Convention July 10-13 at Pheasant Run.

JAMES H. REEVES, Executive Vice President



NEWS

by Pete Henry
(44th BG)

You no doubt noticed that someone omitted a couple of names from the photo of Robert Knowles crew in the last 8-Ball column (3/86 *Journal*). Let me correct that right now. Reading left to right, front row: Howard Robb, Co-pilot; Robert Knowles, Pilot; John Fenn, Bombardier; John Butler, Navigator. Another correction is in order. On page 20, "The Night We Might Have Blown Up Shipdham", John Wolbarst was in the 464th Sub Depot, not the 446th. Sorry 'bout that.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Roger A. Freeman, noted author (*The Mighty Eighth*, etc.) and most eminent air-war historian will moderate the sixth air-war symposium at 2:00 p.m. Saturday, October 18, 1986 in conjunction with the 8th Air Force Historical Society reunion. The topic will be, "The Ploesti Raid, 1 August 1943" and those interested in attending should contact the Symposium Project Director, Lt. Col. John Woolnough, Ret., P.O. Box 4738, Hollywood, Fla. 33083.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

In response to some information that I sent to him regarding the mission to Politz on 20 June 1944, Harold Ferrara (68th Sqdn.) wrote 24 March as follows:

"For the record, Pete, we received a flak hit that knocked out our control of the supercharger waste gates. The gates opened and that put us in low blower. This happened on the bomb run so, with bomb bay doors open, full load of bombs and no superchargers, we felt like we hit a stone wall. We naturally started to descend and fall behind, but we continued on the bomb run *alone*. After bombs away, we tried to "open-up" the waste gates with the spare amplifier but with no luck. We also had flak damage to our fuel cells and that made the flight back to England impossible. For the record, shortly after returning home, Richard Keller died from polio."

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

While serving as the 2ADA Director of Audio-Visual (fancy name for Film Librarian), I have had occasion to correspond with Leroy W. Newby who is a Subscribing Member of the 2ADA from the 460th B.G., 15th Air Force. He has granted us permission to print an address he delivered 28 July 85 at the 15th Air Force reunion in Seattle, Wash. I'm sure all of you 44thrs who participated in the 1 Aug. 43 Ploesti raid can relate to his experience.

"All of us have had our lives touched by others as we grew up, and we in turn have touched many lives along the way. In this

touching process there seems to be one common denominator — no one involved really knows all this touching is going on at the moment it happens. The test is in its remembrance a lifetime later.

"In recent years I have learned that all of us who flew those bombing and fighter support missions over southern Europe and the Balkans touched many people in ways we never dreamed. At the time all we were trying to do was perform our job and stay alive.

"War was impersonal to us flying over German occupied countries. We fought things and machines — not people. We dodged flak and fighters, never seeing our faceless enemy.

"A reader from Massachusetts wrote, 'While you were bombing the Budapest refinery on July 30, 1944 you probably did not see a small American born boy waving to you on the way to his air raid shelter.'

"He's right! I didn't see him. I was sort of busy at the time.

"We also never saw the upraised faces of the oppressed people living under German tyranny — faces that saw in us tangible evidence that help was on its way. We were not privy to seeing the love and gratitude in those faces for American youngsters flying to their potential death.

"An Austrian wrote that he cheered from his Vienna basement window on July 26 as our 460th Bomb Group clobbered the Zwolfaxing Air Drome.

"Last fall the U.S. State Department phoned me to arrange a requested interview with an official visitor from Romania, Ioan Grigorescu, Vice President of the Romanian Film Makers Association. He was a 13 year old boy living in Ploesti on August 1, 1943 — the day the low level *Tidal Wave* bombers came over. He is now writing a book on *Tidal Wave*, and when he came across *Target Ploesti* in the Library of Congress he wanted to come out to Iowa and meet me.

"I suggested they send him up to Mason City the following Sunday, where I was scheduled to give a lecture on *Tidal Wave* to the Friends of the Library.

"Grigorescu and a State Department interpreter joined me in Mason City, where I explained the low level mission from the planning and execution standpoint.

"Then Ioan came up and told about coming out of church that afternoon and seeing barrage balloons for the first time all around the city. He knew something was up! Then the big four engine bombers came zooming over the house tops so low they sucked up the roofs.

"He told of Romanian mothers crying for the American dead as they held personal wakes for all of them. A German soldier asked why they cried for the Americans. A mother told him they cried because they knew American mothers would soon be crying for their sons.

"A lady in the audience asked Ioan how he felt about being on the same stage with

a man who had been dropping bombs on him forty years earlier. He replied, 'Mr. Newby did not come to destroy my house, rather to shorten the nightmare the world was going through.' He then walked over and gave me a big Balkan bear hug!

"In his Christmas card he said my book on the destruction of the Ploesti oil refineries is now in the Ploesti Oil Museum!

"While appearing on a Pittsburgh TV talk show last summer a lady called in and said, 'I lived in Yugoslavia as a young girl and prayed for you American boys as you flew by on the way to Ploesti. This is my first opportunity to thank one of you in person for saving my country. I wish I could thank every one. God bless you American flyers.'

"During the past forty years all of you who experienced aerial combat have touched people like this lady. Her one small voice speaks for all the oppressed people of the world. She was speaking not only to me and you, but to all of the men and women in the United States Armed Forces — past, present and future.

"We who have retired salute you who are still on active duty, in your continuing efforts to keep America strong! Keep up the good work.

"If the oppressed peoples of the world can not count on America, who *can* they count on?

"This is a very revered moment for me as I stand among you and pass along this message from grateful people:

"Thank You For Saving My Country!"

Leroy sent me a complimentary copy of his book, *Ploesti From The Bombsight* and I found it very interesting. My wife also read the book and I don't recall when I've noticed her enjoying a book so much. If you are interested in obtaining a copy, write to Leroy Newby, 810 No. Terrace Drive, Webster City, Iowa 50595.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Hope to see many of you at the convention in St. Charles, July 10-13.

DEDICATION

389th Bomb Group Memorial

Dedication of Group Memorial,
Air Force Museum, Dayton, Ohio,
Oct. 3-4, 1986

For details contact:

Lloyd E. West,
Box 256
Rush Center, Kansas 67575
Phone 913-372-4484

or

Frank Vadas
1026 S. 9th Street
Allentown, Pennsylvania 18103
Phone 215-453-3033

458th BG Report

by Rick Rokicki (458th)

In early April, the 2 ADA held its mid-year Executive Committee meeting at Pheasant Run. I found the facility very well suited to our July convention. It reminded me somewhat of the '77 reunion in Lake Geneva, WI Playboy Club. Lots of room and sure to please just about everyone.

Again, your individual help is needed to provide the names of those you still maintain contact with that are not yet members. Just drop me a post card and I will take it from there.

I have prepared sheets with the new members and their address so that you can maintain a current individual roster of your own. Just request it and send a stamp or two and I'll get a copy off to you. Presently, the sheets contain 29 names and addresses not found in your 1986 roster.

Letters: Bill Cunningham (who always encloses many extra stamps) writes that he would like to make contact with anyone who has a 752nd Squadron patch. He says he would like to have the patch duplicated. I've seen that emblem at both the Palm Springs and the McAfee Conventions. Bas-

ically, it looks like an eagle with gold/yellow outstretched wings with a 500 pounder in its talons. Can anyone help? Along those lines, I have an extra 753rd leather patch that I would trade for a 754th one.

Lucy Carrigan wrote and advised that her husband Boyce passed away a few months ago. Boyce was a flight engineer who was awarded a Silver Star at Horsham St. Faith. We extend our sympathy to his family.

Don Breckenridge advised that we added an extra "b" in his name. Our roster spelling is right, but one of those Pesky Grem-lins slipped another one past the *Journal* typesetter again.

Bill Jameson will have some information for us at the next Convention regarding the Bronze plate mentioned in the last *Journal*. Remember, this will be a 458th project and as such, must be fully funded thru donations, not by the Association. Hopefully, the response to Bill will warrant the pursuit of this idea at the Air Force Museum.

A long time ago, I tried to find a supplier who could furnish an enamelled lapel pin of the E.T.O. ribbon. With absolutely no luck, I turned to an old friend (retired Delta Airlines pilot) Glenn Tessmer, 93rd

B.G. who offered to help. He contacted an overseas jewelry maker and I offered to take 100 of the pins. Last February they arrived and I found them to be very satisfactory. Excellent workmanship and beautiful color. As of this date, 33 have been sold, and that was without any advertising. I've worn it whenever the occasion calls for a sport jacket or suit wear. It almost never fails to start a conversation when an E.T.O. veteran recognizes it. My latest "contact" was from a P-47 pilot at the Lakeland, Florida "Sun & Fun" fly-in in February. He received information of the 2 ADA, but I have no idea if he sent in his application. On the flight back, I had a retired United pilot who asked me about the pin. Turns out he was in the 389th and I sent him membership information. If you're interested in getting an E.T.O. lapel pin, the cost is \$6.00 plus .50¢ packing and postage. Guaranteed to please or your money back. As always, profits go to the Association treasury.

Ceil and I will be attending a 4 state Mini-Reunion in Wilmington, on April 19. All members in PA, NJ, DE and MD were advised. Of course, Pheasant Run in July is right up there on top of our list, Lord willin'. Hope our Group will be well represented, as usual. See you there!



by Dave Swearingen (467th)

Since our last article we have attended two 2nd Air Division Asso. meetings. On Saturday, March 15, we attended the Dallas/Ft. Worth Southwest regional dinner reunion get-together. Our own Jeff Gregory was dinner chairman and he and his wife Terry did a beautiful job. It was well attended and the 467th Veterans and Guests numbered 13.

On Thursday, April 3, we drove to the Pheasant Run Resort in St. Charles, Ill. to attend the Mid-Year Executive Committee meeting and represent our 467th members.

President Bud Koorndyk presided for a full day and a half. I was tremendously impressed with the thoroughness of the discussion on the agenda. Throughout the discussion membership's welfare was the key consideration. I have been appreciative of the dedication of these Veterans who have worked and continue to work extremely hard to keep the Association on the right track. After this, my first executive committee meeting, I can assure you that your best interests are the number one priority.

You will be provided much information

from this most recent meeting so I will not go into any detail. Please, though, if you have any questions about your Association's operation write to me and I'll get the answers for you.

The Pheasant Run Resort at St. Charles, Illinois is a beautiful place and I know you will enjoy yourself at the Convention July 10-13. We of the 467th hope to have the best attendance ever. We'll have our own meeting room for displaying pictures, books and other memorabilia. So bring all you can. We will have someone on duty at all times the room is open to prevent loss of items to outsider. Some of you will be called on to help us on this. Our 467th room will also provide us with a place to have our Group Business meeting and any other activities we might enter into. Please write me suggestions on how we may use our room to make our convention more enjoyable and interesting.

You who attended our 467th Group Business Meeting in McAfee New Jersey recall that Joe Dzenowagis offered to pursue Videotaping remembrances of WWII experiences by 467th Veterans. Joe recently wrote to me and sent me quite a bit of material about this project. At the April 4th Executive Committee meeting we got

the blessing of the Committee so I'm sure at Pheasant Run we'll be asking for those who wish to be interviewed.

We are indebted to Joe for initiating this opportunity to recall for future generations the history of a period that had never been fully explored. You'll get more on this later. A recent printout of the 467th Veterans who are members of the 2nd Air Division Association names 489 of us. We will need to reach out and find more out there who do not know of our fellowship. Please contact these you have kept in touch with and know that they are not members.

Finding lost souls comes about in many different ways. Recently I have had an interesting experience. I have wanted to locate all of my crew members and hopefully get them to a reunion. I had only stayed in contact with my Navigator. A crew member of the 490th Bomb Group (a B-17 outfit) somehow got on our 467th Poop from Group mailing list. He wrote to me after my mentioning the 7th Anti Submarine Squadron reunion in Memphis over the Memorial Day Weekend. He put me in touch with a man who has really been a head hunter for the 490th. This man is a Highway Patrolman in the State of Iowa. I sent him names and WWII addresses. He has located four more of my crew members and is confident he'll find the other three. I am really indebted to him for his help.

Is there anyone out there who is with a Government Agency that has access to registration cards like a driver's license agency etc.? There's lots of 467th veterans we need to locate!

Green, White, and Yellow Tales

by Charles Freudenthal (489th)

The history of the 489th is what's on my mind these days, because I want it to be the best possible account of the life and times of the Group that's possible. While we are making progress; there are a bunch of sticky points. For instance, after 17 September 1945, the 489th strength was a total of one enlisted man, everybody else had been transferred out. Who was the last man? An does anyone have a copy of the Ground echelon overseas movement orders; Wendover to Camp Miles Standish and onward? Has anybody got any photos of life aboard the USS Wakefield on the way over, or on any of the ships we came back on? There is a bright spot though. Turns out that Neal Sorenson went into the Publishing & Printing business when he left navigation, and we're going to get together to see how to go about getting the 489th story in print and in style. Ray Blanchard, who left piloting for the law, has offered to give us legal counsel and serve on the editorial board. So we're making progress — and finding more members, too. Special thanks to Ed Phillips, who's really been rounding 'em up!



489th Mini-mini reunion at St. Charles in April. (l to r): Bud Chamberlain, Art Cressler, Bob Archambault, Charlie Freudenthal, Joan and Stan Biskup.

How Many Missions?

An extract from Danny's Diary of 28 September 1944 says "As of the completion of the mission of this date, 28 September, 1944, all crews having completed 31 missions will be required to complete 33 missions. All crews having completed between 25 and 30 missions inclusive will be required to complete 34 missions; all other crews will be required to complete 35 missions. This does not apply to 'A' lead crews, who will still be required to complete 30 missions." The fact that the Group flew its last mission on 10 November 1944 might have had some effect on these requirements, but I haven't found any word on it.

First To Fight?

Hal Boehm of the 844th has a pretty good claim. "After our arrival at Halesworth, the Group conducted several formation flights for area indoctrination and procedure. We waited for our first combat

mission. On May 28th 1944, our crew was assigned to fly the weather ship (Polka Dots), North and South, up and down the east coast, varying altitude and reporting cloud cover, temperature and wind. As dawn broke, about five hours into the flight, we were ordered to return to base. Our navigator (Frank Trinder? — Ed.) gave us a heading and we started down. As we approached the shore line, which we thought was the North Shore of East Anglia, it just didn't look right. Now at about 3000 feet and two miles off shore we realized that it was the French Channel coast. The next comment was 'Do you smell something?'

It was flak, and all Hell broke loose. That old B24 took evasive action that must have resembled an aerobatic show. As we departed the scene, the flak puffs looked like a trail drawn by a madman.

We had to shut down # engine, and limped back to Halesworth. The first comment after we landed was 'Where the hell have you been?' Well, there was one engine out, and hundreds of holes. We had visited Dunkirk. I think this must have been the first 489th aircraft to 'engage' the

enemy! This account of speed and misdirection came in an April letter from Hal Boehm, who at the time was co-pilot on Milt Hibbard's crew. He went on flying for 32 years with American Airlines, recently retiring.

Important Trivia

Does anyone have a photo of our Catholic Chaplain, Fr. Hinckley, that I can have or borrow to copy? Likewise, Maintenance, Ordnance & Armament activities!! A picture of MSgt. William J. Bullard, Group Sgt. Major? Do you have any clue as to the whereabouts of Lt. Milton Hannan, the first Group Armament officer?

Remember The Tech Schools?

"Several persistent causes lowered the morale of students in technical and service courses. Although a great number of these men, probably the majority, adjusted themselves satisfactorily to the training they were getting, others were unable to do so. The underlying difficulty was the

Ode to a Stripe

*When I was just a raw recruit,
And taking basic training,
I asked myself this question moot
"How can I get a rating?"*

*For "Column Right" I had no yen
And K.P. was a bother.
I'd never worked, you see — I'd been
In business with my father.*

*They gave me tests and interviews
To put me where I'd fit.
Of course I felt I best could use
A job where I could sit.*

*But little did I realize
(The thought just drives me frantic)
That having dealt in merchandise,
They'd make me a mechanic.*

*"A Staff or Tech, with flying pay
You'll be" is what they told me.
"You'll work on bombsights" —
Curse the day
On B.S.M. they sold me.*

*The promised stripes, to my dismay,
I found were just the bunk.
My total take, with flying pay
Is seventy-five a month.*

*A silver badge I'm going to get —
I'm not a chronic cryer,
But PFC I sit and sweat
And Damn that classifier!*

ANONYMOUS
San Angelo 1943

necessity of assigning men to training contrary to their choice; indeed, it was equally true that many were in the Army against their will. . . Student dissatisfaction was aggravated by conditions in the schools themselves. Daily schedules were extremely crowded. . . and the three-shift system then in operation reduced the amount of sleep obtained by many students. Furloughs were generally not permitted while students were in a training status, and this proved especially irksome to men who might be in a training sequence for six or seven months. . . The particular groups of trainees whose adjustment proved most difficult were former permanent party enlisted men who were taken from their assigned organizations in order to fill school quotas, eliminated aircrew trainees who disdained any form of ground duty, and combat returnees who generally resented the personal restrictions imposed by school regulations." (AAF in WWII, Vol. VI) I never knew that!

2ADA Film Library—Update

The following films are available for rent from your 2ADA film library:

Super 8mm	Rental
* <i>Remember Them</i>	\$5.00
16mm	
Liberator B-24J & Liberators Over Europe	5.00
Target for Today — 2 parts	10.00
The Mission	5.00
The Men Who Flew the Liberators	5.00
1973 2ADA Reunion in Colorado Springs and 2ADA—8th USAAF Memorial — one reel	5.00
Video tapes — VHS format — (Order by Roman #)	
I Remember Them	3.00
II A Village Remembers	3.00
III Target for Today	
The Men Who Flew the Liberators	
2ADA Reunion 1973 — Colorado Springs	
2AD Memorial Dedication — Norwich 1963	3.00
IV The Mission	
Night Bombers — RAF	
Schweinfurt & Regensburg	
Memphis Bell	3.00
V Ploesti	
93rd B.G. in North Africa	
The Fight for the Sky	
2ADA Reunion Film Clip — Norwich 1983	3.00
VI The Air Force Story — Vol. I — Chapters 1-8	3.00
VII The Air Force Story — Vol. I — Chapters 9-16	3.00
VIII The Air Force Story — Vol. I — Chapters 17-24	3.00
IX The Air Force Story — Vol. I — Chapters 25, 26	3.00
The Air Force Story — Vol. II — Chapters 1-6	3.00
X Smashing of the Reich	
The Story of Willow Run — Making of a B-24	3.00
XI Some of Our Airmen Are No Longer Missing	
2ADA March AFB Memorial Service	3.00
XII How To Fly the B-24D	
The Story of Willow Run	
Medal of Honor — The Burning of Ploesti	
XIII Battleline Series — Bombing of Japan	
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Order by Roman Numeral

*CAUTION: This film can only be viewed on a Super 8 projector that will accommodate a 600' reel.

It was originally stated that you may order a maximum of 2 tapes at a time, but we now have a waiting list for all tapes. You may order any number as long as you send \$3.00 per tape and we will add your name to each list. Requests for 8mm and 16mm movie films will continue to be restricted to two reels per person.

Send your requests to: Pete Henry
164 B Portland Lane
Jamesburg, NJ 08831
Tel. 1-609-655-0982

"All Right Laddie, You Can Put Your Nose Down Now."

by Henry Orzechowski

I was the pilot of crew 292 and we trained in Savannah, Georgia. My navigator, Norbert "Johnny" Heubusch was retained in the States for specialized training and the rest of us joined the 700th Squadron of the 445th as replacements after the group's disastrous mission to Kassel on September 27th. Major John Burke was our C.O. and our ground crew chief was known to me only as Downey.

Our first mission on October 14th to Kaiserlautern was a bit hairy. We lost an engine and had to fall back to bomb the secondary target at Saarbrücken with the 93rd. We took a few flak hits and finally lost all our hydraulics due to a ruptured line. Getting back to England and calling in our problems got us directed to Woodridge, the emergency field. After the crew got the wheels cranked down and the flaps got pumped in I landed it short and with my co-pilot's help held the nose up to slow us down because we had no brakes. I'll never forget the control tower operator's remark given in an unmistakable Scottish accent, "all right laddie, you can put your nose down now." Well, they patched us up and we survived thirty four more missions, some better and some worse than the first one.

We ended our tour on March 22nd and we were rather lucky because most of the time we flew 620J, which failed to return to base on, I believe, its next mission when it flew a cargo drop on March 24th. I'd like to hear from anyone who might know what happened to old 620 J for Jig.

During a two week trip in September 1983 I met with four of my crew members in Stratford, NJ. They were Jerry Goldsmith, co-pilot from Maryland; Hugh J. Caviston, radioman, Pennsylvania; Joseph M. Keeley, ball turret gunner, New Jersey; George Walker Jr., tail gunner, Vermont. Then I met three other crew in St. Louis, Missouri, James P. McCoy, top turret gunner, Missouri; Roy J. Evans, nose gunner, Kansas; William Heierman, waist gunner, Indiana. On the way to St. Louis we stopped in Dayton, Ohio, and spent a day at the Air Force Museum where the highlight was the B24, "Strawberry Bitch."

My bombardier, Cy Clarkson of New Hampshire, couldn't meet us anywhere because he was recovering from an operation and my navigator, Norbert Heubusch, died the previous year which determined me to make my reunion trip sooner than too late. That's an obvious observation but certainly justifies attending all reunions and I hope to make many more.

Flashback by Gertrude Blue Werndli

submitted by Eleanor J. Storms

Flashbacks of the still haunt Gertrude Blue Werndli. "Towards the ending of the war, I was transferred from Headquarters, 2nd Air Division to the continent, eventually moving on to Germany. With more than enough points, my time came to be deployed home from there. On 14 December, 1945, other WACS, nurses, myself boarded the USAT Athos II at Le Havre, France, bound for Southampton, England to pick up more war-weary troops slated for home. As we departed Southampton on 15 December, we heard that the USS Enterprise, an aircraft carrier, had left there the day before and that we soon would be leaving too. The news of the Enterprise did not mean a great deal to us then; we were caught up in our own elation of going home.

At sea, morale was extremely high on the SS Athos. Our dreams of returning home were becoming true and at long last we would be able to spend our first Christmas home in several years. Several days passed, we had had several safety lectures and life-boat drills. The cold water of the Atlantic and rough waves looked very uninviting, but we gave it little thought. These were training sessions we had to go through but we wondered how many more we would have.

On the morning of 20 December, a notice posted on the bulletin board said that we were now six days out of Southampton, England and 600 miles NNW of the Azores. It also mentioned that a possible storm was developing. Then, on the morning of the 21st a bulletin read that winds had increased to 70 MPH and that the weather was continuing to worsen and a hurricane was nearing. No one had to put that notice up for the Athos II was already rocking and rolling in a very rough sea.

That very same afternoon, we were in the midst of the eye of the storm. According to the "Enterprise Daily News-Aboard Ship" an item written by a WAC (no name) the situation was critical. A port side engine had failed and the ship was off course. Athos was listing at a 40-45 degree angle. Enormous waves crashed over the bow and stern. Life boats were torn loose and swept out to sea from two decks. Inside the ship, the damage was incredible. A huge baking oven had torn loose in the kitchen and completely destroyed it. Pianos and heavy furniture tumbled and crashed against the walls knocking out inside walls. A PX fire had been put out and a motor launch had crashed into the radio room trapping the radio operator for hours.

Our own quarters were in shambles. We were ordered to go out into the passageway for safety reasons. There, too, we felt trapped. We heard objects banging against walls of the passageway. We did not know if some heavy object might come crashing through on either side of us. From deck vents above, water flooded through and into the passageway. Damaged commodes torn loose in the area contributed to the slimy mess. Troops were now being used to try and stabilize the ship. At that point, it was our only survival technique and defense against the fury of the storm. The fierce winds and heavy swells continued to take over human control of the ship. Here, in the passageway, we women stood and then sat, arms overhead, hanging onto the handrails for seven hours. The "Daily News" said that the ship was rolling to "D deck and the life rafts on B deck had all disappeared and that nearly all of the gangways were completely destroyed."

The storm continued on into the second day. We were still in the passageway. "The ship's steering device had gone out" and we felt every wrenching moment of it. Only an emotion of anger and encouragement to each other kept our determination up to fight the storm. We were not going to drown in that cold Atlantic water. We had survived bombings in London and air-raids and

other dire circumstances and this was just another crisis we were going to get through.

By my watch, it was 0600, the 23rd of December, when the winds and the rolling of the ship seemed to have abated somewhat. We learned that Athos II was helplessly driven way off course and that the crews were working to set her back on course towards the Azores. But, because of the severe damage, navigation was difficult. Not until that evening were we in calmer waters. Everything but our stomachs had quieted down.

Two days later, on Christmas Day, Athos limped into port at Horta, Azores. Land, and this port was welcomed with a cheer and a tear; we were thankful to be alive. We now had been ten days out at sea from Southampton.

Our food had been rationed on the Athos after the kitchen was completely destroyed and we were now looking forward to a meal. Our Christmas dinner consisted of Azores mutton, boiled eggs and brussel sprouts. We found we could scarcely look at the food and ate very little. New Year's day passed by in Horta and then on 4 January 1946, Athos was able to sail out from that port to Ponta Delgada, Azores arriving on the 5th. We were not sure as to why we were going there, but on our way to dock we spotted an aircraft carrier in port. It was the very same USS Enterprise that had departed Southampton a day ahead of us.

That day we were advised that we would return to New York on the Enterprise. They transferred us between the two ships via tug boat. Some of the women became violently seasick. As they boarded the Enterprise, the women carried their precious souvenirs while courteous sailors assisting the women, held onto "life-size dolls, fancy taffeta-velvet umbrellas and other unusual items". Those watching us board had big grins on their faces. Understanding smiles, perhaps, thinking of their own weird loot they were bringing home with them.

Settling into our "luxurious" clean quarters, the joy we felt leaving Southampton returned. Not even prompt assignments of GI details or of being on the listing as 'queen' of the latrine could dampen our spirits.

On 6 January 1946, the USS Enterprise left Ponta Delgada, Azores for the United States. We learned then that we were the first enlisted women to ever board the USS Enterprise aircraft carrier. "The Daily News-Aboard the Enterprise" commended the troops for their calmness and courage throughout the days of the hurricane. It commended the WACS too for waiting to have their own injuries taken care of last so that the more serious cases could be taken care of on the Athos. The dispensary and equipment on the ship had been completely destroyed. The news went on to say that we had survived the possible explosion from flooding almost reaching the height of the boilers in that room and capsizing also from the damaged steering device.

On our way at sea, the Navy completely surprised our troops with a complete and beautifully served Christmas dinner. We WACS were so touched by their generosity that we cried. Because of the lumps in our throat and because our appetites having not yet returned, we could not eat the food.

Eight days later, on 14 January 1946, the Enterprise sailed into the New York Harbor. The sight of United States land, harbor and the passing of the Statue of Liberty was never more appreciated by the troops abroad. It had been exactly one month to the day that we women had left Le Havre, France. We all debarked with light hearts, thankful that we had all survived those two critical days in the Atlantic and that the USS Enterprise had brought us home.

392nd BG Report

by Fred Thomas (392nd)

April 12. . . . Again, we point out that this is written long before you will read it, but so goes the newspaper business. However, since we will refer to the coming convention at Pheasant Run, we hope this reaches you before July.

Taking up where we left off back on January 14, quite a lot has transpired. We have exchanged letters with a number of our 392nd BG members as well as many other Division members. In mid January, Charlie and Helen Neundorf were down our way from Dixon, CA on business and Charlie and I were able to join others of the 2ADA for golf one day. Now, Charlie has some of my money. A few weeks later, our 579th Squadron CO, Myron Kielman, and Blanche were vacationing nearby and Myron joined us for golf one day. He, too, went away happy with money. Oh well, a small price to pay for the enjoyment of being able to be together. We are pleased that they visited with us.

Came March 1, our Southern California reunion dinner came to pass. As usual, it was an evening of good folks getting together in the great spirit of camaraderie we always enjoy at our reunions. Two hundred and thirty eight persons attended, and again, the 392nd BG members were one of the largest groups there from the Division. Lack of space prevents us from naming all who attended, but those of our general area gave us their usual fine support. Also, we were pleased to have a number from greater distances. Phil and Mrs. Rose came down from Richvalé, Gil Bambauer came over from Tucson, Bob Powers, et al came up from Escondido, Walt and Mrs. Hebron came from San Bernardino, and one first time couple whom we were pleased to meet finally, Warren and Mrs. Polking came up from Rancho Bernardo. As many of you know, Warren was one of our Squadron COs. I'm certain I have failed to mention someone we should, but I don't have the list at hand. Now comes our local 2ADA golf tournament June 6. My golf game is a disaster, but this time I am the official score keeper. Dare I win??

Two weeks after our dinner, I was off to Dallas to attend the 2ADA dinner reunion there. Another great evening with a number of 392nd BG members attending. The ceremonies there included the candle lighting ceremony, and we were honored to be selected as one of the candle lighters.

April 3-6 we were at Pheasant Run attending the mid-term Association Executive Committee meeting. Not only were we pleased to meet again with the administrative body of our Association, but we had the opportunity to tour the site of our coming convention. The facilities are there which will allow our members to fully enjoy themselves. This year each Group will have a meeting room to use throughout the reunion. That will give our members a

room to meet and swap yarns, display memorabilia, and enjoy reminiscing about days long past. We believe this a great step toward a true reunion. Also, perhaps we can have our Group election and business meeting in that room which will prevent that exercise from taking away from the festive atmosphere of our annual Group mini-reunion. And speaking of our mini-reunion, John Conrad has volunteered to conduct our program, so come ready with your best yarns about Wendling when you were there.

The 1987 reunion in Norwich was also discussed at Pheasant Run. As some of you know, the lack of hotel space there and the lack of a banquet hall large enough to accommodate our expected attendance have things at a disappointing state. Some of you are probably on Evelyn Cohen's stand-by list. However, do not despair just yet. We assure you, Evelyn is doing her very best to make arrangements to accommodate everyone possible. To quote her, "I just can't accept turning our members away and have them wait another four years."

We have had exchanges with our British friends, Denis Duffield and Grace Kimble, who do so much for our 392nd BG program in their areas, and every member's friends, David and Jean Hastings. All report the worst winter in 40 years is slowly relenting. David and Jean had fled Britain on the SST Concorde for a holiday in Vienna.

The finding and signing of new members has continued. . . . along with members from other Groups. We have the following new members added to our 392nd BG roster as of March 12: Roland D. Brown, Arthur W. Olson, Alexander A. Quaglietti, Ernest W. White, Ernest G. Wiener, Charles D. Martin, John Buschman, Grant W. Oasheim, Oather J. Warren, Sr., Anthony F. Mancuso. Also, Associate Members: Mary E. Burns, Timothy T. Sullivan, and Marie D. Gower, and Social

Member, P.E.B. "Benny" Warren. Mrs. Gower sent a nice note to Evelyn when she joined. She is the sister of Virgil M. Dunlap who served with the 392nd BG and was a friend of our member, R.J. Morr. He lost his life while with the 392nd BG. Mrs. Gower wrote that she wishes to help us with our memorial and cemetery upkeep. We certainly appreciate her wanting to be a part of our program. Benny Warren is looking for a character named Tommy Turner. We are sending his letter to Bill Robertie in hopes he can enter it in the letters section of the *Journal*. Whether regular member, associate, or social, we welcome all hands aboard and hope they come to appreciate and enjoy our Association as we do. We hope some of you will recognize some of these new members as friends of yours from WWII. If so, we will be happy to send you their addresses.

And finally, as you know, we will elect officers to fill various offices in the Association while at the convention at Pheasant Run. Please be informed that we will not stand for reelection as Vice President to represent the 392nd Bomb Group in the Association. Those of you who attended the convention at McAfee will recall that we expressed the desire to be relieved at the end of this term. We believe it time for a new face and a person with the desire and energy to represent us as we wish. One does tend to "burn out" after six years at the helm, regardless of his enthusiasm. We are fortunate to have a man who is willing and able to represent us in an energetic manner, who has great interest in the programs of our Group and Division, and of great importance, he has a great rapport with our British friends about Wendling and elsewhere. That man is John B. Conrad from Lexington, KY, and we recommend him most highly. While by no means can we just hand the office to John without accepting and considering any other candidates you may offer, we hope you will agree that John is our best candidate at this date. As we believe that to be the case, we have taken the liberty to keep John informed as to our Group activities over the past several months and we will continue to cooperate with him, both before and after the election, so there will be no lapse in the business affairs of our Group, and, also, the business affairs between our Group and the Division Association. The above does not mean that we will cease our interest in the Second Air Division Association. We will continue our hunt for new members, our activities with our Southern California area members, and our correspondence with our many friends throughout the Division. . . . our many British friends, those here in the US, and those in other countries of the world. As we have said many times, it has been an honor representing the 392nd Bomb Group in The Second Air Division Association since 1980. We will always remember your outstanding support and friendship. We know you will give our new Vice President the same cooperation you have always given me. See you at Pheasant Run!

NORWICH 1987

All members who are planning on Norwich next year have now received their reservation forms. If by any chance you have not received yours call me immediately. At the present time we are only accepting 'Stand-by' reservation. If anybody drops out, then the line moves forward. It's as simple as that.

**Evelyn Cohen
06-410 Delaire Landing Rd.
Philadelphia, PA 19114
Phone (215) 632-3992**

BUNGAY BULL

446th BOMB GROUP
by
William F. Davenport



I am starting this column with information that I hope reaches you in time, if you haven't received it from the 446th publication. Dedication of the 446th Memorial tree and plaque at the AF Museum, Wright Patterson AF Base, Dayton, Ohio will occur at 1000 (10:00 A.M.) on 8 July 1986.

Paul Wermuth and Jim Longstreth have been handling this event. Reservations have been made at the Holiday Inn, Fairborn, Ohio (513) 879-3920 for a meeting room the evening of 7 July for a get-together of us Bungay Buckaroos. We look forward to an outstanding program, including flyover and Taps by a bugler in honor of the 446th BG, and in particular, those friends and comrades who did not return as well as those who have joined them since. This is a 446th BG affair.

The work on authenticating those additional KIA's for our group Roll of Honor is proceeding. Frank Jones, who volunteered for some "grunt job" has really dug in. I believe he has contacted all who submitted names and has these in the hands of the right people at the Army Personnel Center. Since the last issue of the Bungay Bull, where we had an additional 14 names we now have three more. These names together with the other pending, will increase our Roll of Honor total to 410. As I have stated before, I think this is our most important task; to see that those who made the ultimate sacrifice are honored by being included on the Roll of Honor.

I am happy to report that English Oak of sufficient quality for our memorial gate at St. Marys, Flixton has been located and purchased by Mr. Baldry, who is restoring the gate given to the church in 1945 upon the departure from Flixton.

It is our plan to have a rededication ceremony for the gate in conjunction with the 2nd AD Assoc Annual Meeting to be held in Norwich in May 1987. Put this on your calendar. If for some reason, you are not able to attend the 2nd AD Assoc. meeting and would like to attend the 446th BG Gate Rededication, please contact the Group Leader.

We will be working in the coming months with John Archer; Mrs. Hindsey, Church Warden, and the new Church Rector on a program for the dedication. In addition to the gate restoration we want to make a gift to the church to provide for the perpetual upkeep and care of the gate. Also it would be fitting for a copy of the 446th BG Roll of Honor to be displayed in the church. It is hoped permission might be obtained

for the placement of a small locked glass cabinet in the church entry or anteroom.

At March Air Force Base, where the almost flyable "Delectable Doris" B-24 is currently located, considerable changes are taking place. Those who attended the 2nd AD Assoc. Meeting in Palm Springs will recall the excellent museum and collection of aircraft, including our B-24 were located on the operational side of the field. In the past several months, aircraft have been moved to a new site, across the field and alongside the freeway to San Diego. As of this writing, (24 March 86) our B-24 still remains on the concrete apron at the Heritage Flight Line, near its position in October 1985. The Air Force has deemed that in the interest of base security, activities such as the museum should be relocated away from the operational facilities. Dick Butler has informed me that the fund-raising effort for the first building at

389th Notes

by Lloyd E. West

As Spring approaches, it makes all of us want to jump in with renewed effort to make our organization bigger and better. This is proving true as we continue to search for new members. I wish to report we have 50 new members since the reunion at Great Gorge the first of Oct. 1985. The last report from Evelyn Cohen states the 389th leading with 546 members and for the 2nd Air Division Association 6012 members. So as all the Vice Presidents continue to say, "Keep the letters, stories and pictures coming."

In the 2nd Air Div. Memorial Room of the Central Library, Norwich, England the Group has a memorabilia binder or scrapbook, along with the Group Roll of Honor, as part of the Groups memorabilia project. If any of you have material or memorabilia that reflect the life and achievements of the Group for the benefit of members visiting the Memorial Room and others interested in the Group, would you be willing to donate some of these items? If so please get in touch with me as I have considerable information on this.

With the success of the fund drive for the Group Memorial at the Air Force Museum, Wright Patterson Air Force Base, Ohio, plans are underway for the completion of said Memorial. I met E. (Bud) Koorndyk and John Gillotte in Dayton, Ohio on Jan. 27, 1986 to finalize

the new site is half-way to its goal of one million dollars. Since the entire history of the Second Air Division is built around the B-24 aircraft, it is only fitting that this airplane should occupy a prominent place in the future museum. The owner of the B-24 has indicated an interest in seeing this airplane properly displayed under cover. Wouldn't it be great if the Second Air Division Association undertook to provide a home for the airplane which was our vehicle in World War II. Let me know your thoughts on this.

As to the 446th History! Harold Jansen has been to the States and visited with Colonel Brogger in Florida during February, to put together a foreword and glean any additional facts from him. Publication is still planned for this year.

The 446th BG this past Memorial Day had a wreath laid at Maddingly Cemetery, Cambridge in honor of our dead. Several groups and organizations have done this in the past. John Archer handled the arrangements as he does for the 452nd.

Hope to see you all in Dayton at our dedication, or Lake Charles at the Second Air Division Meeting in July. Also we plan on a rendezvous at the 8th AFHS in Hollywood, Fla. in October. This is a busy year for your old Group Leader!!

Keep tuned to Beach bell.

plans for the Memorial. We planned the Memorial with the aid of Richard Baughman, public affairs director for the museum.

In cooperation with the Air Force and the Museum the dedication service for the Memorial will be at 10:30 A.M. on Oct. 4, 1986. We are arranging with a hotel in Dayton, Ohio for rooms for October 3 and October 4, 1986. The evening of October 3 will be at your pleasure, then there will be an informal dinner and mini-reunion the evening of October 4, 1986.

If you would like to attend the dedication and mini-reunion to follow get in touch immediately with either of the names listed in the notice elsewhere in the *Journal*. A schedule of events and approximate costs will be returned to you. Due to the arrival of your June issue of the *Journal* your prompt consideration will be required. Hoping that you can join us for what will be a memorable occasion.

When you read this in the *Journal* I would hope that your plans are completed to attend the 39th annual reunion of the 2nd Air Division Assoc. at Pheasant Run resort, St. Charles, Ill. July 10-13, 1986.

Reminder — It was in the March issue of the *Journal* that each Group would have a home room so to speak at Pheasant Run. If you are coming and have memorabilia that you can travel with please bring it and share it with others of the group. There will be a place to display such items. Join us for a memorable time and looking forward to seeing you at Pheasant Run.



Open Letter To the 93rd

by Charlie Weiss (93rd)

93rd Memorial: I suppose this is the hottest item on the agenda. Here's a brief rundown. We (committee) have just about decided on the general configuration of the Memorial, to be located at Hardwick, and about the size of the one at Seething Air Base. (See previous *Journals*). The inscription which will tell about the 93rd Squadrons, Support Units on the base, engravings of flying B-24's, and other logos, has yet to be finalized. There are a few different views on this! In any event the final plan will have to be finished by October and in the hands of the stone mason this year! Although we have about enough money to cover the cost, there still may be unforeseen expenses. Therefore contributions are still open, so if you want to be included in this fine gesture, get cracking. There have been some suggestions that if there is any money left over we could put that towards the cost of plaques which would go in the USAF Museum in Dayton and USAF Academy. Sounds OK to me.

The plans are to have the Memorial completed and erected by the 2ADA Reunion in Norwich in May 1987. It is at this time we plan it's Dedication.

93rd Roster (and Geographical Index): You will all have to admit that Glenn Follweiler has done a great job on these items — they reflect his professional touch. Now that there is a 2ADA Roster in being (I presume all have one) the requirement is somewhat less to have our own. However Glenn is still going to keep the fire burning with a Geographical Index. For those of us who can still travel, such an Index is really great. It lists all the 93rd Members by City and State. Anyway if you have any questions about the subject of 93rd Roster et al, don't hesitate to drop Glenn a line — you'll get an answer for sure. Send him two bucks for the Geographical Index. He'll up date your Roster too if you have ordered one previously. Glenn Follweiler, 1881 E 5150 S, Salt Lake City, Utah 84117.

Journal Entries: Now you're getting smart! It was great to see so many *Journal* entries by 93rd types this last issue!! Keep it up. YOU are the only ones to know your personal experiences. I refer to one of the articles — "... Trailing Wire Antenna." Well some one (I won't say who) forgot that the bloody thing was still extended when we landed, and you guessed it, it went right through the glide path landing shack on the end of the runway!!

I still get glowing reports from those who have visited the old base Hardwick and have run into the outstanding hospitality of its landlord — Dave and Jean Woodrow. Don't miss our visit to the base 1987. Re: photo p29 March *Journal*:

About the Memorial

by Jordan Uttal

In the last issue of the *Journal*, I was able to report on the optimism felt by the Board of Governors as to the possibility of their obtaining a grant from the Fulbright Commission for the funding of a Librarian for the 2nd Air Division (USAAF) Memorial Room.

At this time I am more than delighted to advise the membership that I was able to report to the Executive Committee of the Association, in time for their April 4-5 meeting in St. Charles, Ill. that definite word has been received. I learned on 11 March that the Fulbright Commission Board of Foreign Scholarships has approved the award for the American Librarian for one year beginning Sept. 1986. It is expected by the Governors that if this works out successfully, the grant will be extended for a second year.

The announcement has been circulated to the major libraries in the U.S. seeking library graduates in their mid to late twenties with a recognized qualification in Librarianship (normally an American Library Association accredited degree in Library Science) and at least three years experience at a professional level, with good communication skills and the ability to give presentations on the American way of life, and facts and figures on American culture. Selection will be made by the Fulbright Commission in conjunction with the Board of Governors and this in no way affects the Librarian Endowment the Association presented to the Trust at McAfee. Rather, it will provide our fund time to accumulate interest for future needs when the Fulbright grant terminates.

Congratulations have already been extended by me to my colleagues on the Board of Governors, and the Executive Committee has asked me to repeat them in my report at the Annual Governors meeting.

2nd Air Division Archives — Memorabilia:

On two or three occasions in the past I have appealed for historical material to be sent to the Memorial Room in Norwich, and I must confess that the response has been disappointing. It is the desire of the Trust, and of our friends at the Library

to make our Memorial the outstanding Archive source in existence about the 2nd Air Division and its personnel.

One bright response, however, was recently received enthusiastically by Colin Sleath, and I hasten to report on the material received from John McCanna of the 389th Bomb Group:

Service order relating to John's belongings sent back to his next of kin while he was missing in action.

Service order for John's return home after his escape from enemy territory.

War Department guides to Great Britain and Dorset.

Phyllis Dixey Show Program, Flyer for taxicab tour of London, London Cinema Program, Red Cross Clubs map of London, London Bus Ticket

Colin reports that nearly all these items are completely new to the Archive. He would like to have documentary material which reflects every aspect of service life in Britain, on and off duty. There is a lot of interest in Britain at the moment on the interaction of G.I.'s and local people. The Archive needs to have good sets of Wartime magazines and newspapers such as *Target Victory*, *Stars and Stripes*, etc. The Group Memorabilia project also needs a lot of material for all groups.

It is urgently requested that you look thru your souvenirs and see what you can offer the Memorial Room. Photocopies of prized items are acceptable if you do not wish to part with something just yet, but **PLEASE DO IT NOW**. Mail items to Colin Sleath, Deputy Divisional Librarian, Norwich Central Library, Bethel Street, Norwich, Norfolk, England NR2 1NJ to reach him as soon as possible.

I understand that each Group Vice President has received from the Library a list of appropriate items, so if you are in any doubt at all about what is acceptable, get in touch with them, or with me. The material is urgently needed.

Please also remember that Hathy Veynar is still desirous of having your taped reminiscences (not to exceed 30 minutes). Please record them and mail them direct to her.

Nadine, Col. Leland Feagle is 2nd from left, middle row. So send in those interesting stories to Bill Robertie.

1987 2ADA Reunion: I know that space and reservations are at a premium — that you'll have to get from Evelyn Cohen. However, if there is still room to get in on Reunion activities there are many bed and breakfast places in and around Norwich where one could get fine accommodations at reasonable prices. It would have to be up to you to get the necessary transportation to and from the various activities, as well as locating the B&B places. Just a

suggestion for those who haven't been able to get in under reservation procedures.

Ploesti: Some of you on the raid will be interested to know that the 1986 Air-War Symposium will cover as its topic, "The Ploesti Raid 1943." Sponsored by SAFMMF on Oct. 18, 1986 in Hollywood, Fla., and moderated by Roger Freeman. Reservations and info write SAFMMF, P.O. Box 4738, Hollywood, Fla., 33083.

93rd History: Don't forget, if you haven't sent historic material to Carlos Vasquez as yet — send it. You'll get it back (if you want it back) one day.

Old Bunchered Buddies of Old Buck

Milt Stokes (453rd)

There are many things to say and write about, so I must get going. Indeed, I have put this off much too long. This now becomes a thesis type of an undertaking.

It is Spring again and all the black cold weather of Winter has departed; taking with it the snow and puddles of ice water. I know it is Spring because yesterday I sent in my 1985 tax returns to the Federal Government, Westtown Township, and States of Pennsylvania and Delaware. I also pay income taxes to the City of Wilmington, Delaware. It is nice to get that load off my mind, you too, pay taxes I know. We all must pay to keep our good roads and streets in repair. We must pay for our Navy and Air Force, which are now patrolling in the Mediterranean Sea, and we must pray too that soon all terrorism shall cease in the world. We fought a war, you and I, to end Nazi and Japanese terrorism. We were not completely successful were we? Enough of that!

Maybe we were just running away from the 20 degree weather here in Pennsylvania when we accepted Moose (Charlie Boy) Allen's invitation to meet him for the Dallas Mini Reunion. Anyway, it was nice to be in Texas when the blue bonnet flowers blanket the roadsides. It was in the seventies in Texas, just a beautiful time to be with friends and old 453rd buddies. We visited Howard Cole and Vera in Mission, Texas in the "Vallah" — that is the Rio Grande Valley as you all know. Mike Benarcik completed our cadre and came equipped with cameras and 28 rolls of film. He used it all! Mike even had Moose back the car up on a six lane highway overpass in Houston, so that he could photograph the main streets of downtown — eighty feet below. We ignored horns of passing cars as derisory and hoped they wouldn't smash into us.

We visited a new member of the 2nd Air Division and 453rd Bomb Group, Oliver Morris, of Tuleta, Texas. He and his wife live on a ranch now being mined by the Texas highway department for the stone aggregate that they use for road beds. The hole behind his home must be two hundred feet deep and thousands of feet across. Oliver (Mo) was a gunner mechanic on Moose's crew, when with the 453rd. He looks the same today as he did in Old Buck. They both speak with awe in their voices, of a raid on Germany with then Lt. Don Lorenzo flying loose formation off their wing. A close burst of 155mm flak sent Lorenzo up and over the formation, who then dived (or rolled) below to come back again into formation. Charlie Allen says it was a complete roll with bombs still aboard. Col. Donald W. Lorenzo Ret. will get a copy of this *Journal* and I'm asking him to verify Moose's report. (Maybe that should be, deny).

Don Olds is still trying to complete our KIA report, asked for by Jordan Uttal for the 2nd A.D. Memorial in Norwich. On our memorial at Old Buckenham we list a William R. Carman as KIA. The Record Center has no listing of William R. Carman as being KIA — but they did have a Walter R. Carmack, KIA, 25 February 1944, 453rd B.G. serial #16149074, SGT from Brighton, MI. So, now our memorial must add the name. Do any of you know the circumstances of the death of Walter Carmack? Were you on his crew? Please write and tell me if you know this man. The War Department records are sketchy and not too complete. He lived with his parents, Walter and Frances Carmack, at 229 East Street, Brighton, Michigan. He had a wife, Mary M. Carmack, who resided at the same address. What information could you add? You might call the Carmack's listed in Brighton, Michigan or send me the phone numbers (if available) and I will call.

Bill Robertie is to be congratulated for the big 32 page *Journal* of March 1986. When Bill put out a 26 page *Journal* last year he said that was the last time he would do that as it took too much work. I can believe that and sympathize with him. So, my thanks to you Bill from the whole gang at the 453rd B.G. You do an exceptional job — a thankless job most of the time, but all of us do thank you. Bill, would you please thank your staff for us too!

Your idea of sending the *Journal* and Roster in one mailing was a good one. Don't make too little of it. So maybe it was slow in coming, the ponies don't run too fast anymore! Rick Rokicki deserves a lot of praise from the 2nd A.D.A. for his and his wife's efforts too. No one can thank

you people who do the day in day out work of the 2nd A.D.A. enough.

Did you notice where Old Bunchered Buddies of Old Buck was listed on the front cover of the *March Journal*. Well don't look. Milt Veynar didn't list the 453rd B.G. as belonging in the 2nd A.D. Instead, he shows the 458 B.G. at Old Buck and at Horsham St. Faith. No harm done Milt. We have heard a dozen requests for corrections, but it is much too late for a retraction. Instead, the Old Bunchered Buddies of Old Buck are demanding a round of thirst quenchers at Saint Charles, Illinois in July — YOU PAY! No, take that back, we of the 453rd are never vindictive — you have done much too good a job over the years for us to criticize you. We will buy you a couple. See you there in July.

As if making up for the foregoing omission, we count four good interesting articles by 453rd scribes; Mallick, Benarcik, Bartelt, and Lambert. Just when one wonders if anyone reads these lines, we get an issue like the *March 1986* rendition. Every one wants to write and does. I thought that issue was outstanding in articles. Mallick has written before, but as far as I can determine, it was a first time for Benarcik, Bartelt, and Lambert. Delmar Wangsvich writes well too, he only has a letter to the editor in this last issue, but some of his past efforts have shown real literary talent. So "Bunchered Buddies" keep writing. Let not your light be hidden under a basket. We all like to hear from you. We would like to hear from Ramsay Potts, Julian Wilson, Charles Ward, Art Cromarty, and many more. Maybe Jim Stewart would pick up our spirits with an article. If Bob Coggeshall would write as well as he tells stories, that would make good reading. If you all would write who belong to the 453rd, we could have a best seller. We could make it up in book form as a history of the 453rd. It would be published.

Wins Purple Heart — by Shaving

by S. A. Sievertson (458th BG)

It is August 1944 and my first mission — Brandenburg, the gateway to Berlin.

It was practice to send the pilot of a new crew, on his first mission as co-pilot, with an old crew. This way he could be the expert on the second mission with his own crew.

Awakened by the orderly in the dark early hours, I tried to be as quiet as possible to avoid disturbing the others in our barracks. While shaving by flashlight (you were told it's a good idea to shave close because of the need to get a good fit with the oxygen mask), I cut myself on the neck and it wouldn't stop bleeding. It was getting late, so I wrapped my neck in the traditional white scarf and hurried down to breakfast, went thru the briefing and went on the mission. It was a hairy one

although I didn't realize it at the time — didn't have anything to compare it to. I was a poor co-pilot on top of it — couldn't fly good formation from the right seat. The pilot (can't remember the name) was very patient although he had to fly most of the mission.

We got back ok and went thru the debriefing. My neck was still bleeding and it showed thru the scarf so I went over to the dispensary for help. The doc froze the cut and bandaged it, then started to fill out some papers. I asked him why the paperwork and he said, "Well, so you can get your Purple Heart, shot in the neck." When I told him what really happened he laughed almost as hard as my crew when I told them the story.

The Bungay Buckaroos

Submitted by John Archer

Printed courtesy Beccles and Bungay Journal

Wartime Days Relived

The aircraft of the American Eighth Air Force, and the men who flew them, made a deep impression in the mind and memory of John Archer, who spent his boyhood in the "shadow" of the wartime airfield at Flixton, near Bungay.

As a hobby since the war, John has become an authoritative historian on the lives and exploits of many of the airmen who flew from the Waveney Valley.

He has many friends among the veterans, and has written a number of articles which breathe life into the fading memories of those dramatic years.

His latest tells the story of a typical wartime liberty run to Norwich. The photographs from his own extensive collection are full of the special atmosphere of those days which are still so vivid to those who recall the "Bungay Buckaroos" who flew from Flixton.



Chester and Dick had been working around the clock since they arrived at Flixton airfield in the winter of 1943. They had not ventured outside the perimeter fence in six weeks.



Coffee break as the NAAFI van arrives.

As they returned to the cold comfort of their Nissen hut, among the farms bordering the great estate of Sir Robert Shafto Adair, the tannoy boomed out a message. "Attention to broadcast: There will be a liberty run to Norwich leaving the station at 1800 hours and returning at 2300 hours. Over."

Chester and Dick didn't know where or what kind of a place Norwich was, but they were determined to find out. They donned their best uniforms, rushed over to the orderly room, and collected their passes. The trucks were already waiting, they boarded, and were soon on their way.

Through the town of Bungay the airman caught glimpses of the quiet waters of the Waveney as it wound its way to the sea. In about forty-five minutes the convoy reached the city of Norwich. As the convoy rumbled through the cobbled streets the airmen saw for the first time destruction caused by the blitz, heaps of what had been houses, churches without roofs or windows, large cleared-up spaces in the middle of the city where ruined buildings had been cleared away. The trucks came to a stop along a road bordering the cattle pens of the market.

Following On

Chester grabbed the arm of Dick and followed the crowd down the street. "Where do we go from here?" he asked. Dick didn't seem to know either, but everyone else did, so they just followed along.

When they came to a corner building bearing a sign Steward and Patteson Ltd., Ales and Spirits, a dozen fellows walked in, with Chester and Dick not far behind.

The room inside was full of tobacco smoke. Along one side stood a long bar, and elsewhere were plain wooden tables and

chairs. The airmen placed some of the strange new coins on the bar, for which they received large mugs containing brown liquid.

Chester and Dick stood around and looked over the scene. Besides a large number of the ever-present GIs there were a number of local civilians, British soldiers in baggy battledress, and a couple of fellows wearing RAF blue.

After a while Dick and Chester went outside. They were met by the blackest darkness either of them had ever experienced. They could see absolutely nothing except the occasional subdued beam of a flashlight or the tiny lights of a passing vehicle. They moved cautiously down what they presumed to be the sidewalk.

The boys wandered down side streets — their trucks were always just a "three-minute walk — you simply couldn't miss it."

Left Behind

Shortly they were rewarded by the unmistakable whir of the motor of a GI truck, but as they rounded a corner, to their dismay they saw the first of a long line of trucks start off with a roar, followed by all the others, one by one. The street was soon empty.

"Maybe if we get out to the Bungay highway we can catch a ride," Chester suggested, undaunted.

They walked and walked some more. After a while Dick stopped suddenly, clutched Chester's arm and pointed. There was one of those bright red telephone booths which are so familiar a sight in England. Dick entered the booth and picked up the receiver. "Operator," said a soft feminine voice.

"Listen, operator," Dick said urgently. "A buddy of mine and I are trying to get to Bungay. Are we on the right road?"

"Yes," the operator said, "you are on the Norwich-Bungay road. If the phone booth is on the right side of the road you are heading in the right direction. Bungay is 11 miles away, ring me up at the next booth you come to and I'll tell you if you are still on the right road."

After what seemed like another 20 miles of walking, they came to another phone booth. Lifting the receiver, Dick again heard that voice of sweetness and light. "Yes you are still on the right road. Bungay is eight miles away. Eight miles. The boys kept walking.



GIs and local girls enjoying the dancing.

They kept on and at each telephone booth they paused to receive their reassurance. As the first grey suggestion of dawn appeared in the eastern sky, the voice said, "When you turn the corner, you will be in the town of Bungay. On the main road two miles further on you will find a junction. Choose the left road and you will soon be at your airfield. Good morning and happy walking."

An hour and a half later, the tired, worn-out bodies of Dick and Chester were stretched out in their respective beds.

The 445th Reporting

by Frank DiMola (445th)

There have been many mini-reunions held in various parts of the country. One most recent was the Dallas one in March and was well attended. I could not make this one, but Buddy Cross, my assistant VP did. He reported the wonderful atmosphere that was created by re-acquaintances after so many years. Sometime we need more time to sit down and talk. That is why the three day affairs are really great. But we can't all do that. With Buddy's great effort he was able to invite our Protestant Chaplain of the 445th BG, Chaplin T. Herbert Minga and his wife along with three invited guests. Just a few years ago we had Rev. Joseph E. Quinlan O.M.I. at our tree dedication ceremony at Wright Patterson Field, Dayton, Ohio.

I have many interesting stories to tell and they all came to me thru the mail. There is still a growing interest that the sons and daughters of our combat men are showing. I am referring to Edward Zobaz (IN) Chris McDougal (IA) and Mary Beth (Kennedy) Barnard (MA). Edward has obtained micro film of the 445th Bomb Group record from the United States Air Force Historical Research Center and has found much information about the group. He has contacted a few men of his Dad's crew Robert Zobac, 700th. Chris has done a deep search and study about the Kassel raid of September 27th, 1944. He sent me a list and numbers of all the aircrafts that we lost, along with a list of names that he is trying to locate. From that list of 27 names, I was able to locate just three men, Rev. Paul M. Dickerson, Arthur Shay and George Noorigian.

Mary Beth Bernard, our group historian, a long time associate member, along with her husband, Sheridan, has also obtained the micro film and has done much research on the 445th Bomb Group. She is trying to complete a pictorial photo album before the July reunion. If you have any photos please send them to Mary Beth and they will be returned promptly.

Vernon Markham sent me diagrams of the Gotha and Fredrichshafen raids which were very interesting to review. I believe that W.W. Jones and James Evans led both these missions. Vernon was also able to locate some of his crew. A great feeling after 40 some years.

Arthur Shay, an old Life magazine photographer and reporter promises to take a group picture for us at the reunion plus do a story on us possibly for the Chicago papers so come on down.

Floyd Oglesby on his trip to Europe in September last, along with his wife Gwen was highlighted when they visited Tibenham and were warmly welcomed by the members of the Norfolk gliding club. Floyd writes "I was ecstatic at the life-time opportunity to go aloft and take some pictures.

My flight was exciting and it brought

I received a letter from Tony North, Deputy Divisional Librarian from the Central Library, Norwich, England and he is undertaking a project to collect material for the Group's Memorabilia Binder which will be housed in the Memorial Room. He is looking for any material you may have about your army life, i.e. maps, orders, combat records, recreational activities, celebrations, etc. Please send them to me, xeroxed copies please and I will forward them in a package to Tony North.

Buddy Cross and I have been working on a patch to be worn at our reunions. A sample patch was reviewed at the Dallas mini-reunion and we did receive some good reports on it. Plans are in progress so we can have the patches ready by July.

I am greatly impressed by the large number of Texans that are in this association. It is a good thing that I have Buddy Cross from Amarillo, Texas as my assistant VP. If you spend some time and search thru the new roster, you will notice how many members are almost your next door neighbors. We finally hit the 400 mark in membership, many thanks to all of you. If you have a list of names that I may use, please send them to me. I have a large list of inactive men from this group and by contacting them and telling them I found you, we may get them back in the fold.

Today being April 10th, I just received a letter from Eric Ratcliffe our contact for the progress of a Memorial to be placed in the Tibenham area. As we all know the area in Tibenham, we are looking for a secure place to have our Memorial placed so we are thinking of erecting one on the grounds where the Norfolk Glider Club is now. The club is purchasing the old airfield for a large sum of pounds. They need our help. What better way can we contribute to this lasting Memorial of our old air base? I'll have more on this at the Chicago reunion. Any donations can be sent to me or mail it directly to Eric Ratcliffe, Church Lodge, Tibenham, Norfolk, England.

I just received a letter from George H. Lymburn (Remember him — he who jumped via parachute at the age of 60) — he visited the "General" and Billie Terrill in San Bernardino, Calif. George writes, "The General was alert enough when we talked about flying". Anyone in the area, pay Bob a visit.

back many fond and some not so fond memories of 41 years ago." He reports that the stories are still going around about the haunted control tower. When the tower was still up, people were frightened to enter or even walk around it. It was reported that a person in flying clothes similar to those worn by 445th combat crews had been seen on several occasions wandering around in the darkness.



2nd Air Division Archive

2nd Air Division, USAAF
Memorial Room
Norwich Central Library
Norfolk, England

There is now an urgent need to build a comprehensive archive in the UK on the 2nd Air Division and its constituent units, 1942-1945.

WHY NOW?

Most veterans have now retired. This means they are free to make the long-awaited trip back to England to see the old sights. They also now have time to sort out long-treasured souvenirs of their war service.

WHO WILL BENEFIT?

More and more Americans are visiting the Room: veterans retracing the past; others, discovering what their countrymen have achieved in their name.

A growing number of researchers turn to the Memorial Room for material for their school project, university dissertation, book, television program, information to help trace former colleagues, etc.

WHAT IS WANTED?

Veterans have preserved a considerable amount of material as souvenirs for their own pleasure. It is vitally important that these priceless documents do not disappear by accident or neglect.

Please look again at your memorabilia and consider what you could donate to the archive — originals if possible, or xerox copies.

EXAMPLES OF MATERIALS WANTED:

Personal diaries, letters, combat records
Movement orders, citations, awards
Formation sheets, navigators' maps, strike photographs
POW experiences, escapes, missing air crew reports
News bulletins, concert programs, celebrations
Telegrams to next of kin
Photographs of personnel, activities, aircraft

Remember: however trivial it seems to you, it may be valuable to a researcher.

Could you tape your reminiscences?

Send to:

Colin Sleath
2nd Air Division, USAAF, Memorial
Norwich Central Library
Bethel Street
Norwich, NR2 1NJ
England

The 448th Speaks

by Leroy J. Engdahl (448th)

There are so many things to say at the beginning of this writing, I hardly know where to start.

I believe we are all proud of our President's decision to take military action against Libya and their barbaric bombings and murders against innocent victims around the world and to our military men who performed with great courage and skill. We feel it's way past time that our country stops letting our citizens be abused around the world.

Plans are moving along very well on our groups' reunion-memorial dedication ceremony at Dayton, Ohio and the Air Force Museum grounds where we'll dedicate our bronze memorial with an unveiling ceremony. Just prior to the beginning of the ceremony there will be a "Fly-Over" consisting of four F-4 Phantom jets honoring more than 400 of our group who were killed in action while flying out of Seething.

All indications are that we will have a very large attendance as already seventy of our eighty hotel rooms we have reserved have been taken and we will have to ask for more rooms. This is very gratifying to see our people turning out to pay tribute to our comrades who lost their lives while

flying out of Seething.

My sincere thanks go out to all who have unselfishly made donations toward this memorial. Without your contributions this memorial tribute would not have been possible. Also my thanks go to all of you who have sent stamps and cash to help with all the expenses of mailing photo copies, typing, etc. You have kept our 448th Bomb Group Association from having to assess dues which we don't want to do if we can avoid it. It is your thoughtfulness and unselfishness that has allowed us to operate without collecting dues.

There will be a photographer from "Monarch Systems" of Mansfield, Ohio to take pictures for a "reunion album" which will sell for \$10.00. It is not compulsory that you purchase an album, but I encourage all to have their picture made so that those who do buy one will have a good representation of our attendance. I was sent a sample of a B-24 reunion album this firm made and its quality is very good. I will have the sample at Dayton.

We will have a supply of our "448th Bomb Group" caps available for sale at Dayton at \$5.00 each. Also, group ensignia patches at \$5.00, 448th tail ensignia patches at \$2.00 each plus 2nd A.D. Lapel pins at \$4.00, B-24 pewter tie tacs at \$6.00, $\frac{3}{8}$ " silver plated B-24 Lapel pins at \$7.00 and other items. Profits from these sales

will go toward the restoration project of our Seething control tower. Also, George DuPont who lives at 9 Tropical Park Rd., Ocala, FLA 32675, has a cassette tape historical record of the history of the 448th Bomb Group from its' inception until its' end. It is a very good quality and worth the price of \$10.00. George is donating the profits to the "Tower Fund". For a copy, contact George DuPont.

I just had a letter from Ralph Whitehead along with a recent picture on the progress of the tower restoration. The pipe barrier has been installed around the top and the "American Room" will be the room we will be most interested in as it will display our "Honor Roll", individual pictures, articles, etc. that have been sent to Ralph Whitehead by our members. If you haven't sent Ralph items you have, which can be pieces of flak, pieces of damaged planes, etc., please do so at once. Ralph's address: Echo Sierra, The Loke, Blundeston NR32 5AR, Suffolk, England.

We are hoping to have a large turn out at Norwich-Seething in May, 1987.

For those who had made plans to make this meeting again with our friends of the Wavely Flying Group and the Village of Seething, please keep those plans. We will have further news to report at our mini-reunion at Pheasant Run and our reunion-Memorial dedication at Dayton, Ohio so don't let present news discourage you.

Fifth Annual Southern California Second Air Division Reunion Dinner

by W. F. Davenport, Dinner Chairman

On a night with weather reminiscent of England, the 5th Annual Southern California Second Air Division Reunion Dinner was held at the Marine Corps Air Station, El Toro. The new Officer's Club was used for this function and true to their reputation, the Marines went all out to welcome us aboard and provided a sumptuous feast at very reasonable cost.



(L to R) Fred Thomas, Harry Orthman and Speaker Wilbur Morrison.

The count for dinner attendees reached as high as 260. However, when it was all done a total of 238 including the General's representative, Col. DeFries attended. Among these attendees, Chuck Turner and his wife came from as far away as Kentucky to attend. Snowbird, former President Vince LaRussa and his wife Gloria

were present from their winter nest in Escondido. Needless to say Fred and Elva Thomas, immediate Past President, were present to make sure that things went well. Fred started this venture and it has grown every year. It is the largest gathering of Second Air Division associated people other than the annual reunion.

The attendance from our area came from all over California; Sacramento, Bay Area, San Diego and of course LA and Orange County, also Arizona and Nevada. There were a number of first time attendees which we were very happy to see. It was an excellent evening. I know of no complaints about location, food or service. This meeting was held without a head table as many of our associates had requested. This provided committee members freedom to get acquainted with our table mates.

The speaker, Wilbur H. Morrison, a former 20th Air Force Bombardier, Douglas Aircraft Company public relations employee and author of six books did a fabulous job in filling the troops in on some of the backroom and political maneuvering in the high echelons. The talk was based almost entirely on his book, *Fortress Without a Roof* which is based on unpublished war diaries and personal interviews with participants at all levels from politicians

and generals to sergeants and privates. In fact one of these was then Captain Harry Orthman, who served on our dinner committee and is a former member of the 492nd and 44th Bomb Groups.

Fortress Without a Roof is a title adapted from a quote by President Franklin D. Roosevelt in referring to coming battles for the fortress Europe. Morrison's research and references used throughout his presentation and book demonstrate his thoroughness in the development of his historical review of those days when we and his audience at El Toro were making history in spite of the maneuvering and back-biting that was occurring at high command levels. I came away satisfied that someone always takes care of the little people, us young kids of that day.

Fortress Without a Roof is to be republished in paperback this spring. I urge all to buy and read it. You will realize how much a part of history you were and how fortunate you are that you were not included on the Roll of Honor in Norwich Public Library. Yes, this was indeed an outstanding event for those who attended.

Organizers of this event represented a wide spectrum of the Second Air Division: Dick Boucher, 445th; Bill Davenport, 446th; Charlie McBride, 448th; Harry Orthman, 492nd/44th; Fred Thomas 392nd; and Chuck Walker 445th. Special thanks are due to Bill Robertie for providing the committee with advance copies of the Roster for use in our mailing list.

Now It Can Be Told

by Ed Essex (389th BG)

Forty years ago, the Great Allied Air Armadas had swept the skies clean over Europe; under the summer sun only rubble remained where the great cities of the Third Reich had stood.

Volumes enough to fill many libraries have been written about that great conflict, yet, as in every complex period of history, new material continues to reveal itself.

One diligent researcher, poring over the many reports filed by flight surgeons of the Eighth Air Force heavy bomb groups, repeatedly came upon the letters E.I.A. The letters K.I.A., W.I.A., and M.I.A. were familiar to him, but E.I.A. was a mystery. He corresponded with a number of former Eighth Air Force flight surgeons, who professed to know nothing of these notations. Finally one of his correspondents, an outspoken critic of certain Air Force practices, revealed the story here recorded.

It is apparent that this information was an embarrassment to the Army Air Corps, and, as we all know, small embarrassments can invite ridicule, something that the higher echelons of the military have never been able to cope with gracefully.

It seems that the fledgling Eighth Air Force had begun planning the huge expansion that was to come, as an increasing flood of heavy bombers and crews arrived from the U.S.

With the increase in planes and men, certain consultants were hired by the Eighth Air Force to deal with specific problems which were foreseen.

One of the consultants hired was a dietitian, an English lady, now deceased, who was to plan the now infamous "Low Gas Diet". Apparently no one thought to question the lady's political leanings; had they done so they would have discovered evidence of Nazi sympathies.

The Eighth Air Force breakfast usually consisted of sausage, powdered eggs, English bread, coffee, and grapefruit juice.

Powdered eggs were prepared by mixing the powder with water until a viscous mass was produced, which then was fried in heavy oil. When overcooked, as they often were, the mass (or mess) could be grasped and swung rapidly in a circle without disintegrating. The sausage, which came in long tin tubes, when sliced and fried, rested on its cushion of oil on the plate, and given a mess hall table less than level, would slither across the plate like a primitive Hovercraft. The English bread was undeniably nutritious, but gave new meaning to the term "high fiber": bits of wheat stalks and an occasional twig disturbed its texture, making for adventures in chewing.

The American coffee was the genuine article, black and rich: it almost made up for the rest of the menu. The grapefruit

juice was unique, highly acidic with a distilled quality, it had almost no sugar content. The veteran airmen would sip it slowly, presumably to ward off scurvy, while the new recruits would take a long draught, causing facial convulsions.

The effects of a typical breakfast manifested themselves one to two hours after take-off, over enemy territory. Stick-thin navigators gradually took on a comfortable, well-fed appearance and those given to extra flesh would become positively rotund. At 25,000 feet altitude, when the gases were released, everyone was on oxygen, so damage was minimal.

The cases described by flight surgeons were extreme. There was the incident involving the greedy tail gunner: this individual was slight of build, but known for his voracious appetite; he had eaten two portions of every item, including the juice, on that particular morning. Over central France his expansion caused him to become wedged in the tail turret, the inevitable explosion hurled him out of the turret and into the waist gun and mount, his injuries, duly recorded, "multiple contusions and facial lacerations".

In the case of the radioman, rapid expansion caused a wire in his electric suit to break, resulting in electrical failure. His personal injury was listed as "hypothermia and severe frostbite".

In the incidents outlined above, the flight surgeon had noted E.I.A. in the margins of his reports.

At this point most readers have solved the mystery: E.I.A. meant *Exploded in Action*.

At war's end, the quartermaster corps had several tons of powdered eggs in storage. At the inception of the Marshall Plan, hungry Europeans were offered the huge stocks of eggs; they politely refused, stating that their long, distinguished, culinary experience enabled them to conclude that powdered eggs could not be classified as food.

The surplus powdered eggs were eventually sold to a New York manufacturer for a trifling sum. This man engaged the services of a research chemist who gained fame as the inventor of leatherette, a leather-like material, water-resistant and tough, which was used in the manufacture of purses, briefcases, and other small articles. Powdered eggs were mixed with water and rolled thin; when high heat was applied, leatherette was created.

The several thousand tins of sausage were rendered into lard, yielding almost 80%, a welcome gift to the Europeans (who had little shortening during the war). The remaining 20% of the sausage was dried and ground into a protein food supplement, also distributed under the Marshall Plan.

The thousands of gallons of grapefruit juice might have been destroyed had it not been for the efforts of one Eighth Air Force flight surgeon, who had observed the facial

convulsions of air crew members after drinking large amounts of the juice. He had written to Sir John Bascomb, M.D., the tropical disease authority, to propose an extraordinary treatment. The results were recorded in Sir John Bascomb's definitive three volume work: "Tropical Diseases and Their Treatments". Under the heading, "Sleeping Sickness" are the following comments: "Comatose patients were injected with an extract made from a special high acid grapefruit juice processed in the U.S."

Results were immediate, patients experienced facial convulsions, then a thrashing of arms and legs, and finally, complete wakefulness. Physicians are cautioned against the administration of overdoses as extended hyperactivity may occur."

And so ends the saga of the "Low Gas Diet". The name of the guilty dietitian has been withheld to protect her innocent descendants still living in England.

Folded Wings

44th

Ronald J. Taylor
Charles F. Kuch

389th

Col. William L. Burns (RET)

392nd

Walter Zwolensky - AM
Henry W. Niemczycki

445th

Robert V. Springer
Thomas J. Martin

448th

Col. Ronald V. Kramer (RET)
Joseph Michalczyk

453rd

William A. Crandell

458th

Boyce C. Carrigan

466th

Maj. Dorsey L. Baker

467th

Robert C. Flagg
Col. Arthur R. Kirsis
Allen Healy

489th

Ralph E. Campbell

492nd

Fred Lauer

Historical Report, Field Engineering Section, 3d SAD

(by Aaron Spitzer, 89th Repair Sq.)

During the Fall of 1943, many changes were made in the table of organization and equipment of the 8th Air Force units, European Theatre of Operations. The plan finally settled upon was called the Bradley Plan. This set up four strategic air depots as forward supply depots for the Air Force bombardment and fighter groups. This plan was to have a maximum supply depot available within a short distance of the combat units and a manufacturing facility capable of repairing extensively damaged aircraft that needed modification to increase their effectiveness and safety.

In this reorganization, a unit called Field Engineering was set up to coincide with the Depot Repair units. Field Engineering had the responsibility of inspecting and cataloging all battle damaged and crashed aircraft that landed away from the station to which it was assigned. Field Engineering also had the responsibility of inspecting all major crashes and determining the category of each of these planes. Crashes took place during take-offs, landings, training missions and numerous mishaps to aircraft returning from the continent with severe damage. The aircraft commander tried to set the airplane down anywhere that he possibly could or at two crashlanding strips, Manston & Woodbridge, where we maintained continuous service using a detachment from Field Engineering. This will be described later in this report. The RAF and AAF stations were always ready to allow any plane in distress to land at the first opportunity.

These serious crashes were categorized as E-1 and E-2. E-1 crashes were aircraft still intact and not repairable, but could be cannibalized for useable parts and equipment. An airplane categorized E-2 was an airplane that had crashed and burned and had no salvageable parts. Airplanes that emergency landed due to battle damage or malfunction of some other type that were repairable, were classified into major, intermediate or minor repair. Usually when a crew was forced to land in an emergency situation, either on an AAF or RAF station or in some other location, they were transported to the nearest American station or taken back to their home base.



Field Maintenance crew directed by T/Sgt. Wilkerson.

Upon returning from operational mission, a TWX was sent to Watton, giving the location and amount of damage on an airplane that did not return to its home station. These airplanes were turned over to the Field Engineering unit and an officer or Field Engineering Technician was dispatched to inspect the airplane in question. Upon returning, he would classify it in the above categories. If it was E-2 (complete destruction), it was turned over to an RAF salvage unit. If it was E-1, it would be placed in our aircraft graveyard for parts use if it was at one of the crashlanding strips or turned over to the reclamation department of depot supply and all useable and repairable parts would be removed and returned to the depot for rework and inspection.

If the airplane was repairable, the officer or Field Engineering

Inspector would estimate the number of weeks, days or hours that would be required to make the necessary repairs and make the airplane flyable, back to the sub-depot at the bomb group station or if the battle damage was extensive to Watton for major battle damage repair. If a very minor repair could be made with replacement parts from the graveyard, it would be done and the plane would be on its way. The more damaged aircraft, if repairable was turned over to the mobile repair units, a division of Field Engineering, and a crew would be sent to the location to do the necessary repairs. Some airplanes only required minor repairs, like an engine change, a landing wheel change, hydraulic sys. repair, replacement of flight controls or control panels, such as ailerons, elevators or rudder to make it flyable and available to either the depot or the sub-depot, depending on further work to be done. The crashlanding strips always had an officer, Field Engineering Technician or Aircraft Inspector available. Mobile units were requested as needed and the makeup of the units were specially ordered depending on the work to be done.

The mobile repair units were a group of men usually commanded by a T/Sgt or M/Sgt. This crew consisted of two aircraft mechanics, two sheetmetal men, one prop specialist, one instrument specialist, one electrician and a machinist. Their equipment consisted of a semi-trailer completely equipped with a mobile machine shop, sheetmetal shop and it carried all the necessary tools and equipment for field repairs. These units were pulled to the site of the aircraft and they were the base of operation for this particular mobile unit. If the aircraft happened to land on an AAF station, the unit was billeted at that station. If it landed at an RAF station, the RAF assumed the housing for the men. In some cases, it was necessary to use tents and in other cases the men lived in inns or small hotels near the site of the airplane.

As mentioned earlier, in England there were two long emergency crashlanding strips, one was at RAF Manston, Kent county, north of Dover between Margate, Ramsgate and Westgate, on the east coast by the English Channel in Buzz Bomb Alley and on the return flight pattern. The other was at RAF Woodbridge near Ipswich, Suffolk County, north of the Thames on the east coast on the return flight pattern. These runways were three miles long, plus a mile of sod, a mile of soft dirt and one-half mile wide for all kinds of landing, (for example, without brakes, landing gear, flaps, control surfaces, etc.). They were used extensively by AAF and RAF personnel in emergency situations. At each location the 3rd SAD maintained approximately 20-30 men at all times during 1944 and 1945. At the crashlanding strips we had as many as seven aircraft undergoing major repairs at one time to make them flyable. Not only were these emergency strips used for primarily battle damage weary airplanes, there was also a fog dispersing gas unit at the side and along the length of the runway on each of these stations. It was a long pipeline that could send up a wall of flame. When the fog got intense it was possible to light these gas units and the heat of the burning gas would drive the fog high enough so that the pilot could see the landing strip. Many hundreds of airplanes were saved on these long runways.

There were very few airplanes that could not be completely repaired by the trained specialists of the mobile repair units, but under the circumstances, they were primarily required to make the aircraft airworthy so that it could be flown back to another station. Some maximum efforts were put out in 1944 and 1945. It was possible to have 30 B24's or other aircraft land on these emergency strips in a day. Some were minor repairs so they could return to their home station. Many of these airplanes were never recorded as being repaired, as all it required was a replaced flak damaged hydraulic line or fitting, hydraulic fluid, a control cable or something of that nature so they could have brakes, raise or lower landing gear, etc. Although we were B24 specialists, we

serviced B17's, P47's and other aircraft that needed help. At one time we had a whole squadron of P47's come in. These strips were also used to unload wounded as they were the first long strips available after the combat units returned from the continent.

As the mobile repair units of Field Engineering operated throughout the British Isles, the war itself dictated the location of where the emergencies would be. In the beginning, before D-Day, the mobile repair units operated a lot in southern England and as the war progressed and the invasion took place, the units were moved to the east coast of England from Dover to Scotland.

A typical day in Field Engineering usually started with the message center sending down the teletypes from 8th Air Force Headquarters informing us the location of the downed airplanes. Upon receiving them a driver and a Jeep were ordered, also a cameraman and an officer or Field Engineering Technician would go to the site of the crash. This destination could be most anywhere in the United Kingdom and most drivers and officers or Technicians carried enough equipment so that they could stay out on the road indefinitely. The TWX would read: "B24 H4312345 crashed near Bridlington Yorkshire, three miles north, two miles west of the town of Bridlington." The Field Engineering unit did not know the exact status of the airplane so immediately an officer or Field Engineering Technician with Jeep driver took off for Yorkshire. This would take him up through East Anglia, up across through Hull into the Bridlington or Yorkshire area.

As the directions were not too accurate, it was necessary to go to the constabulary and ask the local officer where we might find the crashed American airplane. He would state that the large kite was two miles north and then at a jog of the road turn left one-half mile and then turn right again and the famous words were "you can't miss it", which was usually the case. So after some traveling around in the area, we would find the airplane. If this airplane was near an American station, there was usually an MP guarding it. If it was near a British station, there was a British air policeman guarding, but if it was where there were no British or American bases, one member of the Home Guard with his Tommy helmet, would be standing with his rifle guarding the wreck waiting for someone to come by. After proper identification was given, the inspecting officer would look over the airplane. If it was in category E-2, he would try to find identifying marks or make sure that it was the aircraft listed. If it was E-1, he would note the condition of the airplane and how much equipment could be salvaged and what was the status of the airplane.

If the airplane was repairable, he would thoroughly inspect to see just what needed repair. He would also take a look to see how we could possibly get the airplane out of the field. Sometimes it was necessary to go down along a field to see what was on the other side of the hedge row so that we could explain to the Corps of Engineers how we wanted a runway built after we had the airplane ready to fly. If the aircraft was close to Watton, he would immediately go home, but if it was in northern England he would go to the closest station, get to the message center, and call AAF Station 505. He would explain to Sgt. Gilberti, NCO in charge what the status of the plane was and its condition so that he could expedite its process.

If it was repairable, he would discuss what mobile unit could be moved to that location. If one of the mobile units was just finishing a battle damaged aircraft and ready to leave, it would be immediately dispatched. If this was impossible, an interim crew of 2 or 3 men would be sent to the crash site so that they could start working on the plane.

If no AAF or RAF station or British installation was nearby, it was necessary for the officer in charge to arrange for the billeting and housing of the men. This was usually done at a local inn or pub and all the arrangements had to be met so that the men would be ready to function when they got to the site. In many cases, the sergeant in charge had to requisition rations from the home station for the men, because it was impossible for the local inn or pub to supply enough food to keep the men there for their length of stay.

Upon returning to the station, the inspecting officer would give his report, also request a runway to be built by the Corps of Engineers, and give them the approximate date to lay down the mesh. The Corps of Engineers officers would go up and look at the site and make their decision to see if it was feasible to get the airplane runway built. The runways that were built were steel matting and many times hedges had to be bulldozed, hedge rows had to be cleared, and ditches filled in so that this process can take place. Upon finishing the airplane, the mobile repair units would call in and request a flight crew. This was done through the operations section and a crew, usually consisting of a pilot, a co-pilot, a flight engineer and a radio operator were either flown or driven to the site and waited for ideal conditions to get the airplane off. These runways were not too long and it was necessary to completely strip the airplane of all armament and any excess weight so that it could be airborne in a short take off.

The above is just an example of one airplane and in a normal maximum effort strike, field engineering would have anywhere from 5 to 10 airplanes to either inspect or work on after the maximum effort. When the 8th Air Force bombed Berlin, the chances of emergency landings were quite prevalent due to the distance flown and weather conditions.



Sgt. Stoker's crew repairing damaged B-24 at Woodbridge emergency strip.

In the latter part of 1944 and 1945, Field Engineering consisted of seven Engineering Officers and as many as 300 men in the field. At one time there were 30 men stationed at Woodbridge and 30 men stationed at Manston. An officer was put in charge of this contingent as it was necessary for them to expedite parts and equipment needed for the men during the repair. In the 18 months of operation, Field Engineering inspected 1,318 aircraft. Of these aircraft, 373 were salvaged for parts, 229 were complete losses and 716 were returned to combat. This number includes many RAF airplanes, Naval aircraft on submarine duty and navigational duty and planes from the 25th Bomb Group. It does not include many planes that were given immediate repair and sent on their way to their home base or planes that were serviced in other ways.

The officers and all men from Field Engineering, 3rd Strategic Air Depot, 8th Air Force were a proud group. We played an important part in helping to provide planes for continuous service. In 995 days of war with Germany the 8th Air Force dispatched 332,645 four engined bombers and 260,574 fighters from its bases in England. During the last year of the war, an average of 1,200 8th Air Force aircraft attacked Germany every day. The Flying Fortresses (B17's) and Liberators (B24's) dropped 1,402,600,000 pounds of bombs — 1,063,542,000 pounds on Germany proper. Our fighters and bombers destroyed 15,439 enemy aircraft. The cost: 43,742 fliers killed or missing in action.

We did our part to win the war. Our satisfaction for doing a job well done helped us to live a satisfying lifetime of what we did for our country.

491st BG

by Carl I. Alexanderson (491st)

I would like to start off with a very warm welcome from the "Ringmasters" to our new members:

I hope I have not overlooked anyone — if so please accept my apologies. I intend to do this in every future column. It may help in spotting a former friend or crew member before the name shows up in a future and distant roster.

Recently, I had the privilege of being asked to serve out a vacancy on the Executive Committee and Audit and Budget Committee. I had, as you know, represented the 491st in these positions last year. We spent the weekend of April 3-5 at Pheasant Run, St. Charles, Ill. It is a lovely place and I'm sure you will all be happy with the accommodations this July.

It was a bit of a shock however, to look out the sixth floor window of the "Tower" and see the horizon in all directions. Living in the Berkshires, we feel fortunate when we can, on a clear day, see half a mile. I never did get used to Amarillo or Herrington.

At any rate — despite my limited contribution, I remain impressed with the professionalism and dedication of our Officers and Committee Members. We are indeed in good hands.

I have for some time now been in contact with Mr. Randall Bond, Art Librarian of Syracuse University. Mr. Bond is researching material for a book-length study of WWII airplane nose art. He is interested in contacting individuals in our unit who

may have material and information relevant to this study. So if you have photos of your ship or a story relating to it — send it along to:

Randall I. Bond
Art Librarian
205 Bird Library
Syracuse University
Syracuse, New York 13244

Had a call from Pat Perry recently. He has taken one of the site plans of North Pickenham, reduced it to 8½" x 11" and through the silk screen process will apply it to a brass plate and then mount it on a hardwood plaque. He wanted my approval before he went ahead with the project. I feel it would be worthwhile providing the cost can be kept in the \$25.00 - \$35.00 range. He could use some feedback from you people on this — how many, cost, etc.

Along this same vein — John Mesarch raises the question of dedicating a bronze plaque in the memorial park at the Dayton Air Force Museum. He didn't say if it would honor our KIAs and MIAs or the 491st B.G. in general. Here again — unsheath your quills and let me know. I

Pheasant Run is here

NOTE

If you plan to attend any functions at Pheasant Run during the convention in July, PLEASE PLEASE PLEASE contact me immediately and advise. Do not expect to walk in unannounced and be able to attend any of the functions. Space will be very tight and we will not be able to accommodate any unannounced arrivals.

Evelyn Cohen
06-410 Delaire Landing Rd.
Philadelphia, PA 19114
Phone (215) 632-3992

"Lillian Ann"

The crew of a Liberator Bomber, "Lillian Ann", are telling some tales of a recent experience encountered on a mission over occupied France, and wondering what strange force of fate aided them in landing home safely. The excitement started just on the bomb run when the Nazis opened up with a terrific barrage of Ack-Ack. The pilot, 1st Lt. Vernon C. Markham of Evansville, Indiana, and the co-pilot, 2nd Lt. Albert A. Tomajko of Yukon, Pennsylvania, saw a rudder of the Liberator preceding them just as it was dropping its bombs. "Lillian Ann" followed up and spewed her lethal load; almost simultaneously as the bombardier, 2nd Lt. William E. Duncan of Clarksburg, West Virginia, called his "Bombs Away" the ship was hit by a direct burst in the bomb bay, putting a large hole in the main gas tank.

"Gas was flowing out like water from a fire hydrant," said the engineer, T/Sgt. William L. Jacobs, of San Francisco, California. The damage was beyond repair but strangely there was no fire.

Another burst hit the two engines on the left wing putting them completely out of commission, and spraying the nose full of holes. Two pieces went through the windshield between the pilot and co-pilot, another through the navigator's dome, missing him by seconds as he was bending over checking his instruments. The navigator, 2nd Lt. George Walcher of 1525 Maple Ave., Wyoming, Ohio, still turns slightly pale at the thought of it.

With the gas supply fast exhausting and two feathered engines, the pilot warned the crew to prepare to bail out. As the

channel was reached however this order was changed to prepare for ditching, so the radio operator, T/Sgt. Homer M. Burchett of Clarborine, Tennessee immediately started to send an S.O.S. The ball turret operator and tail gunner, S/Sgt. Fred Adatto of 1299 Grand Concourse, Bronx, N.Y., and S/Sgt. Daniel Lynch of 920 Anna St., Elizabeth, New Jersey, adjusted the ditching belt in the waist of the ship.

Lt. Markham was determined to reach England if possible however, and when the white cliffs of Dover came into sight the order was again changed, this time to "prepare for crashlanding". The ship was guided toward the nearest field and just as landing procedures were started the third engine conked out.

The landing came with everyone on board set for it. The plane skidded down the runway and made an 180 degree turn before coming to a halt. The wing was damaged severely and both props on the left wing were torn off. One of the engines suddenly caught fire and just as suddenly went out, something no one has been able to explain.

The crew evacuated the ship in record time, the navigator remaining in the flight deck to boost five others through the upper escape hatch. All were joking about the incident, not one of them had suffered a single scratch, by the time they returned for their equipment.

They're ready for another mission but their ship will be "Lillian Ann" the second, for the original "Lillian Ann" will not fly again.

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

A Crew Goes To War — The Hard Way!

by Philip H. Meistrich (453rd)

It was a cold grey noon on February 20, 1944, when a B-24H Liberator, bomb-bays loaded with flight bags, and sacks of mail destined for Italy, sped across the runway at Mitchell Field, New York. After crawling lazily into the air, it headed south on the first leg of a half-way-round-the-world trip. The first course was to take the plane directly over the home of the Navigator, and he heaved a sigh as he passed over his beloved Flatbush. As the plane passed over New York Harbor, swarming with its usual incoming and outgoing shipping, all eyes turned toward the "Big City" for a last look. As we touched Staten Island's shores, we headed south.

A partial undercast was ahead of us, as briefed, and as we passed over Atlantic City and Asbury Park, they did not look like the gay resorts they are, in that dreary mist. When somebody leaves his country for war, nothing looks gay. We passed over our old base at Langley Field, Virginia, without getting a glimpse of it. The spinning needle of the radio compass told us we were over it, but the solid undercast made it impossible to see. We were now resigned to a dull non-sightseeing tour.

Across North Carolina the sun broke loose, and the sky was blue again. Nothing as heartening as sunshine and blue skies. We got a good look at Parris Island, the Marine training base, and old Charleston Harbor. From there to Jacksonville, Florida we headed for our destination over the swamplands of northern Florida. This area was the old stamping grounds of our pilot, who had spent months flying Marauders, his first love, over this country. He skimmed low over Lake Okachobee, and buzzed the coastline to West Palm Beach. We buzzed many Naval Stations until one called us and told us to get off their roof, and get back to altitude which we did until we came over Morrison Field seven hours and 15 minutes after we left New York. Head winds, our buzzing, and the fact that our landing gear kept coming down slowed us up.



ATC is really a wonderful outfit, in spite of the fact that combat crews call them "Allergic to combat". We use their routes,

and facilities. They're Army, but on the ball. Wake up time was 2330, and briefing for our first leg at 0030. Briefings very interesting and clear. More like a Cook's Tour than a flight mission. At 0130, 23 February, we're at our plane, loading up, and checking equipment. Secret Orders come aboard which are to be opened one hour out of departure. Our final destination was in those orders. Mysterious, just like in the movies!!!, gosh.



Crew #62, 735th Squadron, 453rd Bomb Group, Old Buckenham
Left to Right (Standing):

Thurman "Pete" Cranford, gunner, Dallas, Texas
Harry "Zeke" Siegrist, bombardier, Clarksburg, W.Va.
Phil "Chief" Meistrich, navigator, Brooklyn, N.Y.
Johnny Payne, gunner, Talledage, Alabama
Jimmy Hughes, radio operator, Wappinger Falls, N.Y.
Alex "Chick" Cholewiak, tail gunner, Chicago, Ill.

(Kneeling):

Harold "Curly" Setters, Nashville, Tenn.
Bill "Willie" Norris, pilot, Clearfield, Pa.
Owen Hassler, co-pilot, Wichita, Kansas
Walter "Chris" Christopher, engineer, Bronx, N.Y.

At 0201 we're in the blue, or rather the black. The weather, just like in the song, "The weather's fine for flying", not a cloud in the sky, clear as a bell.

0301 — Pilot calls all crew members on interphone, and tells them to stand by and listen to the secret orders which are to be read. . . Finally. . . Destination — 8th Air Force! Bloodiest spot in the world!!!! The roughest, toughest air outfit the army had. The air force destined to crack the iron skull of Nazi Germany. Well, we're on our way, might as well enjoy the scenery while we can.

0302 — sighted our first island. The twinkling lights of Windsor, Nassau were dancing below us. Darkness and clouds followed. No help when looking for a checkpoint.

Sunrise at 0600. Clouds beneath us, and stacked up ahead of us. Better climb. The clouds stacked up ahead of us looked like dark mountains silhouetted against the morning twilight. Scenery is scenery, but the sooner the sun comes out, and the sooner the clouds go away, the better I like it.

Cruising across the Caribbean we caught a glimpse of Haiti, but lost Puerto Rico in an undercast.

0716 — San Juan. Clouds throw shadows across the water, and these dark shapes take on the form of islands. Very disconcerting from where I sit.

0744 — St. Croix and Martinique. Below were the hangouts of the old Caribbean pirates. Remember Henry Morgan? Tortuga,

(continued on next page)

Headquarters

by Willie Elder (Hdq.)

Greetings from Headquarters Division — We want to report that we have two new members, one WAC, Hermoine Beaber Denker, 13 Barclay Street, Huntington Station, New York 11746 and Harold J. Gill, 374 Harrison Avenue, Massapequa, New York, 11758. Harold was with the 315th Signal Company from Dec. 1941 to Dec. 1945. He sent in three names, Bernard Flood, last address Northfield, Vermont; Peter Silka, last address Hastings on Hudson, New York, and John Ragin, Decatur, Georgia. John is a member, but if anyone of you remember Bernard and Peter and have more recent addresses, please get in touch with them. Or, if you live nearby, look them up and see if they're still around.

It has really been a thrill to locate past members of the 2nd AD. In response to the many letters I have written to Editors of various newspapers, I have been able to send approximately 25 names to the vari-

ous Bomb Groups. Have also had telephone calls (they were rather shocked when they found out that M. F. Elder was really Mary Frances Elder, former WAC) but took it in good grace and we had some great conversations. These names were also sent on to the Groups.

I might mention that I found names and addresses of all the newspapers and magazines printed in the United States at our local library in a book named *Ayers Newspaper Listings*. Let me recommend it to you as a source of information in tracking down new members. I have also written to the Editors of various newspapers, particularly in small towns, asking their help in locating people, especially WAC's whose names usually have changed. I send a brochure about the Memorial Library so they will know we are not a 'fly by night' organization, and have had good response from that too.

We are looking forward to having a particularly large group from Headquarters this year at Pheasant Run in order that we can honor and support our in-coming President of 2nd Air Division Association, our

own James Reeves. Please, if you have any old rosters, any old orders with addresses or just home owns on them, send them to me and I will write — either to the newspaper or the former member. We really want to support Jim and let him know how proud we are of him and how confident that 2AD will go forward at an even greater pace with him at the helm. So, get in there and dig in attics and old records and send me those names, or, if you really feel ambitious, write them yourself, or call, or get an old telephone directory and see if they are listed. As members ourselves we know what they are missing and how much they will enjoy being with old comrades and swapping stories — some of which can be very interesting. Reminds me of the time I went on a Photo Flight down to London just for the ride, and we buzzed a County Fair, especially the ferris wheel — I think the pilot had had a few too many, but nevertheless, that letter of complaint from the Mayor of the town never did get to the top of Colonel Bryan's incoming box, at least not while I was still his secretary. Have often wondered if he ever found it.

A Crew Goes to War

(continued from preceding page)

Martinique? These were the stomping grounds of those old characters. And what must have gone on down there years ago!!!

ATLANTIC OCEAN
WALLER FIELD, TRINIDAD



Very peaceful now. The harbor had a few units of the French Fleet that had escaped the Germans, and squadrons of planes bought by France, but never delivered.

0930 — Beane Island, turn here and head for Trinidad. Sky all clear now, and clouds stacked up over islands only. Visibility unlimited. Southern Caribbean water the greenest I've ever seen.

Ah, those wonderful tropical islands, swaying palm trees, beautiful native gals, wonderful music. . .

Trinidad loomed up ahead. The greenest green water, white surf rolling up to the shores, practically to the palm trees and jungle. Native huts dotting the jungle, probably crawling with monkeys, coconuts and bananas.

1030 — Waller Field, Trinidad, probably named after somebody named Waller. This is strictly an American base, but definitely with British left-hand traffic. Uncle Sam is very lenient. We give them Lend-Lease, they give us left-handed traffic. But, if we're going to England, we had better get used to their ways.

We met the "Major", an Englishman who lives on Trinidad who says he is a Major, and according to him, owns practically all the island, and runs the airbase all by himself. Picked up some "coin of the realm". A Trinidadian dollar worth \$1.18 and a fistful of change. Probably good only in Trinidad, but you know what collectors we Yanks are. Our quarters on Trinidad for our two day stay, were long barracks, built up on long poles. And we slept one story up under miles of mosquito netting, and trying to get our stomachs, to digest Atabrine tablets. Again we heard lectures on malaria control, and we were so scared by the prospect of coming down with malaria, that we ate all our little pills, and checked our netting a dozen times.

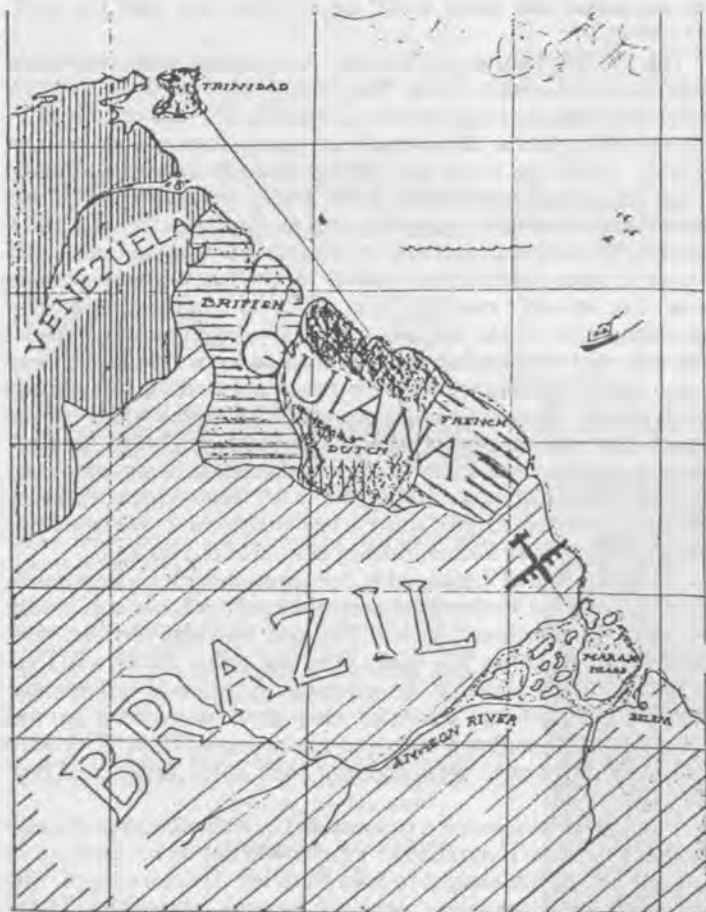
It is now 0300, 24 February, 1944 (it seems that we are destined to make all our briefings and takeoffs when decent people are asleep). Takeoff for Belem, Brazil at 0500. Again briefing made very interesting. ATC outlines all interesting data along the route. On this leg we are to cross the Equator. I sure get a kick out of travelling. I could sit and stare at the scenery for days (if they'd let me but somebody is always yowling for an ETA, position report, or asking me if I know where the sandwiches or coffee are). Clear weather, so it's pilotage for me. That's one way of knowing where you are, and seeing the sights. Between Georgetown and Paramaribo, some English gal coming across the radio with some fine recordings. Our destination was just across the mouth of the Amazon, which is 60 miles wide at this point, where the water is the muddiest I've ever seen.

The navigator was all set to announce the solemn moment of the Equator crossing, when he was stricken by cramps. It seems that he had been eating too many bananas the day before. Thus, as in the lives of all famous men, when you have to go, you have to

go!!! There was no time at all to use conventional methods, which is located in the rear of the plane, and you have to clean out yourself, the handiest object was the cloth Red Cross bag. The kindly citizens of Kankakee, or Podunk, or some town, had seen fit to make up little kits containing paper, cards, toothpaste, shoelaces and little items of luxury like that and donate them to the lads who were going overseas. So, the goody-goodies were dumped from the sack, and filled up with a very unreasonable facsimile. When the sack was filled, it was dropped, smack on the Equator, right out of the nose wheel door. But alas, the sack blew right back in, and luckily, it held together. Had it not, I could have just pictured myself scrubbing one B-24 Liberator. So the sack was dispatched again, but this time with more success.

Across the Amazon, a few more miles of jungle, and we scurried into Belem, under a curtain of low hanging clouds.

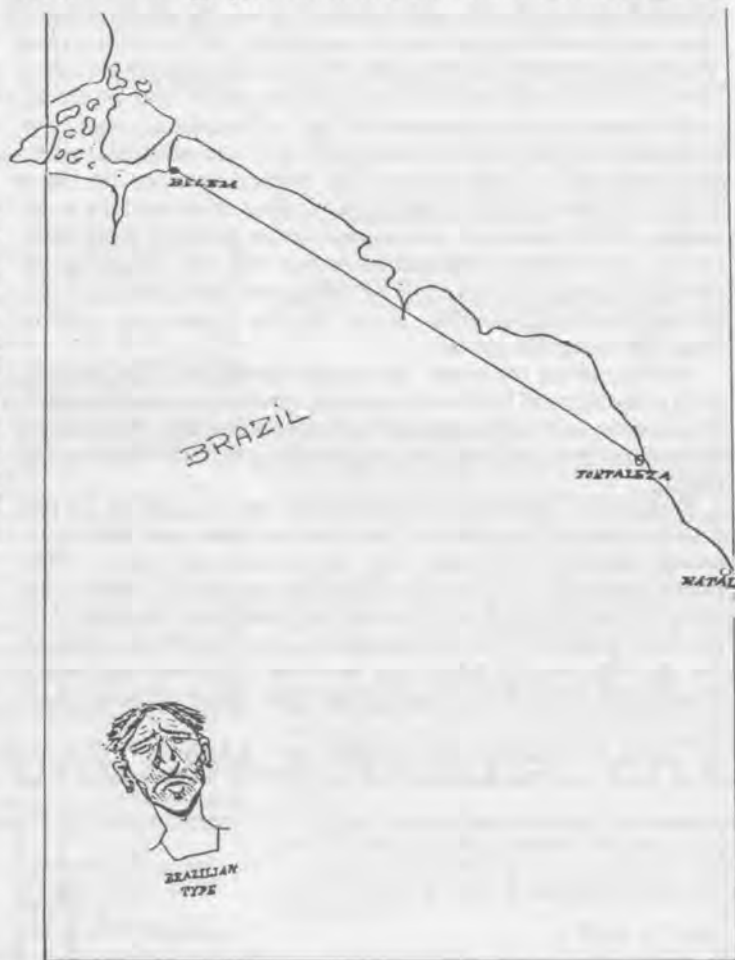
Thursday, February 24. This is Brazil, we're in South America proper, and the navigator cannot resist the temptation of ogling and staring at everything and anything just because it is in a foreign country. The airfield is another one carved right out of raw jungle. Plenty more bananas around, and how I love 'em. Natives go around without shoes. First contact with "barefoot boys". We lived in nice white stucco and plaster barracks, and straw mats strewn about the floors. These straw mats gave off a rather unpleasant odor, and when we opened a closet (which must have been a storing spot for mats), it really stank!!! There were two little native boys who seemed to be attached to the barracks, who fired Portuguese at us all the time. They babbled at us from the time we arrived until we left. We found out that all that they wanted was to shine our shoes.



The drinking and washing water was purified by our own engineers, and safe for consumption, but it was still the brownest water I ever used. But who can be choosy? Stage and screen star Ilona Massey, who was on her way home from an African tour, stopped off at Belem.

Brazil is the only country in South America that uses Portu-

guese for its language. I happen to speak a little panish (very little), so we and the natives got along fine. At mess, every time I asked for something, I got something else. At one meal, I was firmly convinced that I had conveyed my wishes to the little gal waitress, by sign, motions, drawings. I wanted coconut milk, and she nodded her head and dashed back into the kitchen, and brought forth a pitcher of white stuff, which I presumed to be coconut milk. I gulped the stuff down, and as it settled, I realized



that something was wrong, because it didn't taste exactly the way I thought coconut milk should taste. While I was drinking the stuff, the waitress dashed back into the kitchen, and I thought she was going to bring out the coconut, but instead she came running back, grinning all over the place and flourishing a can of evaporated milk. So I figured that I did not convey my wishes to her, and she thought I wanted evaporated milk. So I finished the milk, and called it a day. Did you ever drink a can of evaporated milk? straight?

That day, I also bought a pair of Brazilian boots. We called them Gaucho boots because it sounds nice, and we know damn well that Gauchos are in Argentina, not Brazil. The boots cost 8 bucks, and contained enough leather for 3 pairs of regular shoes. While still in a buying mood, we bought a monkey for 8 more bucks. The native wanted 10, but I, in my finest New Yorkese, offered 5, and we compromised at 7, but he finally squeezed another buck out of me. I also loaded up on Brazilian money, a thousand reis equal one big American nickel!! After the native sold us his monkey, he dashed back into the jungle, caught another, put a string around its neck, and peddled it. But our "Daisy June" was our pride and joy, even though we were rooked. I mailed my first package home, which contained Trinidad and Brazilian money. Seems odd writing "USA," we were just there!! Walking along a road, we were caught in a typical tropical shower. All of a sudden it's clear, and all of a sudden it's pouring, right out of nowhere. Each raindrop the size of an egg. Before we

(continued on next page)

A Crew Goes to War

(continued from preceding page)

could get under cover, we were soaked to the skin, and before we could realize what had happened, the shower was over.

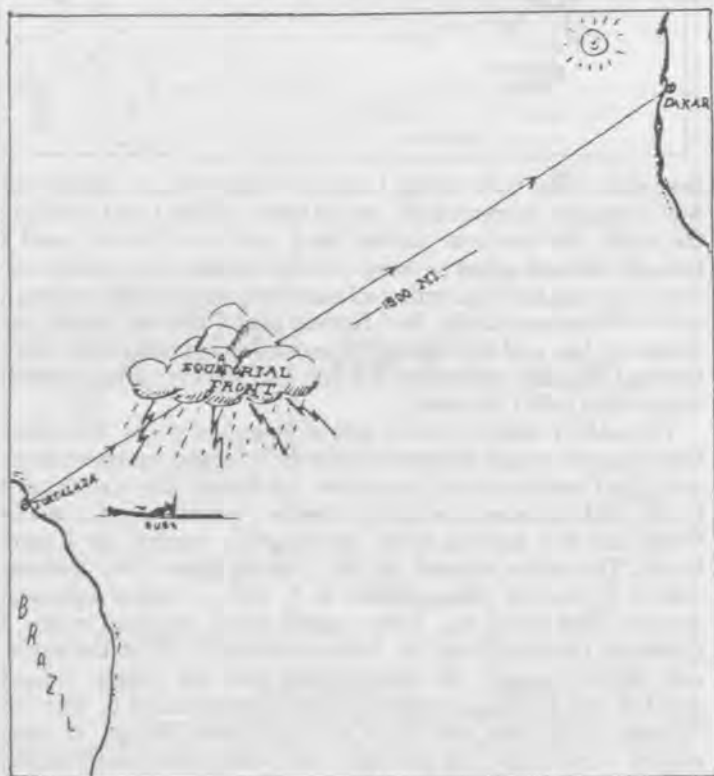
We were briefed for another early morning takeoff. Not sorry to leave this place. We had been restricted all along the way, and we were eager to get going and perhaps get back into civilization. The only way out of camp (not counting the legal way), was through the jungle and underbrush. Anyway, we were ordered to do a search out of Belem and try and find a British patrol plane that had gone down in the jungle. Our course was altered to allow us to cover the approximate area. (P.S. we didn't find anything.)

The dense jungle below, on the way to Fortalaza, must have contained every kind of animal and bird. I sure wouldn't care to walk through it. Little Daisey June seemed to enjoy the plane ride, as she was happily engaged in running all around the waist section of the plane. A few reports came through from there telling that Daisey June had fallen out, but was always found swinging along a control cable, or hiding in a turret. At Sao Luiz, we saw blood-red butterflies about the size of sparrows winging their way along the ground.

Halfway along the route, the jungle opened into flat country with some signs of habitation (nobody could live in that jungle). The countryside was now becoming more interesting. We followed the railroad into Fortalaza, once more racing in under threatening clouds.

Fortalaza — When the navigator was going to school, he had dreamed about flying across the great big ocean, and frankly, it scared the hell out of him. Now the moment had come. . . The South Atlantic . . . 1970 miles of nothing but water. . . Naturally, for a mission of such magnitude, the briefings were long and carefully plotted. This was goodbye to the New World, hello to the old. This was a night hop over the Atlantic from South America to West Africa and would take about 10 hours, and

THE GREAT CROSSING



there would be plenty of navigation to be done. We were also briefed on the "Equatorial Front" that we'd hit (we did!) Collimated sextant half a dozen times. The ship was checked and re-checked, inspected and re-inspected. We were ready. Brock

and Wear crashed on takeoff, all killed.

We were ready, and we took off, and crew took alert positions to watch out for enemy subs reported to be stalking in nearby waters. We climbed on course and the Western Hemisphere soon faded from view.

About 400 miles out, we received an SOS from a plane in trouble. A short while later we received another one, and this position was about 100 miles away from the first one!! What goes? Later, we found out that Earl and Co. had lost two engines, about 2 hours out from Fortalaza. They dumped all their baggage and mail and accessories and hotfooted it back to Brazil. They made it. Better to run around without any pants, than to try and swim 400 miles.

We resumed our trip, and the engines settled down to their steady roar, and the bombardier settled down to his usual position — horizontal. Jupiter lay ahead, and the navigator was busy in the nose with celestial navigation. As briefed, we ran smack into the Equatorial Front, and just what we thought would happen, did happen. The rain poured into the ship. Seemed as if we were plowing through solid water. Seemed like the bulkheads would cave in. Seemed as if we were under the water, not 9,000 feet above it. Felt more like a submarine than a plane. Then lightning started to play with us, and the plane rocked and rolled. When the lightning was finished, St. Elmo started his fire dance around the props, wings, guns, and up and down the catwalk. Our God-fearing gunner from the hills of Alabam', thinking the world had come to an end, was ready to bail out, in the middle of the drink.

Thinking the elements had finished with us, we settled back, and all of a sudden we were set upon by updrafts and downdrafts. In one swish the plane would be at 8,000 feet, and the next, 11,000 feet.

Having flown through the storm for about an hour, we settled down to comfortable flying. The clouds below us were the thick billowing type, or to be technical, cumulo-nimbus, and any boat on the water below them would be going through one helluva squall. Above us, every star in the almanac twinkled. Deneb, Vega and Altair were ahead of us. Every navigator works this trio of stars to death, especially now as they were the only three visible, because morning was coming up. The sun soon rose, and the calm blue Atlantic was visible below. There were no clouds now, just an early morning mist, or to be technical, and early morning mist, on the horizon. Celestial navigation was done all the way, and the heading into destination from the last fix, was "zero-zeroed" when the radio compass was turned on. Dakar was dead ahead. We had to sweat out our ETA to the white curved beach that was our part of Africa. Three minutes before the time was up, Africa was in sight, in another minute we were over Eknes Field, Rufisque, Dakar, French "West Africa. Another continent conquered. Our third in less than a week. We landed on the mat runway at Eknes, raising clouds of red dust.

We had to spend 7 days in the hole, even though we were damn glad to leave the sticky dampness of Brazil for these cool plains swept by breezes from the sea. The food here was terrible, very little and very lousy. The sacks were like rocks. Water was shut off except for 2 hours in the morning. A detail of native boys would come into the barracks every two hours, line up and "Hut-2-3-4" throughout, spraying against mosquitos. They were called the "Hut-sut" boys, and how their spray stank, and how they did, too!!

This was a French colony, commanded by French, and garrisoned by native troops. Even though France was flat on her back up in Europe, she still managed to hold on to her African empire. The native troops, Senegalese, wore red fez caps, blue pants, khaki blouses and carried long bayonnetted rifles that must have been used in the French Revolution. They were barefoot by day, and shod at night. Most of them looked B.P. Even with their ferocious looking filed teeth, they failed to impress us as the famous French Senegalese troops. Maybe the better ones were someplace else.

(to be continued in next issue)

Letters



Dear Bill:

I would appreciate it if you could, once again, help me out by sharing this letter with the "gang" out there.

I made a similar request, such as this, about four years ago and made one heck of a mess at responding to all of those kind people who responded to my letter. To all of you out there who responded to that letter, I sincerely apologize and if you still would like to help (For heaven sake! After four years!) please let me know.

Now, about the Kassel mission. I already have written to several people who were in the 445th on the mission (which is what the book will be centered around, since the 445th lost twenty-five out of their thirty-five aircraft that day, when they strayed off course and bombed a target of opportunity) and I would like to hear from anyone from the following bomb groups who were also on that mission: 446th, 93rd, 448th, 489th, 445th, 389th, 453rd, 392nd, 44th, 491st. Also, any of you 445'ers who I haven't heard from — please write.

I am also in search of photos of aircraft that took part in the mission. I am especially in search of 445th B-24 photos. I have missing air crew reports for each B-24 that the 445th lost that day, but only two gave aircraft nicknames. I, therefore, am interested in photos of any 445th Lib.

I not only have the a/c numbers for each aircraft that the 445th lost that day, but I also have numbers for the aircraft that survived the mission and the ones that aborted that day.

The particular aircraft nicknames are the ones that I have identified and am particularly looking for photos of: "Texas Rose", "Roughhouse Kate", "Patches", "Ol' Baldy", "Bonnie Dee", "Bab, King Kong", "Eileen", "Hot Rock", "Patty Girl", "Heavenly Body", #511 (all metal — had no name — called "C" for Charlie), #549 (had no name), #921 (camouflaged — no known name).

I have also been in touch with the Albert F. Simpson Research Center at Maxwell AFB, Alabama and Mrs. Lynn Gamma has helped me immensely. Also, I have been in contact with Frank DiMola (the 445th group president and contact), and he has been of great help also.

Oops! forgot to mention in my request that I am also looking for news clippings about the September 27, 1944 mission to Kassel, Germany from "Impact", "Target Victory", or "Yank". Possibly any other publications in the separate wings or groups carried information on this mission. If so, I would love to see it.

Also, I know that this letter is going to have to be seriously edited, please be gentle.

Chris A. McDougal
3921 67th St.
Urbandale, IA 50322

Dear Evelyn:

I wish to thank you again. I received my December *Journal* and new Roster. I don't know if it was just late or what. Happened I received it one week after I wrote to you.

Please find enclosed check for the 1987 Norwich Reunion deposit. I only wish I could express how proud it makes me feel to be a member of the Second Air Division.

Wayne Walker

Dear Bill:

Thanks for being instrumental in the reprinting of our *Newsletter/Journal*: as usual you're "on the ball"!

I enclose \$30: \$15 for the first volume and \$15 deposit towards the next two. Thus, I hope not to miss them despite my long distance. Maybe I'm already in time for Volume 2 — the December *Journal* only just arrived.

Don't forget that you, your family, and friends are always welcome to visit us here. I always remember our banquet together years back.

I hope this summer to sort out my voluminous files and find some more 2AD WWII material for you.

Best wishes for St. Patrick's Day.
Sean O'Driscoll (389th)

Dear Bill:

As Sheriff of Norwich may I send warm greetings from the city to members of the Second Air Division Association and look forward to the splendid occasion of the 2AD Reunion in Norwich in 1987.

The heartfelt gratitude and affection the people of this city have for the men of the Second Air Division, Eighth Air Force working and flying from the many bases around this city during the second world war is a source of great joy and pleasure in strengthening the bonds between us.

The returning 'GIs' on pilgrimages or reunions will always be most warmly welcomed to Norwich. We would wish that even more could return for the Reunion next year, and to those who would wish to come but find it a little expensive, I would suggest that many Norwich people in and around the city would gladly offer accommodation in their homes during the days of the Reunion to ensure that 2AD members who would have gladly attended and renewed old links with friends, have that possibility.

If this idea is favorable to 2AD members a list of possible accommodations could be forwarded to the *Journal* in time for the September issue and individual arrangements can be made.

Geoffrey Goreham
31 Lavengro Road
Norwich
NR3 4RT, England

Dear Bill:

We recently heard from Cecil Beck and he enclosed this picture. I believe the fellows would enjoy seeing this picture as the plane flew so many missions and was well known. Cecil wrote, "I don't know if any other plane in the 389th made that many missions."



Picture taken just after plane landed from its 100th mission.

Cecil was the Crew Chief and Paul Blakeman was the fellow who painted the picture on the plane. The Asst. Crew Chief was Reuben Hollenback, now deceased. This picture was taken just after the plane landed from its 100th mission. The Old Veteran flew 112 combat missions and was shot down on its 113th mission.

Roy Jonasson

Dear Ms. Cohen:

I received all the information of the 2nd Air Division from Fred Thomas as my name was submitted by my good friend Arthur Jensen here in Kenosha.

Enclosed please find my membership dues for the year 1986, and I am looking forward to information for the 1986 reunion at Pheasant Run, Illinois. We are approximately 40 miles from this area, and my wife and I hope to be able to get to the reunion. This area has many interesting attractions if you have not been to the Midwest. Chicago is a great visiting town as is Milwaukee. We are situated right between these two cities on Lake Michigan.

I am presently again running for re-election as Alderman in my District, but as soon as the election is over I will send on some pictures I have from 1944-45 taken in England at our base at Attlebridge. If the editor of the paper is interested it will be my pleasure to send some of them on to him.

By the way I was a teletype operator, and covered the invasion from June 6, 1944 until the end of the war in Europe in May, 1945.

George H. Pinzger

Dear Evelyn:

In the December 1985 issue of the Association's *Journal* I read that you were accepting reservations for the 1987 Annual Meeting to be held in Norwich, England on May 21-25, 1987. I am enclosing a check in the amount of \$50.00 deposit for my wife and I (Fred A. and Marjorie L. Dale). I missed the last meeting in England because of a heart bypass (4 by-passes) operation. Feeling great now and will start planning for the trip back to Norwich.

I was a synthetic training operator (link trainer) attached to the 701st Bomb Squadron. Jimmie Stewart was our commanding officer at the time. I worked with pilots from the time that the Tibenham base was activated until we were shipped back to the USA.

Marge and I plan to attend the 1986 Annual Meeting at St. Charles, Illinois in July.

I was very pleased to receive the 1986 Membership Roster, I see several names I recognize.

Fred A. Dale

Dear Bill:

I want to contact anyone who was interned in Sweden and "disciplined", or lost rank while interned in Sweden during 1944 — or any other year for that matter. I especially want to contact Ray Ward, Bob Kahn, Stan Schwartz, Tiny Hauser, Asch, & Weber.

I would like to know if anyone knows of any disciplinary action, by either the Swedes or the U.S. Legation's Military Attache's office, taken against any Americans. Names please! Send details please.

Jim McMahon (93rd)
2100 Mount Olive Drive
Santa Rosa, Calif 95404

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Dear Bill:

Sorry that we can't make the Reunion this year. Hopefully next time.

Congratulations on the new roster.

Now, maybe you can help with a small point which bugs me: the constant identification of the 491st with Metfield only. The Group spent far more time at North Pickenham than it did at Metfield, yet on the cover of the last issue of the *Journal*, as in the library in Norwich, the identification is always with Metfield only. I and a lot of others only knew the group at North Pick, our home for many months.

The 492nd arrived at North Pick on Apr. 18, 1944, went operational May 11 and departed on Aug. 5 of that year. A total of 3½ months.

The 491st arrived at Metfield on April 25, 1944, went operational June 2 and departed on August 15. A total of about 3½ months and 57 missions flown.

They arrived at North Pick August 15, went operational on August 18 and departed July 4, 1945. A total of 10½ months there with 130 missions flown from that field.

If we are to be identified anywhere it should be at North Pickenham — or both.

Not that it really matters a lot but for me always the 491st will be North Pick. Thanks.
Delbert Mann (467/491)

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Dear Bill:

Thanks for the 2nd ADA roster — great job! I trust you will publish annual updates.

I thought your 32 page March *Journal* was the best ever. I especially enjoyed Eric Erickson's account of his mission to Berlin, Michael Donovan's story of the trailing wire antenna, Bob Mallick's story of his first cross-country (as a cadet story, perhaps a first), Mike Benarcik's "strange coincidence," Wes Bartelt's "Last Mission," and John Connor's eerie "Near Miss." I was delighted that you included my letter to Herb Davis.
Jim Coffey

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Dear Bill:

Some of our members have asked me about purchasing the 2ADA tapes that we have to rent. I do not have the facilities to make copies for them, but have received information from two sources where some of them might be available. I would suggest that they write to one or both of the following and request available titles and prices:

American Sound Corporation
2700 E. Nine Mile Rd.
Warren, MI 48091
Attn: Frank S. Day, Pres.

Mike Weber (392nd B.G.)
30 Sunny Hill Lane
Dry Ridge, KY 41035

Pete Henry

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Dear Sirs:

I am one of the lost sheep of the 8th Air Force. Can you help me acquainted with some of the boys of 1944-45.

I was attached to a lead ship. Pilot was Capt. Powell from Dallas, Texas.

If you can, send some information. Maybe I can get to find some of the old group.

John L. Raslawski
1125 Kenton St., Aurora, Colo. 80010

Dear Evelyn:

I am enclosing a check for \$100.00 for reservations for Mildred and myself for the reunion in Norwich. We understand this is a non-refundable deposit.

The new Roster is absolutely wonderful! It is well organized, and the larger print is so helpful. Everyone should be happy, believe me! Thanks to all of you who worked so hard to put it out. We do appreciate it.

Looks like you had a heart warming reunion in New Jersey. Sorry we missed it.

Roy Jonasson

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Dear Fred:

Many thanks for your letter of the 21st December last. It was a very pleasant surprise finding it here on my desk when I arrived home after a month's stay in Europe. I have sent off the application to Evelyn today.

Your enclosed information was very interesting and I look forward to meeting you all personally soon to share our memories. One item that I have found strange to me is that so few of the 8th Air Force members knew that we Norwich 'gratefuls' named your military policemen 'Snowdrops', first because of their white helmets and, second because they always 'cooled' the atmosphere around with their presence!

I am looking for a Tommy Turner who was 31 years of in 1943, leaned towards Clark Gable with his looks, was an air gunner ('Tail-end Charlie'), drove a 3-wheeled Morgan car, and had an Alsatian dog called 'Bruce'. I cannot remember his unit at all. He taught me to sing 'Yankee-Doodle Dandy'!

Sorry for the scrawl. My secretary is away for the week. I hope to do better next time.

P.E.B. Warren
Box 411
Gridley, CA 95948

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Dear Bill:

The McAfee reunion was the greatest. It was my second reunion and I regret that I didn't get connected with the 2nd AD Assoc. sooner.

The opportunity afforded by these reunions, to get together with people with whom you shared the most trying, fearful, exciting and worrisome days of your life, is fantastic. We have a common bond that enables us to enjoy each other's company — though newly met, and share each other's memories of those eventful days. Needless to say, we're strangers only once.

There are two other reunions scheduled for next summer, which will be of interest to a lot of old 2nd AD airplane drivers.

The 14th Annual Reunion of Pampa Army Airfield, which trained 6000 multi-engine pilots — Aug. 14-16. Write: PAAF Reunion Assoc., Box 2015, Pampa, Tex. 79065.

B-24 Transition School at Liberal, Kan: 2nd B-24 Airbase Reunion, Sept. 19-21. Write: Airbase Reunion '86, P.O. Box 676, Liberal, Kan. 67901.

Albert E. Querbach

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Dear Evelyn:

Thank you for continuing to handle all of these matters Evelyn.

I heard a psychologist say that each one of us needs an "I can hardly wait" each day of our life. Going back to visit Norwich again for the first time since leaving in '45 is a great one for me. I only wish it was happening in '86. May we all heed Alfred Jenner as he states in the December *Journal* — "Stay out of heaven till '87."

Thanks again for all your work! You will hear from us again regarding the '86 reunion at Pheasant Run as soon as we get the details in the March *Journal*.

Willie Wilson

Dear Bob:

First off, thanks for forwarding the letter of my crews hut mates. I'll write him.

I wrote a letter to Evelyn, (but she may be out of town or very busy) to send me about 20 copies of the March '86 *Journal* and bill me for them. This was three weeks or more ago. I would call her but there are no phone numbers in the *Journal*. I tried to call you, but must have been given the wrong number, to answer your questions before the article was put to bed.

The reason I need copies of the *Journal* is we are getting more and more retirees in Florida and I met several that were with the 2nd AD and have given a lot of my back issues away. So I need something to give out. Who handles this?

Wes Bartelt

(Ed Note: Me.)

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Dear Mr. Weiss (Charles):

On 6 Feb. 1945, a B-24 Liberator was shot down over Holland (West part in the environs of Alkmaar). This B-24 belonged to the 8th Air Force Group — 93rd Bomb Group, Squadron 3309th Bomb.

Their names, etc. are:
Schoephoester, William Edward, 2nd Lt.
0-776809

Sanderson, Ralph Franklin, 2nd Lt.

0-719760 /21 August 1922

Jennings, Howard, 1st Lt. 0-710951

Massa, Kenneth Everett, T/Sgt. 341431 61 /1925 Collinsville

Midgley, Alfred, Jr., S/Sgt. 33707226 /1921 Pittsburgh, PA

Tatum, Dorian N., T/Sgt. 34671809 /Fayetteville, N.C.

Rubin, Martin Howard, S/Sgt. 32846697 /26 Sept. 1924 New York City

Being a member of the Dutch Auletin Group/Air War '39-45/Study Group.

The Dutch Authorities gave us permission to use an old Fortress (B-17) as an Air War 39-45 Museum in this part of the Country. We suppose it will be opened in a year. We hope to see many USAF Veterans in the future!

Enclosed is an envelope and postage for your appreciable answer. Thanking you in anticipation for the trouble.

Erik De Ruiter
Spatterstraat 100
1531 DG Wormer/N.H., The Netherlands
Phone 02982-3088

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Dear Mr. E. A. Rokicki:

I am writing this letter to see if anybody in the 458th BG that were stationed at Horsham St. Faith from 1943-1944 remembered a 15 year old young man that they found there that was flying missions. I believe his name was Glover DeSales or DeSales Glover. I believe he had flown five missions. I am from Norwich and it was on the front pages of the Norwich newspapers. Then I was serving coffee and doughnuts for the American Red Cross and I danced with him. He was very tall and thin and could have passed for older than 15 years old. My husband was stationed at Rackheath with the 467th. We belong to the 2nd Air Division Association.

Mrs. Sybil J. Skilton
15 Beechfern Lane, Willingboro, NJ 08046

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Dear Bill:

Excuse me for taking so long, after receiving the March *Journal*, to state that I have a problem.

I did not receive a 1986 Roster of the 2AD membership.

Granted, that I live in a remote state of the Union but — at least be kind to us Southern folk.

If you would be so kind as to send me another (probably got lost) I would be most happy.

Wilbert J. Naughton (458th BG)

Dear Bill:

This is a picture taken in Las Vegas at our mini-reunion July 28 - Aug. 1 1985. It is the first time in 40 years that some of the men have seen the pilot. Others of us have met in 1983 and a few of us have been in touch with one another several times during the years following our discharge in 1945.



(L to R) Standing: Bill Trask, navigator; Capt. Oscar F. Weed, pilot. Kneeling: John Kolodziejski, tail gunner; Eldon Yoak, radio operator; Eugene Gorman, engineer; Robert Erfurth, armorer-gunner.

Please return the picture. I don't have another like it.

Joe Kolodziejski

* * * * *

Dear Bill:

Thanks for your time on the phone today. Enclosed is my check for \$10.00 to join the 2nd AD Association. Any back copies of the *Journal* you can send will be appreciated and if a reprinting does occur, I will want to be included.

Since I am so late in joining and have not seen the back issues, I assume most of the combat experiences of others would no doubt cover mine, but a couple of odd items may be of interest.

At Herington, Kansas the 448th Bomb Group was issued their B-24's in November 1943 for transfer to England via the southern route. It developed that our issued B-24H had a warped wing and we were delayed in leaving until a replacement was provided. This turned out to be a J Model which to our knowledge was the first J to the E.T.O. when we landed in England on December 3, 1943.

Enroute to England we flew along with elements of the 445th Bomb Group during which I learned they were headed also for England. Their destination was of major interest as I had a navigator brother in the 445th who went over by boat and when we last saw each other in Sioux City, Iowa, neither of us knew where we were going. I only knew the 445th was in England, but not where. Two weeks after arrival at Seething, I was in Norwich. At the truck parking area prior to leaving for Seething, I passed an individual on the walkway. Simultaneously, each of us turned and called out each others name. We both had recognized the others silhouette in the darkness.

My brother kept a book form record of each of his missions before being shot down on Number 13 in March of '44. He perhaps would share this with you if of interest. I was fortunate, along with another officer of our crew, to be the first officers in the 448th to complete 30 missions in May of '44, about 2 weeks prior to D-Day.

I look forward to becoming active in the Association.

R. (Reese) Cater Lee (448th BG)

* * * * *

Dear Bill:

Good to get the March *Journal*.

Since you want to take the blame, I'll complain to you! I did not get that fabulous December issue, nor the Roster. May I have them, please?

Good Luck Bill. Sure enjoy your efforts.

Roy Hoelke (389th-567th)

Dear Mr. Weiss (Charles):

A phone call was just made to Mr. Jim Beavers, 4920 Tellson Place, Orlando, Florida 32806; and he suggested that you might be able to assist me with information concerning my brother who was killed in action, December 31, 1943.

A former student at the University of Oklahoma, he was a tail gunner on a B24...

Sgt. Thomas Carl Roop 38192091

Received letters dated:

Dec. 11, 1943 - 329th Bomb Sq., 93rd Bomb Group, APO 634, New York City, N.Y.

Dec. 21, 1943 - 329th Bomb Sq., 93rd Bomb Group, APO 634, New York City, N.Y.

Dec. 31, 1943 - 330th Bomb Sq., 93rd Bomb Group, APO 634, New York City, N.Y.

This letter was received six months after he was reported as missing in action, addressed to our father - "Your son was a member of the crew of a B-24 type aircraft and was reported missing in action on 31 December 1943 while on an operational mission to Cognac, France. An official report has now been received in the War Department which establishes the fact that your son died on 31 December 1943 when his aircraft crashed into the English Channel while returning from that mission".

I was an older brother, also a student at the University of Oklahoma and had gone into the U.S. Marines in March of 1939 and had been in the South Pacific during this time and a total of nearly 7 years.

It has been my desire through the years to get in contact with someone who may have known him and served with him and that is my reason for writing this letter to you. Any help and assistance you can give me will be appreciated.

A trip was made to Europe just last year and to Cambridge, England and specifically to the "Wall of the Missing" at the Cambridge American Memorial Cemetery. He, of course, is listed among the 5126 names of men whose bodies were never recovered.

Any help or assistance you can give me will be appreciated.

B.O. Roop

Rt. 9, Box 53 Fayetteville, Ark. 72703

Dear Bill:

The enclosed photo is from the first reunion of Bill Kraham's crew from the 445BG, 700BS.



Left to right are Bob McClendon, radio operator; Chuck Kaufmann, tail gunner; Ed Barber, navigator and Ed Radosevich, bombardier. Bill Kraham, pilot and Kark Rausch, ball turret gunner, could not make this first reunion. Ed Corbin, co-pilot and Wes King, flight engineer were KIA when we crashed on returning from an operation and were forced to land at Grest Ashfield, A B17, 385BG base. Bill Diercks, one of our gunners who was removed from the crew when we reported to the 445th BG, was KIA when the crew he was flying with ditched in the North Sea. Jerry Heller, another gunner that was removed from our crew, hadn't made it through navigation school.

The 445BG was short of navigators so they reschooled Jerry and he became a navigator with another crew. This crew landed in Switzerland and was interned there. So Jerry must have learned his navigation real well. Jerry was from Chicago, ASN 36305556, and we have never been able to locate him.

The reunion was held at the home of the navigator, Ed Barber and his wife Rosemary in Albuquerque, New Mexico, the Land of Enchantment. It was held during the first week of October, 1985. The same time as the Hot Air Balloon Fiesta and the Hell's Angels Air Show at Kirkland AFB. No plans were made for the second reunion, but I think that Bill Kraham, our pilot, would be an excellent host.

Edward R. Barber

Dear Bill:

As per usual a mighty fine job on the *Journal*. And you managed to slip in one of my articles - good show.

In any case I write in regards to the article on page 17 by Michael J. Donahue of the 93rd. As you know I was a radioman and it is inconceivable that anyone would use the trailing wire antenna while flying in formation. During my two years at Hethel I never - but never - used the trailing wire antenna. Can you imagine the leading plane in a formation trailing a ten pound weight around while the formation is turning. No way he knows where that ten pounder is. And - number two - we worked on frequencies high enough that the wire was not needed. At the height of 25,000 feet he claims they were flying you could reach Tokyo without the trailing wire antenna. I hate to criticize his story, but it doesn't seem the 93rd lads were with the program on that deal.

I'll bet the pilots of the other planes in the formation had no idea the lead plane was dragging around that ten pound weight.

Keep up the good work.

Earl Zimmerman

* * * * *

Dear Mr. Robertie:

As you can learn from the correspondence enclosed, I am working on a documentation about aerial warfare. I would like to contact the former crew members of the 445th Bomb Group, the 361st Fighter Group who participated in the aerial fight on Sept. 27th, 1944, as well as the survivors of the B24 J 42-51541 of the 703rd squadron.

Would you be able to publish a particular notice in the magazine of the Second Air Division Association?

In a different matter, Mr. Rokicki had published a notice for me - regarding the 458th Bomb Group - in December of 1985.

I would appreciate your help.

Walter Hassenpflug

6438 Ludwigsau-Hess 1, den 29.01.1986

Akazienweg 6

Federal Republik of Germany

(West-Germany)

Dear Bill:

A couple of weeks ago I ordered Vol. I of the 2nd AD *Journal* and had no idea that I would be writing to you again so soon! I spoke with Ed Hohman on the phone today (we live rather close to each other), and learned that to get some photos printed in the *Journal*, I should send them to you. Enclosed are two photos taken in June '44 at Horsham St. Faith, Norwich, 458th Bomb Gp. Our crew was one of the Azon 10 assigned to the 753rd Bomb Sq.



Top row (l to r): Pat McCormick, pilot; Harry Craft, navigator; George Davis, co-pilot; Joe Schelzi, bombardier. Bottom row (l to r): Henry Jaber, gunner; L. Sparkman, gunner; Frank Limbert, engineer; and Fred Slocum, gunner. Five of the 8 are members of the 2nd AD today. Henry Jaber died last year in a car accident.



The B-24 J photo has Eng. Limbert looking out of the window of our plane, *Bachelor's Bedlam* — at that time, no crew members were married.

We started our missions right after D Day and finished our 35 in late December and early '45. We flew about 10 Azon missions, then went on gasoline haul, then back to regular bombardment to finish. I really enjoy the articles you guys write! Maybe I'll try it. The "Ivory Soap" and Jimmy Stewart articles in last June's *Journal* are typical great contributions.

Hope you can use the photos some time soon — and will return the originals. I am enthused about the July Reunion in Illinois — expect I'll be there.

Harry Craft

Dear Bill:

Sorry to hear the *Journal* reprint will not be done. Sometimes you have to scare people to get them to move. Suggestion: give them one more shot at it in the June issue, saying it'd make a most valuable gift to (1) their heirs, (2) Univ. or college library, (3) city/county library, (4) any number of 'sweat' organizations involved in restoration of WW2 a/c . . . etc. It is too important a project to be scuttled by 'inaction'. Well, I for one hope that you give them a 2nd shot, but am prejudiced being a Phi Alpha Theta in history (National honors society).

Thanks much for giving our Berlin/Russian odyssey March featuring. You should have had it several months ago, but CW thought it was just an informative sent him. Anyway, glad you liked it. The real life experience was far, far more suspenseful and weighty. It has never been given full vent, and I appreciate the fact it is 2ADA doing the job.

I do not know how much of an overage you print, but will be willing to buy 10 and pay for them and postage . . . if you can do it, that is the entire *Journals* for distribution much as I cited par. 1 above. You may just send them and I'll remit PDQ. Thanks.

WWI was the hatching of the air warfare egg. WWII saw air power reach a fruition of might unparalleled in military history. On the day we went down (laboriously) there were 1200 H's plus 900 P's, totaling roughly 12,900 men in action. Today you can outfit 1 a/c with 1 man and do 10 times more destruction. So, we have already reached the status of being quite dated . . . it came in a flash and departed in the birth of the atom. Never again will so much be assembled to do that sort of offensive destruction in material and in men — ever! Already this facet of the war is relegated to a few lines in texts students study, just as Napoleon is known for his Russian debacle and Waterloo principally. That is why 2ADA *Journal* is so vital and important — it documents the slices of lives of men in action and there is all too little of that available. The 'Great Man Theory' of history is fine as far as it goes, but crowds the real feature players from the arena.

So as you sweat and strain to do a most magnificent and worthy job, know that at some point in future time, serious students will acclaim your labor of love and would, if they could, crowd you with 1000's of questions to try and get a 'feel' for what it is all combat airmen experienced, from beginning to end. The *Journal* is more than entertainment or resurrected memories — it is foremost a documentation of living history. I bow and salute your diligence, and, your heart.

Eric E. Ericson (93rd)

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Dear Bill:

I read your "My Apologies" article in the March *Journal* and all of a sudden realized I did not receive my December *Journal* or the Roster.

I've looked all over the house for the *Journal*, which I assumed I had received, but when you mentioned the Roster — I knew I hadn't received it, because I've been looking forward to getting it for so long.

Would sure appreciate your sending both if it's not too late. If there is any charge that's o.k. Just let me know.

Maj. Fred D. Worthen, Ret. (93rd)

P.S.: You should be rewarded for the job you do.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Dear Bill:

Some how or other I was overlooked on my December issue of the *Journal* and 1986 Roster. I never received either one. Can you possibly still send them to me, or at least the Roster.

Gordon H. Baumann (389th BG)

Dear Evelyn:

Enclosed please find a check for fifty (\$50) dollars to serve as our non-refundable deposit for the 1987 2nd ADA reunion/convention in Norwich, England.

Please make a room reservation in the names of

Julian K. and Mary J. Wilson
453rd BG
18951 Castlebay Lane
Northridge, CA 91326
(818) 360-6092

Boy! Was I glad to receive the December *Journal*, plus the Roster. Senility is creeping in and I was sure I had already received the December issue a month ago. I wanted to refer to it last week and I hunted high and low for it on several different days, to no avail. I never throw any 2nd ADA or 453rd BG communication away. I had concluded that the *Journal* inadvertently ended up in the trash and I was going to beg for another copy!

I really appreciated getting the '86 Roster.

I noted that I succeeded in getting Elvern Seitzinger of the 492nd BG to join — indirectly. His brother is a neighbor of mine here in Calif. I loaned the brother all my back issues of the *Journal*. (Those that pre-date my membership were kindly given me by Don Olds). He Xeroxed all the pages he thought would be of interest to his brother and got them to him. Knowing that Elvern had flown a B24 in WWII, I hoped he would be a candidate for membership. (Or was he a member prior to '85 and we here in Calif. didn't know it?)

I wrote several letters using 40 year old addresses, to fellows who had been in the 735th Armament shop with me. To date I have had only one returned as not deliverable or forwardable. But more importantly, I had a telephone call from Florida a few days ago from Jim Fox, his letter having been forwarded from New York state. We will be meeting this spring with his visit to Calif. I think he may join the 2nd ADA too!

Willie Wilson

Dear Bill:

Let me take issue with you on a little matter — our "Apologies" in the March issue of the *Journal*. I think that a brilliant idea is still a brilliant idea. And congratulations to you on being a brilliant-idea man. Look what we all got from your idea. We got our *Journal* when we got it; plus the roster, that we have been wanting since 1980 (I think that's when the last one came out) — and at a savings on postage. If the savings can be put toward the Memorial, isn't that icing on the cake? Where does it say that any of us has to receive his copy of the *Journal* on a certain date?

At a business meeting several years ago you told us that you had been instructed to put out a first class newsletter and that's what you were trying to do. Keep it up, Bill — it's a first class newsletter and does a fine job of representing a first class outfit.

Another one of your fans,

John E. "Jack" Stevens

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Dear Mr. Bertram:

As you can see from the correspondence enclosed I am working at a documentation reconstructing the disaster of the 445 BG.

Perhaps you can help me with further information or to establish useful contacts.

Because I intend to investigate the events of those days — as far as possible — from the American and German point of view I also have contacted three German pilots.

Walter Hassenpflug

6438 Ludwigsau-Hess 1, den 24.02.1986

Akazienweg 6

Federal Republic of Germany

(West-Germany)

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Dear Bill:

Thanks for yours of the 24th last, much appreciated here, and especially the kind comments.

The UPS packet arrived Wednesday. The normal mailing arrived today. So the service on each was outstanding, especially on the part of our Postal Service, which we have come to not expect of them in this era! (*Ed: Guess again. It's a disaster!*)

I mailed a check to Evelyn with my renewal. I am going to mail a check to Charlie Weiss for the 93rd memorial. I think this is appropriate and most especially in view of your kindness, which I deeply appreciate.

Re other stories. I was going to get an oral (tape) to Carlos and Nadine Vasquez re the whole experience for their history. I fired off a letter last week to them to see how much they intended using and tailoring the oral to suit their needs. IF you want me to finish the results of our Soviet experiences for 2ADA, I can see no reason to not have it in the *Journal* also. Looking at it with a somewhat jaundiced eye of an historian, the *Journal* would be an excellent and most appropriate place for the balance of the saga due to the larger audience and generally greater impact therefrom. I can, now that I have a feel for your requirements, tailor it so that both publications can use it and still keep it 'fresh'.

I said oral for them because it is very difficult for me to type much more than an hour or so each day — and sometimes not that often due to a bad arthritic back. As long as your requirements would be serialized, I think 2 addendas would suffice to the original beginning now in print. Please advise.

Wes Bartelt, 453rd, was at Poltava with us and it was great to hear his saga again. B-24's did fly after a fashion on 2 engines but not with any great enthusiasm! In Oct. '84, I flew up to visit John in Tacoma and I finally said that perhaps we should have flown the a/c down and try to effect a landing, wheels up? probably, and he said he would like to have another crack at it because of what we now know about *Ground Effect*. The terrain

Dear Bill:

I am looking for information about my wife's uncle, Howard Kieffer. He was the navigator on Joe Woener's crew, with the 489th Bomb Group, 846th Squadron. They were reported missing-in-action on Nov. 30, 1944. In November of 1949, Howard's remains were returned to the family.



(L to R) Top row: Joe Woener, pilot; Ernie Davis, co-pilot; Howard W. Kieffer, navigator; Al Williams, bombardier. Bottom row: Schwartz, radio operator; Gaver, gunner; Ellis, gunner; Mahan, gunner; Sanderford, engineer; House, armorer.

If anyone has details about the crew's demise, please contact me. Enclosed is a picture of the crew. I would appreciate it if you would print it in the *Journal*.

John Recalin

5742 Nordina Dr.

Huntington Beach, CA 92649

was ideal — but after getting refreshed by Wes and his experiences, I think we did well as it was — hindsight being what it is.

Fact is, in the last half hour of our flight, John had our CoP give him a hand with the a/c as it was getting unmanageable for him.

Anyway, yes, I do have more than one tale to tell — some as an Av/C — some in B-24 transition — flying home — wanting to stay over at the end and not being able to because they thought I was plain NUTS — and such, brief vignettes of my mind as it kaleidoscopes along at this point in life. All of these things may stimulate others to get cracking and help make history a Living Emotional Experience, which it is! If I have any wisdom today, it was nurtured back then — it was a time for many men and I feel that almost without exception we who were so young in years did climb the mountain to plant our flag. Today we have to keep at it, those days of yesteryear, or else it will be garbled by lesser scribes in whom the passions we felt does not live, arouse nor incite.

IF I can be of any help to you, always feel free to ask, because there are some things that are worth the pain. Today, Sunday — I'm paying the price! The mind is strong — the body corrupt. It is fun though to get fired up, it's like old times!

Incidentally — let me sound off on one more thing, the reissuing of the 2ADA *Journals*. This project must NOT be allowed to die! I would go for four myself. One for self, two to university libraries and one to the AF Academy. I think most every member could think of a worthy repository for these even if he did not want one for self use. This is a chance in a lifetime to perpetuate a moving, living and lasting tribute to airmen the world over. I don't think they realize the value of what it is they are spurning now. It is a dedication to future generations so that they can profit and then we can truly say we have done our job full well and completely. Damn it Bill — Don't let it die — especially due to lack of vision. A 17th C. German philosopher said it first, "For want of vision, the people perish." The more roots we plant of

our history, the better chance those that follow us will know, understand and profit from our heritage, and that heritage must be given wide dissemination to ensure survival and a better tomorrow for all mankind.

Forgive me for beating the drum — I just don't want you to quit on this (hopefully). This is a classic example of why people need leaders — it is so easy to 'poop' along.

I'm done in now. Gotta quit.

You have done, are doing and shall continue for another 16 years a helluva job well done!!!

Eric E. Ericson

(*Ed note: To printer — the name is Ericson. Done!*)

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Dear Bill:

Thank you for the letter and picture of the B24 flight deck in the December *Journal*.

I've just sent Jordan Uttal a check for thirty (\$30.00) dollars which is the result of six sales of the poster photo.

The terrific job you did on the roster made your apology about the late delivery, which I didn't even notice, quite unnecessary. I'm too busy in our retail business in December to know what day it is anyway.

Maybe you can find room in a future *Journal* for the enclosed story which I've been trying to get into the 445th Group column without success for two years.

My letter and photo in the December *Journal* brought me a very welcome response from Frank Federici in Illinois and a phone call from Donald Meyers in Oklahoma. I hope that the enclosed story might produce even more contacts and bring back a few more memories.

I won't see you in St. Charles because I really can't get away in July. I will be in Las Vegas this month for a reunion of my pilot class of 43-D in tandem with the Air Force "Gathering of Eagles" 40th. These reunions may bring some stories and new members for our own Association.

Hope to see you again soon at another reunion.

Henry Orzechowski

The Ground War

by Verlin F. Debolt (479th)

Being in a service squadron, later called an Aerial Engineering Squadron, we had no combat planes of our own; therefore, we didn't experience the excitement and anxiety of the flight line personnel. We did have some memorable moments and I would like to pass them along, although I don't remember all of the dates and names of the people involved.

We were attached to the 479th Fighter Group stationed at Wattisham. Our work hangar was a large concrete-walled permanent building. Several planes could be handled at one time and our job was to help the fighter squadrons with engine changes, inspections, plane damage and technical changes. By doing this, it lessened the plane's down time.

We had three liaison planes: a B26, an AT6 and a C64 fabric covered plane.

One day while pulling an inspection on the C64, the hangar became very bright. Wondering what caused the lights to get so bright, I looked out one of the plane's windows and saw the next plane, a P51, encircled by fire. Someone on the wing had dropped a trouble light on the floor covered by gasoline. Out of the fire came John Kapuscinski, disregarding the fire on his shoes and his own safety, to warn everyone of the fire in the hangar and to alert the engineering office to call the fire department. Here came another fellow with a fire extinguisher. Before he had gotten within 50 feet of the fire, the ammunition stacked on the floor started going off. As I ran out the hangar door and looked around, it was like watching a covey of quail burst out of the brush. All the people were running for cover. The fire extinguisher was later found lying in the middle of the floor. The fire truck arrived and the driver, paying no heed to the exploding ammunition, drove up to the fire and put it out with foam.

One man was burned very bad. After months of treatment, he finally got to go home to Chicago. This incident was not the result of sloppy housekeeping, but the hangar chief disregarding his own safety policy of unloading the fuel and ammunition before coming into the hangar. We had to patch a lot of holes in the planes.

Another time I still remember well was while making a routine inspection of the fabric, I took the fairing off the tail and fuselage and the first thing I saw was an empty bolt hole. Upon further investigation I found another bolt missing. This was two of the four bolts holding the tail to the fuselage gone. You think this won't give you a sick feeling — especially when the base commander flew one of the multiple seat planes, he required the crew chief to fly with him. I can still see that empty hole.

We got to watch the victory rolls. Even

in the Service Squadrons, we watched with excitement and a sense of accomplishment. There were some anxious moments as we watched the damaged planes come in making a belly-landing. You would almost hold your breath until it had come to a stop and the pilot was on the ground. Since the Hicham Repair Depot was across the field, other groups would have their badly damaged planes land at Wattisham to be repaired there, so we saw a lot of different things.

While we still had P38s another event happened that stays in my memory. While using the runway that ended near our hangar, the plane had gotten off the ground but crashed and flipped over on its back at the end of the runway and burst into flames with the pilot inside. That was a very depressing sight.

My most memorable moment happened during the latter days of the war. Intelligence thought the Germans were going to stage a last ditch effort to disrupt the allies' progress and cause confusion by landing paratroopers in England. We were posted around the airfield, and had to dig foxholes. Every time there was an air raid alert we had to grab our carbines and go to our posts. Because the Germans were putting a lot of buzz bombs and rockets in the air, the alerts sounded nearly twice a night — usually just after dark and just before daylight. So we got a lot of jogging time. Two other fellows and I were posted close to an anti-aircraft crew. We got a lot of information from them as to what was happening.

I don't remember the date, but this one night we were sitting on the rim of our foxholes visiting and watching the skies. In the very far distance we saw what looked to be an explosion. A short time later there was another light in the distance. The third light seemed to be a little closer. Someone said, "Hey, that's the third one. I wonder what it is." These explosions would light the horizon for a short while as I had seen distant fires do at home. Each one seemed to be getting closer. We were still counting when all at once we could see what we thought were tracer bullets in the air. Then another explosion. Then it came to us that someone is shooting down planes. Now the tension starts to build. Are the planes allied or German? Maybe the Germans are going to try something.

As the planes and the explosions kept getting closer, we could hear the anti-aircraft crew stirring around and talking. They, too, were having some anxious moments.

We had now counted nine aircraft down. As the planes were getting very close to us by now, we could hear the engines. Then there was another burst of tracers and you

could barely hear what we thought was gunfire. Then a small fire shows the plane was hit. As it got closer, the fire grew bigger. After it had passed overhead, it looked as though it was going straight up and started to plunge downward. We could see this ball of fire coming in what seemed to be directly for our position. It seemed to take a long time getting down and we were sure it was heading toward us. That was scary until we realized it wasn't going to be near us. It finally came down in the area near Hicham, probably a mile away.

The final count we had was ten planes. I think they were later said to be B17s, shot down by a lone German plane following them back from a mission over Germany.

After all the activity had quieted down, over us flew this plane at a very low altitude. He made two passes over our base. We had been told the German airplane engine had a different rhythm than ours, and this was very noticeable as the plane made its two passes over Wattisham. The anti-aircraft gunners were furious because the German plane was so close but the British authorities wouldn't let them fire. The Germans never came but the possibility that they would caused some of us ground crew members to share in some of the tense moments of an air war.

By being attached to a battle group, the Service Squadrons didn't share in the award of battle stars. Therefore, no extra separation points. So we had to stay on for a while longer.

After V.E. Day, I was shipped to the 306th Bomb Group, 423rd Squadron. While there we were detached to Southern France for photographic missions. While in France, I got to swim in the Mediterranean Sea. Some of the fellows that stayed there longer than I got to spend a couple of days in Rome. There were some liberty runs to Rome.

The 306th BG moved to Giebelstadt Air Base in Germany before Christmas, 1945 and I was back in Indiana Feb. 2, 1946.

By coincidence I lived in married airmen quarters at both Wattisham and in Germany. The heat was by fireplace at Wattisham and no fuel was furnished. The orderly room was heated by an auxiliary airplane heater.

In Germany we had the small stoves the barracks was famous for. We scavenged for fuel in a bombed out house. In January, 1946, we were issued twelve pieces of pressed coal, each about the size of a brick, for our monthly ration. The next day they told us to bring five pieces back because they had overestimated the load. Because of this situation, I waited for our trucks and jeeps to arrive, then about dark made a scouting trip and finally found a jeep that still had an axe.

As ground crewmen, our big moments may not have been as dramatic or as dangerous as the flight crews, but we did share some memorable events.

We also had some fun.