

Vol. 27, No.4

SECOND AIR DIVISION ASSOCIATION

Winter 1988



HOLIDAY GREETINGS



50th Anniversary of the B-24 Bomber



Test flight of one of the first B-24s manufactured

Thousands of people, from hundreds of cities in America, Canada, Australia and England, will mark the 50th Anniversary of the B-24 bomber next year - the bomber with the largest production run in American history.

From "Rosie the Riveter" to tail gunners, aircraft designers to civilian pilots who flew transport version over the Hump, the team that helped win World War II will congregate in two U.S. cities next year to pay tribute to the plane, the people ... and each other.

The "reunion" of people who have never met, but who made, flew and fought in the slab-sided four-engine bomber will be held in Fort Worth, Texas, May 17-21, 1989 and in San Diego, California, September 20-24, 1989.

The reunions are sponsored, in part, by the International B-24 Liberator Club, a group formed two decades ago to promote the role of the Liberator and the history of sacrifice that followed the plane like contrails.

Information on members of the club in your area, or local participants in the gigantic reunions, are available from:

Bob McGuire
International B-24 Liberator Club
P.O. Box 841
San Diego, CA 92112
(619) 582-5445

More than 10,000 people are expected at the Fort Worth reunion to honor the plane that helped win the war but lost the popularity battle.

Representatives of at least 30 Air Force (Army Air Force) and Navy organizations that flew the warbird will fill twelve Fort

Worth hotels. Fort Worth was chosen as one of the sites for the reunion because it was an assembly point for more than 3,000 Liberators; nearby Carswell Air Force Base is named for a Liberator pilot who won a posthumous Medal of Honor for staying with his crippled craft and holding her steady so his crew could bail out.

There will be a five-day program in San Diego. The plan for the San Diego affair - at the city where the Liberator made its maiden flight on December 29, 1939 - includes two full-dress military reviews, air base tours and symposiums. The San Diego gathering will include recognition of Consolidated Aircraft Corp., the designer and original producer of the Liberator. The company is now known as Convair, a division of General Dynamics.

The much-maligned Liberator had a barn-like fuselage, twin tail rudders that could have been barn doors, a thin high-life wing, and was as drafty as any farm outbuilding.

The ship, and the crews, earned high honors for their outstanding performance but their activities were often overshadowed by the more photogenic B-17, known in some quarters as the Hollywood Bomber.

Early models of the Liberator went to England for North Atlantic ferry service. The plane's three-thousand mile range - a near miracle at the time - made it possible for RAF versions to close the "Atlantic gap" with air patrols and make U-boating an unsafe profession. Until the Liberator closed the gap, German submarines stalked ships in the convoy routes far from land and existing land-based patrol planes.

Winston Churchill had one of the ungainly, but reliable, bombers converted into his executive aircraft.

Another passenger version of the Liber-

ator carried presidential hopeful Wendell Wilkie around the world. A stopover in Tehran gave a young Shah of Iran his first airplane ride on his 21st birthday.

But it was the bomber role that made the plane famous. 24s made the historic low-level mission against the Rumanian oil fields at Ploesti, achieving fame and setting a standard of group heroism that is still the stuff that books are made of.

Navy pilot Joe Kennedy, Jr. piloted a "Lib" on anti-submarine patrols from England. He was killed when his torpedoladen Liberator bomber exploded prematurely on the way to a strike at a V-2 flying bomb launch site.

Aviation pioneers who logged flight time in the left seat of Liberators included Charles Lindbergh, Bernt Balchan, Clyde Pangborn and Frank Courtney.

Actor James Stewart was an 8th Air Force squadron commander. House speaker Jim Wright, ex-Senator George McGovern and a man by the name of Lloyd Bentsen (his name seems slightly familiar) crewed the 24s.

In addition to the manufacturing plants at Fort Worth and San Diego - where 7,500 aircraft were built - other Libs were built at the Ford plant in Willow Run, Michigan (6,792 planes); the Douglas plant at Tulsa, Oklahoma (964 planes); and the North American Aviation plant at Dallas, Texas (966 aircraft). In all, American workers built more than 19,000 of the bomber variants and its cousin, the single tail Privateer (PB4Y-2).

Today, only two of the aircraft remain in flying status; five others are on static display.

Information on the planes, the people, and the reunions is available from the International B-24 Liberator Club, P.O. Box 841, San Diego, CA 92112 USA.

Dear Bill:

Following is a copy of the statement I made to 2ADA members at the Colorado Springs Reunion General Business Meeting. One method to determine how widespread similar feelings may or may not be among 2ADA members would be to print this statement in the Journal. The results might determine whether a navigational course correction is warranted.

— Fred Breuninger
446th Bomb Group

"I wish to bring to your attention a feeling expressed to me by numerous members attending this reunion. It is a matter that deserves to be brought to the attention of the Board.

Each year that passes, the 2ADA seems to be emphasizing the memorial library at Norwich more and more, while at the same time you are de-emphasizing the very airplane, without which there might never have been a Second Air Division Association, namely the B-24.

Do not misunderstand my comments. I am *not* condemning the Library. Far from it. I have contributed to the Library for years and I fully intend to continue doing so.

They say criticism is never valid unless it is accompanied with suggestions. I have three examples to illustrate the de-emphasis of the B-24:

1. It is my understanding that 2AD Board action at this reunion means that the P-X section of the Journal will no longer appear. If you look about, you will observe that we members like to wear B-24 belt buckles, tie tacs, tie clasps. We want to keep the B-24 alive. Your action will make such just a little more difficult. You have never welcomed the Liberator Club to establish a booth at 2AD reunions to sell B-24 jewelry and books. Now this. Let's invite the Liberator Club in the future.
2. The last Journal tells about the magnificent B-24 restoration that is now taking place in Massachusetts. I feel this *should* have been a 2AD undertaking. What is wrong with more than one worthy cause? Frankly, I feel you might find raising money for a 2AD B-24 restoration far simpler than you expect. Question: Why shouldn't the 2AD restore and own their own B-24?
3. The de-emphasis seems to be most visible recently by virtually ignoring the fact that there will be a 50th Liberator anniversary at Fort Worth next year. Your lack of encouragement of this most momentous once-in-a-lifetime affair is only too obvious as we read the Journal. You may choose *not* to be an active participant in the Liberator's birthday (and for the life of me, I wonder why), but I suggest that the Journal from now on should be encouraging a "maximum effort" of attendance by 2AD members at the big Liberator birthday parties to be held in 1989 both at Fort Worth and at San Diego."

(Ed. Note: I would like to hear from every member of the Association on the above subject and any others that might be flying around out there. So send me a postcard or letter so your officers can better serve you.)

American Librarian Fund

You encouraged us to rise to the challenge.

167 of you have responded to the call.

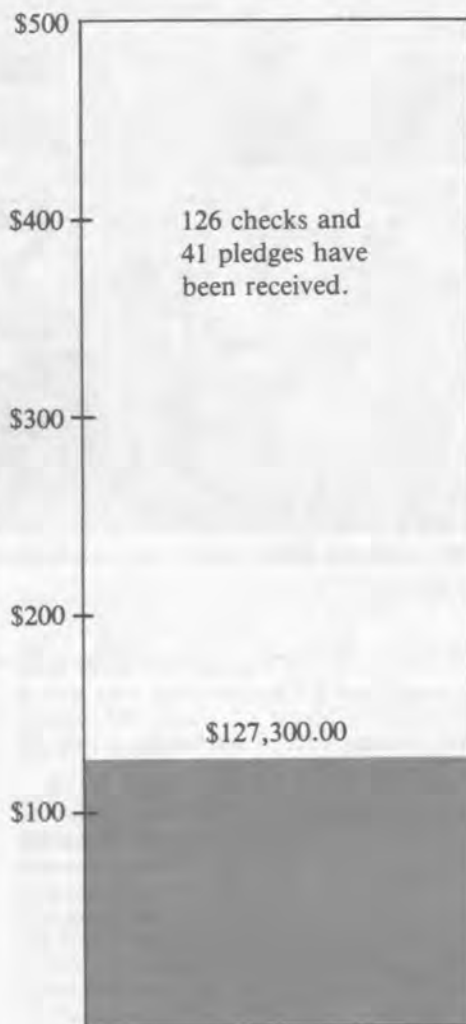
We have close to 7,000 members.

The cause is a most worthy one, remembering our fallen and commemorating our service.

We need your support! See cover and page 4 of Fall Journal.

How about sending this in at once?

HOW WE STAND AS OF
10/15/88



Special Congratulations to the 453rd and 467th for the largest number of responses!

PLEDGE COMMITMENT

- I pledge \$1,000
- I pledge \$500
- I pledge \$ _____
- I cannot pledge now - but we should proceed
- To be given at once
- To be given over a three year period*

Please make all checks payable to:
2nd Air Division Association

Mail or give to:
Jordan R. Uttal
7824 Meadow Park Drive, Apt. 101
Dallas, Texas 75230

Name (Please Print) _____

Address _____

City _____

State - Zip _____

Signature _____

Date _____

Group _____

*Hopefully by 7/1/90 so that we can complete this mission at the next Norwich Convention!!!

446th History Now Available

The history of the 446th Bomb Group by Harold Jansen is now available. This history by the noted Dutch author is a chronological history of the "Bungay Buckaroos" interspersed with individual experiences related for the first time.

480 pages, hard-bound with over 300 photos. Price is \$49.50 plus \$3.50 for shipping. Checks should be made out to the **446th Bomb Group Assn., 13382 Wheeler Pl., Santa Ana, CA 92705.**

This book is in limited supply and will probably go fast. Get your order in as soon as you can.

— Bill Davenport

Vice President's Message



by Frank DiMola

A mini-reunion was held in the northeastern section of the United States on October 1, 1988. We had a very good attendance of about 200 people. These sectional mini-reunions give those a chance to attend who cannot make the 2nd AD reunion yearly.

Pete Henry, as MC, had a short but interesting program scheduled. I gave a short talk about continuing the works and plans of the Association through the Heritage League. Applications were handed out to those who were interested. Speaking to the President of the Heritage League, Vicki Warning, informed me that they received a great response at the Colorado Springs meeting. We must push for membership in order to carry on the memories of the Second Air Division Association. For details on the Heritage League, please read the Fall issue of the Journal.

Evelyn Cohen gave a report on the Norwich Library Fund Drive and gave details on the importance of this drive. Just remember, we are the only veterans' organization with a "living memorial" via a beautiful library. Send in your donations - any amount - to Jordan Uttal.

Pete then had a video tape, "The Last Mission." It was viewed with great interest by those who could not make the trip.

I am sorry to report that Buddy Cross has resigned as the 445th Group Vice President, but he will continue to assist me on a smaller scale. In the meantime, I will attempt a double duty assignment. Anyone wishing to take over this position for the balance of the term, please let me know.

Elizabeth and I wish you all blessed holidays and a Happy New Year.

Look What We Found

Recent discovery of some medical treatment records may enable many Army and Army Air Corps veterans of World War II and the Korean Conflict to file for Veterans Administration disability compensation benefits.

The newly found records, which cover the years 1942-1945 and 1950-1954, are for personnel who served in the Army and Army Air Corps as well as those from other services treated in Army facilities.

Contact your nearest VA Regional Office by using the toll-free number listed in the Federal Government section of the phone book.

466th Bomb Group

by E.W. (Bill) Nothstein

For the omission in the last issue of the Journal, I apologize. The reunited crew members were Bob Pettersen and Joe Ryan, after forty-three years.

Now is the time to organize all of the information that can be located about the proposed memorial window in the All Saints Church in Weston-Longville. In order to pursue this project, we will need ideas and financial support from each of you to get it off the ground. Perhaps this was the reason that the ball was dropped in 1976.

I have asked the President of the 466th Bomb Group Association the following questions, and as of this writing I am awaiting a response. (1) Are there any drawings or designs for the window? (2) Who has the money that was contributed for the window? (3) Who was Vice President of the 466th Group of the 2nd Air Division at the time of the proposal? (4) Does the 466th Bomb Group Association intend to support the placement of a window in the church at Weston-Longville?

The 466th has 326 members in the 2nd ADA and it will not be easy to raise funds for this project. However, if we all pull together, we can succeed with this mission too.

I would appreciate hearing from all of you. These are the things that I need to know: (1) Should we go ahead with the window memorial? (2) Are you willing to help finance this project? (3) Have you drawings or sketches (old or new) which can be considered for use in this project? (4) Have you a skill or talent to contribute that will assist this endeavor? (5) Do you have any ideas that will enhance the memorial? (preliminary discussion follows).

This memorial will represent all of us, so your input will be valuable in making a final decision. I have received a letter from one of our members citing this view: "I do not believe that we should take any action on the memorial on our old base until we have followed through on the commitment for the window in the church ... We should finish what we started before it is too late, some of us will not be around too much longer." SEND ME YOUR OPINION NOW.

To date, the only information I have available is the following, quoted from the November 1976 HISTORIGRAM. "The remembrance window will stand directly opposite the entrance way. It will depict scenes reminding the viewer of the great price that our buddies paid. The Honor Roll will include the name and job code of each Attlebridge man who died in the line of duty. This Book will rest on a table at the foot of the remembrance window. Eventually it is hoped this book can be placed in a case along with one or two artifacts from that time."

NOTES FROM NORWICH - Ted Clarke: "They have altered the layout of the memorial room in the Norwich Library, made it a bit more spacious and added a few more books. It is a good improvement

and I like it." The two pubs in Ringland Village were the 'Swan' and 'Union Jack.' The Swan is still there, but the Union Jack has been closed since the late 50s. (Ringland Village was close to the WAAF site and a natural SPA for the enlisted flyers). Drinking and driving laws there prohibit excessive inbibing on Saturday nights, much the same as they do here.

I received a letter from Irving D. "Bucket" Waterbury that I wish to share with you. I find that I must agree with what he has to say:

"Dear Elwood:

"I promised you during the 466th Bomb Group banquet at Colorado Springs that I would write you a letter and here it is. First of all, I would like to state that we had a wonderful time there and renewed some old acquaintances. It was Mary Jane's first reunion and she had a wonderful time, especially since three of the old crew were there from 784th Squadron with their wives. None of the wives had met before and they all got along wonderfully.

"Now, the reason for this letter. I believe that I have been somewhat naive all along but suddenly and subtly there has been a change. This was only my second reunion and the first one was in Colorado Springs, but I have been a loyal member of the 2nd ADA and the 8th AF for many years. It was John Woolnough that got me interested in maintaining a relationship with the old Group. Now I fear that there has been a separation of the minds, and for what real reason I do not know. However, for every problem there is a solution if everyone tries hard enough.

"I heard the stated reasons during the banquet for why John thought that there should be a separate 466th BG Association. I also know that there are other Bomb Groups that have had their own associations, such as the Bloody 100th, but isn't there room within the 2nd ADA for the 466th along with all the other BGs to maintain the continuity that has kept us together for all of these years? There have been many hard workers throughout the years in our Group and the 2nd ADA. To name a few, Evelyn Cohen, Bill Robertie, Dean Moyer, Rick Rokicki and John Woolnough.

"None of us are getting any younger and there will be a time when the organization will cease to exist except on paper, so let's put the swords down and make them into plow shares and move on with the Mother organization."

Irv Waterbury (Bucket)
Lt. Col. USAF Ret.
784th Sqdn, 466th BG

All things considered, 1988 has been a busy year for me; even so, it has been good. I've renewed old friendships and found new friends. I'm looking forward to an even better 1989. I want to end this year wishing all a Merry Christmas or Happy Chanukah and a Prosperous New Year. Address comments or inquiries to: E.W. Nothstein, 40 Meadow Drive, Spencerport, NY 14559 or phone 1-716-352-3350.

The Battle Brews - B-24 vs. Smithsonian

Mr. Bryan D. Kennedy, Research
Smithsonian Books
c/o Orion Books Crown Publ.
225 Park Avenue South
New York, NY 10003

Dear Mr. Kennedy:

As a member of the Smithsonian Associates (I believe that is the terminology) I have always been very pleased, proud and satisfied with the books produced by the Smithsonian Institute.

As a pilot for 48 years and as a pilot of a B-24 Liberator bomber, 445th Bomb Group, 8th Air Force, based in England (from July 1944 through June 1945) with 35 combat missions, I am totally disgusted with the coverage that you (and I assume that you, as RESEARCH, are the negligent person) gave to the Liberator bomber in "The Smithsonian Book of Flight." But, boy, did you splash around the B-17, the flying fortress.

On page 174 you allowed a black & white photograph of a production line of B-24s. In the accompanying explanation of the photograph you stated, "U.S. industry produced an astounding total of more than 360,000 aircraft during World War II." Did you know that 18,482 of that total were B-24s (more than any other airplane, fighter or bomber) and that only 12,276 were B-17s? You also referred to B-24s on page 205 in connection with the purchase of surplus aircraft by Paul Mantz.

Did you know that the Australian and Canadian Air Forces used B-24s but no B-17s?

Did you know that in the Pacific Theater there were 5 Bomb Groups of B-17s that were replaced with B-24s? That there were an additional 11 Bomb Groups of B-24s?

Did you know that 94 Axis submarines were sunk by B-24s and none by B-17s?

Did you know that the U.S. Navy used 17 squadrons of B-24s (in the Navy they were designated as PB4Y-2s) but no B-17s?

Mr. Kennedy, please get your act together and study the performance of the B-24s and not the hype of B-17 promoters. The B-24 Liberator bombers were the workhorse of World War II in the Atlantic, European, North African, and Pacific Theaters. The B-17s were bombers, but not in the class or actions of the B-24s.

I know there is nothing you or I can do about correcting the obvious misinformation in "The Smithsonian Book of Flight." But please tell your fellow researchers, your editors, your publishers and anyone else who will listen, that the most dominant and effective heavy (at that time) bomber of World War II was the B-24 Liberator.

If you, or any B-17 proponent, disagree, let's start an argument. I didn't make up the above figures. They can be verified easily by any open-minded researcher who will contact the "International B-24 Liberator Club" of San Diego, California.

Please, let's cut out all this crap about the "flying fortress." It was a fire-prone aircraft with small bomb capacity and short range. It was not in the category of the Liberator. The name "flying fortress" seems, unfortunately, to enthrall most writers and researchers and blind them to real bomber performance as provided by the B-24 Liberators.

Fritz Mueller
27 South 100 (East 89-1)
Blanding, Utah 84511

Dear Mr. Mueller:

Please do not jump on Bryan Kennedy for the B-17 emphasis in our book of FLIGHT. As Editor of the work, I'm the hound to blame. The fact of the matter is that lots more art and photography exist on B-17s, and I suspect this is a result of our own Allied propaganda emphasis on B-17s to help smooth ruffled British feathers. Perhaps it all got started with *Memphis Belle*. But I really don't know for sure. I do, however, know for sure that the B-17 folks are better organized and better publicized than their B-24 counterparts. And only you and your friends can correct that imbalance.

There are some other hard facts about B-24 Liberators that I do know, and they all have to do with getting the word out. First, most of the editors and researchers who helped in the publication of our FLIGHT book were born only after WWII. I'm the oldest person in our division and I was seven years old at the end of the war. We do not have the experience or the perceptions of those people, like yourself, who flew them. Second, we've received several letters (3) from people who have faulted us for our coverage of the B-24. Third, we asked Jimmy Stewart, a B-24 pilot, to contribute a personal recollection of flying the Liberator. He turned us down. Fourth, I'll venture that your Liberator Clubs and similar associations could do a lot more to reach the American public. The way to do this is to join forces to write a book, rather than chasing down us poor editors and researchers. Maybe I'm talking through my hat, but if you or some of your war friends put the screws on Stewart, I'll bet he'd contribute to or even write a book detailing the important and obviously undersung role of the Liberator. Our Smithsonian Institution Press publishes dozens of aviation titles. And while I cannot guarantee that we would take a B-24 book, I'll bet that a really good account would find a lot of readers and set some scores straight, and I know that the Smithsonian would be delighted to consider a proposal.

Finally, when the FLIGHT book was first proposed, we almost turned down the idea because we know how vocal and prone to write aviation folks are. We were certainly right about those letters; fortunately most of our correspondence has been friendly, though often taking us to task for not including enough about their favorite aircraft or historical era. What a saga flight has made for itself! Everything cannot possibly be included. But our letter answering has turned out to be very pleasant. I had no idea that so many Associates are pilots...

Joe B. Goodwin
Editor of FLIGHT

Lt. Col. Harold H. Dorfman
U.S.A.F. (Ret.)
31-31 138 St., Apt. 1D
Flushing, NY 11354

Dear Colonel Dorfman:

We understand your consternation concerning the absence of a Consolidated B-24 from the Museum. Please understand that

we are not deliberately excluding it from the National Aeronautical Collection. It is one of several historically significant aircraft we do not have but certainly wish to acquire.

Unfortunately, despite our best efforts, we have as yet been unable to locate an exhibitable B-24. Although 18,188 were built, most were scrapped immediately after the war. The known survivors are in other collections. We do have the nose section of a B-24J that was used for training and are hoping that we will be able to find a complete Liberator and display it, along with our B-17, B-29, and other aircraft too large to be displayed downtown, at a new Museum extension planned for a nearby airport.

We would appreciate receiving any information that you may have that would aid us in our continuing search.

F. Robert van der Linden
Assistant Curator
Aeronautics Department
Nat'l Air & Space Museum
Smithsonian Institution
Washington, D.C. 20560

Dear Mr. van der Linden:

Thank you for your response to my letter concerning the total absence of any display or mention of the B-24 Liberator bomber in the museum. If I may say so, I believe you missed my point, probably because I did not make it too well.

Most of us ex-B-24 types know that there are no B-24s available for display, and that displaying a full size B-24, if available, may not be practical. My point in my last letter was that the B-24 did not exist at present to tens of thousands of visitors according to the museum. No photo, no model, no mural, no mention in the computer list. In fact a tour guide that I overheard in my April visit was at a loss to explain, to a member of his tour group, how the B-24 fits into the history of WWII or what was a B-24. I happened to be, coincidentally, passing on the outer edge of the group wearing a baseball cap with a B-24 patch on the front (purchased at the Air Force museum). Somebody pointed me out and I wound up explaining to the group the B-24's place in history.

I am not a museum curator, so I am therefore less than qualified as to how to correct this situation. But I will try. First possibility: an existing very large wall mural of one WWII bomber could be replaced with a new mural showing several WWII combat aircraft. Second possibility: Reasonably sized well detailed, large (5' to 10' wingspan) scale models of all combat aircraft that are not available could be displayed. Third (and last) possibility is a simple photograph. I have an excellent photograph of a B-24 exploding in mid-air. If I can find the negative I will send you a print although I don't think I would care to see it displayed, it has bad memories. I'm sure you can find an appropriate photograph in some archive.

If I can be of any further assistance, please let me know.

Lt. Col. Harold H. Dorfman
U.S.A.F. (Ret.)

Division Headquarters

by Raymond E. Strong

This is my first column for the Journal since my election as your Vice President last June in Colorado Springs. Following the outstanding job which "Willie" has done over the last couple of years will not be easy. By the way, "Willie" has agreed to serve as Assistant Vice President, so we will not lose all the expertise which she has accumulated. We cannot, however, do this job alone. We must have your help. We solicit your suggestions. We will try to give some direction to the task, but we must have your assistance or very little will be accomplished.

I have given some thought to the matter, and I have decided to try to do the following:

1. Before too long, I plan to send to each of you a copy of the roster of Headquarters active members. Some of the Headquarters people have gone on to their ultimate reward. Others have been members at some time in the past but are no longer on the list. And some have never been members. You need to help us contact those still living but not on the list.

2. Evelyn has suggested, and I agree, that we need to have many of you write up what you did at Division Headquarters and how your work fit into the total mission of Headquarters to plan, supervise and monitor the missions of the Wings, Groups, and Squadrons. Each of you, I know, must have a story to tell - no matter whether you were a high ranking officer or a low level administrator. Each of you were important in the total effort of the Second Air Division. Surely you could write an article with a description of your duties in your section, some humorous anecdotes, or a review of life at Horsham or at Ketteringham Hall. We need to publish this in the Journal and make it a part of the historical record. If you want to talk to me about it, my telephone number is 919-967-2301.

3. Another thing which Evelyn suggested was that we plan more activities for the Headquarters group at the annual meetings instead of just getting together to eat. I will shortly put together a small committee to plan things that we can do as a group at Hilton Head. If you have suggestions for this, please let me know. Or, if you would like to serve on this committee, just drop me a note.

I, too, add my endorsement of the efforts to raise enough money so that the earnings will allow us to send an American librarian to Norwich each year. For our Memorial, a living and usable part of the Norwich Public Library, to be permanently effective, we must ensure that it has an American librarian on duty long after you and I are no longer around. Give what you can.

I would like very much to hear from each of you with your own ideas. I promise to answer every letter!

Notes from the 389th

by Lloyd E. West

We are approaching the end of another year in which many good things were accomplished by those of you in the 389th and the 2nd ADA. With plans being made, it would appear that the next year will be even better.

LOOKING AHEAD: In the next year and beyond, reunions scheduled include the 42nd Annual Reunion of the 2nd ADA, November 2-5, 1989 at Hilton Head, SC. And, after many requests and with the invitation of our English friends, the 43rd Reunion of the 2nd ADA is returning to Norwich in July 1990. If you wish to attend either of these events, Evelyn Cohen is accepting a \$50.00 deposit per person per reunion. The deposits are non-refundable 90 days before each reunion. The theme for the reunion in Norwich is "To Thank The People From Small Towns Around Norwich." If interested, don't hesitate, as reservations are going fast.

MEMBERSHIP: It continues to be the main concern of your VP and assistant to get those who served in the 2nd Air Division during WWII to join the association. We urge all members of the 389th to help us in our efforts to contact as many members as we can. Please take some time and send us names and addresses.

NEWSLETTER: Some time ago, you should have received the 389th "Newsletter" and we would like any suggestions you might have to help us to make it better. Also we are in need of a name. We welcome your stories, letters, notices and any item that might interest someone in the 389th. Send all material to Gene Hartley, 4995 Cervato, Santa Barbara, CA 93111. If you think this project is worth continuing, your monetary support is needed.

THE JOURNAL: Send your stories, letters and pictures which might be of interest to someone in the 2nd Air Division to Wm. G. Robertie, V.P. for the Journal. If you want them in the next or succeeding Journals, don't send them to me. Thanks.

A MUSEUM: The much talked about "Delectable Doris" sits idle on the parking ramp on the former Liberal KS Air Base. She was flown into Liberal on Sept. 10, 1986 with the #3 engine feathered. Thus she sits, still

waiting to perhaps become the property of the new Liberal Air Museum, which was dedicated on Sept. 26, 1988. I attended this opening and proudly viewed this B-24, wondering what missions it might have been on. Perhaps some of you were stationed at Liberal. It was a B-24 transition base. Liberal can be very proud of its efforts to establish an Air Museum. A two-day military and civilian aircraft show was held following the dedication.



FINANCES: From time to time, we receive requests from our members as to different projects our 389th BG should get involved in. At the present time, we are attempting to add to our tower museum project at Hethel and also it has been recommended that we get a good hat made depicting the 389th BG and its location at Hethel. Both projects are in the works, but it takes front money to get them off the ground. Send all orders for the hats to E. (Bud) Koorndyk, 5184 North Quail Crest Dr., Grand Rapids, MI 49506. The hats will be available at the Hilton Head SC reunion.

We urgently request that our membership forward a donation of any amount to Frank Vadas, 1026 South 9th St., Allentown, PA 18103, so that we can build up a decent treasury to enable us to go forward with different projects that come to our attention.

ADDRESSES: 389th VP - Lloyd E. West, Box 256, Rush Center, KS 67575, Tel. 913-372-4484; Assistant VP - Frank C. Vadas, 1026 South 9th, Allentown, PA 18103, Tel. 215-433-3033.

Heritage League

by Vicki Warning

The Heritage League continues to grow. Since the 2nd AD reunion in Colorado Springs, we have welcomed over 130 new members. As I mentioned in the last Journal, we are working on our first newsletter and anticipate having it in the mail to the members before the holiday season. Be looking for it.

We will also be sending out a dues letter, as dues are payable January 1 of each year. If any of you Heritage League members have moved or know of any members who have moved, please let Betty Wayne or myself know so we can change our records and make certain you receive the newsletter and dues letter.

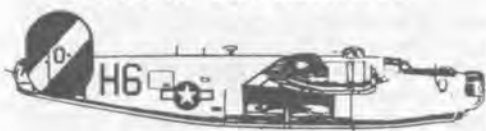
Plans are also in the works to have a roster available to the members. Our priorities now are the newsletter and dues, so more will be mentioned about the roster later.

I made several new friends at Colorado Springs and saw many familiar faces. Everyone always had good things to say about the 2nd AD and the Heritage League. And as with any group, people always have opinions and suggestions as to how things should or should not be done. We welcome your comments as the Heritage League enters its second year.

Before closing and sending this to Bill Robertie before the deadline, I wish to thank the officers of last year who worked so hard to get the Heritage League off the ground. With special thanks to the efforts of Milt Veynar and Bud Chamberlain, we are headed in the right direction.

Have a Happy Holiday Season and I hope to see you all at Hilton Head in November 1989.

453rd Video Tape Now Available



by Frank Kyle

From July 1943 until we disbanded in 1945, I was a photographer with the 732nd Squadron of the 453rd Bomb Group. I joined the unit at Pocatello, trained with it at March Field, shipped overseas in December of '43, and served all 18 months of the group's operations at Old Buckenham. I came back on U.S.S. Hermitage in May 1945 and was with the group when we "stood down" in August 1945.

During that time I accumulated many photographs: officers, air crews, barracks, squadron areas, ground crews, nose art, and bomb strike actions. I took an album home with me. It is one of my most prized personal possessions. My four kids used to love to look at it during their years of growing up. Now my five grandsons thumb through it. I love telling them about us.

It occurred to me that former members of the Group might like to obtain some of the photos I have in my album. I talked with an old photographer-buddy, Frank Fluharty of the 735th Squadron. He suggested that we make a VCR tape, and we now have one available for you. It is complete with a 40-minute description - a pictorial history of the 453rd. It is available to you for a limited time only for \$25.00 per tape. We are the *only* group in the Eighth Air Force to have made such a production. Please DO NOT send cash. Allow 5 to 6 weeks for delivery. Mail the order form below to:

Francis X. Kyle
12 Auburn Street
Reading, MA 01867

**HISTORY OF THE 453rd
VHS VIDEO TAPE**
Produced, Written and Narrated
by 453rd Personnel

Please ship me _____ (how many?) tapes
at \$25.00 each. Total enclosed \$ _____

Name _____

Street _____

City _____

State _____

Zip _____

About the Memorial

by Jordan R. Uttal

I recently returned from attending the Governors' meeting in Norwich and the farewell dinner given by the Governors individually (not the Trust) for Bertha Chandler. Needless to say, we were sorry to have her very successful tenure come to a close. However, she firmly asked all of us, in England and here, to remember that out of sight should not be out of mind. She is eager to stay in touch, and be of whatever help she can when called upon.

At the dinner I was honored to be asked to make remarks suitable for the occasion, and to present Bertha with two paintings of one of her favorite areas in East Anglia. She was most appreciative.

After my report at the Governors meeting, I was asked by the Governors to convey our most sincere thanks to the Association for the immediacy of our response to the American Librarian program. I was able to report to them the decision at Colorado to support the program, and they were impressed and grateful for the amount of money I was able to tell them had flowed in up to the time I left for England on 14 September. Needless to say, there was more awaiting my return, and the Board of Governors joins with us in looking forward to the successful conclusion of our drive to raise the approximately \$500,000.00 for the perpetuation of the excellent results achieved during the past two years due to the American presence at the Memorial Room.

Obviously, my fellow members of the Association, it is in your hands. I could not be more convinced than I am now that the future progress of the Memorial to our fallen - the reminder of our service there during the war - and the firm friendship that we have established in East Anglia, depends on our securing the funds to enable us to have a continued American presence in the 2nd Air Division Memorial for all time to come.

Elsewhere in this issue you will see a status report on our efforts thus far, and an appeal to the membership to make this work!

In addition to my time with the Board of Governors, I had the opportunity to meet with several friends from the base village areas. They all are looking forward to seeing us back in Norwich in 1990. What a wonderful thing it would be for us to be able to tell them then (or sooner) that we have succeeded in our drive.

MEMORIAL ROOM ALTERATIONS:
As soon as I walked into the Room on 22 September I noticed, with pleasure, the improved lighting that had been accomplished since my May visit, as well as the improved hanging of the three flags. There are still a few details to be worked out, but everyone

is aware of what is needed and the project is on the front burner.

BRANCH LIBRARIES: With full support from the County Librarian, and our friend Colin Sleath, we hope to have details worked out for the first of these installations. Impatient as I am, I do understand the administrative groundwork that has to be laid, the selection determined, and the books ordered and shipped. I know that these things take time but I am sure that we will have at least one in place by the time of our 1990 Convention.

OUR PART-TIME STAFF: It was great to see how deeply involved Mrs. Phyllis Hunt, our part-time "Trust Librarian" (official title) has already become. I assured her that all of us stand ready to help where we can.

Tony North, in his usual dependable manner, is on the job. To underline the need for full-time staff, since my visit last May 1988 up to 22 September there were 277 new signatures in the visitors book. They were mostly from the U.S.A. (not all 2AD personnel) as well as from Sweden, France, Belgium, Holland, and of course other areas in the U.K.

Every time I am at the Memorial Room the flood of memories is stronger than those that keep cropping up in the course of my daily activities. I think of those whom I knew whose names are in the Roll of Honor, I think of all those whom I did not know personally, of those who are no longer with us, and I think of all of you who have established and supported this great tribute. **IT MUST LAST THROUGH TIME**, and with your help, it will! Again, I salute you all ...

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
_____	city, state, zip
_____	group



Open Letter To the 93rd

by Floyd H. Mabee (93rd)

FOLDED WINGS OF THE 93rd (NOT MEMBERS OF 2ADA): For members that might have known any of these men: Maurice A. Rogers, 6801 E. 2nd St., Edmond, OK 73034, passed away 9/1/87; Julius A. "Stormy" Stoermer, 8705 LaGrimade, N.E. Albuquerque, NM 87112, passed away 11/2/87; Robert J. Ruth, 3940 N. Amidon, Wichita, KS 67204, passed away 4/23/87; Stanley A. Verstraete, 228 Madison, Pueblo, CO 81008, passed away 5/85; Joseph P. Windincamp, Rt. 2, Box 2462, Townsend, GA 31331, passed away 5/7/86.

MY WINTER ADDRESS: Floyd H. Mabee, 11524 Zimmerman Rd., Port Richey, FL 34668, Tel. 813-862-2309. I will be at this address 23 October through April and then back at my N.J. address in May 1989.

2ND AIR DIVISION MINI-REUNION DINNER: Members that lived within 100 miles of Princeton, N.J. were notified by letter of this get-together dinner October 1, 1988 at the Hyatt Regency Hotel. There were around 166 in attendance and 22 from the 93rd. They were: Carl & Helene Barthel, Harold Burks, Nick & Rose Caruso, Jim & Alice Cooley, Bill & Marge Creedmore, Joe & Mollie Forti, Marty Furst, Ted & Jo Gourley, Dan Roure & Eileen Hunt, Floyd & Dot Mabee, Henry & Beatrice Nykamp, George Chase & Joan Woodward. It was a very enjoyable evening. Only one other Group had more in attendance than the 93rd.

SQUADRON AND GROUP EMBLEMS: Around 1976 I had 25 each of 328th and 329th emblems made up in Taiwan, the cost plus duty allowed I was able to sell them for around \$2.50, but it's not like that anymore. I tried last winter to order from the same company but the letter was returned address unknown. So if anyone can direct me to an overseas Emblem Co., or a company where I can have our four Squadron and Group emblems made up as reasonably as possible, please let me know. I have been informed that they will cost around \$4.95 each in lots of 50. I have a catalog from Southern Emblem Co. in Toast, NC and will send pictures of the five emblems for a quote. The only other problem is, we need a generous 93rd member to finance us, interest free, a sum to cover this project. I'm sure there will be no problem selling these to the members as there is a demand for them. The donor would be fully reimbursed with our thanks, and would receive a free Squadron and Group emblem courtesy of me.

93RD MEMORIAL FOR USAF MUSEUM AT DAYTON, OHIO: Our chairman for the Memorial, William Doerner, has informed me that he has an appointment with the Museum Coordinator 15 October, and I have written a required letter of request to the Director, USAF Museum, presenting the interest of the 93rd BG in establishing a Memorial Commemorative Tree and Plaque. Our chairman will present some tentative plans of our desired plaque and select a site for the Memorial while meeting with the coordinator. I called Charles Weiss, keeper of our Memorial funds, to see how much we now have in our Memorial Fund and was told a little over \$2,000. Now, we must have at least \$2,000 to even request placing a Memorial at the Museum. I reported in my last Fall report to you that we had \$1,684 left in our fund from the Memorial in England. Now come on fellows, we can't say for sure yet that it can be done for that figure. We still need an estimate from a contractor to make up the plaque and a tree, plus installation. Please fellows, give us a little leeway to work with. If you don't want this Memorial, why didn't someone say so at our meeting in Colorado Springs, or give me some response from my reports in the Journal in the last year that I asked for. I only received one negative response towards this memorial. We work too hard for your benefit on these projects to have to worry about whether we have sufficient funds to carry on. I assure you, we are trying to get the best quality at the best cost. Come on fellows, time is slipping by, and the longer we wait the more it's going to cost. *Please send your donations to Charles Weiss, 21 Moran Dr., Waldorf, MD 20601 and give us something to work with. If any of you have any ideas of what you would like to see on this 10" x 12" metal plaque, draw it up and send it to our chairman, William F. Doerner, 620 W. Highland Rd., Sagamore Hills, OH 44067. Bill was kind enough to volunteer for this job for someone that lived in Ohio. Bill will have the final say as to what the wording will be, and with my O.K.*

INVITATION: By the time you read this report, I will have attended, by invitation of author of many 8th Air Force books, Roger Freeman, and Lt. John H. Woolnough (Ret.), Directors of the 8th Air Force Memorial Museum Foundation, Inc. To participate in an "Aerial Gunners of the Mighty Eighth" Symposium held at Des Moines, Iowa, expenses paid, I just couldn't refuse this offer. It should be very interesting and I will give a further report on this in the Spring Journal.

LETTERS AND STORIES FOR THE JOURNAL: When you send these to Bill Robertie for publication in the Journal, please note that you are with the 93rd Bomb Group. Just keep those stories going in. I have had some complaints from members that their stories aren't put in the Journal. Let me give you some constructive advice to help Mr. Robertie on this. Type your stories double spaced, you will find he will be much more cooperative, he sure won't enter it in the Journal if he can't read it. Please don't ask me to submit them for you, I just can't handle any more correspondence. I

found that I have the same problem, I can't understand my own writing and believe me, I receive some dandies to try and interpret. So I have tried to get used to a typewriter, and constantly hit the wrong keys. Thank God for corrective tapes. I have gone through ten this last year.

HISTORY FOR THE 93RD BOMB GROUP: I don't know what to tell you, fellows, I have received no answer from letter to Maj. Carlos Vasquez (Ret.) The address I have in my revised 93rd roster as of 7/15/88 for Carlos is, 6341 Samoa Way, Carmichael, CA 95608. I have received several letters from members that have sent him information for the 93rd History for the last three or four years and now when they write him, they receive no answer. One member just wrote me 25 September saying that he tried to call Carlos and wrote that Carlos no longer lives there. While Charles Weiss was Vice President, I understand that Carlos and his wife volunteered to be the 93rd BG Historians and to write the History of the 93rd, and Charlie and I had requested in our "Open Letter to the 93rd" for our members to send them historic material and pictures. I believe that Carlos and Nadine are angry with me, and if they are, I apologize to them through our 565 members, for whatever I said or did. I don't like for anyone to hold a grudge against the organization as a whole because of something that I said or did. I'm sorry, Carlos and Nadine, please forgive me for the benefit of the 93rd.

THE STORY OF THE 93RD BOMB GROUP, MADE UP SOMETIME IN THE 40s or 50s: I now have a source of making copies of this story, full of good 93rd pictures. If you have never seen it, they are very scarce. Have to borrow an original copy in fairly good condition, need an order of at least 100, they will be approximately \$30 each plus postage. If interested, send me a card at my winter address. If I can't get an original I will use my copy, but I don't think the quality will be as good. Will ask for money with the first 100 orders.

Attention Americans Interned In Sweden

by Jim McMahon

I desperately need a copy of Special Order #76 which was issued by the American Legation in Stockholm in 1944. I do not know the date of the order but I have a copy of S.O. #74 and it is dated 5 October 1944.

I was released from internment on either 1 or 4 December 1944. Please go through your copies of any S.O.s issued by the legation in late 1944 for my name. I would appreciate any copy of ANY order with my name on it.

Jim McMahon
2100 Mount Olive Drive
Santa Rosa, CA 95404
Phone (707) 525-9707

B-24 Restoration Progress

by Art Cullen

Like the legendary Phoenix, rising from its own ashes to fly again, the Collings Foundation B-24J is rapidly progressing to flying condition in Kissimmee, Florida and is scheduled to begin ground and air testing by February, 1989. It's beginning to look like a B-24 again.

At this point, more than 50 USAAF groups who flew the B-24 in Europe, the Mediterranean South Pacific, C.B.I. and Alaska have contributed to its rebuild. This increasing interest has stimulated much-needed contributions since the estimated \$600,000 figure for completion will be exceeded. The results, however expensive, are most gratifying. Except for the lack of the familiar fumes from gasoline, oil and hydraulic leaks, on entering the fuselage you could not tell it from new.



The aircraft is now on its tri-cycle landing gear (with new tires), the 55 foot wing center section, rebuilt with 8,000 man hours, is in place, the horizontal and vertical tail surfaces are installed and the four mounts are ready for the engine installations. Of the 56 engine cylinders, 53 were overhaulable. Two of the Pratt & Whitney 1830s are ready for run-in and installation. Rebuilders in Sebring, Florida say the engines are low-time and in good condition considering the 20-year storage time; no engine logs were available from the Indian Air Force.

On the corporate side, the Vickers Corp. is providing the replacement of the hydraulic systems. The General Electric Corporation, who manufactured the turbo superchargers, is underwriting the rebuild of these four units. A professional electrical engineer, now retired in Florida, is heading the restoration of the entire electrical system. Other corporate entities involved in the original manufacture, including the prime contractor, General Dynamics (Consolidated Aircraft), are expected to participate.

Replacing the control system has been a nightmare. Apparently in its last days with the Indian AF this aircraft was a "hangar queen," source of spare parts, and much of the cabling, pulleys and attachments were removed. Many of the assemblies will be hand-made from factory drawings.

If any B-24 people have souvenir parts they would donate or know of a parts source, please contact the Collings Foundation. Jim O'Brien, 44th BG, recently offered a complete set of B-24 manuals, including leather carrying case. The set was found in a trash barrel.

New fuel cells have been made up (not self-sealing this time) by Fuel Safe of Huntington Beach, CA. Aero Kool of Hialeah, Florida has donated much of the oil cooler restoration. Jerry Gregor, owner, was a B-24 crew chief.

A name for the aircraft has not been selected. Send in your suggestions. Unit designation also has not been decided upon.

All four turrets have been completed in Stow, Mass., and will be shipped to Kissimmee in November for installation. Every detail, including the red arming handles and new plexiglass are there. All of the turret restoration has been done by New England volunteers.

An open house, at which attendees may inspect the aircraft, inside and out, take pictures, kick tires and enjoy a lunch, is scheduled at the Reilly Aviation site at the Kissimmee Airport, February 4, 1989. Details can be found elsewhere in this issue.

In September, 1988, Bob Collings, sponsor of this restoration, was honored in Washington, D.C. at the Air Force Association convention as a General Jimmy Doolittle Fellow in recognition of the educational benefits of the restored aircraft of the Collings Foundation.

People guiding the rebuild of this historic and rare aircraft are most grateful for the spontaneous response of those who have contributed to this project. The generosity of these contributors will guarantee the timely completion and flying of the only active Liberator in the world. We estimate we're now about 2/3 of the way done and we can see the light at the end of the tunnel. To get there we need a *lot more* financial help! Please help us out - a little or a lot - but whatever works for you. \$24 for a B-24 Restoration Bond, \$100 for a "Century Club Membership," \$240 for a "Crew Memorial Membership," \$5000 for a "Dedicated Crew Position" or "Honor Squadron Position." Contributors will: (1) Receive a thank-you letter which can be used for a tax deduction; (2) Become a permanent member of the Form 1 (crew listing) which always travels with the plane; (3) Receive a Restoration Share Certificate for a \$24 donation and up.



Also, we desperately need corporate sponsors to help us with the \$300,000 plus left to be raised. If you'd like to help - sending a donation or perhaps another donation, calling several friends to be sure they've sent their contributions, or contacting involved corporations for donations - PLEASE DO IT TODAY! Contributions in any amount will be gratefully acknowledged and may be sent to the Collings Foundation (a non-profit, historical trust), River Hill Farm, Stow, MA 01775.

Bunchered Buddies of Old Buck

by Milton R. Stokes

It is not quite fair of me to call all of you "Bunchered Buddies" because many of you don't know what that means nor do you care. Needless to say, it means a lot to me. Maybe it still stirs memories in those that would like to forget but I'm not one of those. I can still remember the cold, damp air that greeted one upon raising your nose beyond the protection of seven wool blankets on the bed. They were dusty, dirty blankets, too. If you struck them, a cloud of dust arose to tell you that they should be washed. No one in our hut ever washed the blankets during the cold weather and it was always cold in those unheated huts in England; so they went unwashed. We did send the sheets out to be washed. They were an off-white color (far removed from bleached white) so the dirt was not too apparent to tired red eyes on getting into bed most nights, and never seen in the black of long nights when arising on mission mornings or on training hops. A clean bed was put out of your mind until you completed your missions. It seemed that most things were put on hold until you "finished."

Yes, we did sweep out the place when the Colonel threatened, but he knew the circumstances and was too close to us not to know how we felt, so we went unwashed and dirty. The dirt was not too apparent unless one looked closely. The underwear was washed weekly (if you desired and had money). And our dress uniforms were never cleaned on schedule. Once I sent my "pinks" out to be cleaned and never got them back. Oh, I got someone's pants but not mine. After three trips to our dry cleaner to straighten out the mess, I gave up and bought a new, clean pair. On our base, we never did solve the problem of getting our own clothes back. All of our clothes had our name and serial number stamped with india ink to identify each piece; that made no difference, they were lost anyway. It took some of us longer to catch on but there was a way to eliminate those problems. The local English women would wash and iron our clothes for a reasonable sum. In trips back to Old Buck after the war, some of our men still called on the people who washed and ironed their clothes. Of such small things were lasting friendships made.

On the thought of going back to Old Buck, you know we will circle the Buncher again in 1990. No, I don't mean actually fly the pattern, but to visit. So get your money in to Evelyn Cohen. It may be too late even at what seems an early date to you.

Some of you know that I couldn't attend the 1988 reunion in Colorado Springs. I had an accident on a farm tractor and I came out the worse; the tractor was fixed and now runs much better, not so for me. It will take much longer to heal and mend. You sent many letters and cards to me; I should say I will answer them all with a personal note but I cannot. I do thank you all. You gave me the courage to keep trying to get better. There were times when I frankly didn't think that was possible.

I'm past that stage now. I'm on the mend. I'll make it now with your prayers and God's help.

My thanks to good friend Dwight Bishop for the following:

*The clock of life is wound but once,
and no man has the power
to tell just when the hands will stop or
on what day or what hour.
Now is the only time you have.
So live it with a will.
Don't wait until tomorrow,
The hands may then be still.*

— Author unknown

Dwight had an operation in August for a hernia and he even attended the reunion in Colorado Springs. I know the nagging sharp pain that accompanies a hernia. I'm glad you are mending now, Dwight. I also know how nice it feels to have people say or write, "Please get well, we miss you."

The card you sent to me signed by most of the people at Colorado Springs made me feel really good. Many of you have called to convey the same message. From the bottom of my heart I say, "Thank you!" Without such expressions of love and affection, the healing takes longer. Many of us do not express our love and concern too well. Many don't even try. Examine yourself and determine if there is room for improvement in your life. Don't wait until you are in your deathbed before you make such discoveries.

Bob Jordan wrote late in September, the letter was on yellow tablet paper and he apologized for same. Bob, care not what kind of paper you use, just write and keep writing. You were on a good crew with Eino Alve as your pilot. Alve was one of the best. He had continued that line after the war. He has kept his old crew active; he has your respect and admiration. He has a good family life and is a moral man. I rate him as a 10 in life.

Ed Perro of Mesa, Arizona and Anaconda, Montana wrote complaining of getting a request to join the 2nd Air Division Association. I can't tell him why he got the letter, but I know that he has been a member for years. I'm glad to hear from you again, Ed. Keep writing. I like to hear from "Old" Buddies.

"Wib" Clingan wrote in response to a letter from Pocatello Air Base. They were seeking information on air crews and groups located there in 1942-45. Write to: Lenard Nelson, P.O. Box 4169, Pocatello, Idaho 83201.

Wilbur and Jean Stites sent a card to me with approximately 107 signatures on it from the mid-west mini-reunion in Oshkosh, Wisconsin. It was much appreciated. I wish I could write to all of you. I thank you most sincerely. This Journal is the only way to do the job adequately. No one can tell the signers of such cards how much good they do by sending such cards, but it a tremendous lift to one in bed and looking for signs of encouragement. My thanks again.

I will bring this to a close wishing you all the very best in the holiday season and the new year. Lucille and I look forward to seeing you all in 1989. Over and Out!

A-2 Jacket ... Inside Out!

by Ed Hohman (491st)

Shortly after our crew (4566, McClung's) began flying combat out of North Pickenham, I heard of the mission where a 491st crew had either crash landed or had to bail out over Germany. In this report, I believe all of the survivors were killed by German civilians ... either shot or beaten to death.

I had started to paint bombs on the right front of my A-2 jacket as we completed each mission, and must have had about half a dozen on it at this time. It seems I tried to do everything possible to survive my combat tour, and as you will see, nothing was too far-fetched in this regard if I thought it might help to keep me alive!

I thought about this crew that was beaten to death on the ground, and it struck me that the A-2 jacket with all those bombs on it that I always wore under my heated suit would certainly stir them up if I ever ran into any of those Germans! I still wanted to have that jacket as an extra piece of clothing if we ever had to bail out, (and I did like the idea of those bombs I had painted on there), but I sure didn't want those Germans to think I *enjoyed* bombing their country!

So, for the rest of my missions, before the heated suit went on, I turned the A-2 jacket INSIDE OUT, and awkwardly zipped it up! It may not have been practical, and it may not seem to make much sense now, but it sure did make me feel better psychologically! Who knows, I might have lived a few hours longer if the Germans caught me, right?



Ed Hohman (491st, 852nd Sqdn). You'll notice I had started to paint a bomb for each mission on the right front of the jacket ... I changed my mind after hearing how IMPRESSED the Germans were with our bombing!

The Results of Our Efforts

by Jim Coffey



As the air war against Nazi Germany was winding down, someone in the Second Air Division Command had a great idea. The concept was as follows: The flying crews had the satisfaction of seeing the results of their efforts, as they could see – even when flying at 20,000 to 25,000 feet – the smoke rising from the destruction wrought by their bombs. However, the ground crew – whose stay in England was not limited to a tour – had not seen any results of their long hours and painstaking work. Generally, ground crew were older men, usually married with a family stateside. The air crews, younger men, mostly single, depended on the ground crew for the combat readiness of their B-24s. Accordingly, the Eighth was assigned to fly two “trolley missions” on the fourth and fifth of May, 1945.

We loaded our planes with ground crew personnel and flew at a planned altitude of 1,000 to 3,000 feet across Belgium and then down the Rhine. The pilots and co-pilots did their work with the triumphant knowledge that there would be no flak.* The navigator’s role was mostly that of Tour Guide reading from the order of the day.

All on board were truly impressed by the “results of our efforts”: Mannheim, Frankfurt, Koblenz, with factories, city centers, marshalling yards as well as residential areas, all heavily damaged. These were gratifying sights: we were, after all, at war with Germany.

I believe everybody on board enjoyed the mission. When we landed, a Sergeant in Supply invited me to his “store” and said he’d issue me “anything I wanted!” (I didn’t take him up on the offer.)

The next day, we flew a *second* trolley mission on the same route. As we flew toward the great cathedral of Cologne, I asked our crew via intercom if they’d like to take a closer look and got a unanimous “sure.”

Everyone learning to fly learns that old adage: “There are old pilots and there are bold pilots, but there are no old, bold pilots.” I always took that to heart.

As we drew near to the cathedral, I satisfied myself that there were no airplanes in the area. I dropped somewhat below the top of the spire and began a counterclockwise turn. Halfway around I saw *another* B-24 making a *clockwise* turn at my exact altitude! I rolled out and pulled sharply up. To this day, I can remember the impression on the other pilot’s face: he had not even seen me! I believe his concentration saved us all: if he had tried to avoid us, we would have collided. When I landed later at our Rackheath base, I felt very grateful.

EPILOGUE

When I picked up the prints included in this article, I showed them to the woman behind the counter. When I explained that the purpose of the mission was “to show the ground crew the results of their efforts,” she was horrified. “You mean all those people burning to death!” I responded with a platitude: “We were only doing our job.”

Back at the office, I realized I had never once thought about those people and their deaths.

**From the German “Fliegerabwehr Kanonen”*

Thousand Plane Raid

by Thaine A. Clark

It seemed the total might of the Eighth Air Force was concentrated along a few miles of Dutch coastline. From twenty thousand feet of altitude, the North Sea looked like a peaceful lake on a summer afternoon. The Friesian Islands were stepping stones into the shallow water. Holland was a picture postcard of tiny fields of varying shades of green and tan criss-crossed with a network of blue canals and dotted with colorful villages and towns. The Zuider Zee, a deep blue below us, dimmed in the haze to the south.

The scene was so peaceful, it was difficult to believe most of those planes had been through the hell of flak over target areas, and for some, of fighter attacks. Many planes carried holes inflicted by both. There were planes that had flown east that morning that were not with us this bright, near cloudless afternoon. German ground and air gunners had scored successes too.

The B-24s had caught up with the slower flying B-17s just before they reached the coastline, and for a few minutes we flew together. They had usually been assigned the deeper targets and reminded 24 flyers of this whenever the occasion arose. It was an awe-inspiring sight to us and must have been an awesome sight to the enemy and friends below.

B-17s flew a little below and to the south of us – wave on wave – shrinking in size in the distance. Here and there only three props shone as gleaming disks in the sun on the wings of graceful airplanes.

To the north of us, the B-24s – their bulky fuselages amazingly supported by narrow wings, which gave the impression they were propelled by their flapping action – presented a similar scene. There were feathered props and battle damage among these planes too. Scattered among the big planes were a few American fighters. There were shapely P-51s, blunt nosed P-47s, and twin boomed P-38s. They skimmed along; their job of protecting the big fellows about over. NO enemy fighter pilot in his right mind would have approached that formidable armada at the moment. I was convinced the “thousand plane raid” was fact and not just a colorful news headline.

We moved out over the North Sea. A few futile puffs of flak appeared above a tiny island well below the formation. The fighters pulled on ahead of us; the 17s dropped behind. The coast of Hitler’s Europe dimmed in the haze behind. The safety of England lay ahead.

BUNGAY BULL

446th BOMB GROUP
by
William F. Davenport



EDITOR'S NOTE: The Editor would like to apologize to Bill Davenport and the members of the 446th for the inadvertent omission of "Bungay Bull" from the Fall 1988 issue of the Journal. Accordingly, the following will encompass both the Fall and Winter reports...

I would like to wish all of our readers a Merry Christmas and a Happy Holiday Season as we once again enter another year. May that bring to you and yours good health and a bountiful life.

Last time we described for you ZADA folks the events on D-Day from out front of the "Mighty Eighth" and some other items of interest. In case you have forgotten, the 446th was chosen to lead the 8th AF on this vitally important mission.

Well, as all things happen, because of the major efforts and outstanding effectivity of the 446th, aided by other units - air, ground and sea - the enemy surrendered and it came time to pack up and head stateside. The story of those days is related here.

A happy sound, not of nightingales in Berkeley Square nor love birds in Piccadilly, echoed over merry England in June. Men of the 446th and other bomb groups were whistling as they worked, nailing up TAT boxes to go home. A piece of paper formally termed a letter, Headquarters, European Theater of Operations, dated 28 May 1945, Subject: "Movement Orders, Shipment 10060," was the long awaited authority.

Supplies and equipment were called in and packed. Records were processed and reprocessed, and airplanes were combed for any possible defects. Approximately twenty-eight important modifications were necessary to comply with Air Transport Command regulations for the air movement home. As on the movement to England in 1943, the Group was divided into air and ground echelons.

The busiest people on the field were supply sergeants and Lieutenant Temple, who sat in Group Operations and tried to make sense out of conflicting orders on the how and when of the air echelon's departure. After nine different plans and at least ninety-nine rumors had been scrubbed, the first planes of the Group took off June 15 for Valley, Wales, led by the Group Commander, Lieutenant Colonel Schmidt.

These 23 aircraft left Valley for the Azores and Bradley Field, Connecticut. Colonel Schmidt flew "Ronnie," prize veteran of the Group, making a personal race home of it with Colonel Hetrick, who skippered "Li'l Rollo." Hetrick and "Li'l Rollo" bobbed in first by a good two days at Bradley.

A second and third wave of planes then took off on the "Home Run" mission, making 77 in all, each packed with a crew of ten and ten passengers. The last aircraft made their final circles over Flixton on June 18,

nineteen months after the air echelon first reached Bungay and eighteen months after the Group's first mission. Planes and men had taken off from the field many times in that long interval, some never to return. Now the last Liberator was leaving Flixton. No more missions, no more slow-times, no more blue bombs, no more compass checks. No more mild and bitter, no more groping in London or Norwich black-outs looking for a pub.

The last planes to take off got home fastest. They went to the big ATC base at Prestwick, Scotland, then to Meeks Field in Iceland, Goose Bay, Labrador, and Bradley Field, all in two days. The planes sat down at Bradley, the pilot quickly signed away thousands of dollars in aircraft and equipment, a good-looking WAC directed the men through a short baggage line, and they were taken to barracks. That night there was fresh milk - the first in nearly two years. The next day the crews and passengers were on their way to Camp Myles Standish near Boston by train. In two or three more days, they were going to reception centers all over the country in hot, dirty train coaches.

The air echelon movement was accomplished with thorough efficiency under ATC directions. But not every plane made the long voyage home. Lieutenant Markewitz and his 705th Squadron crew and passengers were forced down in Spain. They were flown back to Flixton, and joined the ground echelon for the return on the Queen Mary. A Liberator from the 389th Group piloted by our Lt. Kellog with 14 other 446th people was lost while crossing the Atlantic.

Engineering Squadron, 704th and 706th Squadrons left July 4, followed by Headquarters of the 446th and the 705th and 707th Squadrons on July 5. After an 18-hour train journey, the personnel arrived at Greenock, Scotland. Leaving the trains, they lined up on a pier. As they passed a transportation officer to reach the tender, he snapped off their last names and they replied with their first and middle initials. The Queen Mary, the same transport that brought the ground echelon to England, stood in the firth of Clyde. The voyage home was smooth and uneventful. The huge ship weighed anchor at 1730 on July 6, passing British men-o-war and vessels of all nations as it made its way out into the Atlantic. Meals were served twice a day in five sittings for the 15,000 on board, including 5,000 Canadian troops. The men filled the time with eating, sleeping and trying to beat the numerous dice games. G.I.s sold Luger pistols and other souvenirs at exorbitant prices - and got them.

On the morning of July 11, the Mary came past Sandy Hook into New York harbor. Men were up early to get a view of the New Jersey coast, and then the Manhattan

skyline. New York greeted the men royally. Boats whistled and thousands of workers lining up on both sides of the Hudson River waved. A navy blimp from Lakehurst hovered over the ship as it went up the harbor.

The Queen Mary docked at Pier 97 at West 51st Street; disembarkation was amazingly smooth. The Red Cross passed out doughnuts and fresh milk as the men marched out from the vast innards of the ship onto the pier. Ferryboats of the Central Railroad of New Jersey carried personnel to waiting trains in Jersey City. After a day there, with a delicious steak dinner, at Camp Kilmer, the 750 officers and men en-trained for reception.

The air crossing was an interesting one, no matter what the route. Some of our planes were hung up because of weather for seven days or longer in the Azores. Drinking champagne in the morning and flinging the bottles over a cliff into the ocean was a favorite sport of at least one crew there. For those on the northern route, stand-out memories were the bleakness of Iceland, with the sun shining after midnight on tundra-covered rocks without a tree or a bush on them, and the fine facilities at the wilderness post of Goose Bay, far up in Labrador. Long limousines brought the men from planes to barracks there, and Goose Bay also provided real, live milk shakes. Things began to seem like home. Next day, we hit Bradley Field, at Windsor Locks, Connecticut. Next night, East Lynn, Boston, and points west.

The less said about the hot, dirty train rides back to reception centers the better. Anyway, we made it, Mom, and ate home cooking for a month.

After the month at home, orders of both air and ground echelon personnel directed them to report to the army air field at Sioux Falls, South Dakota. Once more, after nearly two years, we were in the Second Air Force. The 446th was de-activated, and became a part of Air Force history. Behind it was an outstanding combat record which contributed substantially to the defeat of Nazi Germany. Behind it forever also were the planes and the men who would never come back.

Sioux Falls was a huge mill which hamburgered the group and deployed personnel out over the Second Air Force. The first members of the air echelon arrived late in July, and many still were there in September. The initial processing was smooth and fast, but then we often sat for weeks wondering what and when, if ever, next. After two atomic bombs and the entry of Russia into the war, Japan surrendered in the middle of August. The ground echelon began to roll in, and the works at Sioux Falls became slightly snafued. "The Second Air Force at its worst," was the comment of most group personnel who remembered the training program they had endured two years previously. But after some inevitable confusion, the wheels turned, and officers and men were spread out to

(continued on page 14)

Bungay Bull (cont. from page 13)

other Second Air Force bases or sent to separation centers. A character named Smoe seemed to be responsible for the temporary chaos that existed.

Lieutenant Colonel Schmidt, the Group Commander (now deceased), was assigned to El Paso, Texas, leaving late in August. Lieutenant Colonel Sheley, the Air Executive (now of Falls Church, VA) went to Washington for duties in G-2, Air Force headquarters. Lieutenant Colonel Kyle, Group Operations officer (now of Ogden, UT) went to Third Air Force headquarters at Tampa, Florida. Major Crawford (address unknown), 705th Squadron Commander, shipped to Long Beach, California, and planned to separate from the service. Lieutenant Colonel Needham (address unknown), 704th Commanding Officer, shipped to Fort Worth, Texas for duty with a basic training outfit. Major Yochem (Los Altos Hills, CA), 706th Commander, went to Long Beach, California.

At the end of August, Colonel Crawford (now deceased), former Group Commander, flew into Sioux Falls from the base he commanded at Dalhart, Texas, saw Colonel Schmidt and other Group personnel, and brought Major Holmes, Major Quattlebaum and Captain Cherry of the 378th Air Service Group back to Dalhart with him.

The last activity of the bombardment and air service groups was a dinner September 3 at the Cataract Hotel in Sioux Falls, paid for with the remainder of the Group Welfare Fund administered by Major Stahl. About 300 showed up for the dinner, which had a capacity of about 100. Those who weren't fed managed to drink well, and the affair was a huge and noisy success, even if most of us didn't eat.

The 446th Bombardment Group, activated in April 1943, was through. It died on its feet, with its boots on, in Sioux Falls, South Dakota. Its death, which began when the first plane crashed in training and the first B-24s were shot down over Germany, was complete.

(The last grizzled survivor was probably Lieutenant Robert L. Meyers, who arrived in Sioux Falls on July 30. His records were lost in Building 500, and at last reports in September he was being checked out on snowplows for the long, hard winter that lay ahead).

The 446th will be meeting with other Liberator groups from all Theaters of Operation to honor that craft which we grew to love and to depend on for our safety some 45 years ago, in Fort Worth 17-21 May 1989. So get your reservations in early and take advantage of the price break. This is anticipated to be the largest turnout of our group since 1945. So, if you want to say hello or something to one of your old buddies, this could well be the best opportunity you will have.

It is my understanding that the 2ADA will be represented at this affair as well, so, Bungay Buckaroos, this is the big one.

Keep tuned to Beachbell.

The 445th Reporting

by Buddy Cross

Unlike many unfortunate mid-western states, our Texas Panhandle area has enjoyed one of its wettest years in some time. The rains have kept the trees, grass and shrubbery beautifully green but are causing more attention on my part to keep the lawn mowed. The Labor Day weekend brought cooler nights and mornings which seemed a little early to me with a hint of things to come. Hope someone put the barbed wire fence back up between Amarillo and the North Pole. Amarillo had their 1988 Air Show the last weekend of August. The Confederate Air Force flew in their B-24 (actually an LB-30) and B-29 four days prior to the Air Show and asked if I would help in organizing a special reception for all who were associated with these two aircraft during World War II. Over seventy signed the register at the reception. Of course there were representatives from all theaters of operation, but many from the 2nd Air Division. Met several unsigned members from other 2nd ADA Bomb Groups and notified their group VPs. Four attended from the 445th with two of those being unsigned members, Eldon Gray and Wesley Rogers, who have since joined. The first week of September, my radio operator, John VanBogelen and his wife Esther stopped by for a visit while on a vacation trip back east. We went out for dinner and of course told many lies, but all of you know how enjoyable these get-togethers can be. Frank DiMola, Mary Beth Barnard and I have been corresponding with the Executive Director of the Northwest Arkansas WWII Museum Association concerning the history of a B-24J, Ser. #42-50506 which was just located last year at its crash site just over the border of Newfoundland in Quebec Province. This aircraft flew with the 491st BG from Jan. 10 to April 5, 1945 and from April 5, 1945 to the end of the war with the 445th BG. The aircraft was being flown back to the States in May 1945 when it developed problems out of Goose Bay and the crew bailed out. The Arkansas Museum is attempting to salvage the aircraft

and the Director has been to the crash site. He found scratched on the fuselage this crew roster: pilot, Adams; co-pilot, Betts; nav., Jackson; eng., Gahring; radio, Kusaj; armorer, Sampson; gunner, Reed; gunner, Tauscher. All these names are shown on the roster of our Group History published by Rudy Birsic but we have no current addresses or information on them. Can anyone help?

Don Toye, Oregon, co-pilot on Jack Farmer's crew in the 703rd Squadron notified me of the death in early August of fellow crew member, gunner A.C. Beckham in Mansfield, TX. Beckham had been contacted recently but never joined the 2nd ADA. I'm sure several of you knew him and he will be missed. Here are some of our new members: George B. Leighninger, Frank P. Mangan, Frederick E. Mueller, Charles J. Platz, Thomas G. Povey, Richard N. Parkes, William F. Powell, Howard D. Kelley and Gerald J. Kathol. Don Toye is trying to locate Jack Farmer, Harold J. Butler, Arthur P. Lennon and Charles F. Standridge. A big thanks to Ed Roloff, WA; Bill Vinton, IL; and Al Seyler, OH for doing a great job in locating members in their areas using old addresses. We really appreciate your help.

Even though it has been only a short time since I assumed the duties of V.P., I regret to announce, for personal reasons, I have submitted my resignation as V.P. of the 445th BG. I will continue, as I have in the past, to try to locate "lost" members and encourage them to join the Association.

This is really a busy but happy time for Al Seyler. Al, who is six feet four and seventy-six years young, let his beard grow out again, got the old Santa Claus suit of the closet, and as he has done for the past fifteen years, makes his rounds as a volunteer Santa to many nursing homes and nursing facilities for adults in the Cleveland area. They love it and so does Al. Keep up the good work, Al. And this being the time of year for Santa, Wanda and I wish all of you a Happy Holiday Season.

Missives from the 492nd

by Bill Clarey

Gerry Merket called me the other day from Tyler, Texas and told me that our good friend Art Raisig had passed away. He had been stricken with leukemia about five weeks prior to his demise. I know that everyone will share the sorrow that I do. Art was shot down while on an early (in numbers) mission and was taken Prisoner of War. Hopefully, he was given his POW medal soon enough. He will be missed.

Had a telephone call from a fellow that lives in San Mateo, California. He advised me that he had seen my bumper sticker about the 8th Air Force. He recorded my license plate and then went to the Motor Vehicle Dept. and paid \$4.00 in order to get my name and address so that he could contact me for an application, which I promptly sent. I have been stopped by four different people inquiring about our organization. So, bumper stickers do pay off.

Next January 14, we will have another dinner and an evening of entertainment by the Air Force Band of the Golden Gate, 39 members, at the Presidio in San Francisco. Last year we had well over 300 people attend. Hopefully, we will have Col. John Doolittle, son of General James H. Doolittle, as honored guest.

Please be reminded to get your deposits of \$50.00 each sent in for the Hilton Head, South Carolina reunion next year.

Since the 491st BG and the 492nd BG shared the same airfield, North Pickenham/Swaffham, the two groups will now be affiliated with each other. We wish to thank the 467th BG for their past courtesies.

At this time, I would like to wish everyone a Merry Christmas and a Joyous New Year and will be looking forward to seeing all of you in Hilton Head.

Sweden Revisited!

by Joe Sirotnak

It's a few years since I wrote the last episode of the Sweden adventure. Precisely, it appeared in the June 1982 issue. Since we want to do these articles every six years, I realized it was time for the next chapter.

In the last article we hinted about our return to the scene of our 1945 adventures in the month of September 1972. Since that time I have returned to that pretty land three times more. I wanted very much to get there last year because in September 1987 there was a reunion of Swedish internees hosted by the city of Vasteras. The air base nearby, Hasslo, was where flyable interned aircraft was gathered, and from where they were repatriated at the end of the war. Regretfully, I could not manage to get there, but it did get me thinking about my own earlier visits.

In 1972 my wife, Monica, and I together with our daughter did visit Rattvik for the first time since I was there in 1945. This small town on the shores of Lake Siljan was where we had been incarcerated from January to April of 1945. But that's another story which we already told.

The best place to hang out in Rattvik in 1945 was the Konditori (coffee shop) owned and operated by the family of Martin and Anna Klingberg. The pastries were fresh baked and utterly delicious. So was the waitress, Gerda, who was gorgeous. I mean like tall and shapely with flaming red hair and a...a..., but that's another story again. Needless to say, we enjoyed ourselves in this cozy establishment.

The Klingberg family were wonderful people consisting of the parents, a son, Rolf, and a daughter, Ulla, both in their late teens. The Konditori was also frequented by many of the younger people from the town. I was twenty years old.

It is now, of course, many years later. We have been able to locate Martin Klingberg who remembered me vividly. This surprised me because I could not remember being so vivid. But, he recognized me almost at once and uttered those forgettable words, "Hello, Joe. You got a little fat, didn't you?"

This exchange was the highlight of the entire trip for Monica, who managed to snicker over it at least once a day for the next two weeks. Sure, I had added a few pounds over the years. I preferred to think of it as normal muscular and structural development. I explained all of this to my dear wife whose response was impossible to decipher due to the incessant giggling.

Back to the real story. Martin Klingberg's son, Rolf, was now a dentist in Mora, about 25 miles north of Rattvik. Ulla had married, bore a son, and was sadly widowed at an early age. She was now employed in the Stockholm office of an American

advertising agency. At this time she was on assignment in Paris for a year. Thus, on this visit we were not able to meet her. We did get together, eventually, but then again that's another story. However, we did manage to spend a few delightful days in and around Rattvik.

In 1945 we had a Swedish army officer in charge of our little group. After a while he became much more a friend than a watchdog. After the war, Torkel (Jimmy) Tistrand returned to his home town of Goteborg where he was employed by the Swedish American Lines. Before departing on our trip we had written to him and had made arrangements to pay him a visit. We had booked a room in the city and we were to meet early that evening for dinner.

At 7 o'clock Monica and I waited in the lobby for Jimmy to arrive. He came through the door and I was able to recognize him instantly. He had changed hardly at all. He came towards us, put out his hand and said, "Joe, I am so happy to see you. You got a little fat, didn't you?"

Jimmy, how could you! My God! The coming weeks of snickers and giggles!

Well, we returned from Europe at the end of September. About a month later we received a nice letter from Ulla who explained how sorry she was that she did not get to meet us. She now mentioned at this time that Mai-britt (that's still another story) had married an American G.I. in 1954 and now resided in California. This was interesting news because we were to be in California in a couple of months on a scheduled trip.

True to our plans we arrived in southern California only two months later. It was Saturday, and we happened to be free of any other matters on that day. So it was agreed that we would attempt to contact Mai-britt. The telephone was answered by a slightly accented female voice.

I spoke. "Is this Mai-britt?"

"Ja. Who is calling?"

I said, "This is a voice from the past."

She replied, "You lousy no good bum. You should be arrested. What kind of person would make crank calls and bother people. You better hang up fast, Buster."

I broke in. "Mai-britt, hold on. I'm sorry. This is Joe Sirotnak. You remember me, I hope. I got your number from Ulla. I'm here in L.A. and I thought it would be great to give you a call."

There was dead silence on the line. It must have lasted for 30 or 40 seconds. I wasn't sure what else to say. Finally she spoke, but she was incoherent. She laughed. She cried. It took all of five minutes to calm her down. When she was able to talk all right we agreed that we would drive to her home which was about 40 minutes distant. It was our intention to

take her and her husband out to dinner. Monica had been able to take in most of the surprising telephone conversation. Her expression had become very grim.

We traveled in our rental car towards the rendezvous. I was looking forward to seeing an old friend after almost 28 years. The conversation in the car was very animated, at least on my part.

Then Monica turned to me and asked, "What does this broad look like?"

"Gosh, Monica. I haven't seen her in 28 years. You know how these Swedish are. They eat pretty good, and they get nice and plump and hefty. I'm sure she's well rounded."

A short while later we were able to locate the street, and then we found the house. I pulled up in front. We looked toward the house, and there standing in the doorway was a woman. Not just a woman, but a tall, red-headed, good looking and shapely woman. Wow!

Now I felt a sharp pain in my side. Monica had viciously jammed her elbow into my rib cage. Her voice next to my ear said, "That better not be Mai-britt." Regretfully...it was.

Now, at this point I was sure that I was in trouble, but I also felt that it was as bad as it was going to get. Wrong! It gets badder as after a noisy effusive greeting with much hugging and kissing (Oh, boy), we entered Mai-britt's home.

In the living room there was a table on one side of the room against a wall. On this table were two 8 x 11 photos together with a number of smaller ones. All of the pictures were of me! Next to these lay a set of silver pilot's wings and some other miscellaneous insignia and artifacts. In front of all this memorabilia a candle was burning. It was a damned altar!

We went out later and had a lovely dinner. All three of us. It seemed that Mai-britt and her husband were well on the way to splitsville and he was not around anymore. Sure, it was a merry happy evening with lots of reminiscing. Monica had very little to say. She stared a lot.

A week later we returned home. I was sitting at the kitchen table going through the mail that had accumulated during our absence. Monica had gone upstairs and I could hear her rooting around. Suddenly - BAM! An object whistled past my head and struck the wall with such force it dented the plaster. I looked down to see what it was. It was a set of wings!

"You lousy S.O.B.! You told me I was the only one you ever gave your wings to. You lying cheating no good rat!"

The feminine logic has always baffled me. We only met in 1950.

I am still not permitted to go to California (without Monica).

Memories of Yesteryear

by Bill Griffiths (458th)



Where do the memories begin? It would have to be at Wendover Field, Utah. I was laying in my bunk when someone started calling my name. Here I am, what do you want? Get your butt down on the line, report the status of your aircraft to Group for training flights! Hey, I haven't been assigned and where in hell is the line? You're assigned to the 754th, so get with it!

So being a "good little soldier," I went to the "line" to find the 754th. Finally I found it and along with it Sgt. Frank Tarulli! So was briefed on my duties and suddenly I belonged to something! That "something" was a tent on the tarmac (called engineering office), 2 aircraft (B-24) and a handful of mechanics. From this small beginning was to grow many a friendship and a damned good Bomb Squadron!

So from one "garden spot" we were assigned to another, Tonopah, Nevada. We grew with more planes, more men and more knowledge. How many men can you get in (or on) a Jeep? I think we found out there in Tonopah! With crews and mechanics all wanting to get to the "chow line," we ferried them whenever possible. Men would be everywhere! As driver, I couldn't see where to go so I'd get my instructions from the men up front. I think my record was 22 people. The Group lost its first plane here on the 20th day of the 11th month, 1943. I don't remember too much about it but can still see the smoke on the horizon, knowing someone was in trouble.

I think we all figured with all this desert training, we sure would wind up in Africa.

Well, from here, we split up into 3 trains to get to our embarkation point - Camp Shanks, New Jersey. My train was the one that went thru the center of the U.S. of A. If you have never ridden on a troop train, count your blessings! We slept stacked 8 high and ate "C" and "K" rations. The Air Force sure taught us "togetherness."

After a short time at Shanks, (also known affectionately as Camp Webb), we loaded up on our luxury liner (a converted merchant ship built by Keyser) and joined one of the bigger convoys to cross the Atlantic to England.

Our crossing was fairly uneventful, typical North Sea weather, foggy and wet. We heard rumors of subs, saw our destroyer screen peel back and heard them drop depth charges. We arrived at our destination in Scotland and disembarked. (The Captain promised to come back in a month and get us but he didn't make it. We heard the ship was lost off the coast of Italy.)

We boarded trucks and were taken to the awaiting trains which took us to Norwich. Then back on trucks to the air base (Horsham St. Faith). We had hardly settled in from our "secret" troop movement when we were welcomed by the "Babe in Berlin" and were told, "Welcome to the war, we will be waiting for you! Good night."

She didn't know how right she was! With the 754th flying over 200 missions from 2 March 1944 thru 26 Feb. 1945, we bombed 130 targets in Germany and 70 in enemy occupied territory, dropping 10,600 tons of high explosive and incendiaries. We were officially credited with 28 "in the air" enemy aircraft destroyed. We flew 83,124 gallons of gas on so called "trucking missions." We lost 19 aircraft and were awarded 6 Battle Stars.

When the hostilities were over, we had 18 aircraft on the "hardstands" with 1,120 sorties. The top six were: 42-95018, 104 missions; 42-96183, 100 missions; 42-51170, 98 missions; 44-40126, 84 missions; 44-40298, 83 missions; and 41-100366, 80 missions.

It was decided to fly our planes home. I was lucky and got the "southern" route from Horsham to the Azores (a week lay over due to weather), thence to Camp Miles Standish in Massachusetts. From there we dispersed to everywhere for Rotation furloughs. Most of us to never meet again. Well, wherever all the mechanics and "fly boys" may be today, I say "Job well done! I miss you!"

Some of the mechanics were: Catalfamo, Kingsbery, Davison, Kleineck, Trombino, Papuga, Scatenia, Happel, Rusczyk, Conner, Schott, Lepper, Dehate, Grabo, Walsh, Linden, Botti, Meyer, Blue, Gunn, Moat, Mayo, Kim, Ingram ...

Channel Incident

by William E. Coleman (445th)

After more than 44 years, this incident is still so vivid in my mind, I felt like sharing the experience with anyone interested. This April 1944 day started as an ordinary mission day, but for the crew of a B-24 named "Steady Hedy," it proved to be most unforgettable. Our target was just inside the coast of France, but due to very unusual circumstances, we did not quite make the coast. Our problem occurred over the English Channel on the final approach to the target. Our bomb bay doors were opened but thankfully the pins on the bombs had not been pulled. We were riding the slot position, behind and below the element leader, when we experienced some minor prop wash which became worse until we were forced to remove all power from our engines. The condition increased until we were completely out of control. The aircraft was snapping 60 degrees to one side and then back to the other side, with such force and speed that we could not keep our hands and feet on the control. The wheel was spinning one side and back the other side. The rudder pedals were going in and out so fast, there was no way the two of us could overpower these forces. The action was strong; with no power on, it caused the props to run away and rev up the engines on one side and then the other side.

All the time we were frozen to our seats by the centrifugal force and no one could bail out. We dropped from 26,000 feet to 12,000 feet in what seemed like a minute and the bombs were banging against the side of the aircraft and the catwalks. The top turret gunner/engineer reported the tail was surely going to fly off any minute since it was twisting to such a degree each direction.

After flipping switches and turning knobs, anything we could find to do, we finally started getting control back and leveled off with great effort, salvaged the bombs in the channel and limped back to our base at Tibenham, sometime after the other planes in our group had landed and reported us as DOWN. We landed the a/c as easy as possible but it was hard since the controls were lax and loose.

We were met at the hardstand by the Squadron engineering officer with, "What in hell did you do to my aircraft?" I could see what he meant when I stood back and looked at the condition of the a/c. The aluminum skin on the fuselage, wings, and tail surfaces was all wrinkled and twisted all over with probably not a rivet in place.

I completed my tour and went back to the States, still not having any hint as to what caused the problem. About 6 months later, I was taking a course for returned pilots in a/c maintenance engineering. When I got to the course on "automatic pilots," the instructor told me what actually happened. The autopilot was running in #2 position ready to be engaged in 3 position when ready. At the moment we hit the first prop wash, the rudder gyro disengaged at the bottom bracket and started swinging free from the top bracket. At the same time the a/p control jumped from warmup #2 position to engage #3 without our knowledge. At 25,000 rpm it took over the 35-ton a/c and came close to taking us into the channel in a very awkward manner.

If anyone reading this was on that flight or remembers seeing us in this violent maneuvering situation, I would like to hear from you. I still thank God for our safe recovery and thank the builders of that B-24 Liberator.



by Jeff Gregory

Greetings from Texas!

This seems to be a relatively dead spot insofar as Group news is concerned. Since you will probably receive "Poop from Group" several weeks before this issue of the Journal is mailed, I will defer to Phil Day for an explanation of matters pertaining to our convention in Fort Worth. I can, however, emphasize the following points. Remember there are *two* requirements for your reservations and deposits. First, send your 467th convention \$25.00 per person deposit to Phil ASAP. This is extremely important for his planning of meals, activities, etc., plus he must arrange for deposits required by the hotel.

Next, separate and apart from the above, send your deposit and reservation for hotel room requirements at the Ramada Central in Fort Worth to the Reunion Project Office, 6424 Torreon Drive, N.E., Albuquerque, New Mexico. This must be done soon so as to preclude giving up our space blocked out at the hotel.

Also, to be included with your reservation is the charge for the "Gathering" activities. This covers all activities listed in your brochure plus bus service, and the Saturday night banquet. We (467th) expect to hold our own convention banquet at the Ramada Inn Central on Saturday night. *Remember* - there are two bases to cover. The 467th convention and the B-24 gathering activities including room reservations. Also, keep in mind that this time the convention lasts for three days but will run from Friday through Monday a.m. We do expect many people in on Thursday, however.

Fred Holdredge called to report he is making good progress on his project to locate all 790th Squadron personnel. He asked that all 790th men search their records, particularly for medal orders, or any orders showing home town locations. If found, please make a copy and forward to Fred Holdredge, 2901 Friendship Road, Durham, North Carolina 27705. Fred says it is amazing how many men return to the old homestead as we get older, so please give Fred a hand with this worthwhile project.

Well - I told you I would ask in every Journal - have you sent in your deposits for Hilton Head and Norwich??? Remember, no sympathy if you run out the string. Let's go - sit down right now and do it. \$50.00 each is all it takes. Almost 400 rooms in Norwich have already been spoken for.

Roger Hastings, son of David and Jean Hastings, has made a most gracious and generous gesture to the 467th. It seems that Roger has purchased property on the old Rackheath base, from which he expects to operate his business. He has offered to donate a small piece of ground on this property for the erection of a suitable marker commemorating the 467th presence during the war. This property would be deeded over to the 467th BG Association and would forever remain our little bit of England. A most generous offer which I took pleasure in accepting in the name of the men of the 467th BG. Incidentally, "Daddy" Hastings is recovering rapidly from surgery and will be 100% again soon.

Now, I'm going to preach again. It is so easy to take things for granted. For example, do you all realize it costs about \$1,000 to publish each issue of "Poop from Group?" Now, strangely

enough, we can't do it on Phil Day's good looks. We can't even do it on my good looks. We can only do it with your contributions. Stop and think a moment. We pay no dues, we like and look forward to the "poop," and we *do* forget to send a few bucks now and then to support it. That's so true for most of us. Christmas is a great time to budget a few dollars as a gift to the 467th. Send Phil a check today.

While we're on the subject of money, I will remind you that we have established the Albert J. Shower Fund in order to finance future projects such as the Rackheath Marker mentioned earlier. We are all privileged to contribute to this most worthy fund in the months and years ahead. Incidentally, Col. Shower has relocated. You can reach him by writing to 23790 Cushenbury Drive, Moreno Valley, CA 92388.

When you receive this Journal, we will be almost ready to inaugurate our new President. Whoever he may be, Republican or Democrat, let's remember our country transcends political parties. So let's give him a hand up, a prayer, and roll up our sleeves and go to work. Let's make it the best country it can be.

Now, Terry joins me in sending Holiday Greetings to you all. May the New Year bring you all you wish for. For goodness sake, lay off the mashed potatoes, gravy, butter, bread, cookies, pie, ice cream, candy and booze. If you can find anything else worth having - enjoy. See you in May.

Convention Info

I hope that the following will answer questions received to date.

1989 - HILTON HEAD

Costs, schedules of events, etc. will appear in the Spring issue of the Journal. We will have transportation available from Savannah Airport to Hilton Head.

1990 - NORWICH

Costs, schedule of events, etc. will be mailed to those with advance reservations after our committee returns from Norwich in June 1989. Anyone not having sent in a deposit and wishing to have this information, please drop me a line and I will put your name on the mailing list.

In order to facilitate travel arrangements, we will be working with a travel agent who will represent the airline we have chosen to handle this trip. This will enable those of our members who wish to travel in groups to do so from various cities around the U.S. We will again reserve two trains from British Rail to take us from London to Norwich, however, this time it will leave from Reading and we will not have to go into central London. The travel agent here in Philadelphia will be happy to handle any other reservations you will need for trips after the convention and to coordinate any arrangements you wish with other 2ADA members. We will mail brochures, etc. early next year.

Evelyn Cohen
06-410 Deltaire Landing
Philadelphia, PA 19114
(215) 632-3992

The Flight Jacket That Wouldn't Quit Flying

by Pete Becker



Today the A-2 flight jacket has become quite a popular item with many of the younger generation. Mine was in retirement in a closet. I saved it as I did many of the old memories. Both of my grandsons wanted it, but it didn't seem right to wear it just because it was a fad at the time. I held on to it until I found a reason that seemed to justify letting it go.

The jacket started with me in Boise, Idaho in 1943. I was a B-24 flight engineer for Lt. Gus Johnson. We were part of the 733rd Squadron of the 453rd Bomb Group.

After fast but intensive training, we left the United States for South America. From there, across the Atlantic to Africa. We ended up in England as part of the 2nd Division, 8th Air Force. Our new home, mud, rain and all, was Old Buck.

Our tail gunner, Sgt. William Cleary, had picked up a live skunk for a mascot. Naturally we named it "Stinky." Our jacket and our plane had the skunk logo "Stinky" painted on them.

The B-24 "Stinky" got shot up pretty bad after a few missions, but the jacket kept flying.

In 1944 the jacket got a good workout. It went to Berlin in March. It picked up a little fresh blood on Easter Sunday over Tutow, Germany, when angry 109s hit us hard. It was up early June 6 (D-Day) to be over Cherbourg at dawn. Finally in August it went to Hamburg. The jacket had made 30 missions. It was ready to rest a while.

The war ended. I went home. The jacket went with me.

At last the Air Force was no longer my life. I took off the jacket and hung it in my closet. I still got it out once in a while to bring back old memories, but it was now retired. At least I thought it was.

My great nephew Chuck Winslow became interested in the Air Force. He enlisted in the Kansas National Guard. He talked to me about it and told me the status these old A-2 jackets had attained in the modern Air Force.

He was now a crew chief and wanted the jacket badly. I refused and explained the jackets were for flying personnel only.

Chuck is now 2nd Lt. Charles Winslow, Jr. with the 117th Air Refueling Squadron, 19th Air Division. He is now a pilot on active duty. He is wearing my A-2 jacket just as it was in 1944.

The 19th Air Division is part of the 8th Air Force. The jacket, forty-five years later, is still flying in the 8th Air Force.

I guess that's a good enough reason.



Touring the Ruhr

by Clark L. Robinson (389th)

Reading General Kepner's April 1945 "Salute The Ground Man" in the Summer Journal, I was reminded of Touring the Ruhr.

At the conclusion of the war in Europe someone at Second Air Division (or it may have been someone farther up the chain of command) decided to give our ground crews a chance to see the damage wreaked on Hitler's Reich. They arranged for a series of junkets to targets for interested ordinance men, crew chiefs and other normally earth-bound personnel.

The tours gave air crews a chance to show off their flying skills and shared the pride of a job well done with a group of people who had contributed so much to getting our B-24s into the air and onto the targets.

The mood on the flights was generally relaxed (no flak, no fighters). Some of the air crews added extra flourishes like buzzing to the program. One Liberator reportedly flew *under* a bridge just for kicks.

It was pleasant and warm at low altitude. Flying in the co-pilot's seat, I had removed my throat mike when a set of earphones and a hat flashed past from the nose of the aircraft. Dumbfounded, I watched as a head began to emerge from the front gun turret. We had always been told that the turret escape doors couldn't possibly open outside the plane, *but it happened*. Then, as the head and shoulders were being buffeted by the slip stream, I pushed full left rudder to skew the B-24 to reduce the pressure that was sucking my body out of the turret.

I scrambled for my throat mike and called to the crew in the nose that someone was falling out of the turret. Precious moments were lost as they gave me the merry haw haw.

By then I could see the body flopping in the wind and I was certain whoever it was would be hamburger before someone took me seriously. It took every ounce of sincerity to convince someone to grab the bottom half of the body and haul it back into the plane.

I don't know who the "groundpounder" was. I've always wondered if he truly realized how close he had come to being chopped meat. I've also wondered whatever became of him.





458th Bomb Group

by Rick Rokicki

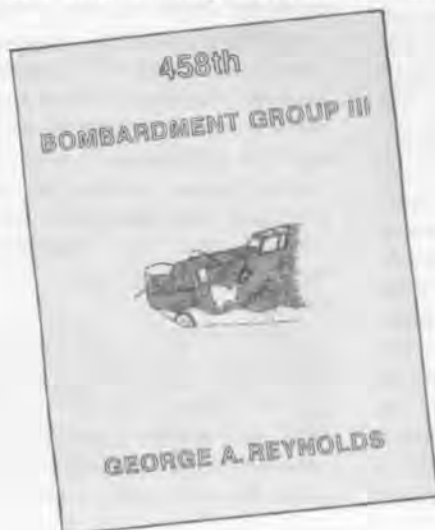
458TH BOMB GROUP HISTORY: Good news, great news! The material has been sent to Taylor Publishing Company, Dallas, Texas, and we have their assurance that the books will be shipped to Birmingham the first week of December 1988. Many thanks to those who have loaned the money to get this project started, and then paid for in its entirety. The checks we received ranged from \$20.00 to \$1,000.00 and were acknowledged with a personal 458th Bomb Group card. Although there were several requests that the book costs be deducted from their "loan check," the bookkeeping involved in this method leaves too many possibilities of mix-ups and clerical errors. Details of how to order your copy (or copies) of the 458th BG History will be found elsewhere in this section.

Regarding the book itself, many changes were made right up until the time the manuscript was submitted. Originally only 400 copies were planned at 80 pages. That soon changed to 500 copies with 88 pages. So did the cost. Needless to say, as we received more money, George was able to improve the contents. Included are various documents, 394 photos, two pages of color photos, all of the mission calendars, a list of our fellow airmen who were KIA and four pages of aircraft serial numbers and "names," plus all memorials will be mentioned and shown. Again, many thanks to all those who have sent George Reynolds photos and info that he needed for this exceptionally complete 458th History. Finally, we had the "extra" money to come up with a cover done with "Final Approach," and a last minute copy of this artwork was just received.

Here's how to get your copy or copies: Send your check or money order made out for \$19.00 each (this includes shipping costs) to:

**George A. Reynolds
416 River Haven Circle
Birmingham, AL 35244**

George's telephone number, for those who might have further questions, is 205-988-8791. Please consider that this is possibly the only chance you will have to get this book. If you decide to order several copies for your children or grandchildren, do it at this time. Once the book is sold out, it's GONE! Don't hesitate or put it off, you may be too late if you wait too long. For those of you who have the first (blue cover, 1974) and second (white cover, 1979) issues, this third and possibly final book is a must. Recently declassified information was made available and the research efforts by George at Maxwell AFB were definitely worth the time and effort. We



think at \$19.00 it is an outstanding value. Again, to get your copy, you must request it from him. In response to those who have requested more than one copy for their families, yes, multiple copies can be bought, and my suggestion is to do it with your **FIRST** order.

Regarding the repayment of the "loan" or advance money received for this project: George Reynolds has assured me that the first payments will begin after January, 1989, and complete repayment by July is anticipated. I wish to thank all those who have written their encouragement (and sent their checks) to George and myself. Finally, my sincere thanks to him for putting together such a fine history of our 458th Bomb Group. Certainly hope that those of you who purchase a copy will drop him a note of thanks and appreciation, because without his time, efforts and knowledge, it would not have been possible.

MEMBERSHIP: We currently stand at 637 members plus 11 Associate members (family). Must admit that more of my time was spent regarding the book financing, but another active "recruiting" effort is now starting. If you correspond with or know of former 458th people who are not members of our Second Air Division Association, please take a few minutes to send me their names and addresses. I really depend on all of you to help me with this membership drive. We're still the largest Group in the Association, but one or two are not far behind.

SQUADRON INSIGNIA: Gene Young advised me that the company he was working with went out of business when the owner retired. Gene did spend some time trying to get this done and the other manufacturer he tried to interest charged too much for the emblems. If anyone in our Group has access to, or information about such a business in their area that can do the Squadron patches at a reasonable cost, please drop me a line. I will send you a photo to get you started for cost estimates. Most emblem manufacturers have a minimum order that they will make, usually it's about 25. In our case, we would need at least 25 of 4 different emblems, "circle" size 4 inches. Those of you who might want to help can use the Summer 1988 issue of the Journal, page 3, to get an idea of the Squadron designs. About 5 or 6 different colors are necessary for each patch. Please advise if you can help.

TAILWINDS: Letter from **Frank Josephson** requesting address of new member **Richard Norris**, who was the crew chief of one of our aircraft which Frank flew on its 100th mission (the aircraft number was not given to me). Frank would also like to know if anyone knows the whereabouts of **Paul Broda** who was also a crew chief. Had a call from **Bob Armbruster** regarding another new member, **Beto Stasunas**, with whom he lost contact. **Bob Morin** writes he's interested in locating new members for the Swiss Internees Association, who recently held their 3rd Reunion at Dayton, Ohio this year. If interested, write to Bob at 71 Grant St., Manchester, NH 03104. Ceil and I attended the area mini-reunion in Princeton, NJ in October. About 175 attended, but sorry to say there were only 3 other 458th members, **Frank Coleman** and **Amisa & Audrey Gilpatrick** with us. We have about 50 of our members who live in the area. **Bradley Associates**, 1704 Gatsby Drive, Montgomery, AL 36106, offers a genuine replica of our WWII A-2 flight jacket. Originally this jacket sold for \$155.00 plus shipping, but by the time I got around to ordering one, the cost had gone to \$175.00 plus \$6.00 shipping. I received mine (size 44, since the size 36 I once wore is now only a memory) and the only thing I found different was that the new jacket didn't have the 3 vent holed grommets under the arms. Otherwise, it was 100% authentic. Clyde W. Bradley, former B-17 pilot, is the fellow whose company will make the jacket. I have seen similar "A-2" jackets advertised from 195 to 295 dollars, so if you're interested, drop them a line and tell them you saw it mentioned in the 458th column of the 2ADA Journal and the Association will get a \$5.00 "rebate" for each jacket sold. Sad to advise you that three more of our members passed away recently; **Bill Cuculich**, **Ray Peters** and **Bill Stuckey** have folded their wings.

LAST REMINDER: The reservations for Hilton Head Island reunion/convention are more than 80% full. If you have any intention at all of being there and have not yet made your reservation, please do it soon to avoid disappointment. **George Reynolds** plans on being there, so why not make a special effort to meet him and personally thank him for the new book.

The 754th Mechanics Remembered

by Bill Griffiths



As They Wuz

1st Row: Arvel Brannum, Robert Switzer, William Bias, Robert Lepper, Angelo Sacco. 2nd Row: Bradford Davisson, Joseph Rusczyk, George Botti, Earl Dewey, William Scatena, Edward Dabrowski, Marvin Cox. 3rd Row: Tommy Walsh, James Powell, Edward Lobdell, Renata Basurta, Frank Delesso, John Erzog, Howard Stephens. 4th Row: May Papuqa, Robert Horn, Charles McComb. 5th Row: Leonard Rathton, Edwin Lindhof, Marion Rudgers, John Colwell, Leche Shroyer, Fred George, Andrew Dean.

For the "almost forgotten men," a remembering for all of them who kept the "sky jockeys" and "fly boys" airborne! No, I was not one of "them"! I was an 18 year old "pencil pusher" in the engineering office, not too impressed by all that was going on around me. It was just another day's duty. Years go by and one day things creep into your memory and you begin to appreciate all they did!

I was with the 754th at the beginning — Wendover Field, Utah; Tonopha, Nevada. I saw most of them come when all we had was one "A" frame, one array of lights, and one work stand.

"On the line" we worked out of a tent. I was there when the first three B-24s were assigned and saw the pride in their eyes when they were "given" one to "mother." To name some of the early arrivals — Bob Moat, Peter Martin, Charley Wade, Bob Myers.

Early air crews I remember? Goldsmith, Raiter, Stilson and Harris. But mechanics? I remember them all! I ate, slept, and worked with them. All were equally proud of their "bird." And Lordee! They worked

around the clock to "keep 'em flying."

I remember the hurt look in their eyes when we had our first crash in training at Tonapah. The excitement of their first combat mission. This is what all the getting ready was about! The pride of the takeoff, the time spent sweatin' out the return of the planes. The return of that one special plane that was theirs! Hoping not to see any red flares. The excitement at the hardstands with the returning crews, then the hours of checking for damage and making the big bird operational again for the next time. All but major maintenance was done at the hardstands. Rain, cold, fog made no difference — by flashlight they repaired the oil leak in #2, checked out the hydraulic system of whatever the air crew reported that needed attention. Then some shut-eye to be ready to do it all again early the next morning.

May I name a few?

Tony Trombino — Crew Chief of "Hell's Angel" — 50 missions, no aborts.

John Erzog — Crew Chief of 41-29305 — "I'll Be Back." The ship lived up to its

name, as many aborts as completed missions (41).

Johnny Kim — Crew Chief of "Bomb Totin' Mama"

Joe Rusczyk, Max Papuga, George Botti of #295 — Down over Tutow.

Ed "Doc" Dehate of 42-95018 — 104 missions!

The list goes on! They represented 20 different states. One VE Day, the 754th had "on the hardstands" 18 aircraft with 1,120 sorties credited to them, 12 of them with 50 or more sorties.

Well, fellows, wherever you are today, all I can say is thanks for a job well done. Through your time and effort, the "big one" probably came to an end a little sooner!

Where are you — Jim Connors, Paul Catalafamo, Reuben Happle, Al Engelese, Peter Mayo, Edwin Lindlief, Angelo Sacco, Bruce Brabo, Steve Braun, Arnold Holcomb, Robert Lepper, Jack Kinsbury, John Kleineck, Howard Tibbitts, John Ingram, Ed Dabrowski — and all the rest?

GENERAL ORDERS
NUMBER 128

CITATION

The 392nd Bombardment Group (H), 2nd Air Division, is cited for outstanding performance of duty in armed conflict with the enemy on February 24, 1944. The Group dispatched thirty-two (32) B-24 type aircraft, the maximum number available, to bomb the most valuable single target in the enemy twin engine fighter complex, the aircraft and component parts factory at Gotha, Germany. Of these, one was forced to turn back shortly after take off. Flying as the lead Group of the second Combat wing in the Division formation, they were attacked by the enemy upon entering the Dutch coast. In the bitter aerial battle that ensued, the Group was viciously attacked for over two and a half hours by approximately one hundred and fifty (150) enemy fighters, consisting of FW 190s, ME 110s, ME 210s and JU 88s, who raked them with cannon and rocket fire and even attempted air to air and cable bombing in vain effort to disrupt the formation. As the 392nd Bombardment Group (H) neared the initial point, the units of the lead Combat Wing were observed to be proceeding on divergent courses. The Group was faced with the decision to follow the lead units of the Air Division to a questionable target and maintain the integrity of the Division formation or to pursue a separate course that might later prove to be erroneous and which would expose the Group formation to even greater enemy attacks. The Group chose the latter, and maintaining perfect formation, valiantly fought its way through the flak defenses to bomb the target with pin-point accuracy, virtually destroying it. Although seven of their aircraft were lost to the relentless enemy in the battle into and from the target, and an additional thirteen aircraft suffered battle damage, they accounted for the confirmed destruction of sixteen enemy fighters, the probable destruction of one and the damage of five additional fighters. The destruction of this high priority target was a serious blow to the GAF and was a contributing factor to its impotency in the invasion of Continental Europe. The aggressive courage, determination to their task at all costs, and combat efficiency of the air crews together with the professional skill and devotion to duty of the ground personnel of the 392nd Bombardment Group (H) have reflected great credit on themselves and on the armed forces of the United States.

BY COMMAND OF MAJOR GENERAL
KEPNER:

FRANCIS H. GRISWOLD
Brigadier General, U.S.A.
Chief of Staff



392nd B.G.

by
John B. Conrad

This report is devoted to Colonel Myron H. Keilman's article on the participation of the 392nd BG in the historic bombing missions of February 20-25, 1944, nearly 45 years ago. His article follows.

LEST WE FORGET

by Myron Keilman

The Mighty Eighth Air Force's Big Week was February 20, 21, 22, 23, 24 and 25, 1944. A high pressure weather condition stagnated over Germany that allowed visual bombing of strategic industrial complexes during the course of the week. Maximum efforts of all B-24 and B-17 groups took place. Primary targets were Tutow, Rostock and Straslund on the Baltic Sea coast. In the heart of Germany were Magdeburg, Oscherleben, Bernburg, Leipzig, Brunswick, Helberstadt, Aschersleben, Wernigerode, Marburg, Gotha, Schweinfurt. 15th Air Force bombed Regensburg.

The 392nd bombed Helmshedt, as a target of opportunity with fair results on the 20th; another target of opportunity - a fighter airfield at Vorden, Holland on the 21st with good results; a weather recall on the 22nd; and English weather standdown on the 23rd; then Gotha's big Messerschmitt airplane plant (works) on the 24th with outstanding results and finally on the 25th we bombed the airplane plant near Nuernberg (Furth) with excellent results.

The Eighth Air Force lost 50 bombers and 10 fighters that week. 155 German fighters were claimed.

On the 24th of February, the 392nd led the 14th Bombardment Wing. Lt. Col. Lorin Johnson, our Air Executive Officer, was the Command Pilot. Lt. Jim McGregor and his crew, with Lt. Robert Good as bombardier, of the 579th Squadron was the lead crew. Squadron bombardiers were Lt. Zicarellie on Feran/Standers crew of the 576th, and Lt. Joacham, of Lt. Read's crew, of the 578th.

97% of the three squadrons' bombs struck the big Messerschmitt works. The Presidential Distinguished Unit Citation was awarded the 392nd Bombardment Group (Heavy) for outstanding performance. Seven airplanes, with crews, were lost. The following citation tells it all:

Death of an "Ace" Tail Gunner

by Don Toye (445th)

The long distance call came from Moultrie, Georgia. It was Talmadge Suber, now Commander of the American Ex-Prisoners of War, Department of the State of Georgia, formerly our waist gunner on a Lib B-24 shot down on a Munich bombing raid of April 13, 1944, on which I was the co-pilot. He had called to report the death by emphysema of "Ace" Beckham, our tail gunner.

As I mulled over Beckham's characteristics - blonde, handsome face, muscular body, smallish because he had to be small to fit into a tail turret with two 50-calibre machine guns - I suddenly thought, "He saved my life." I had never even considered it before.

You see, this Messerschmitt ME-109 that got on our tail on the raid over Munich shot a big hole in our waist section and started a fire in the wings near our fuel tanks. But Beckham had centered the Messerschmitt in his sights, and his guns sent it down in flames. Since Suber, one of our waist gunners, had confirmed it, that was all that was needed for "Ace" to be given his Ace award for the kill by our Air Command. The trouble was, both ships were knocked out of the sky, and all but myself either killed or taken prisoner. I escaped to Switzerland.

Now that I think of it, if "Ace" hadn't got that fellow, the ME-109 could easily have come back and finished us off completely in our crippled condition. Probably none of us would have lived to tell about it, not even "Ace" himself. But here I am, alive and well, telling about the death of my buddy, who never did get his award after saving the lives of some of his crew members - I hadn't even bothered to get a confirmation after the war was over. He hadn't even asked for that recognition for himself, either.

He was on oxygen at the moment he saved our lives back then, and ironically, here he was on oxygen again, when he died of emphysema. He had never even thought of himself as being a hero - as being the reason that some of his buddies are still alive. Well, maybe he didn't receive the Ace award that he was entitled to, but we that are left will remember him as the "Ace" he was. So long, "Ace." Sorry I didn't get you your award - but you were always an Ace from the start.

Mid-Atlantic Reunion Well Attended

by Fred Meyer

The Mid-Atlantic region of the Second Air Division Association held their fourth mini-reunion on October 1, 1988, with more than 176 in attendance.

The Mid-Atlantic region is made up of New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware, Maryland, and District of Columbia.

The reunion was held at the Hyatt-Regency in Princeton, NJ. Pete Henry of the 44th BG was the chairman, with able assistance as always by Evelyn Cohen, Headquarters.

Eight lucky people took home door prizes, some of which were donated by Rick Rokicki of the 458th BG. The showing of "The Last Mission" and other tapes of the 2nd AD provided the evening entertainment.



Vince Angeloro, Charles Freudenthal and Rick Rokicki



Ken & Martha Raisch and Ralph Belward. Ken was a member of Ralph's crew and they met for the first time in 40 years.



Pete Henry, reunion chairman, with Tara Vison, granddaughter of Milt Stokes of the 453rd, who delivered the invocation.



Jim Dorsey, Marvin Speidel, Bill Booth, Margaret Speidel and Pat & Gene Nowak, all members of the 446th



Harry Beirschmitt, Vince Angeloro, Fred Meyer, Gloria Angeloro, Harry Bradley, Betty Beirschmitt and Faye & Norman Levin, all members of the 489th

The 448th Speaks

by Leroy Engdahl

Before starting with my December article, I would like to ask all readers, especially the 448th, to please send in your \$10.00 annual dues to Evelyn Cohen, 06410 Delaire Landing, Philadelphia, PA 19114.

Each year, about the middle of March, Evelyn sends out to each group VP a list of delinquents in their group for non-payment of dues. So please get your checkbook right now while it's on your mind and mail your check tomorrow. To contact those who forget is embarrassing and extra work and expense. Thanks for sending in your check tomorrow.

By the time you read this article, the 448th will have had their Fourth Annual Group Reunion at Harlingen, Texas where we had special seating in an area roped off and marked "448th Bomb Group." We were recognized over the public address system and we presented to the Confederate Air Force a check for \$500.00 expressing our appreciation for their keeping alive the memories of WWII and keeping all those old aircraft flyable.

Our group took a sightseeing and shopping tour of nearby Reynosa, Mexico, where we had lunch and entertainment before returning to our Sheraton Hotel at McAllen.

Bob Marjoram and his wife, June, from Seething, were in attendance. Bob is chairman of the Wavenly Flying Group, which owns most of the land that was formerly Seething Airfield.

Several other British from the Norwich area also attended the Annual "Confederate Air Show." They were on a group tour to Texas visiting several Texas cities of historical interest.

Special citations were presented to four members of the 448th who flew more than one combat tour. The recipients were: Richard Henderson of Midland, Texas, who flew his second tour in a P-51 Mustang and was credited with shooting down two German fighters; Col. Doug Skaggs of Dallas, Texas, who flew another tour in the B-24 with the 446th Bomb Group; Col. Jack Swaze of Wenatchee, Wa. who flew another tour with the 448th; and LeRoy Smith of Hot Springs Village, Arkansas.

Col. Swaze states that there were a couple more from the 448th who flew another combat tour. They were Art Reyburn and Mal Horton. They do not belong to the 2ADA and we don't even know if they are living. If anyone knows the whereabouts of these gentlemen I would appreciate having their addresses. They were last heard of in the late 1950s.

The 448th is now concentrating on the group's Fifth Annual Reunion, which will be at Fort Worth, Texas in conjunction with the 50th anniversary celebration of our famous B-24 Liberator. The dates are May 17-21.

The 448th has been assigned the Holiday Inn South off IH-35. Cater Lee, Richard Kennedy and myself attended the work/planning session held at Fort Worth Jan. 29-31 and toured the hotel. It is fairly new and real nice with a very friendly staff. Our room cost is \$49.00 per day flat rate.

Each 448th veteran is urged to mail in your \$65.00 down payment right away to "Reunion Project Office," B-24 50th Anniversary, 6424 Torreon Drive, N.E., Albuquerque, NM 87109. You may wish to go ahead and select the events you desire to attend and mail in your check for all. It isn't that much more but it is important to get your check in early, as perhaps Fort Worth will have 10,000 visitors for this great event. B-24 groups from all theaters of combat will participate and each group is to have a special group flag. We will have one you will be proud of, financed by donations from our members.

In keeping with writing a brief profile on our 448th Bomb Group Association Officers, we finish this with the December issue of the Journal:

Cater Lee of Foley, Al. has served his second year on our Executive Committee and has been most active and helpful.

Cater was born July 24, 1921 at Savannah, Georgia. Cater was with our original group going overseas and served as a bombardier on Tom Apple's crew. He completed his 30th mission in July 1944.

Cater stayed in the active reserves and was recalled into service during the Korean War but wasn't sent overseas, so he resigned his commission as Major and returned to civilian life, which in his case proved to be a good decision.

He entered into a business partnership in Birmingham, Al. and it was a success. He wanted to get away from a large city to a quieter environment and moved to his present location at Foley, Al., where his group owns a 39 acre industrial site. They have five modern manufacturing plants and deal primarily in signs and metal forming. They make street and highway signs and have customers in 50 states. They stamp the decks for many lawn mower manufacturers and have

their own lawn mower plant in Selma, Al. They are the largest manufacturer of grandfather clock dials in the United States. They have a new, very modern office building with all the latest equipment.

Cater offers his computer services in keeping up our group roster, list of deceased members, and personal data sheets on our members, as well as being very helpful with our reunion planning and many other things.

Cater is married to a native Texan, Sara, formerly of Wichita Falls. Cater, we sure are happy you are on our team.

Our last living member, that we know of, who flew more than one combat tour with the 448th is LeRoy Smith of Hot Springs Village, Ark. He was a pilot and was 715th Sqdn. Operations Officer and our last Group Operations Officer at the end of the European Conflict.

He was born October 3, 1916 in Wray, Colorado. He lived in Denver until he enlisted in the Army Air Corps one week after Pearl Harbor. He attended the University of Denver and the University of Colorado. He flew most of his missions with lead crews and shared this duty with other squadron and group officers and took longer to complete his first tour than regular crews. The war ended before he completed a second tour. He was responsible for taking the remaining ground personnel back to the States following the defeat of Germany. He was separated from active duty in August of 1946 with the rank of Lt. Col.

In civilian life he was the executive secretary of the Colorado Beer Wholesalers Association. In 1952 he moved to Scottsbluff, Nebraska and went into business for himself as a wholesale beer distributor. In 1956 he sold that business and moved to Carroll, Iowa and purchased another business in the same field. He retired from that business in 1984 and moved to Hot Springs Village, Arkansas where he now resides.

His wife is deceased. He has four children and eleven grandchildren. It is a real pleasure to pay tribute to such a gentleman who did more than his share for our country.

I have a good inventory of B-24 mementos listed in three past issues with prices. Part of the profits go to the 448th Bomb Group Association. Ben Johnson has a good supply of 448th caps.

Thanks for reading, and Merry Christmas, Happy New Year and good health to all.

Folded Wings

44th

Ronald S. Allen, Jr.
James L. Corrigan
Michael Corrigan
Albert Faietti
Harold L. Gulliver
Charles R. Kessler

93rd

Harold E. Coltrane
Howard H. Cook
M/Sgt. Harry E. Jones (Ret.)

389th

William D. Bond
Leo R. Burke
Alfred A. Giretti
E.E. Motley, Jr.
Col. Gregory H. Perron (Ret.)
William H. Rooney
Harry R. Roos
David E. Whiteley

392nd

Harold E. Schildknecht
Palmer W. Taylor

445th

John R. Fosler

446th

Austin P. Lloyd

448th

Wilfred F. Haschke
Robert E. Martin
Maj. Thomas E. Symonds

453rd

Herbert L. Hall

458th

Bill M. Cuculich
William L. French
Dr. Charles E. Mitchell
Raymond Peters
William F. Stuckey
Fred J. Vacek

466th

William A. Cronberger
Richard H. Garlich

467th

Kenneth A. Darney
David J. Dunigan, Jr.
Robert A. Keyes
William R. Novak

489th

Emil Cmaylo
James J. Curry

491st

Robert G. Harrop

492nd

C. Curtis Anderson

I'm Glad He Survived

by Brian Martin

When I went to England in the fall of 1984 for my junior year of college, I hoped that my parents would visit me there sometime in the spring. I would be attending University of Leeds, where I would be in a group of 25 third-year students from Vanderbilt University, participating in what was called "Vanderbilt in England."

You see, my father had been in the United Kingdom during 1944, having been a pilot in the 8th Air Force, flying a B-24 Liberator of the 491st Bomb Group. The base was located near the little village of North Pickenham and my father had longed to return there for a visit someday. He was a member of the 8th Air Force Association and through the association's publications he knew that the old base was now a turkey farm. He knew that there would be very little left of the place as it existed during the summer and fall of 1944. Many times I had heard him say he wanted to stand on the east end of the east/west runway, look down that concrete ribbon one more time to that hump at about the 4,000 foot mark. He hated that hump - his loaded B-24 had a tendency to want to lift slightly as it came over it, yet it was not quite ready to fly.

As it turned out, my parents were unable to come to England during that year, so I knew I must do the next best thing. I would go to North Pickenham and stand on the end of that runway for him.

I wrote to Mr. John Page in Norwich for information about the place, how to get there, etc. He rang me on the phone and we had a long talk, with him giving me information about my father, serial number of his plane, missions and much history of the 491st Bomb Group.

One Saturday in March I went to North Pickenham, part way by train, part way by

bus and then walking from Swafford to North Pickenham, arriving in early afternoon. The most prominent building in town was the Blue Lion Pub. I had heard of the Blue Lion, so I snapped my first picture, and, being my father's son, went in to have a bit of refreshment and seek directions to the old USAF base. Transportation from the village to the base was also by foot, about a 3 mile hike through some very beautiful and peaceful countryside. While walking, I tried to imagine what it was like those many years ago when just after daybreak the quiet of this area would be shattered with the roar of engines and then the filling of the sky with bombers on their way to Germany.

Arriving at the 491st Turkey Farm I ran into a totally unexpected problem. Here I was, a college age man with a camera hanging around my neck and that spelled trouble to the two men who intercepted me as soon as I got on the property. There is an organization in England called the Animal Liberation Front. As the name implies, these people are seeking out and protesting against the abuse of animals, same as our Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, and young people are very active in the organization. Quite a stir was caused by my arrival, the management thinking I must be from the Animal Liberation Front, and was there to take pictures and cause them all sorts of trouble. I told them my story and why I was there - I guess my American accent made my story plausible, so they did give me free run of the place; however, I was never completely certain they believed me.

I began to take pictures but there was very little to record. Some 41 year old concrete with grass growing up through the

cracks was about all that was left of what had been the focal point of my father's life during most of 1944. I guess he lived a whole life during those few months. Growing up, I heard little mention of his war experiences, but in recent years the arrival of the association publications would rekindle his memories and he would reminisce.

At the time I was there, I was just about the same age he was during his time on this base. I tried to imagine me doing what he did, engaging in mortal combat, high above the earth in a very hostile environment, given the primitive high altitude equipment of his day; hoping that his friends who did not return had survived but knowing that some of them had died. I was unable to find an answer as to why it had all been allowed to happen. Why had the blindness of the world leaders of the 20s and 30s made WWII necessary? Then I realized that there are those today who still have not learned that weakness invites attack. Just like a bomber with an engine out.

The thought occurred to me that it was much better to use those runways as floors for turkey houses than for their original purpose.

I took two shots of the east/west runway so as to be assured of getting a good one of the "dreaded hump." While standing there I knew that someday I would like to return with him, and while looking down that old runway, have him tell me what his thoughts were on December 4, 1944, when he was on final approach of his 35th mission, knowing that his combat days were over. He could begin to look forward to getting on with his life when the war would end and get about the business of siring me 20 years later.

I'm glad he survived.

Hethel Highlights

by Earl Zimmerman

At the 389th mini-reunion in Colorado Springs I had the privilege of meeting Rocky Triantafellu, who I last saw in Ankara, Turkey after our planes went down after coming off of the target at Ploesti. I sat next to him at the dinner and he related this story to me: "After we came off of the target the pilot, Captain Mooney, was dead and we had five others on board that were wounded. The co-pilot wanted to set the plane down at the first level area but I talked him out of it and told him to keep it up until I could transfer some gas. The engineer, in the top turret, was wounded and bleeding down both arms and could not get out of the turret. He told me to read the instructions on the bulkhead at the rear of the plane on how to transfer the gas. After spilling some gas, I managed to get the right hoses connected and transferred as much gas as I could. On the way back to the flight deck I noticed a large hole in the bomb bay tank and stuffed my A-2 jacket into the hole but it was washed out and the tank emptied itself.

"Back on the flight deck I managed to patch up some of the wounded and then

removed the pilot from his seat and placed him on the flight deck. One of the gunners took the pilot's seat to help the co-pilot, who was also wounded in the left arm and left leg. The flight deck was filled with the dead and wounded and it was determined that we should try to make Turkey if possible. As the radioman was also wounded, I got out the Aldis lamp and went back to the waist window and sent a message to the plane flying off our right wing. 'Pilot dead, five wounded, heading for Turkey.' I received a reply, 'Fly heading 168, we will follow you in.' We were in sad shape, had one engine feathered, bomb bay doors hanging and there were fighter planes in the area but they did not come in.

"Now tell me Earl, you were the radioman on James' crew, did you send that message by Aldis lamp?"

I replied that I did and he said he had trouble copying my message but was mighty happy to see us flying close formation off their right wing. There were no other B-24s in sight, it was like they all disappeared over the target. Rocky said that he still had the piece



of paper, with Captain Mooney's blood on it, on which he copied my message.

After much back slapping and hand wringing, we talked about the aftermath of our internment in Turkey. Rocky escaped after a short stay and I did not get out of Turkey until December 1943. We never saw each other again until the reunion and then I learned he sent the message.

Major General Rocky Triantafellu was invited to give a short speech at the mini and related how important it was to communicate, mentioning his experience at Ploesti.



NEWS

by H.C. 'Pete' Henry (44th)

As indicated in the Summer 1988 Journal, we held a 2ADA dinner at the Hyatt Regency in Princeton, N.J., 1 October 1988 and there were 18 44thers present. Total attendance was 165. Bernie Glettler sent his regrets, indicating that he and his wife would be on their way to Lompoc, CA for the annual AACCS reunion starting 6 October. Bernie also advised that he won six nights in Switzerland in the Sloan-Kettering Hospital cancer raffle. Congratulations, Bernie! Bert Carlberg couldn't make it because he was involved in a SAS golf tournament. The SAS golf group from Norway, Sweden and Denmark, about 8 from each country, were over to play the USA group. It was the 20th contest and was held at Highpoint Country Club, Montague, NJ.

Will Lundy received a letter from Ian Shuttleworth in England regarding the loss of the last 66th Squadron aircraft and crew returning to the States 13 June 1945. (See Will Lundy's book, "44th Bomb Group - Roll of Honor and Casualties," page 362, 3.) Will has been successful in locating 6 or 7 families of men lost when the plane crashed into the highlands of Western Scotland, and one was Bill Ketchum, brother of pilot Jack Ketchum. Will sent a letter to Ian that arrived a short time before Bill Ketchum and his English wife were leaving for a visit to England. Ian and some of his family were up at the crash site replacing the first plaque with a better and more waterproof plaque when the hotel manager told him that Bill wanted to see him at the crash site. Bill, who was stationed at a depot in England, and Jack had been together a week before the crash and attended the burial of all the men, learning about the crash just one day earlier. Ian and Bill got together and both men gleaned a great deal from the meeting. Ian should now be able to complete his memorial booklet and place a copy of it at the Shieldeig Lodge for visitors to see and read.

I am pleased to report that my very good friend and bombardier, Al Jones, is well on the road to recovery and back on the golf course. Al and Emma Franklin talked to Violes Flanary in Dryden, VA and he is not well. I heard from Joe Warth in July and he says that he is 99.9% recovered from his heart attack. Glad to hear that, Joe. Many 44thers will be looking forward to seeing you in Fort Worth next May.

Charlie Mercer wrote at the end of September to advise that Charlie Kessler passed away 20 September. Will Lundy and I were able to locate Charles Kessler about two years ago and notified Charlie Mercer. Some of Mercer's crew, including Charles Kessler, got together at the 2ADA convention in Colorado Springs last June and had planned to get together again with the whole crew next May in Fort Worth. The crew will be missing two men now, Sid Kipness and Chas. Kessler. Chas. (Mercer) says it's later than you think.

Regrettably, we never found John J. Ryan, Jr. until it was too late. One of our members from another group sent me a newspaper article reporting the death of John, 6 Sept. 1988. He was a B-17 and B-24 pilot and did public relations work for the 44th BG. His publications included illustrated booklets on the Trolley Missions as well as bombing runs made by the 44th BG over Northern Europe. Another good friend from the 506th Squadron, Ron Allen from Muskogee, OK, passed away in early July.

I recently recruited William T. Hulsey, 68th Squadron, from Eastaboga, AL. Bill was with the 44th from December 1940 until June 1945 and would like to hear from some of his old buddies who may remember him. Just add Box 233 and Zip 36260 to the above address and I'm sure he'll be delighted to hear from you. A couple of other new names joining the 2ADA are Nathaniel H. Jeter, 68th Squadron, who sent me an address for Edwin R. Ford; William J. Clower; and Leslie A. Wilkerson, 67th Squadron, who is looking for the rest of his crew. I sent him three names and addresses - all I have.

R.E. "Dick" Bottomley wrote on Labor Day to inform me that he has a new supply of 8-Ball T-shirts. Write to him at 4509 Morrice Rd., Owosso, MI 48867. White only, sizes S-M-L-XL.



(l-r): Bob Dubowsky, "Gooch" Arms, & Joe Testa (deceased); kneeling, J. Gegenheimer.

Irma and Bob Dubowsky, 66th Squadron, had a most pleasant and interesting trip from Florida to Colorado Springs for the 1988 convention. They stopped off in St. Louis to see Lester "Gooch" Arms who was on Joe Testa's crew with Bob, and "Gooch" gave Bob a picture of four crewmen which will be reproduced in this article if possible. "Gooch" put Bob in touch with J. Gegenheimer, the flight engineer living in New Orleans, and the Dubowskys stopped to see them on the way home from Colorado Springs. "Gooch" also gave Bob a telephone number to call in New Orleans but wouldn't tell him who it was. When he called the number, it was George Collins, who taught him to fly the AT-9 at Moody Field, GA. The last time they saw each other was when George pinned the pilot's wings on at graduation, Class 43-K. Bob is still talking about what a great reunion they had with the Collinses and the Gegenheimers, and, of course, "Gooch" and his wife.

Forrest Clark sent me two letters in September, one inviting me to set up a mini-reunion of 44th people down near him in Florida. I wrote back and told him if he can arrange the mini-reunion, I'll try to attend! During a visit to New York in August, Forrest visited the Union Field Cemetery in Queens, NY and left a special memorial for T/Sgt. Abe Sofferaman, who was killed in action flying with the 44th on a mission to Frankfurt, 29 Jan. '44. Will Lundy's book, "44th Bomb Group Roll of Honor and Casualties," page 156, reports that radioman Sofferaman parachuted safely to earth but was later killed by Secret Police. The memorial that Forrest left at the cemetery includes a list of Abe's fellow crewmates.

Several people have asked me for a roster of 44thers, and I will receive a new quarterly printing on or about 15 Oct. '88. If anyone would like a copy, I'll have it Xeroxed and mailed to you for \$5.00.

From the last statement, you can probably surmise that this is being written in the early part of October. I haven't yet acquired the holiday spirit, but, you'll be reading this in December, so let me wish you all Seasons Greetings and a Happy New Year.

True Dedication: Crew 55 of the 448th

by B.D. Bottoms

"Where's Sgt. Sansburn?"

"Here, Sir," replied Sandy, our tail gunner, as he climbed out of the tail of B-24 "044" by way of the camera hatch, where he had been checking out his turret.

"Sgt. Sansburn, you've got more guts than you have sense."

This vocal exchange was addressed to S/Sgt. George S. Sansburn by Capt. Thomas J. Keene, pilot of crew 55, 714th B.S., 448th Bomb Group, 2nd Air Division, 8th Air Force, stationed at Seething, just south of Norwich, England. Time: Approximately 04:00, June 20, 1944.

Although Sgt. Sansburn had finished his combat tour (30 missions) on June 12, 1944, he elected to continue flying until crew 55 completed their remaining two missions, explaining, "that HE was the tail gunner of Capt. Keene's crew and that he would need no replacement." No amount of persuasion from his fellow crew members could change his mind, not even the sight of the long trip to Politz, Germany, when the curtain was drawn to expose the briefing room map, revealing the fact that operations had run out of red tape while mapping the mission to the oil refineries at this faraway city, some 600 miles from Seething.

After no sleep, Crew 55 was called at 01:00 for briefing at 01:45. As we dressed, talk was somewhat nil, as experience had taught us that an early briefing generally meant a long mission. Sandy was not called, but he dressed anyway, determined to go with us. Flashlights were in order as we walked to combat mess for early morning chow. G.I. trucks were waiting at the mess hall to shuttle the airmen to the briefing room after breakfast.

The crowded, smoke-filled briefing room, with everyone trying to talk at once, seemed to calm the nervous crewmen. Attention was called for and as the room quieted down, the briefing officer opened up the curtains, revealing the long mission. Red tape ran for miles, it seemed, across the map. A generalization of the mission, pointing out flak areas, probable fighter attacks and identification points along the way, were given to the airmen, who usually sat together as a crew. After a prayer by the Chaplain, the general briefing was over. Special briefing was afterwards given to the pilots, navigators, bombardiers and radio men.

In the locker room after briefing, the airmen proceeded with the task of getting dressed. The dress code was as follows, in this order: Usually long handles were put on over summer underwear. A pair of silk socks, followed by G.I. socks. Then the heated flying suit, heated boots and finally a regulation flying suit. The throat mike was next and then the scarf. Fleece lined flying boots were put on over heavy logger's socks (if you had them). The Mae West (life preserver) was then put on over the neck and secured around the waist and between the legs. Then the parachute harness was put on. At last came the flight helmet and oxygen mask. On our hands we put a pair of silk gloves, our heated gloves, and finally, a pair of heavy gauntlets. The steel helmet, without the liner, was taken along as added protection against flak, to be put on in the combat areas. You are almost dressed now. The 40 lb. flak vest, to be put on later, was provided at the plane site.

An entirely different looking group of airmen emerged from the locker room to be "tumbled" aboard the big G.I. trucks and shuttled to their respective aircraft. At the hardstand, the crew chief and his ground crew assisted the aircrew in preflight inspection. Finally, only minutes before engine start, the pilot, Capt. Keene, arrived and his first order of business was to summon Sandy and commend him for his courage and his devotion to his crew. The entire crew was happy about Sandy's decision.

Time to start engines found everyone in their take-off positions, except the writer, and it was my duty, as Assist. Flight Engineer, to stand by, outside the aircraft, for engine start. First, the whine of the starter on #3 engine. As the starter is engaged, the propeller begins to turn; a cough, a cloud of smoke emits, and life comes to the 1830-42 Pratt and Whitney. Likewise #2 is cranked, then #1, and finally #4. The ground crew pulls the wheel chocks as I enter the plane through the open bomb bay doors and take my place near the put-put (auxilliary power unit) behind the flight deck.

Since we are deputy lead today, we have a group co-pilot. (Sorry, I can't remember his name or rank). Bing (T/Sgt. G.C. Bingham) is at his station between the pilot and co-pilot as we taxi out from our hardstand onto the taxi strip. Aircraft, all around the perimeter of the base, start their engines, come to life, and start jogging for their takeoff position. Along the taxi strip, with their brakes squealing and hydraulic pumps screaming, the heavy, bomb-laden bombers line up like a group of hostile wasps, awaiting their turn to take off at 30 second intervals. As the lead aircraft stops at the end of the runway for engine run-up and mag check, our pilot does likewise.

At 04:30 the green light is given and mission No. 29 for crew 55 is on the way. 30 seconds after the lead aircraft has departed, Capt. Keene shoves the throttles forward and we start our roll down the runway. Four powerful radial engines whine and moan as they reach 2700 rpm and 47 inches of mercury, necessary to lift our B-24 Liberator off the ground. Power is reduced to 2200 rpm as we climb to catch our checkerboard formation aircraft that will lead us to the marker beacon for group formation. As we circle the beacon following the checkerboard while climbing to altitude, other aircraft from the 448th join in the chase as they take off from the base. After the group had formed, we left the English coast at 07:15 at 8000 ft. We were to climb on course to obtain an altitude of 22,000 ft. at the target.

On our bomb run, with bomb bay doors open, we were hit by intense and accurate flak. I was looking into the bomb bay to check our bomb release when a burst of flak exploded right underneath our aircraft. The smoke and flame was so terribly awesome. At 22,000 ft., we continued our bomb run. At bombs away, our plane nosed over and started into a steep dive. No need to try to get to our chutes, because we could not move. The flak had damaged Capt. Keene's oxygen and when he passed out, he fell forward on the control column. Bing was out of the top turret in a flash and proceeded to get oxygen to our pilot and help the co-pilot get control of the falling aircraft. This was accomplished after a descent to 18,000 ft. An urgent call from Lt. Ed Moran on the intercom, "Hey, is this damn thing still under control?" broke up the deadly quietness of our exciting dive. Upon regaining command of the aircraft, Capt. Keene called T/Sgt. Wm. J. Demetropoulos, radio operator, to call for fighter escort, since we were some 5000 ft. below and miles behind our group and fighter support. Demo reported that the radio was out of order, so he was ordered to fire coded flares asking for fighter support. Likewise, the flare gun had been damaged. About that time, I reported that a P-51 was out on our right wing. Shortly afterwards, another P-51 appeared on the left wing. What we found out later at the base was that Lt. Lester Miller, our operations officer, saw us go down and failing to contact us on the radio, ordered fighter cover for us. We were really thankful and happy to see those beautiful Mustangs. One of the P-51s was the "Galveston Gal," which really excited our ball turret gunner, S/Sgt. Fred Krepser, since he was from Galveston, Texas. By this time we were out over the Baltic Sea.

Upon surveying our damage, we found that our hydraulic system, elevator cables, nose and tail turrets and radio had been damaged. All four engines were running perfectly, one gas leak in the bomb bay was repaired. When Bing reported the damage to Capt. Keene, our pilot asked the crew if we wanted to go to Sweden, within view below, and be interned for the duration of the war, or try to get back to England, 600 miles away. The vote was unanimous to go home. Thus, our long trek over the icy waters of the North Sea to England began.

Since we had our fighter support, we were ordered to dump any loose weight, such as ammo, flak vest, etc. overboard. A gradual let-down was made as we neared the English coast. As soon as we were below the freezing altitude, Sandy had to relieve himself of his dirty underwear. Since flak had shattered the plexiglass on his turret while he was still in it, he blamed his accident on the "Screaming G.I.s" rather than being half scared to death???

As we approached the base, red-red flares (distress signal) were fired from a bomb dropping device located in the nose of the aircraft. After cranking the landing gear down by hand, and lowering the wing flaps with the emergency hand pump, Capt. Keene brought our big damaged bird safely down on the runway, by using the trim tabs to assist the landing. As we touched down, we all rushed to the rear of the aircraft in order to drag the tail skid to stop our roll, since we had no brakes.

Col. Gary Mason, our group commander, was at the plane when we came to a stop to greet us and to pass around his pack of Chesterfields. He remarked how happy he was to see us, as they had been concerned about our whereabouts the past few hours.

Upon checking on "044" we found over 200 flak holes, both nose and tail turrets with all the plexiglass gone, plus the damage mentioned earlier.

We are greatly indebted to our Merciful God, and the best pilot and engineer in the world for our safe return to our base. Sandy's dedication was most remarkable, since he returned for yet another extra mission in order to finish with his cherished crew. This true dedication of S/Sgt. Sansburn will long be remembered by the members of crew 55.

2ADA Southern California Golf Tourney

by Charles McBride



Fred Thomas and Harry Orthman take heat at 2ADA golf scorer's table.

As an adjunct to Fred Thomas' fine article which appeared in the Summer 1988 Journal: Our Southern California members have scored again with the third annual golf tournament, which was held on 12 August at the Navy Golf Course, Los Alamitos. These golfing events, when combined with our annual reunion dinners, have now become tandem events for the Southern California area; that is, they are now spaced apart by six month intervals, and offer another opportunity to rejoin with our WWII comrades for both pleasure and reflections.

The golf tournament was chaired by Harry Orthman (492nd/44th BGs), assisted by such stalwarts as Dick Boucher and Charles Walker (both 445th BG), Fred Thomas (392nd BG) and Charles McBride (448th BG). The event consisted of an eighteen hole tournament with specially designed 2ADA trophies for the several winners, gifts for all lady entrants, and numerous door

prizes for those holding winning tickets in the drawing. Again, each golfer received a California lottery ticket in his initial gift packet ... meaning potential winnings of millions. Players were permitted to enter the tournament and compete for prizes with an established handicap, or play under the Peoria scoring system if they had no handicap. Forty-two golfers teed it up to thunderous applause (mostly verbal abuse) and were off on another mission for glory.

When all hands gathered at the scorer's tent about four and a half hours later, a trauma wafted over the crowd such as hadn't hit the 2ADA members since the 445th BG self-destructed over Kassel in September 1944. Of all things, a visiting B-17 jock, Lee Alderdice, had scored low gross for the day. It seems our more dependable golfers such as Dick Boucher, Chuck Walker and Dick Butler had thrown their wheels early in the game. Two out of bounds and three in the water will ruin your

day. Since Fred Thomas was playing with an obscene handicap, some composure was regained when it was announced that he had been awarded low net for the day. He shamelessly accepted the award with a broad smile of self-satisfaction. Most other awards went to 2ADA people or visitors. The closest to the pin trophy went to Robert Davis (392nd BG), and longest drive prize went to visitor Ed Woolderidge. The lady winners were: Low gross - Jan Cravens, visitor; and low net went to Pat Roberts. Most honest golfer trophy went to Frank Brinkworth (he counted all his strokes). Oh, the big winner of prize money. That, too, was won by Fred Thomas; all of \$10.00. He quickly gave his lottery ticket to wife Elva, lest he lose his amateur standing. The writer apologizes to the Peoria winners - unable to obtain those scores at press time.

Following the golf exercise and the trophy awards, a steak dinner with all the trimmings was served to golfers and the several members who came just for the general camaraderie of being with WWII friends again. Although not golfers, especially welcomed were our national 2ADA President, Bud Chamberlain, and his wife, Mike. Also, Robert and Ruth Powers drove up from Escondido to be with us. Several others also came just for visiting. All those who have such interest in our meetings are welcomed and appreciated.

Since Southern California is one of the most popular vacation areas of our nation, we urge and invite any 2ADA member who expects to be in the area next August to join us for this outing. We guarantee a fun-filled good time. Details can be obtained by writing any of the golf committee. Addresses are in the 1986 roster, or if preferable, phones are: Harry Orthman (714) 581-0755; Fred Thomas (714) 536-2294; Charles McBride (213) 541-5381; Dick Boucher (714) 544-7484; Charles Walker (714) 526-4248. You will be expected.

Donations for Stained Glass Window

by Earl Zimmerman

For those of you who have donated to the stained glass window for the Carleton Rode Church, Aaron Schultz has asked me to thank all of you, but the list is too long to include here. During the mini, a B-24, sand-blasted into a ¼ inch plate glass and mounted in an oak frame, was raffled off and won by Kenneth Smith of St. Helens, Ore. He immediately walked over to the table of William Martin, one of the survivors of the mid-air over Carleton Rode Church in November of 1944, and presented the B-24 to him. A standing ovation for Ken Smith. He later confessed to me that he hated to part with the B-24 but thought it was the thing to do, as the money (over \$450) went towards the stained glass

window for the church. Our thanks to Ken for his thoughtfulness.

UPDATE ON THE WINDOW for Carleton Rode. The drawings for the window are now in the hands of Charles Harvey of Carleton Rode and will have to be approved by the Church of England, but I have been assured that it is just a formality, as the window does not contain anything objectionable. I hope to present an actual size drawing to the members of the 389th during our next reunion at Hilton Head. Plans now are for the dedication of the window for our return to Norwich in 1990, so get in your reservations now, it will be a ceremony to remember. Many dignitaries will be on hand.

The window fund has reached the neighborhood of \$1200.00 and if everything goes according to plan, that sum should be sufficient. Shipment of the window will hopefully be made by the U.S. Air Force, as I have Space A privileges, and arrangements are being made now for an Air Force Chaplain to accompany the window to England. As a matter of fact, he volunteered for the job.

If you have any questions regarding the window, please contact me, or if you need information regarding the fund, contact Aaron Schultz, P.O. Box 18, High Point, NC 27261.

It Was Cold!

by Ed Wanner

It was cold alright. I don't know really how cold, but for a kid from Ohio it was cold! Tibenham may have weather records, but I never really cared enough to substantiate the meteorological files to see if there were signs of an approaching Ice Age. For someone convinced that, after the war, there was no point in suffering through bone-chilling, teeth chattering, shivering, and hypothermia – and most of us didn't even know what hypothermia was – an English winter was too cold and too damp!!!

When I awoke one morning and pushed aside four or five layers of blankets, it might have startled some of my crew to discover that I was even sleeping in my cot. It sagged so much that I could have had company in the sack and with my five layers of blankets no one would have been the wiser. Anyway, being alone and cold as usual, I sat up and quickly started getting a pair of socks on over my blue toes. When Sandy, my navigator, said something about my hair getting gray, it really didn't register. After all, I had about six gray hairs when I was in high school and people had been kidding me about that ever since.

This time my hair was white. A crack in the hut window sill had let some snow drift in during the night. Well, usually my head was buried under blankets but I must have come up for air and carelessly neglected to submerge again.

It just seemed that we never got warm. When we flew at high altitude (high for those days) the cockpit heater didn't work. The electrically heated suits would short-out with little wisps of smoke curling up from our back. Naturally when we were getting burned we turned them off and then our hands in the electrically-heated gloves got so cold that we could hardly feel the throttles. The gunners in the waist must have been even colder when the waist windows were open. No wonder they got frostbitten necks. We sometimes got obsessed with getting warm, probably like POWs got obsessed with visions of food, warm homes, pretty girls, and bashed Germans.

Having been unable to thaw out for what seemed like an eternity, it didn't take much urging from somebody for me to contemplate committing a felony. It isn't clear anymore in my memory how we rationalized our way out of the guilt feelings of stealing from the government, although some of our current high officials seem to have developed it into a fine art. Being old fashioned though, maybe we said that we were trying to avoid freezing to death.

Everyone called it a "midnight requisition." The coal pile for the base was in a barbed wire enclosure about 100 feet by 100

feet. One night we were getting a little desperate to get warmed up, since we had been up in the "cold blue" flying a practice mission. It was a very foggy night, which we felt would aid the five of us. We made our way to the coal pile with some difficulty, with a visibility through the fog of about 10 feet. Someone wanted to sing "the Five Blind Mice" but wiser heads reminded us that fog didn't completely block out sound. Two of us got hoisted over the barbed wire with big "parachute bags," etc. When we had them full of coal we'd hand them back over the fence. The mission had to be considered a success since we didn't get shot by M.P.s.

We didn't fly the next day, so our co-conspirators in the hut built a little "coal bin" just inside our "black-out" back door. Instead of a meager 1/2 bucket of coal for the hut per day, we had come up in the world to about two buckets full. Our popularity increased among the other huts and we often had visitors drop by who wanted to get toasty warm.

All good things (including felonies) must come to an end. (By the way, I hope the statute of limitations has run out.) One day our (C.S.) Base Deputy Commander, with nothing better to do, inspected the huts in our squadron. Naturally, he asked some embarrassing questions and wanted to know where we got all the coal. We explained that we'd been saving it for several weeks. He didn't seem to believe that – but no proof. However, he did make us tear down the bin. We were going to quit anyway, because of the risk of an M.P. spotting us.

Getting shot by an M.P. would be too embarrassing, if not inglorious, after being shot at regularly by German flak and fighters. Furthermore, our technology took a quantum leap. Without mentioning names, like Farr, someone in the hut with engineering skills got some pipe and valves from the maintenance hangar plus a large ancient oxygen bottle from a wrecked B-24. The next step was a visit to a hangar which stored some old engine oil – probably another foggy night, and there were lots of those. I believe the term this time was to "liberate" the oil for humanitarian purposes.

Our hut genius filled the oxygen bottles with oil and hooked it up so that a pipe ran from the oxygen bottle down under the linoleum floor, and up into our oil barrel stove. Whoever got up first in the morning would turn on the valve, open the stove door and try to get it lit. Well, the idea was brighter than the flame, which didn't burn very well. Somehow we found out that we had to mix oil with 100 octane gas to make it ignite and burn hot! Pretty exciting to be the one to light it 'cause it would act like a flame

thrower – a big whoosh, with the added gasoline. We had to stand back and around the corner so the flame wouldn't singe us!

The gasoline-oil mix worked so well that our stove would glow cherry red. My co-pilot was afraid the stove might melt down when we had it going too "good," but at least it certainly heated up K-rations in a hurry. There was a problem, though, because lots of black smoke came out of the chimney. This would make it obvious that we weren't just using our little one-third bucket of coal for heating.

We confined our heating comfort to after dark. Duane (the other crew's co-pilot) tried to light some wood one time with a shell from his flare pistol. It was dramatic! Yellow and red flares balls were coming out of our stove pipe chimney. The light leaking through the stove door was a brilliant green. It was a great and beautiful idea, but it didn't light the wood. We even bought a tree stump one time and after working hard to try and chop it up, found that it was practically fire-proof. At least the chopping warmed us up.

With our latest heating method, no "big brass" was out-and-about at night since it was often rainy, foggy and cold (just like in the daytime). The stove was now used with the oil-gas mix all the time, and we heard that other huts had incorporated the idea. The stove was great for cooking our K and C-rations, when we got home from a mission too late to get a meal from the mess hall. We were careful to have clothes hanging up in front of our "fuel bottle" to conceal it when we were inspected. Our clothes were taking on an oily-smokey smell. Anyway, we were warm – but that wasn't to last.

As was destined to happen, our heating system was discovered by our favorite Base Deputy CO. We all wondered if we might get court-martialed, but no one seemed to remember how our elaborate system ever got there. Ignorance was bliss. When our only Captain had moved out of the hut to become a Squadron CO, that left me as the ranking officer – so I found myself on the carpet. I had to assure my superiors that I would see to it that our heating system was disassembled.

After we had left Tibenham, we heard that the Base Deputy was court-martialed for selling our food to black marketers by hiding slabs of meat in the bottom of garbage cans. The Mess Sergeant also supposedly got caught. I still like to think of this on winter evenings, with my feet propped up by the fireplace, getting my toes toasted. The few wisps of smoke from the crackling fire have a clean, fresh wood scent. Not oily! Things have changed.

THE PX PAGE



Desk Model Plaque



Wall Mounted Plaque

The larger (by 20%) pewter B-24 desk model now available. Customized to your request. Also now available is a wall mounted plaque using the pewter B-24 model.

\$44.95 model cost with small base \$ 3.00 Bomb Group tail colors
4.00 lg. 5" x 7" walnut base 5.00 8th AF Cloisonne
5.50 engraved plate 1.75 each for service ribbons (if
5.00 regulation size wings desired.) O.L.C. and Battle Stars
\$.75 each

Any or all options can be had, your choice. Shipping costs (UPS): \$2.50 Chicago, east; \$3.50 west.

New sized B-24 gold outlined, fully vinyl covered key tab/ring, with USAAF "Star & Bar" insignia on reverse, 2 1/4 inches long. Guaranteed to please or money back. (Also, P-51, P-47 & P-38). Cost: \$5.00 postage paid

Now available: both tie-tacs and tie bar (clasp) with: B-24, Pilot, Navigator, Bombardier, Gunner or Air Crew Member wings. Others on special order. Cost: \$6.00 postage paid.



Altimeter Clock

Large, 6 1/2 inch altimeter face clock, battery powered (supplied) quartz movement mounted into a solid walnut plaque, size 9 x 12 inch with large 7 x 3 1/4 inch engraved plate as shown. Can be made with Airman's wings or as pictured with 8th AF cloisonne and B-24 with your Bomb Group colors on vertical fin. Guaranteed 100% satisfactory or your money back. Please give me as much information as possible.

Lapel pins for civilian suit wear: D.F.C., AIR MEDAL, E.T.O., PURPLE HEART. Cost: \$6.00 each postage paid.

Die struck, 8th AF lapel or tie-tac pin. Gold electroplate, 7/16 inch wide, distinctive. Cost: \$5.50 postage paid.

Larger, 8th Air Force Cloisonne, 1/4 inch full color, gold rim, lapel or tie-tac. Cost: \$5.50 postage paid.

Custom Plaques

Basic cost of the large 8th AF logo plaque with one "identifier" still remains at \$45.00. The single identifier may be either the B-24 with Group colors on the tail or full size pewter Airman's wings. The cost of the plaque made with "museum quality" polished .50 cal. shells, is \$49.00. In both cases, the logo or shells are mounted on solid walnut plaques, 6 1/2 inches wide by 10, 10 1/2 or 11 inches long. The plaque length is determined by the model you want made. Need the following information: **NAME** - as you would like it engraved; **RANK** - if desired; **DUTY** - Gunner, Pilot, Navigator, Mechanic, Crew Chief, etc.; **LOCATION**: of airfield; **BOMB GROUP** - and Squadron or attached unit; **DATES** - from/to (month & year of E.T.O. duty); **FLIGHT CREWS** - Give number of missions, any additional information (plane name, number, etc.)

Add \$5.00 for additional identifiers (miniature airman's wings when used with the B-24, or 8th AF cloisonne as used with .50 cal. shells). A full line of WWII ribbons is available, including: Silver Star, Bronze Star, D.F.C., Air Medal, Purple Heart, Good Conduct, American Defense, American Campaign, National Defense, E.T.O., WWII Victory, Pacific Theater (for those who went on to B-29s in the Pacific), German Occupation, Legion of Merit, French Croix de Guerre and Presidential Unit Citation. The last two cost an additional \$1.00 OVER the standard \$1.75 cost of all other ribbons. All ribbons are secured on brass mounts. Bronze Battle Stars and Oak

Leaf Clusters are 75 cents each. Sterling Silver Battle Stars and Oak Leaf Clusters are \$2.00 each.

Shipping charges: Using Baltimore as the shipping center, any radius extending to Chicago, \$2.50. Outside that radius, \$3.50. You MUST give me your home or business DELIVERABLE United Parcel Service (UPS) address.

Use any of the photos as a starting point. Any combination is possible (generally). If you design your own from these options and it is "compatible," I will build it. If there's a problem, I may suggest a change or two before making it. If you give me the option of letting me decide, please say so. Overpayments will have the balance enclosed (or in some cases when the sum is "minor," an item of equal or more worth may be sent). Underpayments will be billed with the plaque shipment. Please include your telephone number with your request, it may avoid a possible delay. Do not hesitate to write or call (301-766-1034) if you have any questions.

A check for \$200.00 has been sent to Dean Moyer, Treasurer of the Association, with the request that it be applied to the Memorial Special Funding as mentioned in this Journal. The total amount sent to the 2ADA treasury now stands at \$2,272, as profits made from the sale of Service Plaques, Altimeter Clocks, Pewter Desk Models, etc.

Rick Rokicki, 365 Mae Road, Glen Burnie, MD 21061



Test Flight of B-24 "Kate Smith"

by John E. O'Grady

Before I settled down to the quiet war with the 93rd BG, I was on Detached Service with the 98th BG in Libya, North Africa. In retrospect, the whole incident might have appeared to be a segment from a "Keystone Cop" movie. At the time, however, it was very real and distinctly hairy!

Kate Smith's demise brought the incident to mind and the old sense of guilt returned.

Incidentally, there is a picture of the "Kate Smith" on page 34 in "Log of the Liberators" by Steve Birdsall. The caption states: "Kate Smith of the Pyramiders undergoes a thorough overhaul in Libya. She went down in the summer of 1943." She most certainly did!

I, Flight Officer O'Grady, and crew landed at Bengasi, Libya on July 25, 1943. We had been transported from England to join the 389th Group. Col. Wogan of 9th Bomber Command placed us on D.S. with the 98th Bomb Group, 345th Squadron. The tents assigned to us were located a long runway's length from Headquarters and the remains of Italian and German planes baked in the desert sun all about us. The wreck of a Breda 88 stood between the Officers and the Enlisted Men's tents. I waited to use the shower we had rigged up, using the Breda's gas tank and some of her copper tubing, as I listened to Sergeant Finnigan, the 98th BG Supply Sgt., fill me in on the exciting history of the 98th BG.

Something big was about to happen but rumors were vague. I flew as a passenger-observer on a low level practice mission that confirmed one rumor, "It would be a low level, perhaps at tree top level, mission!" I watched the sands of the Libyan Desert swirl from the prop-wash of the B-24 formation as the plane seemed to vibrate at top speed. Would I have to fly this one, I wondered, a pilot who never flew below 1,000 feet except in the traffic pattern?

The opportunity to handle the controls of a B-24, for the first time since early June, came on the afternoon of July 29th. I approached number 654, "Kate Smith," and noted the nose art with interest. What else? The moon coming over a mountain! My co-pilot and navigator were grounded with the run-bug so a co-pilot and navigator from another inexperienced crew were assigned to this oil consumption test flight. Weber, my radio-man, was along to receive instructions from a seasoned operator during the test. One of the ground crew acted as engineer and stood between the seats to observe the instruments. This ground crew man proved to be a resourceful person under pressure.

Kate Smith had sponsored this plane that bore her name and I was told that the plane had seen a good deal of combat. Engines were started, using the check list, and after completing the list, we taxied out to the end of the dirt runway. Cleared for take-off, Kate Smith started her run at 1505 and was

soon airborne. I gave, I thought, the routine order, "Gear up!" when I felt the plane pull left. A glance out the port window confirmed the cause as I applied more right rudder and started trimming the ship. Number 2 was feathered! The co-pilot shouted, "Damn, I feathered the wrong engine!" He stabbed at switches frantically, unfeathered 2 and in the next second feathered 1. The terrain off the end of the runway dropped considerably and saved "Kate" from piling in at this time. Power off 1, being feathered, and 2 not yet back to full power, we used up all of the 200 feet we had at the start and much of the extra altitude afforded us. It was hot and the exertion it took to keep the ship righted brought out beads of sweat that our acting engineer mopped off at intervals. The ship was trimmed and we were at least holding altitude a hundred feet above the rolling desert. I had no opportunity to question the co-pilot about his unauthorized procedure that nearly caused us to plow up the Libyan landscape. We needed altitude. "Gear up!" That would cut down on the drag. The co-pilot, for whatever reason, hit the flap lever. We sank as I knocked his hand off and returned the flaps to half. The ground crew, acting engineer took charge at this juncture and as he raised the gear said, "I'll get the gear, Sir!" He wiped more sweat as we gained enough altitude to turn back to the field for a landing.

The co-pilot, silent since his first outburst, answered my question, "Why?" "Number 1 was running away!" He added, "It was up to 2900 RPM." He avoided any mention of his error or why he acted without checking with me or the engineer. I had three engines and back at OTU that called for an emergency landing. The tower gave me the O.K. to make a right hand pattern and I told the co-pilot to inform me when to turn on my final. He gave me the word too late and we were way left heading directly toward a transport plane waiting to take off. I added power to clear the transport and made a hot landing to the left of the main strip. What next, the co-pilot was on the controls keeping the nose up and cutting off visibility ahead. I knocked his hands off the wheel and told him to open the cowl-flaps. The nosewheel touched the ground and I could see tents at the edge of the field ahead so I tapped the left brake to start a gentle turn but as the plane started left it swung back right. Two taps on the left brake started the turn again but we came right back to our original path, toward the tents. I held the left brake a little longer, the turn started and as before came back again. Our speed was greatly reduced by now but I had to turn the plane left to miss the tent area by a safe margin. More left brake. It seemed to take more than necessary pressure to get the turn started. We were slowing and turning left when the left brake froze. "Kate" shuddered to a

stop as the left wing dropped. The wing tip and number 1 prop dug up a little real estate. Switches off! I had a question for the Man as I left the bomb bay to check the damage, "Why me?" A close look confirmed my guess. The left tire blew and the left landing gear collapsed. I was feeling very low when a Captain clamped a hand on my right arm and as he led me toward the tents, said, "Forget it, any landing you can walk away from is a good landing!" Easy for him to say, I was thinking. "C'mon over to the club and I'll buy you a drink," he added. "You probably did Deeds a favor anyway. He has had a lot of problems with that ship." I still felt very low.

The account as I have written it is what I related to the Investigating Officers. I was told by the ground-crewman who was present when the co-pilot gave his version that the co-pilot said that the plane kept ground-looping to the left and he, the co-pilot, corrected it each time with more and more right brake. I started in B-24s as a co-pilot in OTU and I was flabbergasted by the actions of this co-pilot on that almost final flight.

On 1 Aug. '43 I flew as co-pilot for 1st Lt. Blevins of the 345th Sqdn., 98th BG. My co-pilot and navigator were still under the weather with the bug. A 98th BG navigator flew with us and the rest of my crew filled the remaining slots. Killer Kane's Pyramiders were off to attack the Rumanian oil fields at Ploesti. But that is another story. Ask me about it sometime.

Restored B-24J Open House

An open house will be held Saturday, February 4, 1989 from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the Reilly Aviation facility, Kissimmee Airport, Florida. This event, open to the public, will feature the newly restored B-24J and will include a chance for spectators to inspect the aircraft, inside and out, take photos, and attend a luncheon on the grounds. Some of the people who have been active in the rebuilding program will be on hand as guides to explain the details of the project and answer questions. It is planned to have the aircraft out of the hangar where it can be inspected and photographed to the best advantage. To register or for information, contact the Collings Foundation, (508) 568-8924 or write Collings Foundation, P.O. Box 248, Stow, MA 01775. Group discounts on hotel reservations (Orlando/Kissimmee area) are available through Travel Your Way Agency, 1-800-545-3349, "Marsha." Retirees living in Florida or visitors to the Disney World area will have no trouble finding the facility, which is near the intersection of Routes 4 and 192, Kissimmee.

Reminiscing & Relaxing at Bomb Crew Reunion



Attending a crew reunion of the 467th Bomb Group, Second Air Division, Eighth Air Force were (front row from left) Carl J. Shaut, Anthony E. "Andy" DeBiase and Donald J. Faford; (back row from left) James G. Coffey, Robert L. Miller, William J. "Jack" Smith and Robert L. Snyder. They are admiring a photo collage showing the bomb group as they looked in 1944 in Savannah, GA; their B-24 bomber in England in 1945; and all 10 crew members attending a reunion in San Antonio, Texas in 1981.

Veterans of a World War II bomb crew recently reminisced about their wartime experiences and exchanged family updates in the beautiful, serene surroundings of Oglebay Park.

The 10 members of the 467th Bomb Group, Second Air Division of the Eighth Air Force, arrived in England in February 1944, and all of the U.S. fliers returned from the war unscathed. All 10 members of the crew are still alive, and seven of them gathered at Oglebay for a three day reunion.

While four to six members of this 467th Bomb Crew attend the annual reunions of the Second Air Division, this is "the first reunion of the crew by ourselves," said James G. Coffey, a pilot in the bomb group from Chappaqua, N.Y.

All 10 members of the bomb crew attended a Second Air Division reunion in San Antonio, Texas in 1981, when there was a "maximum effort to get all 10 out," Coffey said.

Discussing the benefits of the group's first solo reunion, Anthony E. "Andy" DeBiase of Madison, N.J. said, "We have a better time by ourselves. There's a lot of politics in the Second Air Division." Former bombardier Robert L. Snyder of Piqua, Ohio added, "The wives get along well together too."

Coffey said the 467th Bomb Group members were "lucky boys - we got back without getting hurt." He said the crew

flew in a B-24 bomber, a four-engine aircraft that was "a very famous plane in aviation history" because it made 135 consecutive missions without a single crew member being injured. He said the plane has an "incredible streak of luck."

The 467th Bomb Group was based at Rackheath, England, and flew 13 missions over the European Theater. Coffey said the group flew only 13 bombing missions because "the Germans collapsed."

Former radioman Donald J. Faford of Pawtucket, R.I. said their busiest day was D-Day, when the bomb crew flew three missions.

DeBiase recalled that on the day of a bombing mission, the crew would awake at 2:30 or 3 a.m., attend a briefing and breakfast before taking off at 5:30 a.m. The crews would "get back home" at 3:30 or 4 p.m. with debriefing after the mission. In addition he said, "They'd bring out the bottle after the mission. You could drink as much as you liked."

The group's safety record notwithstanding, DeBiase quipped that he did sustain an ankle injury during "a pubbing mission," when a radioman ran over his bicycle while he was returning from a visit to a local pub. William J. "Jack" Smith, a waist gunner from Franklin, PA, also sustained some injuries after "a pubbing mission" when "someone stole my bike and I stole a better bike."

Regarding actual duty, DeBiase said, "There was as much danger in training as we had over there. The aircraft we used in training was not in as good condition as the planes we had over there. The personnel were much better overseas."

Activities at this reunion included "eating," according to Faford; "stuffing ourselves," in Coffey's words; and talking about their children and grandchildren, Snyder said. Other crew members in attendance were Robert L. Miller, a nose gunner who now lives in Toledo, and Carl R. Shaut, a tail gunner who hails from Inverness, Florida. Unable to attend were Harmon J. "Harry" Small of Stockton, California, William T. Hayes of Stockport, Ohio; and Albert A. Muller of Caracas, Venezuela.

To thank the people of Rackheath for their generosity during the war, the 467th Bomb Group gave the English community a gift several years ago. Coffey explained that Muller, who was the crew's navigator, came up with the "very creative idea" and "nice gesture" of giving a gift to the people of Rackheath. DeBiase and his wife, Jo Ann, devised a method for raising the money to fund the project: selling large, matted color photographs of the group's airplane, "Witchcraft."

The crew members raised \$600 by selling copies of the photograph and the money was turned over to an "honorary member" of the crew, David Hastings, an Englishman who lives near Rackheath and attends reunions of the Eighth Air Force. The money was used to install gates leading to the village church in Rackheath and a bronze plaque on the gates explains that it was a gift from this particular crew to the people of Rackheath, Coffey said. "The plaque, titled "A Village Remembers ... A Flying Crew Remembers," lists the names and hometowns of the individual B-24 crew members.

Coffey participated in a dedication ceremony at the "absolutely handsome gates" while he was attending an Eighth Air Force reunion at Norwich, England, which was the center of the Eighth Air Force's activities during World War II. He said the bomb group now is thinking about starting a project to pave the roadway from the gates to the church entrance.

"We ought to all go to England," DeBiase suggested, adding, "The English people treated us well. They liked us all except Smittie [Smith]. They didn't like Smittie because he could outdrink any Englishman alive."

Letters



Dear Bill:

A new friend of mine loaned me three copies of the Journal to read. He and I recently discovered we had both served in the Eighth Air Force in England during the Second World War.

I was enjoying reading the stories in these Journals when I came upon a letter written in the spring issue by Mike Bailey to Bill, and I am guessing it is William Robertie, the vice president of the publication. He was speaking about a plane he had found a picture of called "Lemon Drop." He included a picture of it in the spring issue. He seemed to be looking for information about this plane.

I was in the 44th Bomb Group and the 68th Squadron. This plane was one of the original allotment of planes given to the 44th Bomb Group. We were stationed at Shipdham Air Base, some 20 miles from Norwich to the west. We moved to the base somewhere in 1942-43.

"Lemon Drop" had a very unusual history, both as a combat plane and one used for almost any kind of service after it had been rated as war weary. I was a bomb-sight and autopilot service man and flew many hours in most of the planes we had.

On one of the more unusual flights I was on, "Lemon Drop" was one for checking guns and gun oils at high altitudes. We were going up to 28,000 feet to make the tests because the guns and oils were freezing up on the missions.

The pilot went to the rear to supervise the tests and the co-pilot somehow got his oxygen hose disconnected. He passed out and fell with his head between the seats. The plane was on autopilot and in a steep climb. Before anyone knew it, we were up to 39,000 feet. I passed out trying to get to the flight deck without a walkaround bottle. The navigator didn't get as far as I did, in fact, by this time, only two, the pilot and a waist gunner, were still conscious.

This is just one of the incidents "Lemon Drop" was involved in while in service for the 68th Squadron. Everything did not go as we had been hoping for on this flight, but this and other flights helped us to figure out how to keep our guns from freezing while in combat.

I have to say that there were many other incidents in the service of "Lemon Drop" for our Squadron. I am sure there are others who remember "Lemon Drop" and I would like for this letter to be placed in the Journal so they can drop me a letter recalling some of the days with the 44th Bomb Group.

Dr. Charles M. Mott
224 Office Plaza
Tallahassee, FL 32301

+ + + +

Dear Bill:

We received this new ship after our fifth mission. It was numbered 556; I do not recall the beginning numbers. Subsequently it was named "Mother of Ten," and we flew 28 missions aboard her. Of the total of 33 missions our crew flew, 22 were to Germany, none of which included Berlin, thank the Lord. Eight of the crew members pictured flew the 33 missions in 101 days ... we had only one casualty (Dan Paris, waist gunner, not in picture.) On a mission to Ludwigshaven the ship returned with one engine out and 101 holes in the fuselage, all repaired by the next day.

Bill Harkins
772 Providence Road
Aldan, PA 19018



"Mother of Ten," July 1944. Crew #40, 713th Sqdn., 448th BG, 2nd Div., 20th Wing. Left to right, top to bottom: J. McGeogh, W. Score, M. Carestio, R. Bremer; B. Harkins, B. Biles, C. Brown, H. Whitfield; Unknown, E. Kellams.

+ + + +

Dear Bill:

During my tour of duty in England, the following experience might be considered combat time.

While flying my missions, I made contact with a close buddy from my home town (Stevens Point, WI) who was also stationed in England. After finishing my missions, we made arrangements to meet in London while on pass. I went to a Red Cross club for quarters. In the morning I was shockingly awakened, finding myself on the floor, after being knocked out of my bunk. After the cobwebs left my head, I dressed and went to the main desk. I inquired of a volunteer what happened and she replied that a V2 bomb landed in a park a block away.

I walked to the park to investigate and observed a very large crater. It scared the hell out of me enough to take the first train back to Norwich. Needless to say, I didn't meet my buddy. I wasn't about to hang around London and get killed by one of those bombs after finishing my missions unscathed.

Francis J. Peck
2620 S. Lamonte Street
Spokane, WA 99203

Dear Bill:

The Summer Journal did not arrive before my wife Mildred, daughter Susan and I left for Tucson, Phoenix, a Canyons land tour, Las Vegas and the reunion at Colorado Springs. As a result, I hadn't seen the letter from Lt./Col. Dario A. DeJulio and the picture taken after the March 9, 1945 100th mission of "Final Approach."

Yes, I was the navigator on that mission and also on the April 9th mission to Lechfeld Airfield when we went down. I have had the crew picture in my collection (the 100th mission) but could not decipher the names of the crew members. I'm so happy that Dario DeJulio was able to identify that whole crew.

He mentioned living close to John Barillaro, my engineer and fellow POW at VIIA in Mooseburg - whom I'm happy to say I met for the first time since we were liberated, along with Len Abramowitz, our pilot on that final mission. We all had a great reunion in Colorado Springs and we are looking forward to Hilton Head and Norwich.

John S. Holdak
11 Flower Avenue
Hastings in Hudson,
New York 10706

+ + + +

Dear Bill:

We, Mary Ellen and I, have been fortunate enough to have attended the 1983 and 1987 Reunions at Norwich, as well as making our own trip back in 1985. We have many friends in Seething and Norwich now and are so very proud of the relationship which exists between the English and the Second Air Division! One person we consider a very good friend, though our contacts have been only via telephone and correspondence, is Jean Thirkettle, who lives in a small village southeast of Seething, in Suffolk. Jean is a really true friend of the 448th and the Seething Tower Ass'n, and is really an accomplished artist and poetess. I would like to include a poem Jean composed about the "Restoration of Seething Tower." (I called England, and have permission for your use in the Journal):

*Memories drift away, as on a morning mist,
One would soon wonder, did they exist?
But how could we forget all those who came,
Not to seek fortune, nor yet find fame.
So thought the few as with dedication,
They gazed at the scene of near desolation,
Thus Seething Tower, for old times' sake,
Began once again to regain its old shape.*

*There was Ralph, Minnie, Pat and Ron,
All to help with things near gone,
Nancy, Jim, Judy and Mike,
All had minds that thought alike,
To bring back the past for our children to
see —*

*How they fought for us, both you and me.
And now restored again, the Tower does
stand,*

*Proving the devotion of that one small band.
by Jean Thirkettle*

Paul Homan

+ + + +



Dear Bill:

The April 7, 1945 Duneburg Raid just won't go away, so I thought I would add a little from my notes on the mission with the 448th BG.

My crew had the wing lead to Duneburg which I had recorded as 6 hours, 35 minutes. Our wing was under fighter attack from the I.P. to target plus approximately 25 minutes after leaving the target, a total of close to an hour.

I believe we hit a munitions dump, at any rate we felt a heavy concussion from the ex-

+ +

Dear Bill:

During the 2WW over 40,000 U.S. 8th AF personnel were housed in dispersed sites around the 14 airbases of the 2nd Air Division.

Many of these wartime sites were built in woodlands and fields approached by concrete pathways and roads. During the last four decades many of the buildings and huts on these sites have gradually been cleared, although a large number of buildings still survive, being used for agricultural purposes.

I am at present compiling a history of these sites related to the particular bomb groups and hope to publish a book containing contemporary photographs of buildings on the sites and how they appeared during 1943-1945.

I should be grateful if any 2AD veteran who served on one of the 2AD bases during the war who has photographs of the dispersed sites would send them to me to assist in this history. All photographs sent would be acknowledged and returned if required. Any photographs from the domestic sites, Sick Quarters sites, Administration sites, and Communal sites would be of great value to this history. Photographs can be sent to: **Mr. Geoffrey Goreham, 31, Lavengro Road, Norwich, NR3 4RT England.** Please help to perpetuate the memory of these old living quarters and sites now fading away in the Norfolk countryside.

Geoffrey Goreham

plosion at our bombing altitude of 18,000 feet.

I recall some very close views of ME 109s and we used up a lot of ammunition - don't know if we hit anything.

I am sending a picture of my crew, complete except for F/O Henry Spuill, my mickey operator, who never could get up in time for a picture.

K.A. Wheeler
26279 Westmeath
Farmington Hills, MI 48018

+ +

Gentlemen:

I owe the name and address of your association to the Headquarters USAF Historical Center, Research Division, Maxwell, whom I had contacted for this information.

The reason for my present letter to you is the fact that I am establishing, on a non-commercial basis, a documentation on aerial warfare particularly as far as Mannheim and Ludwigshafen on the Rhine are concerned. During WWII, these two towns were the targets of numerous heavy air raids by the 8th USAF and the RAF.

For the documentation on these attacks, I am looking for reports and photos made by airmen or taken from operation diaries edited by operational units which participated in them. I am also interested in accounts or crashes and capture of aircrews. Last but not least, I should appreciate receiving a copy of your association's Journal.

For this reason, I should be very glad if you could help me with such information and material. Of course, I shall be pleased to answer queries that you may have yourselves about your air raids as we experienced them on our side.

Thanking you in advance for a reply.

Erwin Folz
Ostring 64
6700 Ludwigshafen
am Rhein
West Germany

Dear Bill:

Is there anyone who served with the 44th Bomb Group during 1942-45 and who has war-time photos taken outside of the Public House that stood at the top of the road that led from the base to Shipdham village? The pub used to be named the King William or the Kings Head, most of the locals used to call it the King Billy.

The reason for this request is that I paid a visit to the old base and called in at this pub, which by the way has just been reopened under new management, and I see that there was a plaque on the wall presented by the 44th Bomb Group. I asked the new manager if he knew what it was all about and he said that he didn't, so I explained to him about the Group and its exploits during the war. Hence the reason for my request, as he would like a few photos to go with the plaque on the wall. Photos of B-24s I can supply, but if anyone has a few domestic photos, I would be grateful if photos are of sentimental value I would reimburse for copies.

E.D. Clarke
16 Darrell Place
Norwich
Norfolk NR5 8QW
England

+ + + +

Dear Evelyn:

I just recently found my pilot from the 446th. This took place at Dover A.F.B. in Delaware while I was serving as tour guide for "Shoo Shoo Baby." His name and address: Lt. Col. George E. Kusch (Ret.), 5500 46th Ave. N., Keneneth City, FL 33709.

When this meeting took place, both of us were almost in tears of joy. We had not heard of each other since November 1944. He is the only one of my crew members that I have any data on since that time. Please accord to him all the nice things of membership.

Glasco E. Dukes
RD 2 Box 339
Lincoln, DE 19960

+ + + +

Dear Evelyn:

In a recent letter Jeff Gregory cautions that if Maggie and I have any thoughts about attending the reunion at Hilton Head in '89 we should send in our deposit. Since Hilton Head is probably the nearest place that will ever be selected I guess I'd better get started with the plans to attend or Jeff will never let me forget. My deposit check is enclosed - please put us on the list.

Although not an active participant in the 2ADA activities, I am an ardent supporter of the organization and endorse all of the projects that are undertaken. I would like to commend you and all others who work tirelessly to keep the wheels moving.

Carl E. Epting, Jr.
20 Park Terrace
Ormond Beach, FL 32074

+ + + +

Dear Bill:

Would you please include this picture, taken at the Colorado Springs reunion, in the Journal? These fellows were all in the 328th Squadron and flew over with the original 93rd Bomb Group, first B-24 group to England, September 10, 1942.

Floyd Mabee



(l-r): Samuel J. Delcambre, gunner & assistant radio operator, flew on "Jerks Natural." Harold Secore, radio operator, flew on "Balls of Fire." Robert H. Harms, radio operator, flew on "Jerks Natural." Floyd H. Mabee, engineer gunner, flew on "Shoot Luke." Prince A. Martin, engineer gunner, flew on "Eager Beaver" and flew on "Dog Patch Raider" for the Ploesti mission 1 Aug. '43. The mannequin is wearing Mabee's original uniform.

+ + + +

Dear Bill:

I have been reading the Journal with great interest since becoming a member of the Second Air Division Association this year. I am sending you an article as a follow-up to the one in your last issue by Art Cullen. It may be something you would like to use. I hope so. It is so important to all Second Air Division people that we have this B-24 restored to flying condition. Information about it should help to generate more interest and support.

Of all possible organizations in existence, it seems to me that our Second Air Division ought to get behind this and become a sponsor for it. Supporting the library in Great Britain is fine, but this seems to me to be a greater priority. The B-24s are gone, except a few in static displays. I hope that this organization will get behind this project in a solid and immediate way. How great it would be to see her flying next year at the Fort Worth 50th Anniversary Celebration.

Just as it thrilled me to get into the plane again, it must do the same for many other B-24 veterans.

I was a pilot in the 466th Bomb Group. We crash landed in Sweden, April 2, 1945. All crew members survived.

By the way, Bob Collings has a number of photos of the plane before and during restoration. If you can use some, please get in touch with him and he will be happy to cooperate.

Charles W. Lanham
Wesley Heights Community
580 Long Hill Ave.
Apt. 326
Shelton, CT 06484

+ + + +



1944 CREW. Front row (l-r): Cliff Allen, engineer; John Keever, radio operator; Roger Bishop, waist gunner; Worsdel K. Pearson, ball turret gunner; Bob Pauley, top turret gunner; Ray Osterman, tail gunner. Back row (l-r): Hollis Hunt, pilot; Bert Clausen, co-pilot; Dick Bettine, navigator; Stewart Bland, bombardier.



1988 CREW. Front row (l-r): Cliff Allen, John Keever, Roger Bishop, Ray Osterman. Back row (l-r): Hollis Hunt, Bert Clausen, Dick Bettine.

Dear Bill:

Although I have enjoyed the Journal for a number of years, this is the first time I feel I have something to add to it.

I found our pilot, Hollis Hunt, through one of the issues and just this past spring, we put together our first reunion in forty-three years.

We trained together in Tonopah, Nevada and joined the 93rd on August 6, 1944. We flew four missions with the 409th Squadron and then switched to the 329th as a lead crew. We completed thirty missions, the last one being on April 8, 1945. After our first four missions, our ball turret gunner, Worsdel K. Pearson, was no longer needed and was sent to Italy. I have never made contact with him since and would like to know what happened to him. We added Charles Flint as the radar bombardier and I have not heard from him. Any help on locating these people would be appreciated.

We held our reunion in Scottsdale, Arizona in April and had seven in attendance. Bland could not come and Bob Pauley, the youngest member, has passed away.

I am sending a picture of the 1944 crew and one of those attending the reunion. Clausen had to show off that he could get into his uniform, but really he needed some help to button it.

We had a wonderful time together and hope to be able to meet again sometime. We remembered many things, one of them being Captain Ken Gilbert. He is the only person I know of who flat spun a B-24 and lived to tell about it. He was flying with a new crew and hit prop wash. I can still hear the waist gunner calling over the intercom, "There goes Gilbert." He straightened it out at about 10,000 feet, salvoed the bombs and climbed back with the formation. The crew was bruised up a bit.

I hope you can find a spot for some of this in the Journal. Thanks for all you have done to keep our memories alive.

John Keever
Route 10, Box 648
Hickory, NC 28601
704-324-2959

+ + + +

Dear Bill:

For some time now Tom Brittan and I have been working on a project to list every B-24 that flew with the 2nd A.D.; a mammoth task as you can imagine, but we have made quite good progress although we realize we still have a long way to go.

The aircraft are listed by serial number under the various Bomb Groups and include such information as squadron assignment aircraft letter, name (if any) and eventual fate. Of course we know that some aircraft served with different Groups and Squadrons, which makes things complicated at times, but all adds to the interest.

One of our best sources of information has been mission formation sheets which usually give the "last three," the squadron and the aircraft letter. By a process of elimination and intelligent guesswork, we can usually come up with the full serial for most of the aircraft. So if anybody has kept any of these sheets from the missions they flew on we would be very grateful to receive copies, as they would help us a great deal with our research.

We would also appreciate any sort of information that ties in an aircraft name and number, because names, being unofficial, rarely appear in official records and although we have linked many names and numbers from photos and other sources, we still have long lists of names from most Bomb Groups where we have been unable to make a connection. So any information from diaries, etc. would be gratefully received.

Please write to me at the Memorial Room, Central Library, Bethel Street, Norwich, NR2 1NJ. Thanks!

Tony North, Trust Aide
Central Library
Norwich, Norfolk

+ + + +

Dear Evelyn:

Enclosed is \$100.00 deposit for reservations at Hilton Head for my wife and me.

I tried to see you at Colorado Springs to give you a deposit but didn't manage it. After we left Colorado Springs, we travelled for four more weeks. Hence the delay in sending the deposit.

At the convention, I was especially pleased to meet two men who had been on the Sept. 27th Kassel raid. I was fortunate enough to be on one of the planes to get back to England. They were shot down.

Don Whitefield
1434 Martin
Houston, TX 77018

+ + + +

Dear Evelyn:

I am trying to locate a former pilot of the 389th, John Jewett, 2nd Lt. Flew two missions at the end of the European war. Last address was Columbus, Ohio. Can it be printed in the Journal? Many thanks.

David B. Powers
12692 Foster Road
Los Alamitos, CA 90720

Dear Bill:

I hate to take up space, but want to answer one burning question: HOW DID I BECOME INVOLVED WITH THE 2ADA? (Ed.: "You blinked! Better still, how did I become involved?")

No, I did not marry a man who served with the Division. I served with the Division, having arrived in Norwich in June 1943, was stationed at Old Catton (while working at Horsham St. Faith until the 458th kicked us out) and then moved to Ketteringham Hall, adjoining the 389th Bomb Group. During one crazy moment in 1954 I volunteered my services for one year and here I still am, never dreaming we would still be around and growing in 1988. I have enjoyed these past 34 years and want to take this opportunity to thank you all for your many kind letters and good wishes.

Evelyn Cohen

+ + + +



Dear Bill:

Thanks for your letter and a copy of the Journal. Certainly brings back memories.

As I may have mentioned to you, I was transferred from the 104th Infantry Division to Headquarters, Second Air Division, and spent approximately a year assigned to Operational Research.

Enclosed is a photo of our "group" outside our office at Ketteringham Hall. If my memory serves me, Major Dent is seated front left, and Dr. Carter, front right. Major Dent was a fighter pilot, reassigned to Operational Research. I'd certainly like to contact Major Dent if anyone has his address. His brother was a Colonel Dent. Yours truly is rear left, with two other enlisted personnel.

The men in the Bombing Groups will certainly recall our Group in Operational Research since we graded their performance in combat bombing strikes. Some appreciated the "report card," and I'm certain others didn't.

William B. Myers
620 31 Avenue, North
St. Petersburg, FL 33704

+ + + +

Dear Evelyn:

The past reunion at Colorado Springs was our first but it was a marvelous get-together and won't be our last one. Got to meet you briefly and that was a pleasure. I knew how busy you were. Also got to press the flesh with the illustrious Bill Robertie, who publishes some of the stories I write. This too was grand fun! Maybe get to see Milt Stokes again, after all these years, at Hilton Head.

Can Lavawn and I register this early for the 1989 meet? If so, find enclosed our registration check. My Pilot, Radioman and Martin gunner missed the main banquet as they didn't have their funding sent in on time. Came to the dance later. And, we had several mini-reunions with each other previous. Will encourage them to put into the pot earlier next time.

I can see that with more and more old vets discovering the 2nd Air Division Association that problems arise from sheer numbers attending the functions. I really don't know how in hell you can find the time and energy to organize these huge meetings. But am very thankful that you do. Congratulations to you for the work and devotion you apply for us all. Many thanks to you! It is appreciated.

Bob Mallick
Star 9 Box 139
Mena, Ark. 71953

+ + + +

Dear Bill:

I would like to express my sincere thanks to all those members of the 2nd Air Division Association who so kindly wrote to me during my visit to the hospital for major surgery. Your cards and letters were a great tonic and bless you all. I am glad to say that I am now well on the road to a full recovery, and Jean and I look forward to seeing you all at Hilton Head, as well as Norwich in 1990, the plans for which are already well underway.

Best wishes for Christmas with good health and happiness in 1989.

David J. Hastings

+ + + +

Dear Bill:

In the summer issue of the Journal, I noticed Mr. Sheffield's narrative, "The Thirteenth Mission," mentioned him being Asst. Ops. Officer of the 93rd BG. I wonder if he would have any information on a Major Robert J.D. Johnson who was Operations Officer at about that time, possibly a little earlier. There was no address on Mr. Sheffield. I am still trying to locate this Robert Johnson or any of his original crew. I flew my first 18 missions with them. Any help would be greatly appreciated.

John L. Mosier
403 Crane Street
Flat River, MO 63601

+ + + +

Where Is Christmas?

by E.O. "Buddy" Cross

December 24th, 1943. Tibenham, England with the 445th Bomb Group. Boy, what a long day this has been. The weather has been dreary all day, adding to the "lack of Christmas spirit" most of us were already showing.

Our crew had arrived in England on Thanksgiving Day just a month earlier. We had landed at a base in southern England too late in the day to proceed to Tibenham, and our Thanksgiving meal ended up consisting of Spam sandwiches. Sure hope it will be different tomorrow and we get turkey and dressing.

The 445th had made its first combat mission on December 13 and now had a total of four. Our crew had been on two of these. Thank goodness we aren't scheduled for the one tomorrow, Christmas Day.

Me and the tail gunner were two of the first in the supper chow line and had already returned to our hut. The chow had not appealed to us and we planned later on to make some toasted cheese sandwiches in our little stove using the brown bread we had requisitioned and the cheese from some "C" rations. But for the moment, we were just relaxing in our bunks deep in thought.

My thoughts kept drifting back to other Christmases I had enjoyed in that small Texas town where I grew up. The thrill we used to get by visiting aunts and uncles and cousins who opened their presents on Christmas Eve, whereas we waited till Christmas morning to open ours. I remember the year I got my first bicycle and the year I got a twenty-two rifle. Boy, that was something. And just the previous year when I had been in basic training and couldn't leave the base, it was still only 135 miles from home, so it didn't seem too bad. But this - don't they have Christmas in England?

Our thoughts were interrupted as the rest of our crew and the other crew that shared our hut started drifting in from the mess hall. Someone suggested a blackjack game, but no one was interested. One of the last fellows to come in mentioned there was going to be a movie at the base theater and Santa Claus would be there with goodies for everyone. We all had a big laugh at that and then everyone quieted down.

Some of us had already received packages from home, but if they contained cookies, candy or anything to eat, we shared it with the others and it was quickly gone. I remembered that one of the fellows from the other crew was from Louisiana and his mother sent him some canned chicken and dumplings that were terrific. I can almost taste it now.

After awhile someone, I don't remember who, said that since there wasn't anything else to do he thought he would go to the movie and he got up and left. One by one the rest of us said we might as well go along also so we followed in behind.

We were all trying to put on a front and show how tough and manly we were, but inside we were still little boys.

The Red Cross girls were at the Base Theater with the customary refreshments for all. After relaxing and visiting with others, everyone seemed to loosen up and feel better. One of the Red Cross girls led us in singing some Christmas songs and we did the best we could. Then, sure enough, here came Santa Claus. He was dressed in green fatigues with flight boots on and a white collar and beard made from cotton, a duffle bag filled with candy over his shoulder and a big cigar in his mouth. I saw the first sergeant's stripes on his sleeve and thought he sure had guts to do this for a bunch of tough guys like us. Anyway, no one complained.

As the time came to leave, one of the Red Cross girls sang "Ava Maria." It was just beautiful and the whole room got real quiet. We all walked back to our hut laughing and joking and were in a much better mood that when we had left earlier.

Everyone hit the sack as soon as we got back to the hut. After crawling into my bunk, piled high with extra blankets, several thoughts passed through my mind before I dozed off.

Sure, it would be nice to be back home and spend Christmas with family and loved ones, but then I realized that Christmas was not just in one place only. Christmas is wherever you are and all you have to do is open your heart and let that spirit in. And under the conditions we are in and with a common bond between us, these guys are friends and family and

loved ones while we are here. Say, it's turning out to be a Merry Christmas after all.

And as I slowly drifted off to sleep, I prayed that all of us here tonight might share future Christmases together, if not in person, at least in thought.

Merry Christmas, you guys.

"The Last Mission" Norwich 1987 Convention on Tape

Donations for the first 200 plus tapes have been received and orders filled. "The Last Mission" is a 1½ hour (VHS) video tape of the 5 days in Norwich, May 21-25, 1987. Portions of this tape were provided by NBC Atlanta, Kent Stokes of the 453rd BG, the NBC Today Show and others.

THIS TAPE MAY NOT BE SHOWN COMMERCIALY ANYWHERE. This is the agreement we made with NBC. It is only for use of the 2ADA members and their families.

We are now ordering this tape from the processor in five and ten lots to fill the reduced number of donations and must now request a \$25.00 donation to the Second Air Division Association (make checks payable to "The Second Air Division Association") from anyone who would like to have a copy.

Also available is the 30-minute NBC Atlanta tape as shown on TV in the States. For this, send a \$20.00 donation.

Send your order to:
H.C. 'Pete' Henry
164B Portland Lane
Jamesburg, NJ 08831
(Tel. 1-609-655-0982)

Please allow six to eight weeks for delivery.

SECOND AIR DIVISION ASSOCIATION

BILL ROBERTIE

P. O. BOX 627
IPSWICH, MASS. 01938



Address correction requested
Forwarding & Return Postage Guaranteed

AARON & SALLY SCHULTZ
389TH
P O BOX 18
HIGH POINT NC
27261

Non-profit Org.
U. S. Postage
PAID
Ipswich, MA 01938
Permit No. 74