

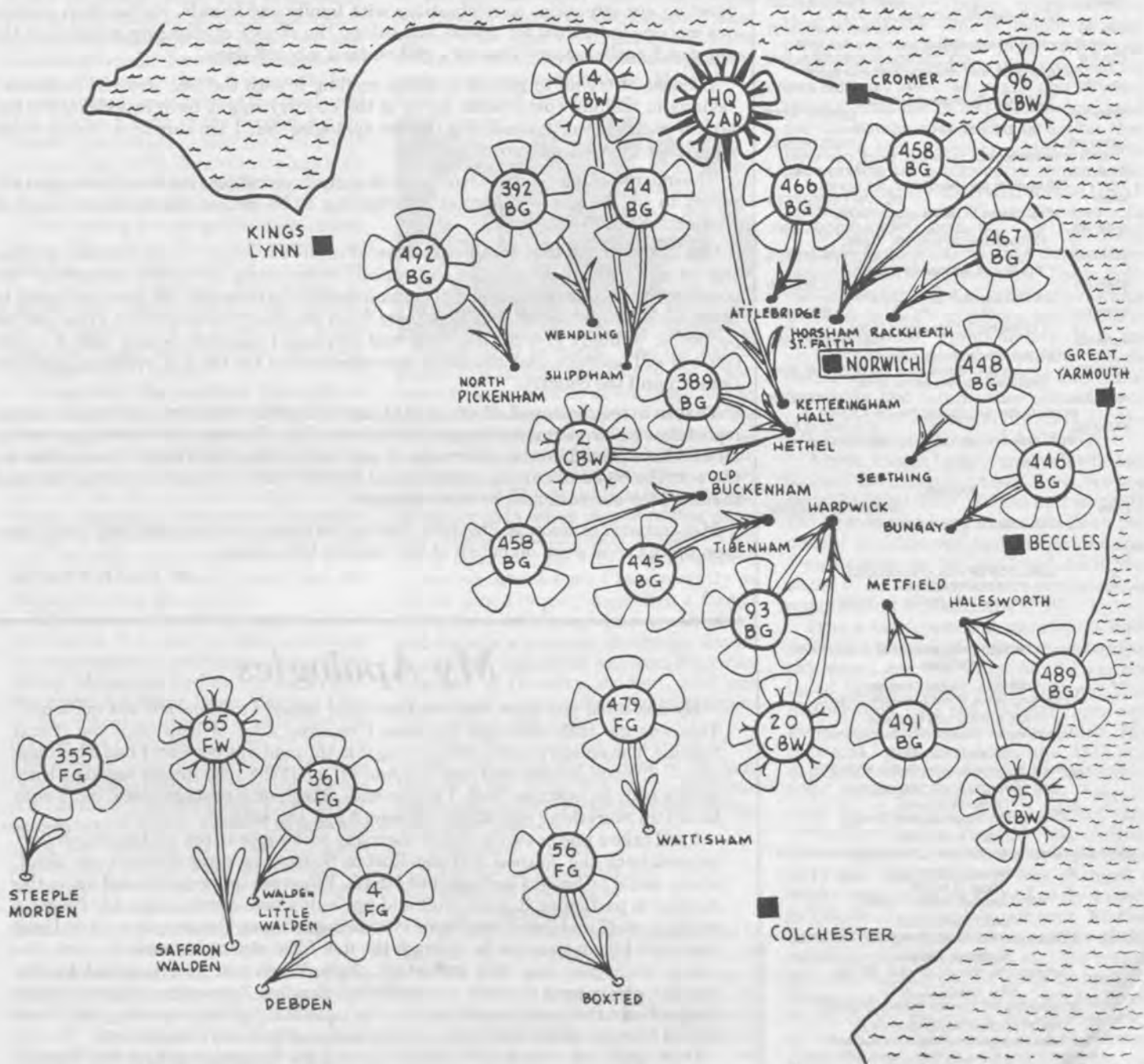


# JOURNAL

VOL. 25 NO. 1

SECOND AIR DIVISION ASSOCIATION

MARCH 1986



Springtime in East Anglia

## Second Air Division Association Eighth Air Force

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## President's Message

As we, members of the 2nd Air Div. Assoc., 8th Air Force, look forward with anticipation to the year 1986 and the sharing of experiences of our wartime years together, both at various Group Reunions held throughout the country, as well as our Division Reunion to be held at Pheasant Run, Ill., July 10 thru the 13th, I would as President wish you all Godspeed and the best of health and happiness in the year ahead. May you all look forward to enjoying those cherished friendships that become such an integral part of our lives as we reach those golden years together.



My first item of business in this New Year would be to give a collective thank you to our staff for turning out such a beautiful 2nd Air Div. Roster. We should all be especially aware of the fact that this was done during the Thanksgiving and Christmas holidays, when the majority of us were devoting our attentions to celebrations with family and friends. Rather than seeking out any one individual for thanks and taking the chance of slighting someone in the process, I again repeat "Thanks a million for a job well done."

Because of trying to get out a roster, mailing it with the Dec. *Journal* to attain a savings in mailing costs, some parts of the country might have experienced a late arrival of their Dec. *Journal*. For this we apologize, but I am sure that you all would agree that the wait was worth it.

The inner workings of the Assoc. goes on and all committees are functioning and will report to the Executive Board at our meeting to be held in the month of April at Pheasant Run, Ill.

One of the things that continually amazes me as President, is the complete dedication of all members serving on the various committees. Scattered throughout the country, they use various means of communication to complete the tasks assigned to them. This in light of the fact that there is no monetary remuneration given and all parties so willingly give of their time and services. I sincerely believe that it is this spirit of self sacrifice that has made our organization the envy of veterans organizations around the country.

Thanks to the continued efforts of all of our Group Vice Presidents, we are now able to report that we have attained the goal of 6000 members. Our heartfelt thanks goes out to all who have contributed to this mark of success. All who work at the Group level are the very life blood of our organization and I would like to extend to you my personal thanks. May our next goal be 6500 members.

May our next reunion at Pheasant Run be the largest we have ever had. Until then, keep up the good work on behalf of the 2nd Air Div. Assoc.

E. BUD KOORNDYK

## My Apologies

By now all of you know that the December issue of the *Journal* was quite late. This was my fault although I'm sure I received a lot of help from the Postal Service. The reason I was late in getting it in the mail was because I had a brilliant idea — I would publish and mail the *Journal* AND the 1986 Roster together, thus saving a lot on postage. Well, I might have saved some postage costs, but I sure fouled up everything else along the way. All of you have my apology.

I will take a line or two to thank the many who wrote to tell me how much they enjoyed both the *Journal* and the Roster. Some even congratulated my 'Staff' which would be fine if I had one, but I don't. When anything gets fouled up, in the *Journal* in particular, it is my fault and my fault alone. Maybe some day I'll get a working 'staff' and then I can blame everything on them. Dreamer that I am! Until that time I'll continue to fly through the flak filled sky on my own.

One additional, but very important, item. When you have material for the *Journal*, please send it to me, not to Evelyn. Sending *Journal* material to Evelyn simply slows the process and there is the possibility of items getting lost. And while I'm at it, please send membership material to Evelyn, not to me.

Once again, my apologies for being late with the December issue of the *Journal*, but I'm glad to read so many of you enjoyed both the *Journal* and the Roster.

BILL ROBERTIE

# BUNGAY BULL

446th BOMB GROUP  
by  
William F. Davenport



Well, here it is another year. How fast they seem to come as we grow older, and that 6-month to 24-month stint that we spent as Bungay Buckaroos becomes a smaller and smaller portion of our lives. I think that as we look back upon those years that in most of our lives they represented, at that time, a very large portion of our manhood years. This is probably why we hold those experiences and friendships made during those years, and new friendships made since with those of similar experiences so close. I guess that is, in a paragraph, why most of the readers of this column belong to the Second Air Division. It also explains why the first publication of the 446th Bomb Group has been so well received and people are looking forward to the next issue.

The mailing for our publication consisted of 780 copies. From this number we have had 234 people respond in a positive mode and no negatives. As a result, we should have sufficient funds on hand to get us through two or three more issues this year. So get some info into the editor to make his job easier.

Along with the positives there are always some negatives. I have found that a number of our non-Second Air Division people, even though they have made a commitment to the 446th Bomb Group, have not yet accepted the Second Air Division. Your help in this area will be appreciated by your Group Leader and, I am sure, the newly recruited individual when he participates in Division activities and starts receiving the *Journal*.

When you receive this in early April or late March, it is time to make a personal decision regarding attendance at our 446th Group Memorial Dedication at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, Dayton, Ohio on the morning of 8 July 1986 and the Second Air Division Reunion 10-13 July. The date, 8 July, was selected to allow those who also plan to attend the Second Air Division Reunion in St. Charles, Ill. adequate travel time to reach Chicago and enjoy this meeting also. This is a great opportunity for our many members in the Midwest who have not been able to attend any SAD reunions, and of course no group reunions have been held, to get together with some of their old friends.

As to our 446th First Reunion and Memorial Dedication Service, it is our intention to keep this very simple and consequently the cost will be minimal. It is planned that on the evening of July 7th, we will have a room reserved in a nearby motel suitable for a friendly get-together and retelling of how each was responsible for the demise of the Third Reich.

On the morning of July 8th, we will attend the Memorial Dedication Service near the Air Force Museum at 10 A.M. Thereafter we will adjourn to a nearby restaurant for lunch and the saying of our goodbyes—see you next year or at St. Charles.

It is important that we have some idea of who and how many plan on attending our Dayton Memorial Dedication. Please let me know and I will get back to you with a list of motels in the area so you may make your own reservations. My address is on Page 2 of this *Journal*.



Speaking of reunions, note the photograph. J. Wakeman sent this to me. It was taken in late October at his place in Las Vegas. He had present nine of the 10 original crew members; the 10th was unable to make it because of his wife's serious illness. Isn't it great that these guys could get together. This is the first time since 25 February 1945, when they were shot down over Regensburg in "Rigor Mortis" of the 705th B.S., they have all been together.

Among other letters I have recently received is one inquiry regarding a former Pilot, John V. Colson, who was shot down and became a prisoner of war for several months. He reportedly was from Waycross, Georgia, a Divinity student, and was imprisoned prior to release by the Russians in the Black Sea area.

I also have received a number of requests regarding the address of the gentleman in the Netherlands who is preparing the history of the 446th Bomb Group. His address is:

Harold E. Jansen  
Dr. L.J. Rogierstrat 112  
2552 LB The Hague  
The Netherlands

Our Roll of Honor is being updated to include 1st Lt. Jay G. Carr, O 685294, of the 705 B.S. who was killed in action 8 March 1945 on a mission to Berlin. His remains were unable to be individually identified, and were interred as a group burial with other members of the crew who could not be identified individually. The remains were subsequently transferred to Jefferson Barracks National Memorial Cemetery.

In response to the Roll of Honor listing which was in the 446th Bomb Group publication, I have received several additional names but strange as it may be, Lt. Carr was not among these. Surely someone remembers this man and his crew. Let me know if the others are not included on this list. The following other names have been received, and it is hoped can be authenticated: 1st Lt. Clark H. Jensen; 1st Lt. James E. Dale; Capt. Penrose; S/Sgt. Maynard Brisbois; Capt. Nelson T. Seagraves; Wilford Potis; Sgt. Bickel; T/Sgt. Melvin Julius Solomon; John L. Vassler; 1st Lt. Mark Hulet; 1st Lt. L.V. Allen; Sgt. Allen E. Crandall; S/Sgt. Thomas R. Kelly; Sgt. Harvey K. Tillman, Jr.

As I have stated before, it is important that we get the Roll of Honor as near complete as possible as a tribute to our comrades who paid the ultimate cost for our Victory over 40 years ago. Please recheck that list of 392 names, and send me those who were killed in action that are not listed as well as additional facts surrounding the deaths of the above names.

I have recently ordered from the USAF Historical Research Center the two rolls of microfilm containing the 446th BG monthly histories as required during those years by AAF regulations. These rolls should contain a lot of information which will be invaluable to anyone who wants to develop another group history. It is my understanding that they should contain listings of personnel assigned and transferred. In the future, they should be of considerable historical interest to the 446th MAW at McChord AFB, WA.

Again, I want to encourage all who can to visit the museum at McChord. As you know, I visited there and feel that we 446th BG people who have memorabilia to dispose of would do well to consider its donation, or loan, to the McChord AFB Museum. After all, this is where our successor organization is stationed.

Just a brief personal mention: I have received a number of letters trying to identify who I am. Well, first of all I am not listed in the Casten 446th history. This history only lists the original crews and those who were there at the finish. My crew and I arrived in late June, 1944 and departed October through December, 1944. I was a Navigator on Jim Pickett's crew. We flew Capt. Schreiber's old ship "Naughty Nan" on most of our missions. We completed 31 missions in September, 1944 and then the tour was changed 2 weeks later to 35, so we had to fly 4 more in October to complete our tour. At this time I was assigned as a member of the squadron instructor crew, and the rest of my crew shipped out for home by boat. In December I got my wish and left for home via Stone and Prestwick. We left Prestwick in the early morning hours of Christmas Day, 1944 across the North Atlantic via the Azores and Newfoundland to Bangor, Maine where we arrived on 26 December 1944. That's who I was and what I did.

So Keep Tuned to Beachbell.

# 392nd B.G. Report

by Fred Thomas (392nd)

January 14 . . . Although you will read this in the spring, we must take this means to thank all of you who sent us the many Christmas cards and notes. As before, they came from Hong Kong, Ireland, Norwich and Norfolk, England, and all across the U.S. To say the least, it is nice to be remembered. Thank you.

The reports given by our British friends, the Hastings, Kings, Eatons, Duffields, Kimbles, and others, indicate winter with freezing and snow came early. Doesn't that make you want to "re-up" and spend some more time in your Nissen hut at Wendling? All send their best wishes and express their anticipation of our Division return and reunion with them in 1987.

Denis Duffield, our good friend and 392nd B.G. contact of Dereham, wrote that once again our friends of the surrounding area about Wendling and our old base held Remembrance Day ceremonies at our obelisk memorial last November 10. Col. Clifford Bingham of USAF Lakenheath gave us representation from the Air Force. About fifty persons attended. As we said last year, being remembered by our British friends after all these years means a great deal to us, as I'm certain it does to you. We hope many of you will write your appreciation to all in care of Denis Duffield, whose address we gave you in the September *Journal*, and who is listed in our roster under Subscribing Members. I'm sure he will pass your letters on to Mrs. Wendy Carter of the Beeston Council so they may be made known to all our friends about there. While on the subject of Denis and Wendling, you will recall we gave you information in the September *Journal* about preparing yourself if you plan to visit Norwich and Wendling on your own. Well, Denis wrote me a couple of corrections. To alert him about your visit when in London, call 0362-67440. The number I gave you, 96-67440, is to be used from Norwich. The other correction . . . I said you should take the train from Liverpool Station; that should be Liverpool Street Station. As Denis said, we don't want our members going off to Liverpool by mistake.

Ernie Cromie, our contact who lives in Lisburn which is near Belfast, wrote that a few Americans were by last year visiting Nutts Corner and surrounding area. He has left his number at the gate to the old base, and his address is in our roster under Subscribing Members. He would like to meet any of our members visiting Nutts Corner and his area.

Speaking of our new roster, it has been longer in coming than any of us anticipated, and the December *Journal* was late on account of a combined mailing, but the combined mailing was a money saving

effort, and I believe you will agree the new roster was worth the wait. We think it's a beauty, and we congratulate all who composed and produced it. It is a great dividend for our members, and we urge you to care for it and use it to find your old friends from our Group and all others of the Division in order to increase our camaraderie which is a great part of the reason of our Association.

We have new members who have joined us since the roster went to print. They are: Chester Catulli, James W. Smith, James R. Carlson, Lynn D. McKim, James F. Davey, John Huba, Carroll W. Cheek, Donald C. Gephard, John J. Goodwin, Stephen A. Wozniak, and Chester Janowski. We welcome them, and we will be happy to send you their addresses if you should want to contact them. We show our Group membership to now number 431. We continue our search, and we appreciate those names and addresses you have sent us. We get the information out to those men as time allows; however, we get names with no address, or names with only the city given. Perhaps that is all you have, but if you do have more complete addresses, we would appreciate your sending that further information to us. Oh, hello, I just found Robert L. Eagan. He makes 432. Glad I didn't leave you out Robert.

In our report in the December *Journal* we addressed the plans for a 392nd B.G. Memorial Association and promised more information. The details concerning the formation of the Association continue, and you should be contacted by the time you read this. We have had a letter outlining the planned activities of the Association and reassurance that no splintering of our Division programs will occur. In fact, the first reunion of the 392nd B.G. Memorial Association is planned to be in conjunction with our Division reunion at Pheasant Run in July. That should result in an increased number attending from our Group. Bill Richards called and reported the Association has 110 members so far, and that a newsletter would be out in

February. More information can be had by writing Gil Bambauer or Lawrence Gilbert whose addresses are in our roster.

Our other activities have us involved with our committee in planning our Division reunion for our members here in Southern California and adjacent areas. It is planned for March 1 at El Toro Marine Station, and we look forward to another great evening. We also plan a Division golf outing June 6. Please let us know if you would like to attend.

In closing, we would bring an important item to your attention, and that is the matter of communications which is a two-way street. We and our V.P. Membership, Evelyn Cohen, do all possible to keep you on our rolls. We value each of you, but we need your help to prevent your being lost due to some mistake on our, your, or the Post Office's part. For instance, we recently saw where one of our members had been dropped on account his mail had been returned. Since he lives near us, we called him to see if there had been some change in his address. There had been none, so we can only surmise some Post Office error, or an error may have crept into the computerized address. Then, another member rejoined and said he wasn't aware of the reason he had fallen from our rolls and his *Journal* stopped coming. Turns out he failed to pay his dues in 1984 and the printout we received from Evelyn did not list him, so we were unaware we had lost him. Our suggestion, and favor asked, is that you be aware that you should receive a dues notice from Evelyn about November preceding dues being payable January 1. If you haven't received that notice by January 1, you just know something is wrong. Also, we reiterate, it is very important that you keep Evelyn informed of your current address, especially now that we are using non-profit mailing. Then, if you don't receive your *Journal* by the end of the month it is due, write Bill Robertie and/or Evelyn Cohen and so inform them. It is our duty to keep you informed and up to date, but we need your help.

Don't forget to make early reservations for the Second Air Division reunion at Pheasant Run. We plan to see you there!

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## WORLD WAR II

### AIRPLANE NOSE ART INFORMATION SOUGHT

For a book length study of American airplane "nose art" during World War II, I would like to hear from individuals who either executed such art or used it on their aircraft. I am interested in how and why subjects/motifs were chosen and any memories/stories about individual examples. I would like to hear from individuals with photographs of this art work. All materials will be promptly returned after copying. Please contact: Randall Bond, Art Librarian, 205 Bird Library, Syracuse University, Syracuse, New York 13244-2010.

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IT'S SO EASY TO REACH



PHEASANT RUN is just 35 minutes from O'Hare International Airport. Take the Northwest Tollway to Route 53, continue South on Route 53 (following the signs to Joliet) to Army Trail Road. Go West on Army Trail Road for 13 miles to Route 59. Take Route 59 South for 3 miles to Route 64, West on Route 64 for 3 miles and you are at Pheasant Run. Van service is available to and from O'Hare Field. Private planes, including small jets, may land at adjoining DuPage County Airport.

"WHERE BUSINESS AND PLEASURE GET TOGETHER"

ON NORTH AVENUE JUST 45 MINUTES FROM CHICAGO 3 MILES EAST OF ST. CHARLES

**Second Air Division Association  
39th Annual Reunion**

**Pheasant Run Resort, St. Charles, Illinois 60174 • July 10-13, 1986**

*(See location map on back.)*

**Thursday, July 10**

9 a.m. - 5 p.m. Registration  
9 a.m. - 5 p.m. Group Hospitality Rooms Open  
6 p.m. - 7 p.m. Group Cocktail Party  
7 p.m. Group Dinners

**Friday, July 11**

7 a.m. - 9 a.m. Buffet Breakfast  
9 a.m. - 5 p.m. Group Hospitality Rooms Open  
Noon - 3 p.m. Ladies Luncheon  
Noon - 3 p.m. Men's Luncheon  
6 p.m. - 7 p.m. Cocktail Party  
7 p.m. Gala Italian Buffet

**Saturday, July 12**

7 a.m. - 9 a.m. Buffet Breakfast  
10 a.m. - noon General Business Meeting  
Noon - 5 p.m. Group Hospitality Rooms Open  
1:30 - 4 p.m. Films  
6 p.m. - 7 p.m. Cocktail Party  
7 p.m. - Midnight Gala Banquet and Dance

**Sunday, July 13**

7:30 a.m. - Buffet Breakfast  
9:30 a.m.

*Times listed are all tentative.*

*Programs will be available at check in desks.*

*The costs listed below are for the entire package as shown above, including hotel room for 3 nights. For special arrangements, let me know your requirements and I will advise as to costs.*

**Cost per person:** Single Occupancy — \$405.00 Double Occupancy — \$315.00 per person  
If you wish to share a room, let me know and I will try to come up with a partner.

**For guaranteed reservations:** Full payment by June 10th

**Cancellations:** Full refund if written notice received no later than July 1st.

**Reservations:** Not accepted without deposit. If full payment is not received by June 10, reservation will be cancelled and no refund will be made.

**Extra nights:** Pay directly to hotel — \$78.00 per night + 6% tax.

**Parking:** Free. There is plenty of room for RV's, but no electrical hookup.

**Golf Tournament:** Thursday, July 10 — Contact "Pete" Henry, 164B Portland Lane, Jamesburg, N.J. 08831 (609) 655-0982 for reservations and cost.

We have 400 rooms reserved at Pheasant Run. We also have available at a nearby motel approximately 100 additional rooms. Reservations will be made on a first come first served basis.

**United Air Lines:** United Air Lines has been designated as our **official airline for this convention.**

They will provide a special discount fare to Chicago O'Hare Airport from July 6-15.

They will award 2 tickets to any destination in the United States as a prize drawing for those who book reservations through their toll free number 800-521-4041 (8:30 a.m. - 8:00 p.m. EST, 7 days a week). Use Account No. 643K when ordering direct or through your travel agent.

**From O'Hare to Pheasant Run:** Call (312) 584-6300 and ask for transportation desk (ext. 7704). Advise airport, airline, date and time of arrival and they will make arrangements for van pickup. Cost \$10.00 per person, minimum 3 passengers, less than 3, \$15.00 per person, one way. Pickup point is between United and TWA on the lower level at the second curb. All vans are tan and brown with Pheasant Run Resort logo. **All reservations must be made in advance. Do not call me, call Pheasant Run Resort.**

Upon receipt of your deposit, I will enclose a brochure from United explaining all the details of flight reservations, and acknowledgement of your hotel reservation.

**Reservation Form**

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Spouse \_\_\_\_\_ Group \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Single \_\_\_\_\_ Double \_\_\_\_\_ Will Share \_\_\_\_\_ 1st Reunion \_\_\_\_\_

Arrive \_\_\_\_\_ Depart \_\_\_\_\_ Deposit \_\_\_\_\_ Paid in Full \_\_\_\_\_

Phone No. ( ) \_\_\_\_\_

**Send all reservations to:**

Evelyn Cohen, 06-410 Delaire Landing Road, Philadelphia, PA 19114 — (216) 632-3992.

**PLEASE DO NOT CONTACT HOTEL DIRECT.**

# The 445th Reporting

by Frank DiMola (445th)

Here it is, the first week of January, 1986, with sleet and snow and temperatures in the low 20's, and I'm writing out a report to be read sometime in March. I'll just have to think Spring and look for my tulips, hyacinths and crocus.

Once again, my mail bag is increasing daily and much corresponding keeps me very busy. Some day I'll catch up and clear off the top of my desk. Buddy Cross, my assistant vice president, can also make the same statement. Speaking of Buddy, we will not be hearing his hometown on radio along with all the other towns in the Route 66 song. There was some talk about changing the route number and eliminating the Route "66" road number altogether.

After leaving Miami, Florida, I was sent to Amarillo, Tex. for AM schooling and spent 5 cold months in the area. Do you know what separates Amarillo from the North Pole? — A barbwire fence.

I have never done this before, but here is a listing of all the new members who have joined the 445th bomb group recently:

Don Gallant	Greg Jay Swindle
Ernest Weddell Sr.	Frank Reed
Mervin Sheaffer	Jim Dowling
Harald Eckelberry	Oscar McKeever
Donald Mills	Billy Buzbee
Bob Powell	Henry Bachowski
Floyd Bradley	Merlin Odegaard
George Anderson	George Kesely
Lyle Papworth	Joe Swanick
Charles Goens	Ed Kowalski
Richard Parkes	Bernard Anderson
Billie McCelennen	Alphonse Spahn
Carl Bally	Betty Campbell
William Jones	

Speaking of W.W. Jones, I had many requests to look for the EX Squadron Company. He is a resident of Las Vegas, Nev. This is a great step towards increasing our membership. I have contacted many newspapers and have written to the editors to publish my "Looking for Lost Buddies" article. I may not find many 445th's, but I do find men who were attached to the Second Air Division in England.

Many thanks to the few members who sent me postage money and stamps to help Buddy and I to continue our contact with you and the mailing out of applications in search of new members. We thank you all. As an afterthought, we will try to welcome and contact all the new members by mail but a better idea would be to all meet in St. Charles this July. Since the reunion is being held in the Chicago area, I am sure we will have a large turnout. (Today is the day after Chicago beat my New York Giants. Wait till next year Eddie.) Please check in the *Journal* for more details and information about this reunion and our 40th reunion back to

Norwich, England next year. Please plan ahead and do not be left out.

About our plans for a memorial in Tibenham, England. Progress has been very slow. A location for the memorial is creating a problem. As you know, the Tibenham area is barren and there is really no town in the area. The latest report came to me from Ed Folloff who stated in his letter that the Norfolk Glider Club's contact, Eric Ratcliffe, still has hopes in obtaining some runway for a memorial, and to keep the Glider Club in operation. If and when the time comes, we will promote a drive for the memorial. At this time I have a bank balance of \$1,556.27.

There has been a slight delay in the delivery of the December *Journal* and the new roster for the East Coast members. It was mailed in mid-December, and we will receive our copies via Pony Express and Wells Fargo. When you do receive it, go searching in the roster. Search for members living in the same town as you do.

It is amazing how close your buddies are to you; for example, there are 4 members from Aurora, Colo., 3 from Boise, Idaho, 3 from Bossier City, La., 4 from Rockville, Md., 2 from Midwest City, Okla., 2 from Gaffney, S.C., and so on. I have made up a list of members by states, and this is how I got my information. The largest membership comes from Texas, California, New York, Pennsylvania and Florida, in that order.

I'm getting many requests for life in England during your stay, on and off the base, and your visits to various points of interest. If you can think of any unusual experience that you have encountered, please write me. Names will not be used. I have received a few and had some published in the past.

I received a "Saga of the Sorgenfrei Crew" about this crew's mission of July 19, 1944. Their target was Munich. It was an article published in the Reader's Digest of September, 1984. Some of the crew members were Joe Bonczek (B), Carl Pacharzine (N), and Ray Swedzinski (CP). With their tongue-twister names, Polish, Italian, Swedish, Jewish and Norwegian, this was some crew of All-Americans. Does anyone know what group this crew was with?

I contacted Betty Campbell (Tex.) and extended our sympathy to the passing away of "RJ", a very active member of the Association. Our prayers are with you Betty.

More corresponding has been done by Frank Federic (Ill.) in trying to get his crew to attend our 39th. He has been in touch with Vincent Mazza of Hawaii, Carl Bally of Ohio, and Ed Goodgion of Ind. Poor Frank lives just 15 miles from St.

Charles — I wonder if he can make it?

It seems a great number of people are still interested in the events of the 8th Air Force, because of the amount of mail that I am receiving from many European countries, including Syracuse University, N.Y. and Kenyon College, Ohio.

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## Folded Wings

44th

Ronald J. Taylor  
Sidney Kipness  
Arthur B. Loyless  
Theodore B. Scarlett  
Ronald J. Taylor

93rd

James W. Holliday  
Harold M. Holt

389th

Robert D. Hawkins (HDQ)  
Oliver G. Mattice (93rd)

392nd

Kenneth E. Kline

445th

R. J. Campbell  
Robert V. Springer

446th

Warren W. Stickle  
Charles Toth

448th

Robert M. Martin

453rd

John A. Nortridge

458th

Samuel C. Robeson

466th

Maj. Dorsay L. Baker

467th

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

489th

Thomas H. Baker  
LTC. Charles C. Bouchard (Ret)  
Harry F. Haid  
James J. Hussey

491st

Col. Maurice L. Fennig (Ret)

492nd

Francis J. Williams  
Walter E. Wyatt

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# The 448th Speaks

by Leroy J. Engdahl (448th)

Paul Homan, who lives in Wauseon, Ohio during the time he hasn't moved to Florida for the winter, spent three days in Dayton, Ohio in October looking over hotels for our 448th group reunion July 14, 15, & 16th, 1986 and made contacts with the Air Force Museum and other people in regard to our needs and desires to make this a great reunion.

Paul asked for and received a quote on a "package deal" for better prices from the hotels, and we are waiting on one more of the final three Paul recommended before making our final selection. I can tell you Paul is a great salesman as he really did a selling job on them, and we should be sure to tell Paul when you see him how much we appreciate his time and efforts on our behalf.

Our memorial site at the Air Force Museum grounds has been selected, and the order has been given for the purchase of and the planting of our memorial oak tree, which will be planted in February or March and guaranteed for two years.

The order has been given for our bronze memorial plaque designed by Robert Harper of Crescent City, CA according to Air Force Museum specs, and the order to install the plaque and secure it in a 14" x 16" grey granite marker on a concrete base per Museum specs has also been issued.

We have not been billed for any of this yet but the total cost is about \$1,600.00, and we have \$1,305.00 in our special bank account. Many of you have promised you would send a check made out to "448th Bomb Group Association" marked for "Dayton Memorial". We need the money right away please. It is tax deductible and if we have any over, most of it will go toward the restoration of our control tower

at Seething back to its WWII appearance as nearly as possible. Remember the Dayton Memorial project receives first priority as our reunion is next July, so please send your checks right now, OK?

Contact was also made with the Wright-Patterson Air Force band, honor guard, bugler, chaplain and a high ranking officer to participate in our Memorial dedication. No confirmation has been received, but it is expected we will get their participation; we are paying respects to our over 400 from the the 448th who lost their lives while flying out of Seething.

We will visit the Air Force Museum and have our Memorial ceremony at 10:00 A.M. Wednesday, July 16th. It is expected the Museum will open the B-24 "Strawberry Bitch" at 8:00 A.M. and that our group name along with welcome signs will be posted. Also expected there will be a showing of a film featuring B-24's and the 8th Air Force. Public announcements will be made ten minutes prior to the showing.

We have also asked for Air Force buses to pick us up at our hotel at 7:30 A.M. and take us to the Air Force Museum, and deliver us back at our hotel after we are finished with our Museum visit. We expect to eat lunch at the Museum cafeteria.

We have asked for a high ranking Air Force officer to be our guest speaker at our Wednesday night banquet, and for an Air Force band to play WWII music following the banquet.

We had all these things at our reunion at Barksdale AFB, and there is no reason to expect we won't be able to do the same at Dayton.

From the information received so far from hotels, it is anticipated the total cost for the hotel (3 nights), Monday night informal banquet, Tuesday luncheon, and formal dinner Wednesday night including all taxes and tip, will be about \$180.00. The room is for single or double. Cost on a

couple basis would be less the \$220.00. This is not final but should be close as hotel selection hasn't been made.

You would buy your own breakfast, Tuesday evening meal, your drinks and other items you may purchase.

If you attend the 2nd AD Reunion at Pheasant Run, Ill. near Chicago, you can drive by way of Indianapolis to Dayton easily in one day; it's less than 350 miles. A room at our hotel for Sunday night would be about \$45.00 for a single or couple. This will give you an idea of cost. Thanks to Paul Homan for his hard bargaining in getting a good "package" deal.

What we need from you right now is to let me know if you plan to attend so I can be sure to get you a room reserved. If you are planning to attend, I'll send you a hotel reservation card and you will deal directly with the hotel for deposit and final payments.

This job as your Vice-President requires a lot of postage and expenses for photo copies. Any help along this line is appreciated as I'm not rich, and if we spread the cost it's easy on us all.

This will be an enjoyable and excitable reunion memorial so please attend if you possibly can, and let me know as soon as possible so I can get enough rooms for all who want to go.

I have a big stock of 2nd Air Division Lapel Pins that sell for \$4.00, and about (90) 448th Group Patches which sell for \$5.00. All profit will go to the restoration of the Seething Control Tower. Also, if you are interested in a 448th Cap with a B-24 on the front with 8th A.F. Emblem on each side, let me know. They sell for \$5.00 but we have to buy 100 at a time to make a profit for the tower restoration.

Have a great 1986.

## Flightseeing Trips of Wartime Bases !

EAST COAST HELICOPTERS LTD.



Many ex 2nd Air Division USAAF members return to England to visit their wartime bases in East Anglia. Whilst, strolling around the remains of their old flight hut and dispersals may bring back many memories, surely the most exciting memory jerker would be to see the old base from the air. See it as you did all those years ago — the most welcome sight of all — the approach to the runway on return from a grueling mission.

EAST COAST HELICOPTERS, based in East Anglia, offer you this thrilling prospect. We could pick you up from your hotel, a convenient site near a railway station or even meet you at your old base for a quick circuit. Our service offers complete flexibility; just let us know what you want and we will arrange the rest. You may also wish to combine the visit to your base with a trip over the East Anglian countryside with its numerous areas of interest.

Our JET RANGER helicopters offer 4 seats in comfort with superb visibility, ideal for taking pictures. Our costs are based on flying time from Norwich. A typical example: Staying in a hotel in Norwich and wishing to visit Seething. Total flying including landing at the base — 1/2 hour cost £180 which with 4 people equates to £45 per head.

FOR DETAILS AND BOOKINGS CONTACT:—  
CAPTAIN GERRY HERMER.

East Coast Helicopters Limited, Hangar 6, Javelin Road,  
Norwich Airport, Norwich, NR6 6HX, Norfolk, England.  
Tel: Norwich (0603) 486014 or (0653) 2451 (24 hrs).



# 489th News and Views

by Charlie Freudenthal (489th)



The Sharon D. Mission unknown

In the September issue of Aerospace Historian there is a letter from a German doctor V. Wilckens, who in the summer of 1944 was a 15 year old schoolboy assigned to a Flak battery in the Koblenz-Mainz/Russelsheim area. He reports that on August 26th, 1944 at about 11 o'clock his battery shot down a B24, tail number 250897, which crashed near Bausheim. There is a photo of the wreckage, and I will write to Dr. Wilckens and see if I can get a copy of it. The Germans believe they saw five parachutes, and these crew members were taken prisoner. Anywhere from one to three chutes failed to open. This was Capt. Thomas Plese's crew, according to our records, and eyewitness reports were that 7 chutes were seen after the plane had taken a direct hit in the bomb-bay just before bomb release. The tail gunner on the crew was John Davis, one of our members, and he has provided me with the address of another one, Joseph Holmes, the RO. Stay tuned; I'll let you know what I hear from the good doctor!



Left: Sharon D. Vance Kiernan.  
Right: Sharon D. Brown Wilken

## ROLL OF HONOR UPDATED

There are now 167 489th names on the 2nd Air Division Roll of Honor in Norwich, and I expect that 12 more will be added. I can provide anyone who would like one with a copy for one dollar, cash or stamps, to cover copying and mailing costs. There are also a bunch of names listed as MIA whose status I can't resolve.

## WANT A NORDEN BOMBSIGHT?

For a long time now I've had the thought that I'd like to buy a Norden bombsight, just to have it around. A few months ago I was offered one (the sight head only; no stabilizer) for \$500! While I was thinking about it, it was sold. A month ago, there was an opportunity to buy another one, in mint condition, the owner said. He offered to throw in the manuals too — all for \$1,000!! Anybody know where I can get a cheap one?



Welcome sign put up by the hotel.

## THE HISTORY—AND RESEARCH

Now that I've culled everything possible from the records at Maxwell, there are only two more places that I can think of to search. One is the Office of Public Records in London, where all the Europeans who write seem to get their facts. The other source is you all. I know I've had a lot of help from a lot of you in the form of diaries, photos, orders, etc., but I know that a lot more out there just haven't got around to digging in the old trunks, boxes, and other storage places. So this is my first plea to you—please help! I'll be out later with a list of items I really need if this is to be a solid history, but I'd sure appreciate your starting to stir things up. Diary copies are especially helpful, as are good photos—with captions if possible. I've held on to some photos a long time, I know, but I've never lost one! If I can work it out, I'll try to catch a Space-A flight to Mildenhall in November, right after our local mini-reunion.

Before I forget—Ed Phillips is looking for Frank Pickering who, he says, came from New Hampshire. Anybody got a clue?

## NOTICE

If you wish to be called during an Air Raid kindly hang this card on the handle outside your bedroom door.

Remember  
London



by Dave Swearingen (467th)

My wife Jackie and I thank all of you who have phoned, written and mailed Season's Greetings since being named your Veep. It's been a busy time for me trying to get oriented. I have a challenge to fill Jim Coffey's shoes. He did a superb job as your Veep and we appreciate it.

A special thanks to Jean and David Hastings for their greetings from salhause. Again we thank them for the beautiful gold colored plaque titled "Greetings from Rackheath" they presented our Group at McAfee. It will be on display at the reunion in July in St. Charles this summer.

At McAfee, ten of our veterans pledged \$400 each to underwrite the third reprinting of Allen Healy's History of the 467th. Vince Larussa is the promoter of this project and copies of it can be ordered direct from him. His address is Vincent D. LaRussa, 467th Book Club, 97 Grayton Road, Tonawanda, N.Y. 14150. The cost is \$30.

Philip Day has reported we have on hand, as of October 15, 1985, \$1,353.78 available for printing and mailing our Poop from Group 467th. There is also \$140 in the Adam Soccio Memorial Fund.

Our efforts to continue increases in our Group's membership in the 2 ADA is our number one priority. I note from the latest 2 ADA Roster of 1986 our Group has 478 members listed. I didn't have a copy as of Jan. 1, 1985 so I don't know the increase in members over the past 12 months. As of June 24, 1985 a printout listed 454. Based on this, we have a net gain of 24 since then.

There's bound to be a number of 467th vets who don't know about the 2 ADA. Please help us to increase our membership. You'll be doing a service to those who need to be in our fellowship.

Marshall Loftus wrote about an interesting experience. Six of his crew and wives attended the Air Force vs San Diego State football game last Nov. 2nd. He gave a small blurb to the Press Box at the Academy Stadium containing words about who they were, the section where they were sitting, the 467th BG and Rackheath. It was announced during the game, and William Manning and J. William Hillen Jr. brought them out. Their names were turned in to Evelyn Cohen and application blanks were mailed to them. As Marshall says, "It pays to advertise."

I challenge all to encourage folks you know to attend the 2 ADA 1986 reunion July 10-13 at the Pheasant Run Resort,

St. Charles, Ill. We will especially recognize the flight crew with the most members in attendance. We want all the ground crew members to attend, and I especially would like to hear from more of you about your experiences at Rackheath. You played a most important role in the overall operation and success our Group achieved.

There were several pilots, including yours truly, bombardiers and flight crew members who, prior to training at Mountain Home, Idaho and then on to Wendover, Utah and the make-up of the 467th who had served in the Anti-

Submarine Command. Those I knew were with the 7th Anti-Submarine Squadron and we were in Trinidad the first half of 1943.

My wife and I are hosting a reunion of the 7th in Memphis over the Memorial Day Weekend. If any of you out there served in the 7th back before your assignment to other Groups, please write to me and I'll give you the details on our Memphis Reunion.

Jim Coffey wrote to me about his and Joan's visit to Cologne, which he had recalled from his "Trolley Missions" on VE Day and V-E plus 1. I quote: "From virtually complete devastation 95% except for the Cathedral, the destroyed area has been re-built virtually entirely to original plans; the railroad station, the bridge which the Germans blew up and all the rest. I had an odd sense of deja vu".

## U.S. Ambassador Visits Norfolk

(Courtesy Eastern Daily Press, Nov. 22, 1985)

U.S. Ambassador Mr. Charles Price began a two-day visit to Norfolk yesterday by talking to students at the University of East Anglia.

Undergraduates from the schools of economic and social studies and English and American studies questioned him about Americans' hopes for the Geneva summit and U.S. politics.

The university was his first stop in the county. He arrived at the Sainsbury Centre, where he toured the gallery and had tea with Pro-Vice Chancellor Dr. John Tarrant.

After private talks with the students, Mr. Price visited the city Memorial Library — founded to commemorate the 2nd Air Division of the USAAF.



U.S. Ambassador, Mr. Charles Price, during his visit to the American Library. Mr. Paul King (left) vice-chairman of the Memorial Trust of the 2nd Air Division USAAF, shows Mr. Price a section of the library.

Mr. Tom Eaton, chairman of the governors of the 2nd Air Division Memorial Trust, presented him with a specially-bound copy of a thesis, "American Airmen in Norfolk 1942-45," written by teacher Allan Murray for his MA at the UEA, for the American Embassy in London.

Mr. Eaton said: "The members of the 2nd Air Division who founded this memorial in 1945 were some of the best of young Americans of that time. Because they felt as they did from the experience of war and from living, working and fighting with us here in Norfolk, there was an affinity between us, and so they were inspired to create a war memorial that is unique . . ."

The presentation was made "in memory of over 6300 of your countrymen in the 2nd Air Division who, flying from bases in these parts, gave their lives defending freedom," he said.

Last night Mr. Price was the guest of Eastern Counties Newspapers Group Ltd. at a dinner at its head office in Norwich. He arrived accompanied by chairman of the group, Mr. Timothy Colman.

# Green, White and Yellow Tales

by Charlie Freudenthal (489th)

For a long time now, I've been telling all of you 489th types that I'm trying to gather enough information about the Group's short but happy life to be able to produce a Group history. A lot of you have come to the rescue with photos, diaries, documents, and personal recollections so that I now have a pretty good base to work with. At this end, I have about exhausted all the official sources, with trips to the USAF Historical & Research Center, the Federal Records Depository, the Archives, the Public Records Office in London, and Halesworth. Still on the schedule is a visit to the National Air & Space Museum, where most all of the WWII stuff has been taken. So, I have a lot but I really need more, and I plead with you; I beg you, I importune (!) you, especially those who just haven't gotten around to it yet, to help. We can use photos, diaries, and your personal recollections—with the photos captioned wherever possible. I don't need permission to use official photos, but will have to have your OK to use personal photos, diaries, stories, etc. However, I won't need to get into that until we've made a final determination of what will be used. Anything you send will be identified with your name, and if you wish, will be returned safely to you. I promise.

A while back, I was lucky enough to track down Lou Corrington in Chicago. Lou used to be the Intelligence officer in the 845th, and he told me he has a box full of 489th stuff. When I get to Chicago for the Executive Committee meeting in April, we're going to get together and see what there is—"Lots" he tells me! Lou has also had some contact with Fred

Kelley, the Group Photo Officer, and is going to try to track him down.

So what will the 489th history cost, per copy? How would I know? I'm just starting! I need your feedback here for sure. What would you be willing to pay for it? Personally, I would want it to be a first class job; slick paper and pages about 11 x 8½, and hard cover. Maybe we won't be able to do that, and will have to compromise. It will depend largely on how many copies can be sold (500?) and how much it will cost per copy. I don't believe we could come up with anything worthwhile for less than \$25 each. Please let me have your thoughts. There's no use going ahead with this project, which will be an awful lot of hard work, if there's no interest. I need more than four or five responses! If you can't write, dictate a letter to your wife, or a friend—even a passing stranger. But let me hear from you!

## LOST SOULS SECTION

Anybody going to Hawaii? I found an old address for Carlos Bonham who brought his crew into the 847th in September. He hailed from Wahiawa, which is near Schofield Barracks. Some more old addresses—Pilot Dale Coburn, Salt Lake City; Claude Hicks, Minden, Louisiana; John Dominy, Bolivar or Bolwar, PA; Michael Pallotto, who was the first 489th man to shoot down a German plane, New Haven. Would anyone in any of those areas please do a little searching? And one more; MSgt. William Bullard, Group Sgt. Major, Gainesville/Jacksonville, Florida area.

## MEMORIES ARE MADE OF THIS

I spent nearly two years with the 489th,

from Wendover back to Tucson, and do you know how hard it is to find something to write!? All those months of living in tents, tar paper shacks and quonset huts, surrounded by a host of people, a lot of them good, close friends, and it still isn't easy to come up with a story. I can remember working in Bombsight maintenance with CWO John Mahler and crew, and trying to meet Lt. Col. Vance's demand for 100 flying hours a month; and sandbagging a mission or two to do it. I also remember almost flunking a gunnery course because I couldn't cram myself into the ball turret—and I wasn't much good at skeet either. There was the time I navigated Col. Napier to Nellis Field at Las Vegas with no trouble, but got lost when we went sightseeing over the Grand Canyon on the way back and almost landed on Main Street of Spanish Fork; and I think of all the lines at Wendover—chow lines, PX lines, movie lines, and lines waiting for a sink to wash in. Lines for the bus to Salt Lake, and warm Cokes at Halesworth.

Especially I remember when General Hodges, then 2d Division commander, came to Halesworth shortly after we got there. Jim Zicarelli, the Wing Bombardier, told me to be sure to have plenty of training charts on hand. "The General likes to see charts" he said. So I made fine charts—lots of them—and the General said they were all a waste of time, and that I should get some help from Zicarelli, who "knew how he liked things done."

All the memories, and I can't find a story! Can you? Remember, I'll be in Chicago in April and if any of you who live in the area would like to have a one-night mini-reunion, let me hear from you. I could arrive a day early or stay a day late. No extra charge.

## 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



George Nokes, Morgan Higham, John Lamar and Julius Vanerwegen at the McAfee reunion.



## NEWS

by Pete Henry  
(44th BG)

First, I want to thank all of our friends who sent Christmas cards. We sent cards to a few 2ADA members, but could not send to all who remembered us. Your friendship is greatly appreciated.

Jordan Uttal requested that I put a note in this column inquiring about serial numbers for the following men for the 44th Roll of Honor:

BESSEN, Theodore, S/Sgt.  
DUCKI, Starkey H., S/Sgt.  
FOLSOM, Glenn E., 1/Lt.  
GORDON, Rhoda C. S/Sgt.  
HAMMOND, Charles P., Sgt.  
HANTOBER, Manuel, S/Sgt.  
HAWKES, Hazel E., Sgt.  
HURST, Clifford C., Jr., S/Sgt.  
MILLS, John D., 2/Lt.

If any of you have the requested information, please send it directly to Jordan Uttal or to me as soon as possible.

Forrest Clark is helping to organize a group of Swiss Evadees and Internees. A reunion was held 11 January 1986 at Dillinger's Restaurant in Maple Shade, N.J. Anyone interested should write to Forrest at 220 Fairmount Avenue, S. Plainfield, N.J. 07080.

About six months ago, T.C. 'Ozzie' Osmundson wrote inquiring about one Wilbur J. Simons and I sent a letter to an address down in Swannanoa, N.C. that I had in my files. Within a week, a reply was received from his son, Wilbur E., advising that his father was indeed the man 'Ozzie' was seeking but that he is no longer living. I found the following paragraph from his letter of October 29 very interesting, particularly the last sentence:

"My Dad was a career soldier who served in the Air Service, Air Corps, and USAAF from 1918 until he retired as a Colonel in late 1947. He arrived at Barksdale in early 1942 with the 14th Recon. Squadron, which was soon redesignated the 404th Bombardment Squadron, and was assigned to the 44th Bomb Group. In May of that year, Dad was appointed a Warrant Officer and became the Assistant Group Engineering Officer. He accompanied the Group to Will Rogers Field at Oklahoma City in late July of 1942, and then went with the Group's ground echelon to Shipdham, England in September, 1942. Soon after arriving in England, he was commissioned a Captain and was moved to Headquarters 2nd Bomb Division. General Hodges had been a long

standing friend of my father's for many years prior to the War, and Dad served in his headquarters for the next several years as the Division Air Inspector. Prior to returning to the States in 1945, he served briefly with the 96th Bomb Wing. Interestingly, my Father's secretary in the 2nd Division Air Inspector's Office was a lady named *Evelyn Cohen!*"



That's 'Ozzie' on the left and your Group V.P. on the right.

'Ozzie' teamed up with then M/Sgt. Simons on the B-18 in early 1938. They subsequently qualified as gunners on the B-17 at McDill and were part of the original cadre forming the 44th Bomb Group. (See 'Ozzie's' letter in the Letters section of the June, 1985 *Journal*). The accompanying photo was taken in early November when I visited 'Ozzie' in Virginia Beach, VA. Wilbur E. Simons (the son) is now a member of the 2ADA and would like very

much to hear from his Dad's old friends, not only from the 44th B.G. but from the old pre-war 2nd Bomb Group from Langley Field. He is the 2nd Bomb Group Historian and his address is: 109 Eastwood Avenue, Swannanoa, N.C. 28778.

One of our newest members is Howard H. Robb, who was Co-pilot for Robert P. Knowles on "Fearless Fosdick" in the 67th Squadron during the period from 23 May 44 to 25 August 44 (31 missions). Howard has written to me several times, and one of his letters advised that Bob Knowles passed away 3 November 1985. We are always sorry to get news like that. Shown below is Knowles crew and Howard standing in front of "Fearless Fosdick".



Howard Robb, 67th Co-pilot in front of "Fearless Fosdick"

That's it for this time. Hope to see many of you at the reunion in Pheasant Run near Chicago July 10-13, 1986.



Back row (l to r) — F. Ryan, Engineer; Mike Powers, Radio Operator; Bernard Schiffbauer, Ball Turret Gunner; Henry Lavallee, Waist Gunner, Russ Lindsey, Tail Gunner; Bill Gness, Nose Gunner

# Old Bunchered Buddies of Old Buck

by Milt Stokes (453rd)

It is early January here on Wakefield Manor Farm. It has been cold for weeks, down to 10°F some nights. Of course, it has been colder in years gone by and will be colder in the future, I'm sure. What seems to make it bad is we get older and the cold is no longer a joyful experience. Ice skating is a no-no now — even the snow, which at one time was looked forward to with expectation, is not welcomed anymore. It makes it too slippery and difficult to get up our farm lane to the main road. Well, needless to say, winter is not our favorite time of the year. In fact, we who spend our winters in these chilly climates are looking forward to the first warm breezes of spring. They are months away and much snow is in the forecast before that happens. Lucille and I look forward to a visit in Florida in the next couple of weeks. There are a lot of 453rd people in Florida now. In fact, I had hoped by now that a mini-reunion had been planned in the Sunshine State. Understand this is only a get-together of old buddies; no formal speakers — no big deal at all. Plan on coming, will you?

As though it were a forecast of better things, I saw a flight of ten to twelve bluebirds in the lower pasture this morning. At first I was incredulous; I couldn't believe my eyes. But the sunshine reflected off the blue wings and the slightly pinkish breast of the male birds made identification absolute. Boy, I wondered, how are you fellows going to make it through a long winter yet to come? They eat mainly bugs in the summertime. I wonder what they eat in the winter? God bless you little birds; you certainly seem to enjoy the sunshine of the morning, and being hungry didn't inhibit your flight at all. We have never seen bluebirds at our feeders. What would attract them? Of course, in the last ten years we have seen increasing numbers of them in the summertime, but in the winter — never.

Have you been searching the winter skies for a glimpse of Halley's Comet? Well, even using binoculars and searching in areas where it should be, we have yet to find the object. It should have been visible when it passed through or near the Pleiades a couple of weeks ago, but we couldn't find it. However, I have enjoyed looking at the stars again through binoculars. They are all so much brighter and one sees millions in one swing of the skies.

I am reminded of the flight we made on government orders; down the Caribbean, off the coast of South America, across to French West Africa, then up to England in 1943. We had a lot of time to search out the heavens for stars, and what a bright

lot they were. Our Navigator, Art Lamy, was particularly anxious to see the Southern Cross. Well, we finally located it when flying off the coast of Brazil. Lamy gave us all a lesson in celestial navigation. I began to understand how the ancient ship navigators could locate their position on pitch black nights when thousands of miles at sea. Now, of course, planes and ships use satellite signals as a more precise method of navigation. I suppose it is no longer a mystery or an adventure to fly to Natal, Brazil to Dakar in old French West Africa in today's planes. I remember it as an adventure; it was all uncertain. Would the gas line hold out? Would the engine make the crossing without quitting? All this happened forty-three years ago, but the memory — the feeling of that ocean crossing, are as new as this morning.

The 453rd Bomb Group is growing. With the last roster and some recent additions, I count 447 members. Our recent "Outreach" program has helped our numbers grow. You deserve a lot of thanks searching out Old Buddies and asking them to join. But don't get too complacent; there are yet thousands that don't know the 453rd and 2 A.D.A. even exist. So, please keep trying. You could try putting a notice in your local newspaper. Your local Veterans organizations come into contact with a lot of people, so try them all.

It is not too early to plan for the July 10-13th, 1986 reunion at Pheasant Run Resort in Saint Charles, Ill. Please get your reservation in to Evelyn Cohen NOW. We of the 453rd have led the field in numbers who turn out for these reunions. So please act now.

Don't forget England in 1987 — May 21-25. This trip is always over-sold. A lot of people start too late to make reserva-

tions. So don't be left out — write to Evelyn Cohen today. Send her your check for \$25 per person to hold your space.

Francis X. Kyle writes that he had a nasty accident last February, and is on the mend and will be answering his correspondence soon. Remember, he was a photographer in the photo lab and had hundreds of good photos. I've asked him for samples for our records.

On "Out Reach", Vic Martini had a letter from Mrs. Dona Mackay that her husband had been killed in an airplane accident in early 1985. The Mackay's lived in Spokane, Wash. John was not an active member of the 453rd.

Ed Werner writes: "A funny thing happened on the way to the mailbox; I was jogging to the mailbox, 2/10 mile, and happened to think about you and operation "Out Reach", wondering how many members you had reached. When I got to the mailbox there was a letter from Rocco Tinari, one of my two contacts. Premonition? Yes, it was Ed. Thanks for your efforts. Rocco Tinari is a new member now, and we formally welcome him aboard.

Last but not least, Walt Edgeworth writes a long, 8-page letter. He tells of 33 Lancaster Bombers being fogged in on our base. One, you all might remember, sat on the hard stand in front of the tower with half of its mid-section lost to a bomb dropped from another Lancaster. Walt tells of taking some of the British lads into every pub (3) in Attleborough and being thrown out of each because they were boisterous (maybe) and perhaps drunk (a wee bit). It is hard to believe Walt Edgeworth could have behaved in such a manner. Oh well, that was a long time ago Walt, and all was forgiven.

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## EXTRA

### 2ADA Film Library

Hugh McLaren, 2ADA member from Scottsdale, AZ., has just donated another video tape to our collection. It was made from a 1962 TV documentary entitled "Smashing of the Reich" and provides a very good prospective of the Air War from both sides of the English channel. It proves once again that the B-17 won the war in Europe! Running about 82 minutes, one is treated to approximately 2 minutes of B-24's in action. This tape, like our other video tapes, is available for rental for \$3.00. Order Roman Numeral X.

H.C. 'Pete' Henry  
164 B Portland Lane  
Jamesburg, NJ 08831

# Mission: Berlin, Germany

Feb. 26, 1945; 93rd BG, 328th BSq. (B-24) — 2nd Air Division

by Eric E. Erickson (93rd)

I 'knew' this, our 2nd combat mission, was going to be our last. I was the last Navigator out of the plotting room, having pre-charted all optional safe territories, totaling 3 in number. In the crew locker room I packed my A-3 bag with a class A uniform and sundries, plus my beloved cigars, candy and such. Everything was uneventful from takeoff onward. By the time we were halfway into Germany we had a solid undercast. Altitude 21000 ft., IAS 165 mph, max load of 8000 lbs. of 500 lb. bombs.

We were perfectly with Wing on navigating and the IP was 0-0. The run from the IP to Berlin was 60 miles. Immediately after completing the turn I ran a wind check and plotted our GS which was an amazing 250 mph! I reflected that not many men had traveled at THAT speed, even at the Air Races in Cleveland. I had no sooner relished the thought when the a/c gave a violent upward lurch and I looked out and saw the trailing flak burst. We were 5 mins. on the run then.

2nd Lt. John R. Cadle, Aircraft Commander, alerted our armorer to look at #3 and #4 (right wing) to see if anything was amiss. Within a minute Kidd said he saw an oil slick, that was growing larger and gushing. John checked the gauges and could see cylinder head temp go up, MP down, so he shut her down and feathered the prop. At that instant the group decided to try for 23000 ft. and perhaps 26000 ft. and we could not maintain IAS much less climb. Altitude began to go also. We fell to about 3 miles behind the Group and some 1500 ft. below it when they let go the chaff to deflect enemy flak. The chaff presented a beautiful silvery flow past our wounded ship and I was looking at it when I saw a tiny black blob, which then exploded about 25 yards astern the right wing and about 10 yards beneath it. I had never seen such beautiful colors — black dot, to white, to gold, to orange, to black and then dissipate slowly. The a/c lurched 40 ft. upward by my altimeter.

Cadle alerted everyone to look for damage. The only sign of a hit was on #4 with the same results as #3 — only with greater severity of damage. Again cylinder head temp went up, oil pressure down and so it too was feathered. The Gp was now specks head of us. We could see they had begun to unload the bombs and our Bombardier got all excited and tried to crawl between my legs to salvo 'his'. I told Cadle to call him back as I could salvo the damn things, which he said to do. It was done.

I told John I'd like to get into the Gp, if we could, by cutting short and try to head

them off. It was futile. We never got closer than 5 miles from them. I don't know how many Gps and Wings passed us by, when I asked John what he wanted to do. "Let's try for home a while."

As soon as the strike force armada of 1200 heavies passed us by, we were damn alone, but still in open view and above the undercast. "John, do we have any little friends with us?" "NO." "Can you call for some?" "YES." "Eric, we have 4 little friends, 2 off each wing and a few thousand feet above us." "I can't see them John, but I feel better with them there." Fifteen minutes later, "Little friends to wounded 24, we are very low on gas and have to leave you. We'll relay this to your Gp. Good Bye and Good Luck!" DAMN — all alone again. IAS sinking. Alt sinking. Then we play touch and go with the clouds. Suddenly it is no more in and out but all a hideous monochrome of light grey. I looked out my window and in a flash I knew we'd never see sky or land again — BUT, how to navigate???

Navigation school had NOT went into this at all. For a very fleeting instant I had a hopeless feeling seize upon me and it seemed as if every fibre in my body was about to panic. Miraculously I rebounded in a split second and decided there had to be something I could try. Navigators live (and die) by the wind speed and direction — in reference to 'something' — so I looked down my B-5 drift meter and spent several minutes determining IF there was sufficient delineation in that grey mass to get a reading from. Yes, there was — but, it would be a very exacting and painful operation taking an inordinately large amount of precious time. While I was determining this I also had to determine that the clouds were not affected by our wounded lumbering B-24. Fortunately, the a/c movement did NOT disturb the cloud mass. I estimated (with my 0-0 depth perception) that they were some 100 to 150 ft. away from the a/c. I got my winds. I worked ceaselessly and my map looked like it had black measles as I charted our course. I was able to get from 2 to 3 fixes every 5 minutes. There was no relaxing. If my eyesight were mediocre, it'd have been absolutely hopeless!

Some 100 miles west of Berlin, John asked me how we were going. I suggested we head for the closest alternate, the Russian lines supposedly up to the Oder River at all points as of 25 February 1945 (my Mom's birthday!). He asked if we'd make England. "Not unless this SOB makes like a submarine!" "Where do we go?" "We have only 1 alternative, the

Russian lines." "I'll start turning as soon as you give me a heading." "I have it ready NOW!" "Which way do you want me to turn?" "Turn right John." "In B-24 transition school they said the a/c would spin in if a turn into 2 dead engines were attempted." "You can go to the left, however that'd take us smack over Berlin again and add about 15 miles to the Russian lines." "We'll turn right on your heading, now." "John, give me about an 8 mile turn. Let the damn thing skid into the turn, you won't have to force it." "OK, 8 miles it is." The turn into 2 dead engines was accomplished without incident. With the 2 dead engines on the same side we flew, naturally, at about a 10 degree dip on the right side. #1 and #2 were brand new engines, the installation of which had been accomplished the day previous. John added extra mercury and they did not run hot badly nor was there any indication they were going to leave us. Those were magnificent Pratt & Whitney power plants!

I had one helluva job between getting drift readings, plotting the declining altitude and decreasing airspeed. I was a slave to the panel and my watch and it was all done with precision. The longer it went on the calmer and more assured I became. John did a masterful job of flying that ship. As IAS declined so did our Alt. Finally in projecting my figures I called John and asked if we could unload our machine guns and whatever else we had that could go overboard. He said there wasn't a helluva lot else we could do, but did tell the crew to throw overboard everything that was loose and disposable. It didn't affect our rate of descent at all, nor were we able to gain even 1 mph in IAS. We passed, as I recall Berlin some 12 miles to the south at 9000 ft. and I spent some time looking for flak. There was none! Perhaps the flak crews and their sounding equipment thought we were a Nazi twin engined a/c. No matter, we didn't draw a shot.

I called John, "We may not make it unless this thing holds some altitude." "Eric, I'm pulling out all the stops and there isn't much else I can do." That was true, he WAS doing a beautiful job, no question about that at all!!! I replied, "Well, unless we hold something for a few minutes, we may not make that bulge in the Oder I'm aiming for — so I suggest that anyone in the crew so inclined — PRAY — because we need help!" At 6700 ft. the old lady HELD that alt. for 5 minutes!!! "Eric how does 5000 ft. grab you to bail out?" "That is as good as anything John." "John, what does your altim-

eter read?" "My altimeter shows 1000 ft. more. Did you crank in the barometric for here?" "No, did they give you one?" "Yes." "OK, we'll go by yours and I have it set now."

IAS 136 mph. Altitude 5000 ft. "John, I need a few more minutes to cross that bulge." "How far in did you want to go before bailing out?" "Five miles John." "OK, let me know 1 minute before we hit it." "Roger." "OK, John, we are safe now." "Anything for the crew?" "Navigator to crew, we are exactly 5 miles inside the Oder River some 25 miles northeast of Berlin and the Russians should be here. That's it!" HONK, HONK HONK — "Pilot to crew, Pilot to crew — bomb bay doors open, BAIL OUT, BAIL OUT!!!" IAS 132 mph. Alt. 3600 ft. — I had my 'junk' destroyed and pulled the nosewheel door release and it opened like a charm. I buckled my chute, a chest pack on, checked my straps and knelt before the door opening, peering down into that hostile unfriendly deathly grey mass that had sanctuary been, and I said a hurried prayer to my Heavenly Father. I looked at the A-3 bag and decided it was wasting time and even left my left hand leather gauntlet on the desk and slowly rolled forward into the mists.

As I learned from reading aviation magazines from age 7, I stretched my arms outward, fully extended from my body, counted to 5, reached for the ripcord and firmly pulled it. In an instant I felt something flick the end of my nose and it was followed by an authoritative — BANG! I looked up and above my head was a very comforting billowy mass of nylon, like a giant mushroom. The opening shock I never felt because I was really tightly strapped. About a minute later I heard that gallant old lady wind up as she went down, heard a muffled thud with boom and knew she had expired.

With the grey mists completely covering me I wondered how close to the ground it'd be before they dissipated. All the war movies I saw as a kid flashed before my eyes and I could see myself in the middle of No-Mans-Land tangled in barbed wire and being machine gunned to death!!! Well, I thought, that's life!!! Suddenly at about 700 ft. I broke through and saw a very nice countryside, no trees, no houses, no nothing all around my descent. Good, I thought, this won't be so bad — mebbly!

I saw transports on the highway about 2 miles away. Some definitely looked German and far behind them other trucks that looked GI. I was getting close to the ground and started by look up to the horizon and began my flex when — KA BOOM, I hit in several inches of mud, my kneecaps hit my chin, snapping my head back and the slight surface breeze ballooned my chute and I began to aquaplane thru the mud. After about 30 yards

I spilled the chute and unharnessed when I noticed I couldn't see! My sunglasses were firmly in place and a muddied mess!!! I took them off and figured I had no need for them and tossed them.

About 50 yards away another chute came down. We saw each other and made tracks to unite as a mighty force of two! It was our nose gunner.

We were safe and from that moment on we were at the mercy of whoever it was 'owned' the territory. We felt that whatever were to happen from that moment on, we'd be able to cope with it. We did.

Two days later in a Russian command post I asked (in German which I had studied for 3 years in high school — finally convinced they knew we REALLY WERE AMERICANS!) where we were on their map. I looked at the scale and spanned it off — we were exactly 5 miles inside the Oder River, that beautiful bulge some 25 miles northeast of Big B. Shakespeare said it best — All's Well That Ends Well.

Actually though another adventure was to unfold before us with our Russian 'allies' and that takes several pages more.

Sixty days later, having gone through a portion of the defunct Third Reich, Poland, Russia, the Ukraine where we still had a USAAF airbase staffed by almost 200 of our troops from shuttle bombing days, we were the 1st and only crew there from the 26 Feb. '45 Big B raid. I can tell you with all my heart and soul — it was good — DAMN GOOD — to be with our people again. When the Polish situation cleared, the Russians allowed us to leave Poltava via a USAAF C-47. By then and from the early March Big B raid, the fliers outnumbered the base personnel.

Later in London I drank Irish whisky with Col. Hampton, Base Commander at Poltava, at the O Club. We were of one accord, both of us felt that the Soviets would be our enemies!!! We each felt that WW2 should continue when Germany was through (only days away) by militarily quashing the Soviets. They didn't listen to General Patton. They didn't listen to us. And so we are where we are today.

Almighty God Have Mercy On Us, even though we really don't deserve it!!! Amen.

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## View from the Control Tower

by Lou Dubnow (467th)

Much has been written about the exploits of the Fighter Aces and Combat Crew Heroes, however very little has been written about their friends in the Control Tower who "KEPT 'EM FLYING"!

Ours was not a glamorous job, and at times, it was a long, hard grind under conditions that were less than ideal. There were times, too, when it was touch and go, and no two situations were alike. We just did what we had to do, and I'm quite sure that most of us would not have traded places with the Air Crews, nevertheless, it seems appropriate after all these years, to give some recognition to the dedicated men in the Control Tower who were always ready to help and DID help!!!

We were down at the runway talking them in when our fickle English weather decided to play tricks on us. Always on the lookout for red flares letting us know there were wounded aboard. Giving priority landing to aircraft in distress. Landing 'em with wheels up, out of fuel, shot up and other various and sundry conditions which required delicate handling.

We maintained the Airfield with regard to the safety of the planes, examining the runways after a mission and before take-off to make sure there were no cracks or pot-holes. Getting the Engineers to make

quick repairs. Making sure that all the lights were working properly. Removing obstructions from the runways. Getting to crashed aircraft with ambulance and fire-fighting equipment. Many times we were called upon to make split-second decisions (and pray that hopefully they were the right ones!). We had to contend with rain, cold, fog, sleet and snow, in addition to our planet being shot up when trying to land!

We were on duty 24 hours a day to assist R.A.F. planes diverted to our field after night missions. We arranged transport, billeting and mess for those crews who remained overnight. We answered Darky Calls and Mayday Calls. Well, sometimes it was just one darn thing after another!!!

My hat is off to all of you fine men who worked in and around the Control Tower. Flying Control, per se, was born in the United Kingdom in WWII and at the end of the war, for all of us Flying Controllers, IT DIED THERE! Let us not let the memory of our contribution also die! I believe that we contributed our fair share towards the successful conclusion of the war and we should feel proud to have been part of FLYING CONTROL IN THE UNITED KINGDOM IN WWII!!

# Stress Problems Show Up Among Veterans of WWII

(Copyright 1985, Los Angeles Times. Reprinted by permission.)

by Marlene Cimons, Times Staff Writer

CHARLESTON, S.C. — Ex-Marine Philip Covert, a former prisoner of war, had classic symptoms of post-combat stress. He had always wrestled with restlessness and insomnia, but his problems intensified about three years ago when a stroke forced him to quit work.

Hanging around the house with nothing to do, he became depressed. Whenever he saw his wife and daughter in conversation, he imagined that they were saying bad things about him behind his back. He grew morose and angry, unable to sleep.

But Covert, unlike thousands of veterans presently experiencing the serious disorder of post-traumatic stress syndrome, did not fight in the Vietnam War. He is 64 and a veteran of World War II, who was captured by the Japanese when they invaded Wake Island in 1941.

However, his most serious symptoms did not emerge until almost 40 years after he returned home.

What's more, Covert does not appear to be an isolated case. As celebrants mark the 40th anniversary of the Japanese surrender ending World War II, mental health professionals both inside and outside the Veterans Administration are reporting a whole new pattern of post-traumatic stress cases.

For many aging WWII veterans, the stress of major end-of-life changes — such as retirement, in Covert's case, or the loss of a loved one, or the onset of a major illness — has brought on or aggravated the disorder by leaving them vulnerable and less equipped to cope with the memories of their war experiences.

"I think it is a more pervasive disorder than we recognize," said Dr. Harold Dickman, assistant professor of psychology at Oregon State University, who has treated WWII veterans. "I think it has always been there, but we just haven't recognized it."

"Unlike Vietnam veterans, WWII veterans have been able to suppress it — many of these guys became workaholics or alcoholics, or both. Then they retire, or lose a spouse, or their health begins to fail. It gets worse as you get older — and then it becomes almost unmanageable."

Delayed stress — although widely associated today with Vietnam veterans — followed both world wars, although it was less defined and more contained. It was not called post-traumatic stress disorder then, nor did doctors know how to treat it. After WWI, troubled veterans were said to have "shell shock." After WWII, it was "combat fatigue" or "war neurosis."

These after-effects of combat were thought to be transient — insidious, but not permanent. Indeed, most soldiers

returned home to a hero's welcome, went to work, reared families and got on with their lives.

Or so it seemed.

## Many Find Ways to Cope

Dr. John Lipkin, the VA's associate director for mental health service, said that veterans often find everyday ways to cope with the psychological trauma stemming from their war experiences.

"But, with changes in circumstances, with losses that can include family, friends and ambitions, people's expectations for themselves and for their future change," he said. "For some, these changes are gradual and not too much trouble. But, for others, those were the things that enabled them to get up every morning. When those things became weaker as coping mechanisms, sometimes something happens."

Because there have been no formal studies of post-traumatic stress disorder among WWII veterans, no one knows exactly how many veterans had it, or have it now. Many afflicted veterans have probably been diagnosed as having other conditions — alcoholism, for example.

"It's often written off as something else," said Dr. Arthur Arnold, chief of psychiatry at the Phoenix VA hospital. "They tend not to mention their war experiences. Unless you're alert to it and ask questions, you're not going to find out. They tend not to understand what's going on."

## Learning to Spot Disorder

A small group of mental health professionals has learned to recognize the disorder by treating individual veterans or encountering it when conducting related research. Covert, for example, did not realize his depression was war-connected until he began participating in a POW study at the Charleston VA Medical Center, where the relationship between his 45 months in captivity and his current behavior first became clear.

"All we have is anecdotal studies of people who seek treatment," said John Russell Smith, director of the VA's Center for Stress Recovery in Cleveland. "If we extrapolate from the Vietnam population, only 5% will have a stress disorder. But, when you're talking about 5 or 6 million people, that still leaves you with about 300,000. So, even with a conservative guess, you're talking about a significant number of people who need to be treated."

Certainly, the anecdotal material offered by mental health experts is chilling:

— A 65-year-old veteran who drove a tank in the Philippines underwent coronary bypass heart surgery five years ago. The day after the operation, he awakened in his hospital room to a view from his

window of a body of water that reminded him of the sultry Pacific jungles where he had once fought. Suddenly, for the first time in more than 40 years, old images returned — and he became panic-stricken. Since then — he is about 70 now — he has experienced regular combat flashbacks.

— A former POW who barely survived the Bataan Death March returned from war and functioned well for four decades, despite disturbed sleep and a tendency to become a workaholic. After the war, he continued to maintain a close relationship with another POW who had been in the same prison camp — and with whom he had made a survival pact during their captivity. Recently, his friend committed suicide, and the surviving POW began experiencing severe stress symptoms.

— A former WWII medic, described as "devastated" by his inability to save lives while under continuous fire on a South Pacific island, spent his postwar years drinking. "I saw him after he had been in and out of VA hospitals as an alcoholic," recalled Arnold, who treated him in Phoenix.

## 'Put Himself Into a Coma'

"No one had ever asked him about his war experiences. They thought he had a drinking problem. This guy poured out to me that he had been dreaming about this for 40 years — the fact that he couldn't save all those men who had been blown to bits. He drank all day to put himself into a coma," Arnold said. "This was chronic (post-traumatic stress disorder) unrecognized."

— One WWII veteran spent his postwar years frequenting bars and picking fights. In addition, he had an explosive relationship with his teen-age son. Psychiatrists learned that, when riding in a jeep through the city square of a small German town during the war, he spotted a soldier coming out of a building with a weapon. Instinctively, he fired. When he drove over to look at the body, he discovered that he had killed a teen-ager. He sat over the body and sobbed. His doctors now theorize that his own son, a young blond teen-ager, reminds him of the one he killed.

— A successful lawyer who had been a bomber pilot during WWII had flown in the mission that bombed Dresden. He had been without symptoms for 35 years, but his son, a former helicopter pilot in Vietnam, developed post-traumatic stress disorder and entered a treatment program. Father and son began talking about war. The father, reading a book about the breaking of the German code, learned for the first time that the Allies went ahead with the Dresden bombing — even though they knew the city no longer had any strategic targets — because canceling it could have alerted the Germans that the code had



been broken.

### Film Sparks Nightmares

Soon after finishing the book, the son and his father went to see the film "Slaughterhouse Five," which contains documentary footage of the Dresden devastation. Suddenly, the father began having nightmares. Shortly thereafter, he joined his son in treatment.

When an incident occurs in later years that brings on symptoms, experts say, the feelings are likely to be closer to those of wartime than of the present, especially if the veteran has never allowed himself to confront the earlier experience.

Arnold said that veterans who saw many of their companions killed in war may be vulnerable to the death of close family members back home. "The symptoms are apt to be the grief of the loss in combat, not the current loss," he said. "Elements of the original experience come back and flood the awareness."

Smith, of the VA stress center in Cleveland, said that traditional "rules of war" help veterans deal with psychological trauma. The fighting is conducted for a purpose, he said, and postwar rituals such as medal ceremonies and victory parades allow veterans to "separate war deeds from civilian actions."

"A WWII veteran can say, 'Oh yeah, those kinds of things happened in my war. War is hell — but we had to stop Hitler, or we had to stop the Japanese.'"

Dr. Valerie Homstrom, chief of psychology at the VA Medical Center in Charleston, where she treats Covert, said that WWII veterans do not appear to be suffering from delayed stress with the same intensity as Vietnam veterans. The WWII generation, she said, benefits from lower divorce rates and a more consistent employment record. But, she said, "most of them were not symptom-free."

Covert says that his close marriage,

## 389th Notes

by Lloyd E. West (389th V.P.)

Another New Year has rolled around — 1986. Let's look forward to it being a very useful and prosperous year for our organization. With each helping, it can be that.

With the arrival of the Dec. *Journal* and the Assoc. Roster I would like, on behalf of all of us in the 389th, to thank those responsible for a job well done.

We continue to spend a great deal of time in our search and recruiting of new members. The many letters that we get expressing support in any way is reward enough for us.

I would like to report that the 389th IS the largest group as of 1-14-86. With 546 members, I assure you we are striving very hard to stay on top. As I have mentioned before, keep the letters with new names and stories coming.

To those new members and to those

## PHOTO OF 2nd ADA PEN SET

This is a Sheaffer Pen set which will serve as an added attraction on your desk. It has a one quarter inch plate glass coaster with sandblasted insignia mounted in solid walnut including your name engraved on the brass plate. I can duplicate any design, Group or Squadron insignia or company logo. I must have a good black and white copy of the design and an order for at least ten pen sets to compensate for the positive I must make. All orders thereafter at the regular price. Designs you can order now include the 8th Air Force insignia and the 2nd AD Assoc. The 389th B.G. design will be available soon. Price is \$20.00 and send check or money order to me,

Earl Zimmerman, 8922 Haverstick Road, Indianapolis, IN 46240



which has survived the fact that he and his wife sleep in separate rooms because he is so restless, has helped him cope with his war-related stress. "I asked my wife a lot of times if she'd be better off without me," he says. "She tells me no, over and over, that she wouldn't."

Although some WWII veterans suppressed their stress symptoms for years through work or other activity, others have experienced unabated symptoms since their discharge.

Gunnar Sacson, 67, a photoengraver from Lake Bluff, Ill., has always had nightmares about his 41 months as a Pacific theater POW and a participant in the Bataan Death March — a period when he was beaten and starved and forced to watch as others were shot or hanged.

"Some (of the nightmares) are of the Death March or of the burial detail," Sacson says. "I have this other dream: I'm coming home and, when I get home, no one's there. I have flashbacks of the Death March, where I'm walking it again. I could be cutting the lawn and it could happen.

who may have forgotten, we the officers of the 389th B.G. were authorized at the Great Gorge reunion to conduct a fund drive for the purpose of placing a memorial in memory of our fallen Comrades during combat in W.W.II.

I wish to tell you that your response far exceeded any expectations we might have had. Frank Vadas, fund treasurer, and I can only say, "Often times it is hard to convey via of words one's deep appreciation." This is certainly true at this time in regards to the tremendous success of the fund drive for this memorial. Only thru the generosity of you 389th members was this made possible. So on behalf of Frank Vadas and myself, *Many Thanks*. That expresses our feelings of your support.

With the funds being available Bud Koorndyk, John Gillotte and myself met Jan. 27, 1986 with representatives of the Air Museum, the Memorial Art Co. and the Nursery at Dayton to complete plans

But it doesn't scare me the way it used to.

"I functioned but I was always a loner. I didn't want to be around people. If I was in a crowd, I wanted to hide in it. When I was marching along, the Japs loved to club you and beat you up. I always hid in the crowd. For years, I couldn't even stand the sight of an Oriental face."

When he returned home, he told the VA of his problems. "They sent me away," he said. "'Don't worry about it,' they said."

The VA did not establish a nationwide program to deal with delayed stress for WWII veterans comparable to the "storefront" centers for Vietnam veterans, but it makes psychiatric and social services available through VA facilities. "The VA is actively trying to meet the medical and psychiatric needs of the aging veteran population," the VA's Lipkin insists. "But the answer is not a new, special program."

Holmstrom, of the Charleston VA center, said: "No one claims to cure (post-traumatic stress disorder). It is considered a chronic disorder. But a person can learn to cope and adapt much better."

for the memorial.

Out of this meeting I hope to report to you, by way of a special announcement in the *March Journal*, a completion date for the memorial and a date for the dedication program at the Memorial at the Air Force Museum, Dayton, Ohio; so check your *March Journal* carefully for further notice.

It has been announced before but let me remind you again of the 1986 2nd Air Div. Assoc. reunion July 10-13. So get your reservations in early. Since we do have the largest membership in Assoc. — then let's have the largest number at the reunion.

I understand the blanks and the cost will be in the *March Journal*. The next date to remember is May 21-25, 1987 when the reunion is to be held in Norwich, England. This will be limited to 500, so first come first served.

Come join us at St. Charles; you can be assured it will be a memorable time together.

# About the Memorial

by Jordan R. Uttal

Among the eight Individual Endowments which have been presented to the Memorial Trust, three are in the name of Bomb Groups, the 44th, 445th, and the 467th. I tried to get the 1984 Business Meeting minutes corrected at McAfee in 1985, but I guess that I didn't make myself clear, and 466th was again listed instead of 467th. Apologies 467th.

Those of us who attended the Business Meeting at McAfee heard for the first time of the efforts of the Trust to obtain a grant from the Fulbright Commission for the funding of an American Librarian for our 2nd Air Division Memorial Room. Since then, based on copies of correspondence which I have received from Tom Eaton, it appears as if we have reason to be optimistic. The British office of the Commission has enthusiastically submitted a budget request to the American Headquarters for such a grant, after months of contacts between them and Tom Eaton, originally started by Mrs. Anne Collins, the Cultural Attache at the American Embassy (and a member of our Board of Governors). Tom's efforts with Captain Franklin of the Commission have gone on in splendid fashion, and we are awaiting word from the American side. After talking with Tom today, we still feel optimistic. Such a grant will fund a Librarian for 12 months, subject to renewal for another year if all goes well.

Perhaps we will hear before this goes to press, in which case we will ask Bill Robertie to add a word to that effect. In any event we owe sincere thanks to our British Colleagues for their efforts. Such a grant will give our 2ADA Endowment, presented at McAfee the chance to build up interest income to enable us to carry on along this line.

At the end of November the Memorial Room was visited by the American Ambassador and according to press reports and correspondence from members of the Board, he was most favorably impressed, and promised whatever assistance he could add to our future efforts.

Also, since the departure of Sue Vision, our first American Librarian we had until the end of November, the services of Tony North, part time, as an aide, in the Library on behalf of the Trust. He has carried on some of Sue's work, continued organization of the archive material, been available to assist American visitors, and in general, answer questions asked by any visitors about the efforts and the achievements of 2nd Air Division units.

Regardless of the outcome of the Fulbright matter, we still have our eyes firmly fixed on our past and current target — to

## 2ADA Film Library—Update

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

	Rental
<b>Super 8mm</b>	
* <i>Remember Them</i>	\$5.00
<b>16mm</b>	
Liberator B-24J & Liberators Over Europe	5.00
Target for Today — 2 parts	10.00
The Mission	5.00
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build the Capital Fund of the Trust to £250,000. Roughly we are at present, £75,000 short of that, but I am happy to report that Evelyn and Dean tell me that you are continuing your generous support for which we are most grateful.

I will be going to Norwich in May for the Annual Governors Meeting, and will be taking additional names to be added to the Master and Individual Group Rolls of

Honor. A few of the Group V.P.s are currently working on authenticating a few more names. I anticipate that by the time we are finished with this project we will have over 6,300 names inscribed.

Please feel free to write me with any questions that you feel should be brought to the attention of the Governors. And, once again, thanks most sincerely for your continued support.

# The Dilemma of the Trailing Wire Antenna

by Michael J. Donahue (93rd)

The trailing wire antenna is one type of radio antenna found on a B-24 Liberator bomber. It is used for long range radio transmission on medium or low frequencies. It is 150 ft. of fine flexible copper wire wound around a spool type reel and weighted at the trailing end by a 10 pound lead weight. When not in use the weighted end fits flush against the fuselage on the undercarriage of the bomber. When long range transmission is necessary, the reel type mechanism, located in the radio compartment is cranked out so that the weighted wire trails below and behind the plane. In the training manual it reads, "Know your length of the antenna with which you are operating. Full transmission may save the life of your crew."

Now let me take you back in time to where this story begins. It's Sept. 30, 1944. The war in Europe is going well against the Nazis. On this day our plane, a B-24 heavy bomber, called, *Ma's Worry*, will lead the 2nd Air Division of the 8th Air Force, to a target in Hamm, Germany.

Major Brown and Capt. Spencer of the 409th sqd. 93rd bomb group will be the lead pilots. This bombing mission will be our 17th.

My duties as a radio-operator gunner during this eight hour mission will be to send and receive coded messages to Division Headquarters in England. Take off and assembly from our base at "Hardwick" went well. With the group together we crossed the English Channel at 08:00 hours. Flying over enemy territory at 25000 ft. we picked up heavy flak on the bomb run and over the target. After the bombs were dropped on the target, it was time for me to send a strike report back to our base in England. For this long range transmission I cranked out the trailing wire antenna to its fullest length. With the bombs gone and the plane much lighter, our air speed must have increased. The training manual warned us not to reel out the antenna if the air speed exceeds 240 mph. This could have been the cause of the problem that now plagues me.

With the transmission completed I proceeded to reel the wire into my radio compartment. About one quarter of the way in the wire became a tangled, twisted mess on the spool of the reel. There was no way I could reel the wire in any further. Over 100 ft. of twisted line trailed helplessly behind the bomber. I tried feverishly to untangle the twisted mess. Working with heavy gloves on made it very difficult. I wouldn't dare remove them because of the sub-zero cold my fingers would stick fast to the metal wire.

Over the loud noise of the plane's engines I could hear the bursts of flak and the

thump of the 50 caliber machine guns fired by our gunners as the German fighter planes flew through our formation. World War II was going on around me as I worked to free this bloody wire. I imagined I could see the damn weighted wire swinging and swaying below our bomber and finally crashing into the flight deck of the plane below us. That could really hurt somebody and needless to say it would cause great concern to the pilot and crew of the other bomber.

I could also visualize the wire getting caught and winding around the turning props of the bomber below us thus causing the right side of our plane's fuselage to be ripped apart. This could result in the loss of our plane as well as the whole crew. If the crew ever found this out they would kill me.

The radio-operator's manual states, "WARNING: The trailing wire antenna must be reeled in before landing." If we land with that turkey trailing behind us, there's a good possibility that the bastard may bounce off of the runway and come crashing through the waste window inflicting serious injuries upon our tail gunner. Walter Borland would never forgive me if I let a thing like that happen.

I reached a decision, I must cut the wire and release the antenna from the plane. Consider first what might happen when you drop that heavy weight on the innocent people below. Don't be an idiot for God's sake you're worried about dropping a 10 lb. weight when your bomber just released three tons of bombs. Besides this is war, that's not cream puffs they're shooting at you. What about the bomber flying on your wing, taking a direct hit and going down in flames. Don't forget about your last pass in London. Remember how those buzz bombs and V-2s kept you awake all night. Cut the damn thing and get back to your duties.

The pilot called me on the intercom. In a loud voice he says, "What the hell are you doing, have you sent in that strike report?" Now I am really nervous, hope he don't find out what's going on. He has enough trouble trying to feather a prop of a dead shot up engine.

My God that burst of flak was close. I have got to take this flak suit off. It's 60° below zero, but I am sweating like a bull. It's a good thing I am on oxygen, my breathing is rapid. Better turn up the valve a little.

Wham! Flak hits the dome of the top turret gun, Plexiglass comes falling down around me. I look up into the turret where "Neadue", the engineer is sitting. I fear the worst, but he is OK. The shrapnel passed through the dome and hit Ned in

the flak helmet.

Once again I look at the tangled mess of wire and realize the situation has not got any better. Kelly the navigator calls me on the intercom and wants a position report. Now I have got to cut the wire and switch to the fixed wire antenna. With a firm grasp on the wire with the pliers I apply the right amount of pressure and cut the wire. In a flash the end of the wire disappeared and along with the heavy weight fell to earth.

Again my imagination began to run away with me. I visualized the weight crashing through a huge round stained glass window in an ancient old cathedral somewhere in Germany. In a few seconds I have destroyed a work of art that has endured for centuries. Then again it may drop on an oil refinery, blow up a munition dump, or discourage and interrupt a German Field Marshall in his endeavors to seduce a beautiful young maiden.

Anyway it's gone and good riddance. It will be a cold day in hell before I use that damn antenna again.

All in all it was a successful mission. We destroyed the target and the group returned with minimum casualties.

Although there is no evidence in the files or the record books of the 8th Air Force, that any of these events or happenings ever took place, I believe that after I released that trailing wire antenna I should have received some credit for saving our plane from destruction and possibly the lives of our crew. Destroying the oil refinery and blowing up a munitions dump is doubtful and would be difficult to prove. I would like to take credit for putting that oversexed German Field Marshall out of his misery. About the stained glass window, well it was probably broken any way.

After all these years I wonder what ever happened to that leaded weight and where it finally ended up. I am not really sure, and I would not swear to it, but when I watched President Reagan and the German Chancellor walk through the SS military cemetery in Bitburg, Germany, for a second I thought I saw hanging in the background a rusted old trailing wire antenna weight with a twisted length of tarnished copper wire hanging peacefully from a huge tree limb in the cemetery.

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# Old, Too Soon

by Bob Mallick (453rd - 467th)

When I enlisted in the Corps in 1942, Aviation Cadets were a diverse group! We were *not* the Flying Cadets of the late 30's. Not the Elite — with autos parked somewhere on the base and our golf clubs in storage for a long vacation break between flight phases. We jokingly referred to ourselves sometimes as "Junior Birdmen". We were warriors in training. And would eventually fight the enemy from cold and barren skies. We were treated as such! Rough and tough training with no let up and discipline that was very cruel at times. Some had college degrees and some of us had just exited high school. We did have some things in common as we had passed strenuous physicals and intense mental tests. Most of us had read Col. Robert L. Scott's book, *God is my Co-pilot*. And, we were gung ho to fly anywhere anytime. We began to eat, sleep and live solely for flying.

As I look backward down the runway of years it almost seems that we had easier living in combat than in our training. Perhaps, that was the nature of the beast. I want to tell you of a cross country flight incident that happened to me. I had the living hell scared out of me and became less indifferent to the rules and regulations. Also, I quit buzzing cows, flying beside freight train engines and stopped scaring motorists who were on long open Georgia roads. I stopped using the Stearman airplane as a toy and began using it for a 'tool' of war. Don't get worked up! I was only 19 years old and I began to age very fast.

Our class of '44-D was scheduled for a short cross country flight. North from Southern Field, Americus, Georgia to an Aux. field, perhaps 75 miles up the state line. To fly up there and drop down over the field as we passed and have our side numbers noted then directly return.

We had 40 or 45 air hours at this time. Some had passed the 40 hour check ride which was a ducesey. Our instructors were civilian contract pilots but Army fliers ran the field and gave the check flights. We were afraid of the Army boys who could recommend a 'wash out' if we did not meet their standards. The civilian instructors were an extremely fine bunch of men. Dedicated all their lives to flying, and now to us. They did their best to teach us and worried and fretted over slow students. The courage they displayed in flying daily with us was unbelievable. They smiled and laughed at our ineptness and kept us relaxed and trying. Somewhere the contributions they made to the war effort should be noted. But, I have never seen it. This country can never repay them for the skills they used and taught and the deep devotion to flying.

I passed my 40 hour ride with Army First Lieutenant Brazile. He took over the controls after take off and proceeded to wildly whip the craft all over the sky. I saw the horizon mostly as a 'blur' as it rotated. He was good. The tautness and smoothness of his maneuvers really startled me a bit. Beautiful slow rolls, half rolls and perfect loops. One aerobatic blending into the next with vicious snap rolls.

He kept his eye on me in the round rear view mirror. The longer he flew the damn thing the less mistakes I would display. I got a real display of what I *didn't* know about flying and how much that was! I kept a big smile plastered on my face and of course passed the check. Some of these men, civilian and army had thousands of hours in the air and I never attained their proficiency although I tried hard. That is what they wanted.

Rumors sparked and ran like grass fire about the proposed cross country flight! It would be exciting to fly away from the home field for a change. We all were 'up' for it. Odo G. Valentine called the 5 of us together and talked it out. One man to fly with him and the other 4 to have their own machine. A loose gaggle of aircraft to fly North and check in. No landings! Drop low over the field on arrival, let them get your number then pull up and return by group to Americus. It was noted we should stay in some proximity to the leader. But — not too close. We had no formation technique at this time.

Now, I could hit my own propwash coming out of a Loop. I flew good Chandelles. Sloppy Immelmans and beautiful half rolls. Also, precise snap rolls. I won't mention cross control and full slow rolls. I could bounce like a rabbit upon landing and not groundloop the ship anymore. A Jack-rabbit. I was getting big headed with excess confidence and trouble stalked me! Remember, I was 19.

Two Dodo birds cranked the engine for me on the fateful day. They wound the crank with vigor, goggles bouncing on the back of their necks. You did not wear glass on your forehead with us unless you had soloed! I fired up the big radial engine from the back seat and the kids pulled chocks to set me free. I was King of the Universe waiting to follow Odo for take off into the big blue. It was the culmination of all the training we had to gun those engines into the sky! I loved it. But, this was to be the day I grew up and aged some. And, marked my shorts for the laundry. I may even have started to become a Pilot that day.

At field's edge, I pulled a 45 angle to take off and scanned the skies behind me. I began my run-up and engine check. Valentine was already tail up and blasting dust as he raced across the ground to become airborne. The other ships were swinging the nose from the 45 angle to

gun across and follow him. The pace was quickening. I revved the Continental until the airframe shook and checked the magnetos. Sharp alarm twigged at me as there was over 100 rpm drop on both banks. Damn-Damn-Damn — I was keyed to go with my buddies and not abort! I revved higher and the mill sounded strong on both mags.

"What the Hell. Let 'er rip." Kicked the ship around and poured on the coal. Really blasted after my bunch who were up and circling to hit a Northerly heading. I straight lined it after them. The screwy part was I had a very fast bird that wanted to fly. I was really an 'Ace' — at making mistakes. I was going along come hell or high water. "Into the Valley of Death rode the 600". All that stuff. Remember, I was only 19.

My engine cracked and snapped a few times, but I kept it full throttle to burn the water from the gasoline I felt was in there. It settled to a smooth rumble of power as I caught up and took a level position to the left of the group. It was an extremely pretty morning. Bright sunshine dappled the earth with sharp diamonds of light and racing shadows flowed below us as we progressed. Euphoria and content flew with me. The landscape of Georgia with its peanut patches, pecan groves and hog farms went gently and slowly behind us. I was hard pressed to throttle back and stay with the bunch. I slid out and did a few snap rolls in sheer exuberance of being alive up there.

Flying a 360 or 0 course on the magnetic compasses we droned North and located the field. The pace really picked up. We strung out and began losing altitude to cross over. Two stage ships were on the ground to record our passage. In my turn, I rolled left and down and cut back on the throttle and made my swing over field. Opened the throttle to climb back up.

The engine quit completely. Just zonked out for a space of 6 or 7 seconds and 10,000 heart beats. I had popped the stick to maintain a glide and could feel a giant suppository from those Georgia pine trees. My helmet flooded with heat and sweat. My scalp itched and burned furiously! I knew whose fault all this was. The engine began to bang and kick and cleared itself. I hauled that bird up with sheer willpower and knew what the word *adrenalin* meant. I shipped the bird around into a very tight pattern about 550 feet high and fast. I needed altitude and speed if it conked completely!

I got shoved out of my approach. Some Yoyo came slamming at me sliding in from my left and I was forced to around again. He probably was another 40 hour wonder like myself. Do or die this time and I was not going to be shoved out by the devil himself. I got some very quick engine

(continued on next page)

## HETHEL HIGHLIGHTS

# The Mysterious Shooter

by Earl Zimmerman (389th)

As far as I know T/Sgt. Arthur J. Marsh — Fearless Caldwell's original radioman — was the only combat enlisted man in the 389th to receive a direct commission. Lt. Marsh thought he had it rough in combat, but he had second thoughts about one of the duties assigned to him at Hethel, which was to take charge of the water cooled fifty caliber machine gun pits scattered around the perimeter of the field. Things started off smoothly enough but he was called on the carpet by the Group Commander who complained that he had received reports about shots being fired from the gun pits. He was to learn that on any given day or night someone in a gun pit would fire off one round from a water cooled fifty.

One day while on patrol, he heard a shot from across the field and went racing to the area in his jeep and asked some mechanics working on a plane as to where the shot came from. That was his first mistake. When you inquire of a six striper you say please — which Marsh failed to do. The six striper pointed off in one direction and at the same time a five striper pointed off in another direction.

Well, the word got around that a Second John was on the loose in a jeep looking for the culprit who fired off a round a day. From then on it was Katy-bar-the-door as every time Marsh stopped to inquire about the mysterious shots, he invariably was sent in the wrong direction.

Remember the woods between the 565th and the tower. . . One day a Pfc. carrying a book of poetry is seen strolling through the woods on his way to his duty post, the gun pit located near a hardstand near the road leading to Wymondham. A very interesting Pfc. He had a B.S. degree in English literature and was older than most of the men on the base, but he was contented to wear one stripe and take life as it comes.

### Old, Too Soon (continued)

misses this time and lots of backfiring making the circuit. Hot chills and cold sweats accompanied the downwind leg to base. I chopped power and practically dove at the ground. Fishtailed and fought to lose height and speed. I touched down and rolled long and used lots of toe action on the brakes. It wasn't too large a field, and the far fence came at me fast.

The stage ships got the number correctly. It was brought down and handed to them. An instructor played around with the engine awhile and then took it off me. Eventually, he gave me a stage plane to fly home. The ride back with a smooth running engine was uneventful. Just watched

He was often heard quoting poetry in the ground mess and most of the troops think his draft board fingered him to get him off the streets. Why should he complain — he got three squares a day — one hundred percent wool threads to wear and a corrugated tin roof over his head every night, except when he was on duty in the gun pits. Funny thing though — he wore glasses and couldn't see across a hardstand.

The Pfc. on the other hand was frustrated as he had never hit any of the birds he fired at. When all was said and done, he inquired of a combat gunner why he never hit the target. The gunner advised him that the birds were never in any danger from him as the rounds were going under the birds by at least one foot. The educated professor chalked up his mistakes, headed for the squadron area through the woods talking to himself in measured tones — "Of Cabbages and Kings. . ."

While on duty in the pits, he would ring up the lads in the other pits on the old crank field phone and quote, *The Shropshire Lad* to any who would listen. He was mystified by a bird, about the size of a robin, that would fly to an altitude of about fifty feet and flutter in one spot while singing. A few minutes of this and drop to the ground only to resume the same activity a few minutes later. To keep from being bored to death, he took to uncovering the gun, getting in the cradle and sighting the 75mm gun sight on the bird as he fluttered in the air. One thing led to another and one day he chambered a round and fired at the unsuspecting bird.

After a few times in the cradle, the MP's would drive by looking for the culprit. From then on he set up his routine before he fired off a round. Make sure no one was in his vicinity, uncover the gun, fire as quickly as possible, run a cleaning rod

the compass swing around 180 degrees and saw a few more headed my way.

When I landed at Southern Field the sun was still out, but it was not shining so brightly for me. I shut down and climbed very tiredly out of the cockpit and unhooked my chute harness. I actually felt 50 years old and all over. I was thoroughly disgusted and discouraged with myself. This was a League where poor judgement and mistakes could kill! And being dead is for a long time! My legs wobbled a little and I looked neither left nor right as I headed for the barracks to flop out on my sack. I was young and did recover by Chow time.

The sad and laughable part was the

through the barrel and wipe it down real good, cover the gun, get his poetry book and lounge on the protective sand bags around the pit. Of course the word was out among the troops about the mystery shooter and no one gave him away.

Lt. Marsh was getting desperate as the Group Commander kept getting reports about shots being heard on the field. Again Marsh was called on the carpet and given the word "nail the culprit" or else. The Lt. could see his new gold bars being ripped from his shoulders during a Group formation and vowed to get his man. The M/Sgt. in the motor pool complained that Marsh was wearing out one of his new jeeps. Marsh checked out a bicycle one day and tried his luck wearing fatigues without his gold bars. The troops could smell him coming regardless of his *modus operandi*. The Pfc. went about his daily duties, getting off one shot a day at the happy English flutterer, cleaning his gun and reading his poetry. He had the cleanest gun in the Group. One thing Marsh didn't think of was to count the rounds of fifty in each pit, but that didn't occur to him until he had orders to return to the Z.I.

As Lt. Marsh had finished his missions and had many points to his credit, he was one of the first to leave after V.E. Day. On his last day as he was heading for the flightline to catch a B-24 home, a friend confided to him that the Pfc. was the mystery shooter. The Lt. gritted his teeth — never suspecting the poet — headed for Hqs., stopped halfway there and smiled to himself — turned around and headed back to catch the B-24 home. No way he could redeem himself after wearing out two sets of tires on the jeep and getting an ulcer in the process. Who cares anyway — let the professor go home with his victory. The Lt. was heard to mutter to himself all the way back to the land of the round door knobs — "I'll be damned."

high credit I received for landing the clunker and bringing home the stage ship. My name was mentioned at an instructor's meeting and they credited me with a good strange field landing and excellent judgement in coming down. I could only nod and smile weakly at Odo G. when he complimented me. I knew that I had risked my own rear end very foolishly and put the instructor in grave danger who lumped my plane back as high as he could fly it in case he had to jump out. It went directly to the repair hangar. I never mentioned this to anyone before but 1944 is long gone and they cannot wash me out now.

"Waitress, bring me another Coors beer. I'm all shook up."

# The Night We Might Have Blown Up Shipdham

by John Wolbarst (446th Sub Depot)

It was sometime in 1944, that I was told to report to the 44th B.G. Armament Officer, Major Robert L. Dean. I was the senior NCO in charge of bombsight and autopilot maintenance for the Group.

With Major Dean were S/Sgt. Max Goucher, armorer of the 68th, and others I don't remember. They were handling an extraordinary piece of ordnance — a four-barrel flare gun. Four Very pistols had been cut down and mounted in a row on an aluminum plate about a foot square.

They were to be fired by a pair of modified bombrack releases. These devices, cocked with a powerful spring, were released electrically; the actuating arms then flew around and hit the firing pins of the flare pistols.

The purpose of the gun was to signal to the rest of the Group when the first bomb was leaving the lead ship, so the other bombardiers could toggle off their loads in a compact pattern.

We were to mount it in the waist of a 68th ship that was to lead a mission the next morning. Goucher and I were to meet S/Sgt. Fred Piela and a sheet metal crew of the 464th Sub Depot on the line and get the thing installed.

As it was late when we got to the plane we decided that we would go to evening chow and come back to do the job. On the way we warned the control tower that we would be firing flares.

Piela's men worked fast. First they cut a slot in the roof of the plane; then they riveted the top edge of the plate to a longitudinal stringer so the gun barrels just protruded through the roof. That was it. I thought the setup looked flimsy and told Piela so. He said: "I don't tell you how to fix bombsights. Don't you tell me how to fix sheet metal." They left and Goucher and I strung wire from the intervalometer in the nose back to the waist. We were finished about 9:30.

Goucher loaded and cocked the gun and then got out onto the hardstand. I went up to the nose to fire the thing. The plane had a full load of bombs, ammunition, and gas so I was very careful how I set and ran the intervalometer. There was a loud bang and a horrendous crash of rending metal, followed by sounds as if someone was hammering on the ship, all mixed with blood curdling yells from Goucher.

I ran back. Smoke was pouring out of the waist windows, Goucher was jumping

up and down. Through the waist window we could see a big hole in the roof. We climbed in the waist hatch. It was clear what had happened.

When the gun fired the recoil pushed the barrels below the roof. Most of the fireballs were trapped inside and flew around the waist. A piece of roof about 3 ft. square was torn loose. The stringer was a ruin. Bits of fireballs were still smoldering in corners.

After putting out the sparks and checking that the ship was secure, we were about to leave when the fire truck arrived. The crew's remarks were not complimentary.

It was after 10:00 when I found Piela and told him to round up his crew again. They were not happy, but they got to work with a will.

About 11:30 it began to rain steadily. The men outside on the roof were getting soaked; they also began to get shocks from their electrical equipment. Anguished protests filled the night air.

By midnight the job was done. Goucher loaded the gun, it fired the flares high into the wet air and we went off to bed. As I was dropping off to sleep I had a sudden thought. What if some of those fireballs had landed in the ammunition containers? Wow!

That night the mission was scrubbed.

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## Definition of a Loser

Author unknown — (Submitted by Colin Sleath)

I'm one of the fellows who is making the world safe for democracy. I fought and fought and fought — but had to go anyway. I was called in Class A. The next time I want to be in Class B. (Be here when they go and be here when they come back.) I remember when I registered. I went up to a desk and the man in charge was my milkman. He said, "What's your name?" I said, "Oh, you know my name." "What's your name?" he roared. I said to him "August Childs." He said, "Are you alien?" I said, "No, I feel fine." He asked me where I was born and I said in Pittsburgh. He said, "When did you first see the light of day?" I said, "When we moved to Philadelphia." He said to tell him how old I was so I told him. "Twenty-three the first day of September." He said, "The first day of September you'll be in China and that will be the last of August."

Then I went to camp. I guess they didn't think I would live very long for the first fellow I saw wrote on my card "Flying Corps". I went a little further and some fellow said, "Look what the wind is blowing in." I said, "Wind nothing, the draft is doing it."

On the second morning they put these clothes on me. What an outfit! As soon as

you are in it you think you could fight anybody. They have two sizes — too small and too large. The pants are so tight I could not sit down.

What a raincoat they gave me. It strained the rain. I passed an officer all dressed up with a funny belt and all that stuff. He said, calling after me "Didn't you notice my uniform when you passed by?" "Yes, but what are you kicking about, look what they gave me."

One morning it was 5 degrees below and they called us out for underwear inspection. Talk about scenery, red flannels, B.V.D.s all kinds. The union suit they gave me would fit Tony Galento. The lieutenant lines us up and told me to stand up. I said, "I am up sir, but this underwear makes you think I'm sitting down." He got so mad he put me digging ditches. A little later he passed me and said, "Don't throw that dirt up here." I said, "Where am I going to throw it?" He said, "Dig another hole and put it in there."

Three days later we sailed for Australia. Marching down the pier I had the worst luck. I had a sergeant who stuttered and it took him so long to say "Halt" that 27 of us marched overboard. They pulled us out and lined us up on the pier. The captain

came by and said "Fall in." I said, "I have been in, sir."

I was on the boat for 12 days — seasick for 12 days. Nothing going down and everything coming up. I leaned over the rail all the time. In the middle of one of the leanings, the captain rushed up to me and asked if the Brigadier was up yet. I said, "If I swallowed it, it's up." Talk about dumb people. I said to one of the fellows, "I guess we dropped anchor." He replied, "I knew they'd lost it, it's been hanging out ever since we left New York."

Well, we landed and were immediately sent to the trenches. After three nights there, the cannons started to roar and the shells started to pop. I was shaking with patriotism and I tried to hide behind a tree, but there weren't enough trees for the officers. The captain came around and said, "Go over the top at five o'clock." I said, "Captain, I'd like to have a furlough." He said, "Haven't you any red blood in you?" I said, "Yes, but I don't want to see it."

At five o'clock we went over the top and 10,000 Japs came at us. The way they looked at me you would have thought I started the war. Our Captain yelled, "Fire at will." I didn't know anybody by the name of Will. I guess the fellow behind me thought I was Will, because he fired his gun and shot me in the excitement.

# Strange Coincidence!

by Mike Benarcik (453rd)

A few weeks ago, a business friend of mine, who is president of a prominent publishing house in Greenwich, Conn., phoned. Mike he said, now that you have rested for a while in retirement, would you be interested in doing some management consulting for me?

He has two prestigious art galleries, one in Carmel, Calif. and one in South Port, Conn., not too far from his corporate headquarters.

He just felt that having an operation like he had, and knowing our background he wondered if he could impose on my coming up to his Fairfield-South Port, Conn. Gallery to observe the operation. We agreed that December 18 and 19th would be the day of my visit.

Having surreptitiously made some observation between his sales personnel and customers and among others, a couple that had just concluded their business transaction, and were heading up the staircase. I introduced myself, saying that the president of this firm has asked me to make a survey of some of his patrons, and would they mind if I asked them some questions. They were most obliging. Where do you live? How far is Easton, Conn. from here? What prompts you to travel all that distance to do business with GWS Galleries, and questions of the like.

After they told me that they have been coming here for over 3 years, and always liked the way they were treated etc., I asked if they could recall their first visit. Mrs. Factor responded by saying, they had been to other framing shops and were disappointed. On their first visit here, were impressed. And as they were leaving the day of their first visit, she said, my husband Bob saw a painting on the gallery wall that impressed him.

It attracted his attention because the painting showed a WWII scene of an Air Force Bomber and an RAF Spitfire, and since he was in the war at that time in 1943 in Europe, it brought back some memories. We purchased the print some 3 years ago, we've been coming here ever since.

Nobody, but nobody, including myself, (consultant or not) would accept such a comment without further questions, because I too was in the Air Force in World War II.

"Were you stationed in England?" I asked. "Yes, I was with a bomber group and in fact the painting that we purchased shows a bomber with an identifying letter on the tail, of the group that I was stationed with."

"Were you with a B-24 outfit," I asked, "YES," he responded.

With hesitancy I said, "Were you with the 453rd Bomber Group?" His eyes lit

up, and he looked at Sally, his wife and said, "Can you imagine this man knows of my bomber group." I followed with another question, "Is the title of the painting, *Welcome Home Yank*"? With amazement, he said "YES!"

Then let me shake your hand, *Welcome Home Yank* is our 453rd Bomb Group plane and the bomber depicted by the artist, Bill Phillips, in that painting was our plane, and I was the Pilot of the plane with my crew coming back from Frankfurt, Germany mission in March of 1944, and the Spitfire did escort us back over the channel. That's how the picture got its title *Welcome Home Yank*."

We all three stood in amazement that an Airman of WWII from Easton, Conn., and an Airman of WWII from Delaware on another mission, both of the 453rd Bomb Group should by chance meet in a gallery whose random interview brought them together this day, this morning Dec. 19, 1985 — 41 years later . . . STRANGE?

For a moment in the excitement of such a coincidence, I was tempted to ask further questions, and I did.

With 5000 men cadre supporting a Bomber Group at the 453rd, "Where, on the base were you assigned?" I asked.

"I worked at Headquarters, operation, as a Cryptographer for the Group."

Does the name Capt. Rhode mean anything? "Oh yes, he was the engineering officer." Were you there when Jim Stewart was in Operations? "Many a decoded message I would send thru the passage window in operations."

I'm sorry Bob that we didn't shake hands then in 1944, for I too worked at

Operations with Rhode, Stewart, Andy Low, Stokes, McFadden S-2, Major Daley in the 732nd Sgt. Easterwood, and a litany of names, he too recalled. We were serving our country, and a little younger then.

My interrogation was fulfilled.

In the mail, this day, to Mr. Robert and Sally Factor from Easton, Conn., is the printed "Story" documenting the mission of March 1944 of a B-24 from the 453rd Bomber Group that the artist Bill Phillips perceived and chose to title it, *Welcome Home Yank*.

## ATTENTION GOLFERS

The Seventh Annual 2ADA Golf Tournament will be held Thursday, July 10, 1986 at the Pheasant Run Golf Course in St. Charles, Ill. Starting times will begin at 0900 hours. It is expected that the costs will run a little bit higher than they were in New Jersey in 1985.

Anyone interested, please advise the undersigned as soon as possible enclosing a check for \$30.00 (refundable if unable to attend) and your handicap or average score.

Pete Henry (44th BG)  
164 B Portland Lane  
Jamesburg, NJ 08831  
Tel. 1-609-655-0982



5/12

Taxi!

# Our Last Mission

by Wes Bartelt (453rd)

Forty years to find most of the pieces to the puzzle of our last mission with the 453rd Bomb Group, and some are still missing.

My crew was in all probability like hundreds of other Bomber Crews. We came from all parts of the country. We were a mixture of ethnic backgrounds and religions. Some, I still remember after forty years. My nose gunner was a Frenchman from Chicago; my radio operator, a Scandinavian from the San Francisco area; the engineer was English and a Rebel from Athens, Alabama — to him, I was a damn Yankee from Wisconsin and half Polish. The bombardier hailed from Boston of Jewish heritage; one waist gunner was an Italian from Michigan; my tail gunner was a Swede from New Jersey. The co-pilot came from Baton Rouge, he was a Duke's mixture. One crew member was distinctive and that was my navigator. Tall, blond, blue eyed, born in Munich, Germany, he came to America at age 4, his name was Hans Niichel. He always told us he had two first cousins flying with the Luftwaffe. This was one of the pieces missing from the puzzle. We were grounded for almost 3 weeks after being ready to fly combat.

At the Nashville convention in '82, I met Bob Harper who was with 453rd Intelligence at the time. He recalled that they were rechecking Hans' records as he was being considered to lead a mission to bomb a camouflaged target in Munich, his birthplace. It may have been more of a loyalty check, to get his reaction to such an assignment. After a short discussion with Wing S-2, it was clear that Hans was not only loyal, but a very good navigator and a competent photographer.

We were finally cleared and went on our first mission in November of '44. From that mission on it became a running joke that someone on the crew would call Hans, up in the nose, as we crossed the Zuider Zee and yell, "Hey Hans, get on the horn and tell your cousins we are up here today and to leave the 453rd alone."

Our luck continued to go well, even with the 0-0 take-offs in the dark for the Bulge Missions, a few flak holes, and now and then, a near-miss with some clown flying a reverse course around the Buncher.

On our third mission, we took the Lead of the 732nd squadron. That day we were flying in the Coffin Corner, but were the only ship with a bombardier and a bomb-site that was working.

The months moved on, December, January, February, March and our mission count grew to twenty-one.

One week before our twenty-second mission, I was called into Squadron Operations and was told to take up a new B-24 that had come to the Group. It was the

latest model and I was to take it up and check it out. It had a formation stick which worked with the autopilot and a new type of Mickey Equipment Set on the flight deck behind the top turret. It sure didn't give us much room to move around. I took it up on two flights around Norwich and everything seemed to be working well. I gave my report to the Squadron Operations Officer and was told it was going to be the CO's personal ship.

March 15th, we were scheduled to fly our 22nd mission; so it was up early, with a breakfast of powdered eggs and the usual coffee(?) and off to briefing. As my co-pilot and I listened, we couldn't believe that we were going to fly Deputy-Lead for the Group and that our plane was the new bird we had just checked out.

The target was Zossen, Germany, 20 miles south of Berlin, headquarters for the German army. This would be our third trip to Berlin.

With briefing over, Parker, my co-pilot and I headed for our hardstand. Shortly after, we loaded our gear and pre-flighted our "New Baby." Just as we finished, Hans came along with another crew member whom none of us had ever seen. We all gathered under the wing and met Bombardier and Mickey Operator, Lt. Clark.

Well, it was time to load-up and move out. Everything seemed to be normal. We took off, formed and headed for the coast, then across the Channel, and over the Zuider Zee.

There was the standard intercom chatter. My nose gunner was complaining how cold he was; my tailgunner would tell me to quit swinging him from side to side, he

was getting sea sick. Everything seemed to be going great. Now, the formation was well inside of Germany and the crew got on Hans again about his cousins, even though we hadn't seen any German fighters for several missions.

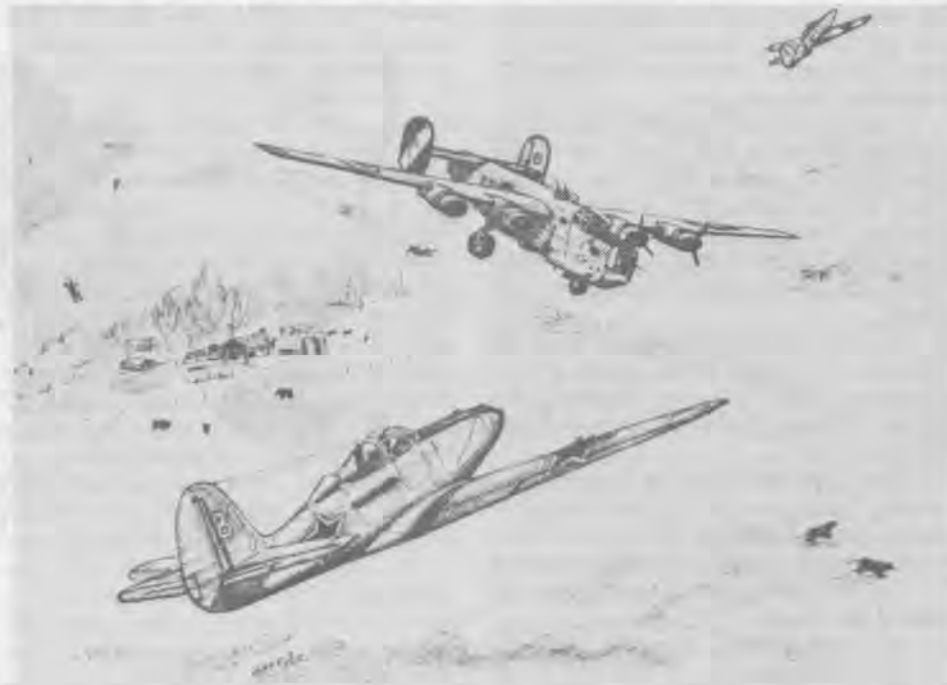
Flying off the right wing of the lead ship, I did most of the flying. I was concentrating on flying formation because I was using the new Formation stick. Suddenly, my ear drums were nearly blown out with the words, "Fire on the flight deck!" I called for someone to give me a report. The Mickey Set was on fire. The cabin was filling with smoke so I opened my window to see and to ventilate. Parker did the same. Carlson, my radio operator got a fire extinguisher and helped Clark and my Engineer, Pepper, with the fire. It seemed like hours. I kept asking Parker, who was watching everything, to keep me posted. I was worried about the oxygen in the cabin blowing us up, so I opened the bomb bay doors as a precaution.

The word came that the fire was out and so was the Mickey Set. With that, I relaxed and we closed everything up.

I don't remember how close to the Bomb Run we were then, but things seemed OK, then the cabin started filling up with smoke again. I remember hollering to get the damn fire out, thinking it was the Mickey Set again.

At that time, I was too busy flying formation and not looking around; with that, my co-pilot hit me and yelled, "The smoke is coming from behind your instrument panel." With more profanity, I said, "What next?" Little did I know what else was in store for us before the day was over. By this time, the smoke was coming out on Parker's side, too. Again, I opened the window and so did Parker. Whether we

(continued on next page)





## Our Last Mission (continued)

talked or just acted automatically, I don't know. I signaled for Parker to take over the controls and then I started unbuckling, threw off my flak suit, got out of my parachute harness, ripped off my right hand glove and pulled out my oxygen hose. While Parker flew, I went under the controls and reached behind the instrument panel with my bare hand. I knew that if I touched -40° metal with my warm hand, it would stick and burn, so that would not be the area of the fire. After touching a few times and pulling skin off to get my hand loose, I hit something hot and my hand did not stick, so I grabbed a handful of wires and pulled and looked for more hot spots. By this time, I needed oxygen and Pepper was there with the walk-around bottle. I took a few fast breaths, unplugged again, and went back under the panel looking for more hot wires and found them. As soon as I pulled them loose, the smoke seemed to diminish and the cabin was clear once more.

By this time, we were on the Bomb Run. The Lead Ship called "Tuckem in." The speed with which one can work to get buckled up with all the gear is something else. Now it was up to me to fly the run. As I remember someone remarked, "Two down and three stikes, you're out." There was a quick reply of, "Knock it off with those damn superstitions." I was to find out later that Clark, the new man, had parachuted once and on another mission had crash landed in some trees from which he had spent several weeks in the hospital. This was his first mission since that accident.

The flare dropped from the Lead Ship and Hans started the count down. Then I noticed I was pushing full right rudder and was still skidding left toward the Leader. Out of the corner of my eye I could see our two port engines windmilling. By this time we were no more than 25 feet from the Leader. I jammed the wheel forward and we slid right under the Lead Ship. Hans was still counting as I heard, "six, five, four." All I could see above me was an open bomb bay full of bombs. Instinctively, I pushed the controls forward and turned to the right to get away from the formation before they dropped their bombs!

This is where another one of the missing pieces of the puzzle was found. At the Reunion in England in June 1983, I met Delmar Wangsvick who was flying in the Lead Ship as Bombardier.

For 38 years, I believed that I made the decision to head for Poland and the Russian Air Field which we had been briefed on. After talking to Del, he said he sure as hell remembered that mission and our sliding under their ship. The turbulence jostled him, but he had time enough to turn around and kill the switches for the drop. If it wasn't for Del, not only our

# 458th B.G. Report

Rick Rokicki (458th)

By now, everyone should have a copy of the new 1986 Roster which was mailed with the December '85 issue of the *Journal*. I've had a few calls up to mid-January — Ceil and I took a two week vacation in Maui then — stating that the December issue had not arrived. Suffice to say that a combination of delays on the part of the Printing and Mailing functions, plus the Christmas rush, etc., contributed to the late delivery of the *Journal*/Roster mailing.

The Roster shows 442 members (458th) and includes 6 who are listed as Associate Members. Since the "cut-off" date we had in late October, we have added an additional 14 members. Some of these were a result of a follow-up after I received their names from Dick Linn, Charley Melton and Don Holcomb and other sources. Received word from Evelyn that one of our members, Sam Robeson, recently passed away. We extend our sympathy to his family.

Here is a listing of the new members that do not appear in your Roster. If you recognize a name and wish his address, please drop me a card and I will send it to you by return mail. Space does not allow a full address in this column. New members:

Don Breckenbridge  
Rex Brudos  
Bill Craycraft  
Tom Dawes  
Bob Frazier  
Roscoe Heins  
Warren Johnston  
Russ Lower  
Myron McNamarra  
Hal McCray  
Ray Peters  
Jack Umphrey  
Frank Vermeien  
Dan Walker.

ship, but the whole squadron could have been blown away. He also told me that I asked for fighter escort back to Old Buckenham but was instead ordered to fly to Poland. The decision to go to Poland has always bothered me because of the loss of my two crew members. I thought I had made that decision.

Now, there we were, out of formation and down to fifteen thousand feet and heading east to Poland. The crew was busy throwing out flak suits and loose gear, but we kept the guns loaded since we were not sure where the Russian lines were. A fast check with Hans and he gave me the headings to Lodz, Poland, which was one of the fields designated. Parker and I were busy trying to fly on two engines and maintain as much altitude as we could, but we were slowly settling. The one thing that bothered us was that our altimeter

Bill Jameson recently wrote and asked whether the 458th ever considered having a bronze plate cast and installed at the Air Force Museum at Wright-Patterson. Several Groups have done so, the latest being the 392nd which dedicated their plaque last September. I personally feel strongly in favor of this and will help anyone who can help in this effort. There are certain criteria that have to be met in the design and size. I do not have that information. If you would like to participate in the funding of this project, please write to:

William S. Jameson  
9715 Springtree Lane  
Dallas, TX 75243

Bill plans to attend the Dallas Mini-Reunion March 15 and gather some facts on this plaque regarding approximate cost and design, etc. More on this in the June issue in the "Report".

So far the 1986 Reunion at Pheasant Run Resort, July 10-13 is filling up rapidly. If you plan to attend, do not delay in getting your reservation request to Evelyn ASP.

Have received word that the 235 rooms we had reserved in Norwich for the May 21-25, 1987 Reunion, have all been spoken for. If you haven't committed yet, my suggestion is that you contact Evelyn for a "stand-by" listing in the event that there may be some cancellations between now and then.

By the way, thanks to all who dropped me a note regarding the "by-line" in the last *Journal* under 458th BG Report. I was listed as 489th, but Bill Robertie said the Pesky Gremlins slipped that past the typesetter. We accept that . . . .

was set in England so we had no idea how much the altimeter setting would be off when we reached Poland. We had salvaged the bomb load after leaving the formation in a dive. While Hans was working on headings and giving me information on the two available airfields, all the gunners were watching for any sign of enemy fighters. The feeling of being over enemy territory all alone without the P-51's or 47's to keep us company was a scary time. We would have welcomed their escort, but we knew we were going in the wrong direction.

Parker was using the escape map from his jump suit pocket and giving us the distance to the Polish border. One hundred miles of enemy territory, and then another one hundred fifty miles over Poland to Lodz. We had plenty of fuel. The big worry was, why did the two left engines stop and would the other two get us out of Ger-

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## Our Last Mission (continued)

many? Our air speed dropped to 130, so that meant two hours flying if we didn't have a head wind. We kept busy checking everything, but it still seemed like forever. It wasn't long before Hans called, "There's a fair sized town ahead and to the left." Soon we could see the airfield, so I called to Pepper to ready the Very pistol with double red flares. That was the briefing signal for the day. By this time, we were down to what we figured to be about fifteen hundred feet. We came over the airfield on which there were a number of fighters with big red stars on the wings. My nose gunner, Provo, called and said that some of the fighters were taking off. I then called the crew to clear their turrets and we would try to hold our altitude as long as we could. We were thinking that they were coming up to escort us in. I cautiously turned into the good engines and leveled out on my downwind leg. The co-pilot started the landing checklist; gear down, 10° flaps, that's when we started losing altitude fast. At that time, two fighters roared over the top of us. They were so close, I could see they were Bell P-39 Air Cobras. The engineer was still firing double red flares.

Suddenly, all hell broke loose. Someone called, "I see tracers coming at us." Parker looked up and two P-39's were coming straight at us from 12 o'clock level. By now we were below one thousand feet and someone (I never found out who) hollered "Bail out!" With that I screamed, "Don't jump, we're too low!" Russian bullets and shells were coming in everywhere. They were even hitting the controls because the wheel was jerked right out of my hand.

At that time I yelled to Parker, "Gear up!" While he was trying to get it up, I ran the servo power all the way to ten. It was

either burn out the engines to get enough altitude for bailout, or dive for the air strip. Either way, should the bastards make another pass at us and hit our gas tanks, we'd all buy the farm. Everyone was watching for their next pass. There were four P-39's after us. All that ran through my mind was, what kind of allies are they? I watched my rate-of-climb, it was slow and then Parker said "The gear is stuck, it won't come up." With that I got on the intercom, "Bail out on the bell, don't even count, open your chutes as soon as you clear the ship. We'll try to get more altitude and if they turn back, that's when we go." I looked at Parker and said, "How high do you think we are?" The altimeter showed a little over one thousand feet. He said he thought that was pretty close. The fighters turned and headed toward us again. I hollered, "Good Luck" and rang the bail out bell. The bomb bay doors had been opened by Parker while I kept trying to climb for more altitude.

We had always talked about bailing out at high altitude and also what to do at low altitude. I also told my crew that I would count to fifteen and then I was going and they had better be ahead of me.

With all the extra power on the two right engines, it took both Parker and me to hold full right rudder so that we wouldn't roll over.

The countdown to fifteen was over and I signaled Parker to leave. At the same time, I was unbuckling as he headed for the bomb bay. I started to pull back the throttles on the good engines, rolled in some trim, but when I took my foot off of the rudder, it still wanted to roll. The only way out for me was to cut back the power and trim for a glide. As I climbed to the catwalk, I saw some cows go under me. They were BIG as hell! I was way below

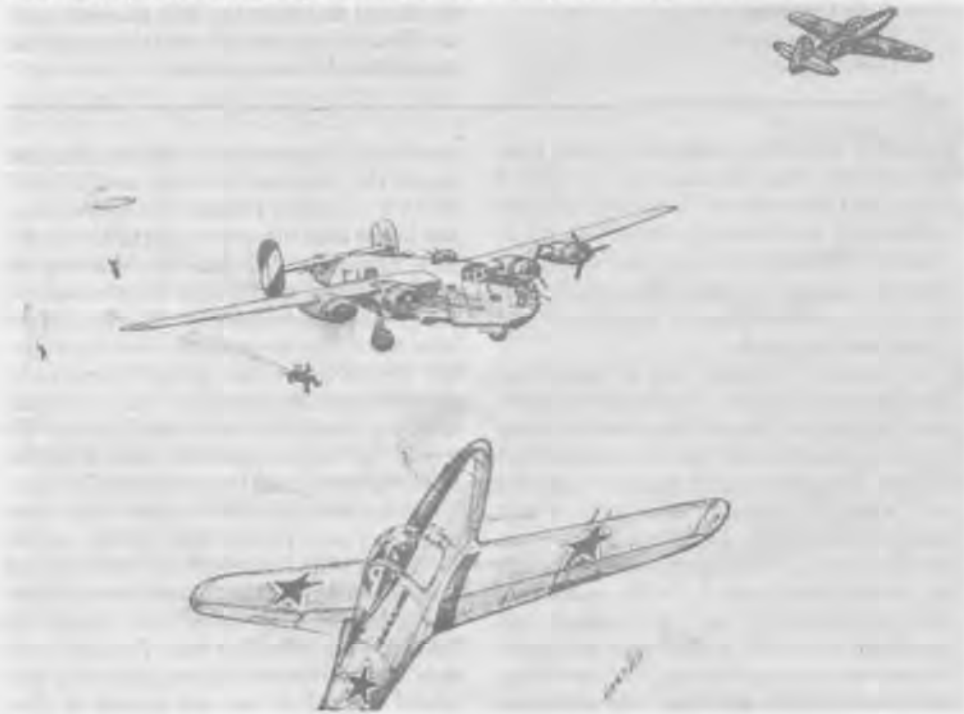
bailout altitude. I knew there was no way to land and no way to get out except jump, so I dove out and pulled my ripcord at the same time. I remember my foot hitting the center bulkhead and as the rudders went by, I could see the chute coming out and I was parallel with the ground. When it opened, I swung 180° like a pendulum. I remember looking at my ripcord and my fingers gripped tight around it. The thoughts raced through my mind that we were told that we had to bring it back or pay for it. The crazy stuff that passes through your mind when you think you're going to die. I thought you were supposed to see your whole life pass before your eyes, and not the price of a ripcord. With that, I threw it away and grabbed both risers as I was starting to swing back in the other direction. Unfortunately, the ground came up to meet me on that swing. I slammed into the ground, but luck was with me that day, I hit in a marsh and my legs went in all the way to my hips.

After crawling out, I was met by four men in drab uniforms with no markings, but each had a rifle that looked six feet long. They started to speak what I recognized as Polish. Oh, how I wished I had listened to my Grandmother, who tried to teach me her language.

With my hands up, I pointed to my leg pocket and with a slow move, I pulled out a pack of cigarettes and the American flag arm band which I showed them. I gave them my cigarettes and then they marched me to a small town and into the local pokey where I found my co-pilot. They held us a day and by that time, we were both hungry. About noon the next day, they brought us a bowl of jellied meat with vegetables and black bread. It was the best they had and after thirty-six hours, we were both darned hungry.

That night, we were taken from the cell and put into an old army truck with a red star. We bumped along very slowly for an hour or two and then pulled up to an old barn. It was dark, we weren't sure where we were. As daylight broke, we could see that it was an old barn with wide cracks between the boards and some straw scattered on the floor. We also had company. There was a B-17 crew that had landed on the strip, only to have the machine gun emplacements open fire on them. The barn we were in was a part of the airfield. We introduced ourselves to the other crew and traded stories. It seems that the Russians would shoot at anything that didn't have a red star on it. The next day, two more of my crew showed up. We talked over the events of the day before and they didn't know if everyone had made it. Then two days later, the last of my crew was brought to the barn. I should add that the barn was constantly guarded by the Russians with automatic type weapons.

That's when I learned the heart breaking  
(continued on next page)



## Our Last Mission (continued)

news that Hans Niichel and Ken Olsen, my tail gunner were both dead. Provo, Tater and Carlson had attended their funerals in a small town, but they didn't know the name or where it was. They told us that they were both given a High Mass funeral as they were both Catholics. After the shock was over, we tried to figure out what had happened. Both were found with their chutes fully strung out, but they had not opened. Further speculation as to what happened would not bring them back. I still had one more man missing, no one but the engineer had seen him and it was confirmed that his chute opened but he disappeared behind a ridge of trees. That was my other waist gunner, Russell Hughes.

They kept us in the barn for several more days. We were only taken out for breakfast and supper at what we believed was the Enlisted Men's Mess. During the daylight, we could watch through the cracks in the boards and the one thing that angered us most was watching the Russians march a hundred or more women in a column of two out to the strip. The women were barefoot or some had burlap or some kind of wrapping on their feet and each one was carrying a broom that looked like the broom carried by the witch in *The Wizard of Oz*. It had snowed quite heavily the day we arrived and they were going out on the airstrip to sweep it clean for the fighter planes. While we watched thru the cracks, we could see the women sweeping the runway. One of the fighters took off, pulled up his gear, dropped back down buzzing the runway right toward the area where the women were sweeping, causing them to scatter and dive for the ground. A young German boy, who they let come to the barn, and who spoke both Russian and English, told us it was a game the fighter pilots played to see if they could cut off any of the girls' heads. He also told us that when the Russians took the town, there were very few German prisoners taken. All these women workers were considered to be German sympathizers and were therefore treated as prisoners.

Some trucks pulled up to the barn and both the B-17 crew and our crew were loaded and moved out. We pulled out of the airfield and headed toward town. None of us could figure out what was going to happen next because each truck had a guard with his favorite automatic weapon.

About thirty minutes went by and we pulled up to a building which turned out to be a hotel in downtown Lodz. There we were unloaded and marched to the second floor. Each crew was divided up into two rooms. Out of our ten man crew, there were only seven of us. Besides the two who had died, we were still missing our waist gunner. Either they had not found him or were holding him someplace else.

The next morning, we were loaded into

the trucks again. I told the crew that this was getting to be a pain in the butt. The trucks headed for the airfield. I said, "Well, back to the barn and horsemeat stew with black bread." To our surprise, we were unloaded at a different building. It was the Officers' Mess and we were all seated at a large table with the Base Commander, a Russian Colonel, who sat at the head of the table. By this time all of us were nearly starved. Sometimes we had only one meal a day or just black bread and potato tea, but we decided that beggars can't be choosers.

We finished off breakfast about 10 A.M. with a toast by the Colonel to Stalin. There was no water on the table, just large glasses of clear liquid, Vodka. The toast was a chug-a-lug routine. Then it was back in the trucks and to the hotel. By the time we reached our rooms, most of my crew, who had not previously done much drinking, were bombed out of their gourds. That evening about eight, we were taken back to the field for supper which lasted until about eleven o'clock. I can't remember each meal but it consisted mostly of black bread, beet soup, potatoes, cabbage, and a dish of meat suspended in a jelly type material with beets, carrots and other vegetables. The only satisfaction we got from eating this kind of food was the fact that the Russian Colonel had to eat it too. There never was any water on the table, but always large pitchers of vodka. If you drank any from your glass during the meal, someone would reach over you and refill the glass from one of the pitchers. I guess this was to make sure that we had a full glass for the toast at the end of the meal. This procedure went on for several days.

On the first night, after we got back into our second story rooms, a man outside of our windows on the main street signaled to us. The windows were seven or eight feet high French doors, opening on to a balcony. He indicated that he had something for us. Using our American know-how, someone quickly made a rope out of the bed covers. We tied the makeshift rope to the railing, it was about twelve feet down to the sidewalk. We pulled him up as he hung on to the rope. When he was in the room, we got the other crew members from the next room. Our conversation with him consisted of gestures and picture drawings as he knew very few English words. It was like playing a game of charades. He brought us five photos that someone had recently taken and somehow had been developed and printed. They were from the little town that had held the funeral for Hans and Ken Olsen. They showed the burial procession, and the flower covered graves with wooden crosses and name plates showing the men's identity. The next two nights, we had more visitors, this time one spoke a little more English. They brought with them several large packets of envelopes and asked us if

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# Reunion 1986

July 10-13

Pheasant Run Resort  
St. Charles, Ill.

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we would mail them to the USA when we got back to England. It was very clear that the Russians were not letting anyone in Poland contact the outside world. Most of them had relatives or family in America and they had had no contact for over eight years. They told us how the Russians has mistreated them. Now we had a problem. How would we get these letters out of Poland, if and when they ever let us out! As I was the only one who had kept his parachute, we unrolled it, put the packets of letters in and rerolled the parachute into a nice, neat ball. Then I used the shroud lines to tie it up. The Russians had seen me carrying it around and hadn't bothered to look at it, so we felt we were safe.

By now we had been confined for over two weeks, and there seemed to be no hurry to let us go. At the evening dinner that night, it was the same routine. The Colonel kept asking us about our bases and if it was true that all Americans had guns in their houses. He would question us about our radios and types of call signals. My crew would not answer any of his questions. Once in a while, we gave them a wrong answer.

The Captain from the B-17 crew, warmed by the vodka, was talking too much. I finally got mad and told him to clam-up. In turn, he threatened to Court Martial me when we got back to England.

That did it. I told my crew to do what the Colonel wanted and not to follow me. The meal was over and it was time for the toast of vodka to Stalin. Everyone stood except yours truly. The Colonel asked the German lad who was interpreting why I was not standing. I told him to tell the Colonel that if we were going to be treated like prisoners we wanted to be treated under the Rules of the Geneva Convention, and have the Red Cross notified of our internment. When the interpreter told the Colonel what I said, his face turned beet red, he made a fist, and slammed it on the table. He shook his finger at me and speaking in a loud voice said, "You smart, young Lieutenant, in twenty-five years, we will control your country without firing a shot." Well, at least I knew I wasn't being shipped off to Siberia. We were immediately loaded into the trucks, taken into town and shoved into our rooms. The next morning they got us up early and

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## Our Last Mission (continued)

again took us to the airfield. This time, they did not stop at the Officers' Club, but instead, they took us to the Enlisted Men's Mess. I said to my crew, (as we ate a breakfast of black bread and tea), "I think I said something wrong last night."

The B-17 crew was also with us and their Captain was not happy with me, but I could have cared less. Breakfast was a hurried one and then it was back into the trucks again. We kidded about how cold it was in Siberia. The trucks moved out, but this time we were headed for the airstrip. They parked about a hundred feet from a DC3 with a big red star on it. Now we were getting worried. The guards prodded us with their guns to get off the truck. As we neared the plane, one of my crew shouted, "Hey, there is a US Army Major there." Oh, were we glad to see him. He was a Flight Surgeon and he told us that we were being flown to Poltova, Russia. It was the only airfield the Russians allowed the Americans to use. It was shared with the Russians half and half.

As soon as everyone was on board, the Russian pilot and co-pilot started the engines and off we went. No engine run-up, no mag check, just straight up into the Wild Blue. After about fifteen minutes into the flight, I said, "I wish I could get my chute on." I think most of my crew answered me at the same time. "What the hell good would that do you, we are only fifty feet above the trees." Everyone of us sat with clenched fingers, grabbing the plank seats so tightly that our knuckles turned white. None of us ever had a ride like this, we buzzed the trees all the way to Poltova. At last, we were on the ground and were taxiing toward a line of Americans and some US planes. After we were unloaded, we were told that no Americans were allowed on the Russian side of the airfield.

They had jeeps waiting for us and a meal of American food, then an issue of clean clothing. Walking in the electric or fleece lined boots for more than two weeks gave us blisters and athlete's foot. Next it was off to the showers, a shave, and a smoke (These were the first cigarettes since we bailed out.) For some of us, that was worse than the bad food. We were taken to debriefing, at which time I turned over all the letters from the Polish people to a Red Cross Officer.

After this, our return trip to England was rather routine. We left Poltova in C-47s for Teheran, Iran, then on to Cairo, where we stayed overnight. The next day it was on to Athens, Rome, and Paris. This was an all expense tour of Europe by courtesy of the ATC. We left Paris for London and then by Army truck to Old Buckenham and the 453rd. As we entered our base, there were several 6 x 6 trucks moving out, loaded with bomber crews and ground personnel. All were waving and hollering,

## Near Miss

by John B. Connor (389th BG)

I don't suppose I will ever forget 'D-Day' June 6, 1944. The entire Eighth Air Force lost very few aircraft that day considering they put up thousands of planes flying two missions each; since the only objective was to drop our bombs in front of the invading troops, and there was no air opposition.

But, I'm ahead of my story. It started in Tucson, Arizona in 1943 when I as a newly commissioned 2nd Lt. was assigned to Lt. Vince Courtney's B-24 Crew for combat training. Vince had attended Duke University and was known throughout the southeast for his dance band, "Vince Courtney and his Duke Ambassadors". They played at summer resorts, filling in for big name bands.

Our crew completed training December 1943 in Lincoln, Nebraska where we were assigned a brand new B-24 aircraft. I was also married there, with Vince being my best man. The remainder of the 10 man crew, and an Air Force nurse (maid of honor) were the only people that attended the wedding ceremony at the base chapel.

We arrived in England in January 1944 for combat training and eventually became a Lead Crew in the 564th Bombardment Sq. of the famous 389th BG. Members of this group received many decorations during the war including the Congressional Medal of Honor for the low level bombing raid of the Ploesti Oil Fields in Romania.

General Eisenhower originally scheduled "D-Day" to be June 5, however the

weather was so bad it was postponed till June 6. Our crew was scheduled to fly Deputy Lead of the 389th BG.

On the night of June 5, 1944, while waiting for the weather to clear, the Bombardier of the Lead Aircraft in cleaning his hand gun, accidentally shot a bullet through his foot. Since I was on the Deputy Lead Crew and had the same briefings as the Lead Bombardier — the decision was made to substitute me on the Lead Crew rather than switch the entire crews. I moved my flying gear from our plane to the Lead Aircraft and prepared for the mission. My place on Vince's crew was taken by a Captain flying his 25th or last mission.

The rest is history. We completed our mission. Cloud coverage prevented us from seeing the channel or the invasion. We dropped our bombs on the Beach Head Fortifications using radar techniques then returned to reload, since it was a short mission.

Upon landing, the group chaplain met our crew to notify me that Vince Courtney's crew was missing. Since I was the only survivor of his crew I was relieved from the second mission that day.

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*Footnote:* On June 20 the crew I was newly assigned to was shot down on a bombing mission to Politz, Germany. Fortunately, we crash landed in Sweden and eventually returned to England to continue the war.

goodbye.

Once again we reported to Intelligence and learned that the base was disbanding. The men were going home to train in a new bomber, the B-32, which was to be used in the Pacific theatre. But our excitement was short-lived; we were told we were being reassigned to another bomber group as soon as they could replace my missing crew members. We were going to the 467th Bomb Group at Rackheath and not too thrilled when we found out that we were not going home. Just a few days before we were to be transferred, my crew came running over to our barracks, where only Parker and I lived. We couldn't believe it. Who was with them, but our missing waist gunner, Hughes. His experiences would make a story of its own. It seems he landed behind a hill, near a road and before he got out of his chute, several Russian tanks came up, stopped, pulled him up into one, and off they went to the front lines.

Another part of the missing puzzle was found in Dave Patterson's article, *A Free*

*Trip to Russia.* His B-24 went down on the same day ours did, only they landed at a small field twenty miles northwest of Lodz. My three crew members, who were at the funeral, were taken to the hospital where Dave Patterson was and then were brought to the barn to join us. I have since learned the name of the town where Hans Niichel and Ken Olsen were buried from some correspondence that Dave Patterson had from the Historical Department in Montgomery, Alabama.

So, the puzzle of March 15, 1945, is at last almost completed. Some answers will never be found.

In all probability, we were the only B-24 crew in the 2nd Air Division to be shot down by American-built fighter planes flown by Allied pilots. OR WERE THEY REALLY OUR ALLIES?

I feel thankful for my membership in the Second Air Division, for the many new friends I've made and for the help I received to find more of the missing pieces of the puzzle of that last combat flight.

# Letters



Dear Herb (Davis):

I read the report in the June, 1982, issue of the 2nd AD Assn. *Journal* of your plan to write a story about the *Joplin Jalopy*, together with your request for details from anyone remembering that aircraft. Your story is about the *Death of a Liberator*. In this context, the following report should be of interest.

During the war, my family moved from my native West Virginia to Missouri. In the summer of 1946 I was in Joplin, when the *Joplin Jalopy* was flown home. The plane had been paid for by funds raised by the people of Joplin; the intent was to use the plane in a memorial.

The plane was open for public inspection, at the Joplin airport, one day, so my Dad and I joined a large crowd of curious townspeople. Toward the end of the afternoon, as the crowd was thinning, we finally had our chance to inspect the cockpit. After I explained the controls and instruments to my Dad, a man who had been watching and who was part of the committee in charge asked me if I was a B-24 pilot and, if so, would I be willing to taxi the plane to a place prepared for it at the other side of the field. A former pilot with the 467th Bomb Group, I was delighted to comply with the request.

After the remaining people were cleared from the plane, I began to start the #3 engine. The checklist had been lifted, a portent of the vandalism to come, but I was confident I could remember the key steps. The engine failed to start and the cranking was getting slower, when I realized I had not turned on the main electrical switch. I surreptitiously reached over the empty copilot's seat, turned on the switch, and #3 engine roared into life; the others soon followed.

As instructed, I followed a lead car which proceeded down the runway at a stately 5 mph or so. To add a little excitement, I increased my speed until, for a few moments, I was "chasing" the lead car at perhaps 50 mph. At the end of the runway, I waited until a fence was lowered and made the indicated 90° right turn off the field and lumbered up a slight but bumpy grade to an area of hangars and other service buildings. A newly prepared triangular hardstand, just large enough for the three wheels, awaited. Under the direction of an evident B-24 groundcrew man, I turned the plane precisely onto the hardstand and shut off the engines, pleased with myself. But I let the nosewheel fall off to the left to the disgust of my groundcrew director.

This last "mission" for *Joplin Jalopy* was a happy experience for me and a proud one for my Father, an interested passenger. *Joplin Jalopy* was vandalized within a short time and had to be scrapped.

James G. Coffey

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Dear Evelyn:

Enclosed is a check for \$20 to cover a dues payment or two, or to help defray cost of the new Roster printing and distribution.

Thank you so much again for all of your faithful work, and for the current news and Roster. Hope to see you in '86, or '87 for sure.

Harry N. Craft (458th BG)

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Dear Bill:

I just received the Dec. '85 *Journal* and read with interest the letters of Carl Wirges and Gordon Baker, both of the 389 BG, relating their experiences on the April 7, 1945 mission to the Hamburg area. Their account brings to mind my own recollection of that raid in which my group, the 44th also participated, in which a similar incident occurred wherein a FW190 flew "in formation" with our squadron for what seemed an unbelievably long time. In reality probably 20 to 30 seconds. This occurred about the time when the group was under heavy attack from enemy a/c and the accompanying fighter cover was performing magnificently. My reaction at the time was that the FW190 may have decided it was momentarily safer to be in our formation than to have a P51 on his tail. The interesting thing I recall was looking out the left plastic bubble in the navigator's compartment and seeing this FW190 come up from below and move with reduced speed into a position just in front and slightly below the squadron leader's ship. As I looked on in disbelief, it appeared no one was shooting at him and by the time they did, he peeled off. About this time the tail gunner hollered over the intercom that he had just shot down a ME109 which had moved into a position on our tail. According to the tail gunner the 109 was close enough that he could see the pilot when his plane was hit and disintegrated. Incidentally, I observed two P51's diving with an enemy plane "boxed-in" going for the deck and disappeared from my view as they dove toward the ground with a P51 on either side of the German fighter. After our return to base, we found the "put-put" had been shot out from a bullet which entered the a/c near nose wheel and below pilot position on into the bomb bay.

For the record R.C. Pitts, was pilot; Cornely, co-pilot and plane was V769-45, target was Geesthacht on the Elbe River, 17 miles southeast of Hamburg. Time over target was 939.

It would be interesting to learn from others if they remember this incident and whether the German Air Force was using that maneuver as an operational ploy at that time.

Jack T. Francis  
15414 Lanswick Ln.  
Houston, TX 77062

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Dear Bill:

Having planned a visit to England (2nd thru 21st Nov.), it was my good fortune to have contacted Mr. Tony North in September and advised him of my intention to go to Norwich. Thru his efforts, hotel accommodations were arranged for the night of 11 Nov. and a trip to the site of the Hardwick aerodrome the following day.

I met Tony when I visited the Memorial Room of the library where we had a pleasant conversation. We looked thru the chronicles and clippings of the 93rd BG, the honor roll of the men we lost in the war. So many of the names were of men I knew so well. The next day Tony came to the hotel and we had breakfast together. Later in the morning Mr. Dave Woodrow called for me at the hotel and took me for an extended tour of Hardwick where the stars and stripes was flying from his flag pole. I was taken all about the 409th area, we "taxied around the perimeter of the field and then made a take-off run on the active runway" in his car. After having met his son on the farm, we went to his house for a delicious lunch prepared by his lovely wife. More pleasant conversation, then I was given a ride back to the railroad station to catch the 1640 train to Leicester arriving back there by 1935. The end of two perfect days.

I shall always remember the kindness and enthusiasm of these fine gentlemen.

John R. Swindler

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Dear Charles (Weiss):

I note your address as the contact for the 93rd BG in The Eighth Air Force Yearbook and as 'Friend of the Eighth' over here in England I hope you will not mind my writing to you.

As you can see I write from the old 2AD county of Norfolk. I was born in Norwich in 1942 and I am the Accountant with Barclays Bank. Since I was about fourteen I have been a fan of Major Glenn Miller and as well as collecting literally hundreds of lp's and tapes, I have over the years also researched the AAF Band's movements, collecting any information and PHOTOS especially.

Miller gave an afternoon concert to the 93rd on September 12th, 1944 or maybe it was in the evening . . . I am not too sure. I know that they left that same day in B-24s for Twin Wood Field near Bedford. I am wondering if you have or know of anybody who has photos of that concert for I would very much like to obtain copies? Perhaps you have some kind of periodical Newsletter and could perhaps mention my interest and that I will be pleased to meet any expense or will return any photos kindly loaned.

If there is anything that I can do for you from over here, please do not hesitate to name it. I hope very much to hear from you.

With thanks and best wishes.

Vic Brown  
"Lorna Doone"  
Welgate, Mattishall  
Dereham, Norfolk  
NR20 3PL  
Phone: Dereham 850826

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Dear Bill:

Congratulations! You have done it again! The December *Journal* is another masterpiece and the Roster is outstanding!

I do not know what we have done to deserve you, but I am sure that all 6,000 of us are happy that it happened. May you live long and well.

Delmar Wangsvick (453rd)  
(ED: I'm going to argue with this???)

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Dear Bill:

I have just lately found out about the 2nd Air Division and the newsletter. I found this out from Sid Cullington in Norwich. He has sent me some info and a few pictures of Shipdham as it is today.



Reunion 1984

(l to r): R. Andris, D. Stroh, R. Anthony, H. Brown, J. Thomas, J. Meyers

I was a member of the 44th Bomb Group, 66 Squadron. We as a crew had our first reunion in 1984 in Chicago and our second in Baltimore in 1985.

We are going to have our third here in Denver, and I am trying to get all the info for our reunion in September.

If you can send me any info, pictures, where I can get books, etc. of the 2nd or 44th, I would be very grateful.

Donald E. Stroh

Dear Bill:

My wife and I had a wonderful time at the convention at the Americana. I hope you gave my note to Howard Hill. Since he wrote that article in Roger Freeman's book that Final Approach flew over 100 missions without a mechanical abort, I have been contacted by various people. I named the plane and brought it over to England from Hamilton Field. I don't know whether you read *Air Classics*, but in that magazine's October 1985 issue the cover is as follows: "Saga of a B-24 H Final Approach".



The last time I wrote to you, I asked whether you could help retrace my bombardier and pilot (I was the co-pilot initially on Final Approach). As a result of that letter, I was able to find my bombardier and we had a great visit this summer at the 2nd A.D. convention. The pilot, James K. Zimmerman, still remains missing. I am enclosing a picture of Zimmerman and myself taken in front of "Briney Marlin". Our plane was in for repairs or something. "Briney Marlin" was a shiny new aluminum plane (unpainted). In the picture Zimmerman is the guy on the right; that leaves me on the left. Perhaps someone may recognize him and could help find him.

Regards to Taffy, and tell him to come to the next convention. Keep em flying!

Joe Linsk

Dear Bill:

While I admired the artistry of the cover, Dec. issue *Journal*, one thing has troubled me since: when Santa executed that perfect loop (in his PT12?) at the top of the 8, did he, as he entered the bottom half of the 8 half roll to do a conventional loop or did he perform an outside loop? A tricky maneuver even for Santa!

Perhaps one of our "Hot Rock Little Brothers" can enlighten me.

G. Lionel Goudreaux (458th)

(ED: Never question Santa or you'll find a piece of coal in your stocking.)

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Dear Bill:

I was told by Charles Weiss to write to you about my brother, S/Sgt. James Dimuzio (13039158) who was an Air Crew member of the 330 Bomb Sq., 93 Bomb Group on Oct. 29, 1942. Their B-24 was badly damaged over France. The airplane made it back to England. The pilot steered it away from a town or city and crashed in the outskirts. The townspeople erected a monument in their honor. I would if possible like to know of this location so that I could visit the site.

One crew member survived the crash. He visited my parents in 1946 and told them the above.

Any information would be deeply appreciated. I was in England (Colchester) 1943-1945 with a fighter group.

Anthony DiMuzio  
2728 Russell Drive  
Lower Burrell, Pa. 15068

Gentlemen:

I appreciated receiving the Directory of the Association membership. In looking through it, I failed to find a listing for myself. I would appreciate your cross-checking this; it is probably an oversight.

Robert F. Chapin

(ED: You joined after Oct. 15 which was the cut-off date to have your name listed.)

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Dear Sir:

I would like to obtain a colored photo (approx. 12 x 14 in.) of a 389th BG B-24 in flight, suitable for framing. I also would be interested in a picture album of the Second Division. Can you give me the information as to where these can be obtained?

Floyd Toney  
248 Elm Street  
Paoli, IN

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Dear Evelyn:

I can't tell you how much I have enjoyed the 2nd Air Division *Journal* since I became a member this year and all the good work you folks are doing. The *Journal* has helped me decide to make the trip to Norwich and to Wendling and our old 392nd BG Air Base along with my wife.

I need your help! In a back issue there was a note that two fellows in Norwich would be glad to help in any way to a visiting member if asked (in the way of directions, transportation, etc.). Do you have any information on these fellows or anyone else we could contact to assist after our arrival in Norwich on November 15, 1985. Please rush all possible.

Continued success with the 2nd.

Sid Davidson (392nd)

Dear Bill:

I just received the roster of the 2nd Air Division and was very glad to receive it as I did find the address of one of the men that I served with at Tibenham, England with the 445th.

However, I could NOT find my name under the 445th, instead I found it under the 448th Bomb Group on Page 54 of the roster. I do hope that things can be arranged so that I would be where I am supposed to be so that if any of the other men try to find me to contact, me, they can do so.

Also, about two years ago I did write you kind of a snappy or snippy letter about putting one of my articles in the paper that I had sent in and I wish to apologize for my actions.

Things have not been the best for me medically and there have been times when I just lose myself but Thank God, I am getting a little better and I do have hopes of getting to one of the reunions at a later date.

Thanks for the roster and I just wanted to point out the error in the placement of my name in the roster and to apologize to you for my actions earlier.

John L. Boyle (445th)

(ED: I sure can't explain this one! My apologies.)

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Hi Evelyn:

Enclosed are two photos:



My crew made a snow lady December, 1944. Some of the fellows in the 491st Bomb Group will remember her. She was a real big hit.



My crew and plane "Flak-Shy" after 24 hours sleep, food, shower, shave; Just flew into Presque Isle, Maine from England after credit for 17 missions. Later that day we flew into Westover, Mass.—last time I ever saw "Flak-Shy".

Ben (Jack) Glidden

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Dear Bill:

I received Roger Freeman's *War Diary* about a week ago. The effort that went into the book defies the imagination.

Now I have two questions — do you have a copy of *The Mighty 8th*, if so how much? Second do you know where I can obtain an 8½ x 11 of the picture on page 459? The center plane in the picture with the letter H on the vertical was mine or on loan to me from the Air Force. This is the first time I have ever seen this photo.

Frank Jones  
161 Boston Rock Rd.  
Melrose, MA 02176

(ED: A reprint of "The Mighty Eighth" is now being done. This should be completed shortly, it is a completely revised edition.)

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Dear Bill:

It was nice talking to you last weekend. You sound like a very nice guy and a very dedicated man to the causes of the 2nd A.D. Assn.

I was surprised to hear from Tony North in Norwich and he too, by his letters and trust has to be a very special man.

So in truth, just as most of us learned many years ago during war time that young boys, men and women too for that matter, with different backgrounds came and did work, fight, hunt and suffer all in a common cause.

That, I suppose is the main ingredient of being free men. So we must all, each and everyone of us, guard and defend our freedoms with our lives.

I have the CBS VCR film on the Air War in Europe and the Ploesti raid has to stand out as the greatest and good old 2nd AD had 3 groups in that raid, commanded by Col. Leon Johnson — all great men.

It will be nice to hear from you as any of the organization as one can have the time to communicate.

Danny Ballinger

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Dear Bill:

Mr. Leroy J. Engdahl advised me to contact you for the following. My name is Jaap van der Kuylen. I am 40 years old and I am researching the stories of two B-24H Liberators which crashed in the northern part of Holland on January 11, 1944. Both bombers were part of the 448th Bomb Group.

The first bomber which crashed about noon, was the B-24H no. 42.52123, part of the 713th Bomb Squadron. The plane went down near the town of Exloo, (province Drenthe). Nobody of the 10 crewmen was able to bail out and all were killed.

The pilot was 2nd Lt. James E. Urban from Grand Rapids, Michigan. The other crewmen were: 2nd Lt. Alden P. Anthony, Cleveland, Ohio; 2nd Lt. Stanley Friedman, Haverhill, Mass.; 2nd Lt. Fred Brenner, Brooklyn, N.Y.; S/Sgt. Howard M. Smith, Atlantic, Iowa; S/Sgt. Wendell R. McClellan, Bowie, Texas; T/Sgt. Roy D. Barber, Winter Haven, Fla.; S/Sgt. Joseph B. Deffner, Batavia, N.Y.; S/Sgt. John J. Kelly, Brooklyn, N.Y.; S/Sgt. George Petula, Yonkers, N.Y.

The second bomber which crashed, approximately 10 minutes after the first one, was the B-24H no. 41.28593, part of the 712th B.S. This plane went down near Dwingelo, also in the province Drenthe in the northern part of Holland. Only five crewmen could bail out and the other five were killed.

The pilot was 2nd Lt. Donald C.G. Schumann from South Milwaukee, Wis. He survived by parachute. The other survivors were: S/Sgt. John M. Hilton, Marinette, Wis.; S/Sgt. Conrad Holzgraf, Midland, Texas; S/Sgt. Isaac H. Odell, El Cajon, Calif.; S/Sgt. James V. Newton, Lake Forest, Ill.

Dear Bill:

Thanks ever for your most interesting letter of 1 January. Don't feel that you have to write as I know that you are so busy, what with the *Journal* and other correspondence.

Am glad to hear that you consider Eric E. Ericson's experiences good enough to put into a 1986 *Journal*. That should please him very much. He was injured during that jump and has been on Military disability nearly all the time since. He suffers a great deal from arthritis.



Now I would like to ask another favor. Could you please print the enclosed picture of 93rd Bomb Group men in one of the 1986 *Journals*. The picture was taken in either August or September of 1944 at an awards ceremony. The only person we can identify in the picture is the man in the extreme right in the second row. His name is Harry H. Gruener and he received that DFC by General Orders Number 195, Hq. 2d Bombardment Division dated 18 August 1944. However, as you know, the awards ceremonies usually took place sometime after the citation was made. I would appreciate it if you would make up some statement to the effect that identification of the men would be appreciated by Carlos Vasquez, 330th Bomb Squadron (H), 93rd Bomb Group (H), etc. Please be sure to identify Harry as he is the one who sent us the picture. Thanks ever.

Wow, you are a glutton for punishment! The *Journal* plus the Roster. I am sure that everyone will appreciate the Roster. The 93rd BG has their very own Roster. Or did you know? It comes two ways—little booklets. One is an Alpha listing with the addresses and the other is a geographical listing (by State) and lists just the names; really handy if you are driving along and want to look up someone in the state you are passing through. You are a glutton for punishment.

A few days ago, after Carlos read the latest 8th AF *Journal* or *News* as it is called, he stated that the 2nd AD *Journal* is certainly a much better product. I heartily agree. What a job to edit, type and organize all the material. You do an excellent job of it. And to think you have to also decipher everyone's handwriting!!! Bless you. Happy to hear that the mailing is now 'non profit'. That should help a bit on expenses for the organization.

Best regards to you and your wife.

Nadine (Vasquez)

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The five perished crewmen were: 2nd Lt. Jim Biggerstaff, Clarendon, Texas; 2nd Lt. Raymond L. Thurber, Ann Arbor, Michigan; 2nd Lt. Harold E. White, Attleboro, Mass.; S/Sgt. Harvey E. Smith, Cowpens, S.C.; S/Sgt. Willard R. Malwitz, Red Lake Falls, Minn.

Just a little is known about both tragic casualties. To the honor of the perished crewmen, I am intending to write a book about the 'black day' for the 448th B.G., dedicated to them to preserve their memory. The information about the raid of January 11, 1944 is very concise.

I am most interested to learn from survivors, who flew that day the mission to Brunswick, the following information: eye-witness accounts of that mission, circumstances of both crashes, friends of perished crewmen of both bombers who can tell their memories about them, perhaps photographs, copies of documents concerning that raid, etc.

In a word, any information will be greatly appreciated. I would be most grateful for any contribution to reconstruct the mission of that day.

I already contacted relatives of seven perished crewmen and they all greatly appreciate my research.

Likewise I was able to contact Isaac H. Odell and John M. Hilton to learn their thrilling stories of being POW.

Finding detailed information of that mission is a most difficult task after so many years. I very much hope there are some survivors who will provide me with any information.

I am looking forward to any reply.

Jaap van der Kuylen  
Rietgorslaan 8  
3181 SN Rozenburg  
Holland  
The Netherlands

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Dear Bill:

Nice to hear from you again. In my frantic effort to explain my frustrating situation in regard to work load I may have come over a little too abrupt. Pardon please, that was not my intention.

Have you ever heard of the Valiant Air Command? In a recent issue of Air Classics, I read about the organization and their upcoming fly-in to Titusville, Fla. The emphasis will be on the B-25 and the Doolittle Raiders (March 7-8-9). We sell at car show flea markets and are due to be in Fla. near Tampa about that time. With a small layover we might make it to Titusville.

I think the 44th Insignia is finally straight in my mind. It is good to know that you are available to help when the time comes on as to related info about the Eighth and possible sources of knowledgeable people.

The Air Force Museum in Ohio as well as The Historical Division at Maxwell Air Base are on my must see list. I'm sure a lot of valuable reference material could be gleaned from those two spots.

The Second Air Division work that we talked about will be on my mind and my eye will be looking for neat ideas or layout possibilities.

If you have any more Roger Freeman book deals let me know. It amazes me when I see all this information that these authors compile. I wonder how in the world they have ever managed to do it.

F. C. Hayner

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Dear Evelyn:

Thank you very much for the splendid work you have done in arranging the reunions I have been fortunate enough to enjoy. I am truly sorry that I did not know about the 2 ADA until the year of the San Diego Reunion. I have been trying to make all of them since then. I have missed a couple. Betty and I truly enjoyed New Jersey and are looking forward to Chicago.

N.N. Gebhard

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Dear Charlie (Weiss):

Thought you might like a copy of this photo of you and your family. We think it's extra good.

As always we enjoyed being with you at the 2nd ADA Reunion. Was happy to see so many 93rd people there. Especially enjoyed being with original members. Only wish we could have had more time to be with others. It seems our time is always too short.

Talked to Gen. Timberlake Sunday. He had wonderful news. He is feeling much better, and his doctors told him after three more treatments the cancer would all be gone!! Sincerely hope the doctors know what they are talking about.

Charlie, I'm sending you a photo of the ex-crew members of the "Eager Beaver". To the best of my knowledge, this is the most of a crew of the original pioneers of the 93rd ever to get together. Thought maybe you may want to put this in 2nd ADA Journal.



(L to R): Rupert G. Thacker, Waistgunner; Violes L. Flanary, Tail Gunner; Prince A. Martin, Engineer; Frank J. Rinehart, Pilot; William L. Gros, Radio Operator; Robert L. Lent, Bombardier

Hope you and your family are OK. We are still going, but slowing down some. Drop us a note sometime. Until later—Give our love to Peg.

Violes L. Flanary

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Dear Sir:

My name is Tom Shane. I am writing to ask your help with a project I am working on.

I have a very deep interest in WWII aviation, particularly the 8AF, and I believe it is important to keep the memory alive of the men and women who participated in that era of history. To help with this goal, I support various organizations and have also started an aviation collection of my own with hopes of having a small museum. Sir, the help I need is with my collection and display. I am in need of authorized and unauthorized squadron patches of the various squadrons and am hoping your members may be able to help. If any cost is involved, I would gladly take care of it. If possible could you put my request in your newsletter and provide me with a copy. One last request, I would like some help with. While I was in school, I worked part time and my boss was with the 8AF. I am looking for items relating to his unit, 733 Sqdn., 493 BG and he flew B-24's. His name is Richard Witton. If anybody can help with items or information, I will appreciate it very much. I will look forward to hearing from you.

Tom Shane  
6109 Bridlington  
Austin, TX 78745

P.S. I am also looking to buy an authentic A2 flight jacket.

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Dear Evelyn:

In response to the notice in the December issue of the Journal regarding the 1987 reunion, I enclose my check in the amount of \$50.00, a deposit for my wife and me. As things now stand, we definitely plan to be in Norwich for the reunion.

We are looking forward to this year's reunion in the Chicago area. I am expecting at least five of our former crew to be there. I'm sure it will be a great party because you do a superb job with the reunions. Hope to see you next July.

William J. Edkins (458th)

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Dear Evelyn:

The 1985 2nd Air Div. Reunion was the first for McKeny's crew of the 446th BG, 706th Sqdn. I might add that it was a great reunion for all of us. Thanks much for your cooperation in getting us organized. Enclosed is a photo of McKeny's crew at the '85 reunion. From L to R LaMarca, Ghere, McKeny, Richards and Perry.



We are all planning to attend the '86 get-together at St. Charles, Ill. Some are considering the '87 trip to Norwich.

Thanks again for all the work you do for the organization. You should be getting flight pay at least! Add combat pay!

Dick Ghere

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Dear Evelyn:

Enclosed is my check for \$100.00 to cover my '86 dues and the balance to the Norwich Memorial Fund in memory of Henri Guillerm, alias Pacha Alain Glacier, who died in Lyon, France on November 27, 1984. I am making this dedication because "Pacha", as he was always called by his wartime comrades, was a member of the French Resistance who on one of his three jumps back into the German Occupied Rhone sector of France was "delivered" by the "Carpetbaggers" of the 856th Squadron, 492nd Bomab Group operating from our base at Herrington in England. I flew some of these missions as Radio Operator on Lt. Seger's crew and later was associated with the Anney, France escape operation.

I met Pacha at a reunion of his Resistance Group as an invited guest for dinner at the Nanderan Restaurant, in Lyon, France, in the Fall of 1983 during a European vacation. (I believe the Nanderan is one of the finest restaurants in France). We stopped in Lyon on our way to Anney. During the low level Carpetbagger missions there were signals from the Resistance fighters on the ground, and I then tried to visualize these people who were risking their lives (and ours) for the guns, etc., we dropped to them along with the "Joes" and their equipment. Therefore it was a real reward for me to be their guest and have the pleasure of meeting comrades-in-arms, both ladies and gentlemen, including Pacha's lovely wife, Bernadette, who had fought under very substantial odds to win back their country. I felt very humble in comparison, especially at their strong affection for America and the American soldiers of World War II.

Pacha's honors included: Officer of the Legion of Honor, Croix de Guerre with Palms, Officer of the Medal of the Resistance, Member of the British Empire, Croix de Guerre of Belgium with Palm.

Pacha was a true hero, and a strong advocate of continuing close lasting friendship between his country's World War II veterans and ours. His close association with the 8th Air Force, and particularly the Carpetbaggers of the 492nd B.G. prompts me to include him in our Norwich memorial to fallen comrades.

Ralph P. Beaman

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Dear Evelyn:

Thank you so much for being so faithful to the 2nd AD.

I have received many letters from fellows with whom I have lost contact over the past 40 years. Just last month I received a letter from a fellow with whom I flew my last mission in the E.T.O.

Charlie Head

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Dear Evelyn:

Here is my annual fee. I'm very proud to be a member of the 2nd Air Division Association and I won many good friends. It's too bad, that I have not much time to write them, because I'm still an apprentice and school takes a lot of time.

One month ago we had a short visit from a Sky Skorpion (389 BG), his name is Robert Stone from Carmichael, California. He crash-landed in 1944 at Basel-Birsfelden after a mission against Munich.

Now I wish you all the best and I send you many greetings from Switzerland.

Reto Renfer  
Solithurnstrasse 53  
2543 Lengnau  
Switzerland

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Dear Ms. Cohen:

I was recently put in contact with Pete Henry of your Association thru a paragraph in a local paper and he sent me this application and other information.

Thru the years I have often wondered if any of the old organizations would get together, but no information appeared that I could associate with until now.

It seems incredible that in Chicago at the very moment you were organizing downtown, I was 3 or 4 miles away out on Ashland Ave. going to an electronics school and that it took 37 years to find out what you were doing.

Thru an unfortunate set of circumstances I was left with almost no information or addresses of my friends in the service so this Association may offer a chance to renew an old friendship sometime.

Enclosed is the application and fee.

Russell E. Lower

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Dear Evelyn:

Was rereading some of the *Journals* and came across Glenn Matson's article (March-84), "Mission 250 - Big-B by Day", in which he mentions a familiar aircraft, B-24 41-28719Q, "Paddlefoot".

The old girl spent a good portion of her down time in the 753rd "Parking lot". Two things I remember best about her - C.S. Evans bringing her in with the nose wheel up and locked; the skid collapsed, taking out the skid and a couple of panels of skin. No embarrassment about dragging - 'twas a beautiful landing.

The other? After completing a mission and descending over the Channel, guns stowed, relaxing on my flak pads in the waist and reading the "specs" of the aluminum skin. In case anyone asks, it was ANA-13-24ST Al Clad.



Thought Glenn and perhaps others of the 458th might enjoy the picture, including D.W. Latch and Walt Cline.

Carl White (USAF-Ret.)

Dear Bill:

I am enclosing a photo of our recent reunion of Wm. Magee's crew, held at Phoenix, Arizona. If possible, can this appear in the next issue of the *Journal*? I had sent this photo to Lloyd E. West and he returned it to me for forwarding to you.



Front Row, L-R Wm. Magee, Pilot; Paul Vincent, Nose Gunner  
Back Row, L-R Roger Stone, Tail; Joe Kimmey, Right Waist; Nolan Harris, Radio; A.J. Thomas, Nav.; Harry Young, Top; Norman Green, Left Waist

Paul Vincent

Dear Evelyn:

Just a few lines to let you know just how much my wife and I enjoyed the McAfee reunion and the people we met. Also to let you know how much we appreciate your continuing efforts for the 2nd AD.

Enclosing check for \$50.00 as deposit for my wife Margaret and I for Norwich Reunion 1987. Will also try to make the 1986 one in Illinois, but Hawaiian trip plans for our Anniversary may interfere. Looking forward to England.

Marvin H. Speidel

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Dear Evelyn:

Received patch and decals today. Thank you very much. My grandson thinks they are super. You made a little boy very happy today.

Enclosed is ten dollars to pay for them and use the rest for postage or whatever.

Ed Skula

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Dear Evelyn:

Congratulations on another outstanding job in arranging the 1985 Reunion at McAfee

I was able to find and get 3 members of my crew to attend, and they also enjoyed getting together after 40 years. I've since located two others and am hopeful that we can all make the 1987 Reunion at Norwich.

Enclosed is a check for \$50.00 to reserve a place for my wife and I, Cass and Joe Soder - 446th BG. We also expect to make the 1986 Reunion, but will await the March *Journal* for the specifics.

Joe Soder

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Gentlemen

I have the names of "Nose Art" removed from surplus bombers before they were cut up for the smelters. They were stored in a barn for 20 years before they were given to the Confederate Air Force in 1965. They are now hanging in one of their hangars in Harlingen, Texas. If anyone recognizes any of the names, and can supply me with any information, including serial numbers, I would be interested in hearing from them. I would like to research some of the planes.

B-17

Just Once More  
Nobby's arriet "Z"  
Rum & Coke  
Little Bit O'Haven?  
Mis Behavin'  
Sleepy-Time Gal (not sure of type)

B-24

Lady Luck - 5th BG, 7th AF, 13th AF  
Flamin' Mamie  
Mission Completed  
Double Trouble - 493rd BS, 10th. AF  
Mors Ab Alto (Death From On High)  
Yellow Fever  
Forever Amber  
Sloppy But Safe  
You Speak  
Surprise Attack  
Lassie, I'M Home - 14th AF  
Home Stretch  
Night Mission - 30th. Bomb Group  
Easy Maid (Pacific Theater) Reported as Navy PB4Y-1  
Hump Time - 14th AF

Anthony M. Giacobbe  
901 Midwood Dr.  
Rahway, NJ 07065  
201-388-1962

# Ach! Munich!

by Herb Lambert (453rd)

That recollection (Moment of Glory) by Michael J. Donahue (93rd Group) in the September 1985 edition of the *Journal* certainly evoked memories. My reading of Donahue's comments was, well, with routine *Journal* interest until paragraph five and reference to 12 July 1944. Interest mounted there because our crew began flying combat in July. Nope, we weren't in the 93rd. We were in the 435th, at Old Buck. Then, when I got to paragraph six and saw "Munich" I figured I'd better dig out the log book on completing reading Donahue's tale.

That was "der Tag" for our crew: Mission Number One!

We were a replacement crew, not one of the original 453rd cadre. We were so green we didn't know enough to realize the portent of that long line of cord stretching from Old Buck to Munich to (we hoped) Old Buck. We did know, from the length across the briefing map, we had drawn a dilly for the first combat foray.

In retrospect, it appears that since we were a replacement crew (as were many at that time) we also were considered "expendable." I use the term statistically, not morally, for no crew in any group was truly considered expendable. But new, green crews seemed to be handed the most battle weary and, therefore, expendable ships. I don't recall the name of the ship we were assigned, but do recall that it had really been through the mill.

Obviously, this writing is evidence that we got home from that first mission — and the ones that followed — but surely not without some very tense and scary moments. It was comforting, I can recall, to learn that the cover of "little brothers" would be there for a good part of the Munich trip. But it was sobering to know that they could not accompany the bombers to the target — certainly not on such a long haul.

And long it was. It was the longest mission, 9 hours and 10 minutes the log book shows, of my combat tour. And it was far rougher than we realized, even though the crew had an ample introduction to those black puffs of flak — often concentrated enough so that it appeared you could land on them. I guess we did learn after return and perhaps in a few days, how rough a mission it was. But that picture — or those statistics are dim now and, too, would not have registered so deeply on a new crew. But I quickly noted, in Donahue's narrative, that the 389th must have taken "the brunt of the fighter attack, losing a greater part of the day's 44 Libs shot down." So far as I can recall, the 453rd did not get bounced that day. At least the 732nd squadron, of which we were a part, did not get hit. While we did not know at once that 44 ships were lost that day, we did know that losses in some groups were heavy. While the two can hardly be compared — your first solo and your first combat mission — two firsts of this kind can hardly be forgotten.

Things were humming then. We logged, our green crew, that is, five missions in our first seven days on operational status. We went to the Ruhr twice right after the Munich jaunt and then participated in the "assist" to the ground forces working up to the breakthrough at Caen and St. Lo. As I recall, the B-24s went in there at about 16,000 feet, seeking to be as precise as possible in the bombing of hedgerow terrain.

That introductory pace for our crew kept up: We logged 18 missions in the 36 days from 12 July through 16 August 1944. And, as I recall, we were assigned slightly better equipment to fly.

In contrast, it took us 89 days to log the 12 other missions. Our stateside training in radar navigation finally was recognized or begun to be put to use and we were "stood down" — so to speak — for lead crew training. The remaining 12 missions were as a lead crew and very often we were alerted for the next day's mission, only to have it scrubbed, for us, because the weather on the Continent cleared and the need for radar navigation was lessened. And so we sweated out those 12 missions.

But we finally climbed aboard for Number 30 and 21 November 1944, more experienced, but no less apprehensive than on Number One. I guess it could be debated *ad infinitum* as to which is worse: the first mission (especially such a long one) or the final one (realizing you've survived 29 and hoping, praying, wishing the final one will not be "final.")

If our crew's introduction to combat missions, Munich, was notable, that 30th was equally so: Hamburg! Even as I write this, I can recall, as though it were yesterday, my thoughts as we plowed through the intense flak: "I wish some of those newspaper report-

ers could be here right now — those fellows who have put out numerous stories saying that 'Hamburg is a dead city.' While Hamburg may have been laid waste by November 1944, it was hardly a "dead city" in terms of visiting its airspace, as we were doing. The Germans evidently had moved flak guns in by rail by the hundreds. No "dead city" could have put up the black barrage that was encountered that day! Almost solid black clouds of flak blossoms covered Hamburg and the B-24 rocked from the concussions. But we made it and headed out across the North Sea and eventually back to Old Buck. And I can recall the admonition to myself as we approached the base: "Be extra careful in the approach, in the landing and even in the taxiing. It would be sadly ironic if something happened *now*."

We'd made it! Thirty times outbound and no aborts. No stress from that awful condition of gearing up for a mission and then having to re-do that gearing up the next day, or another day to get credit for one more mission.

True, there were a few "milk runs" scattered among the 28 other missions, but they were few. There were some mighty tense ones for our replacement crew, even as there were for all the crews who managed to make it back and managed to complete a tour.

We made it back to Old Buck 29 times. The one time we didn't was, as I recall, after being "flak bit" over Dessau. The right outboard engine was shot out and we managed to feather it. Then the right inboard began acting up and then ran away — running hotter and hotter. There were stragglers all over the sky that day (Dessau flak was accurate and intense) and there were calls for "little brothers".

We finally were picked up by one, a P-51, who had answered my Birmingham, Alabama, co-pilot's appeal for, "Lil brutha, we need an escort." Ralph Tucker's southern drawl was a bit desperate.

But that wonderful looking P-51 tucked in close and actually followed us down through the undercast until we broke out. It was impossible to maintain altitude and the Channel hardly looked inviting. We finally made it to an RAF base sitting, it seemed, right at the edge of the cliffs. "Coachwhip" was its call, though I do not recall its proper RAF name. It looked like the end of the rainbow to us, struggling on the two good engines. We barely made it across the perimeter and even as we rolled down the runway the windmilling engine caught fire. As we slowed, and it became possible, most of the crew dropped or stepped off the catwalk in the bomb bay and onto the runway. The RAF fire trucks met us as we rolled to a stop and, surely, prevented a fire disaster right there.

That probably was the worst situation among the 30 missions. One other perhaps warrants mention for its near disaster but, lo, many years later, also its wryly humorous aspect.

The mission was to Bremen and before we even crossed the Channel one engine began acting up. But we did not want to abort. We nursed it along and somehow managed to keep our position in the formation. We made it all the way to the IP and then got on that so-called "30-second," but really interminable, bomb run. Then, approaching the release point, we heard a big sound, even through the helmets and earphones: The bombardier, somehow, hit, or pressed, or bumped, or whatever could physically be done to the release mechanism, and salvoed the entire bomb load through the about-to-be-opened bomb bay doors! We went across Bremen empty and with the bomb bay doors hanging. Somehow, before we got back to the field, the flight engineer, Kyle Clay, perched precariously on the catwalk and using, I believe he said, electric cords from the plug-in suits, managed to snag the door rollers and tie the doors up sufficiently high to clear the runway and allow an OK landing. There was no humor in the incident then. But looking back there was wry humor and luck.

I guess I never really got to know the "old hands" in the 453rd because we did not start out at March Field. And once the 30 missions were done my crew headed home and I went to the 2nd Wing, on temporary duty. Then I went to Hdq., 2AD to work in Operations until heading home in May 1945.

And to wind up this recollection on a brighter note, by far, I saw some of those "AD Hdq. people, for the first time since May 1945, at Palm Springs in October 1984 at the reunion there. And among the very first people I saw was a bombardier, Wendell Jeske, who had flown with a similar replacement crew at the 453rd. His pilot and I had followed the zig-zag route from flying navigation students at Hondo, Texas, through B-24 transition at Smyrna, Tenn., to Salt Lake to pick up a crew, to Pueblo, to Westover, to Langley to train as a radar crew, and thence to the U.K. His pilot, Kenneth Parten, flew P-51 "weather recce" after completing the B-24 tour at Old Buck and later died in an aircraft accident.