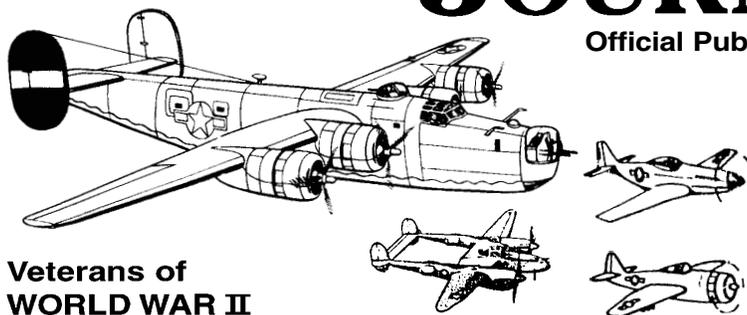


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THE JOURNAL

Official Publication of the:



**Veterans of
WORLD WAR II**



Volume 45 Number 2

Spring/Summer 2006

SUPREME HEADQUARTERS
ALLIED EXPEDITIONARY FORCE
Public Relations Division

This copy has been
transmitted to MOI London
and OWI Washington for
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and Canadian Press and Radio.

8 MAY 45

SHAEF RELEASE No. 1453

VICTORY **ORDER OF THE DAY**

Men and women of the Allied Expeditionary Force:

The crusade on which we embarked in the early summer of 1944 has reached its glorious conclusion. It is my especial privilege, in the name of all Nations represented in this Theatre of War, to commend each of you for valiant performance of duty. Though these words are feeble they come from the bottom of a heart overflowing with pride in your loyal service and admiration for you as warriors. Your accomplishments at sea, in the air, on the ground and in the field of supply, have astonished the world. Even before the final week of the conflict, you had put 5,000,000 of the enemy permanently out of the war. You have taken in stride military tasks so difficult as to be classed by many doubters as impossible. You have confused, defeated and destroyed your savagely fighting foe. On the road to victory you have endured every discomfort and privation and have surmounted every obstacle, ingenuity and desperation could throw in your path. You did not pause until our front was firmly joined up with the great Red Army coming from the East, and other Allied Forces, coming from the South. Full victory in Europe has been attained. Working and fighting together in a single and indestructible partnership you have achieved a perfection in unification of air, ground and naval power that will stand as a model in our time. The route you have travelled through hundreds of miles is marked by the graves of former comrades. From them have been exacted the ultimate sacrifice; blood of many nations — American, British, Canadian, French, Polish and others — has helped to gain the victory. Each of the fallen died as a member of the team to which you belong, bound together by a common love of liberty and a refusal to submit to enslavement. No monument of stone, no memorial of whatever magnitude could so well express our respect and veneration for their sacrifice as would perpetuation of the spirit of comradeship in which they died. As we celebrate Victory in Europe let us remind ourselves that our common problems of the immediate and distant future can be best solved in the same conceptions of co-operation and devotion to the cause of human freedom as have made this Expeditionary Force such a mighty engine of righteous destruction. Let us have no part in the profitless quarrels in which other men will inevitably engage as to what country, what service, won the European war. Every man, every woman, of every nation here represented, has served according to his or her ability, and the efforts of each have contributed to the outcome. This we shall remember — and in doing so we shall be revering each honored grave, and be sending comfort to the loved ones of comrades who could not live to see this day.

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SECOND AIR DIVISION ASSOCIATION



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THE NEW PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

BY ALAN SENIOR

TALK ABOUT THE BIG BANG THEORY — here I am President of the Second Air Division Association. Just fourteen days ago, February 5, 2006, I was going along my merry way with my only concern being the preparation for our 2ADA reunion/convention in Washington, D.C. **And now I have several balls in the air and a rapidly increasing telephone bill.**

It was a privilege to speak with the members of the Executive Committee, conversations in which I asked for their support and for their ideas as well as comments for the betterment of the 2ADA. As I did not know many of the group VPs, the telephone calls informing them of the former president's resignation and my move-up to the presidency enabled us to exchange ideas and to become better acquainted, as well. Remember, I want to hear from all of you on any ideas you have for the betterment of the 2ADA.

More than ever there is a genuine need for a large dose of positive thinking, conversation, and, most importantly, positive ACTION! Start now and build toward our 59th annual convention, October 13-16, 2006 in Washington, D.C. Place an article in your bomb group's newsletter to develop member interest; initiate telephone calls to your membership emphasizing the historic events and highlights.

Friday is the day of registration and the bomb group dinners. On Saturday, October 14th we are to attend the USAF Memorial Dedication and Memorial Concert. Buses for each of these events will be provided. **Plan to attend and become a part of these historic events!!** Pack your camera and lots of film — your pictures will make your post-convention newsletters souvenir albums. Let's make this one of the best conventions ever! **And remember, think positive!!**

On Sunday, October 15th we have choices: (1) Buses to AeroSpace Museum, (2) Tour of Washington, D.C. There are additional costs involved so check out the registration form. **HOPE TO SEE YOU ALL THERE! ■**

2ADA Executive Committee Updates

BY NORMA BEASLEY, DIRECTOR, CORRESPONDENCE SERVICES

Alan Senior, Executive Vice President of the 2ADA, became President on January 18, 2006 following the resignation of then President John deCani as provided for in the 2ADA Bylaws and the Policies and Procedures Manual.

Earl Zimmerman, VP 389th BG, has accepted the position of Executive Vice President. His address is Post Office Box 40897, Indianapolis, IN 46204, phone 317-846-1462, e-mail: Ssynke@aol.com.

Richard Robert, 453rd BG, has accepted the position of back-up (Assistant) to James P. Dyke, Secretary. His address is 750 Dartmoor Drive, Baton Rouge, LA 70815, phone 225-275-1850, e-mail: Robert453@msn.com.

Richard Pulse, VP 458th BG, has accepted the position of Chairman of the Audit Committee. His address is 11 South Lakeway, Reisterstown, MD 21136-5923, phone 410-833-2681, e-mail: dick2ADA@aol.com.

Neal E. Sorensen, 489th BG, has accepted the position of Liaison Representative to the Mighty Eighth Museum. His address is 132 Peninsula Road, Minneapolis, MN 55441-4112, phone 763-545-2698, e-mail: nealesorensen@hotmail.com.

President Senior is compiling a new directory and committee assignments. When completed, new directories will be sent to everyone listed in the directory. As president, Alan is asking for everyone's support and welcomes phone calls, e-mail or letters if you have suggestions or input that you feel is important concerning the 2ADA. His address is 610 Salerno Street, Sugarland, TX 77478-3362, phone 281-494-2445, e-mail: alansenior@ev1.net.

Congratulations are in order to these men for their willingness to serve the 2ADA in their respective positions as outlined above. ■

Thoughts from the 2ADA Liaison to the Mighty 8th Museum

BY NEAL SORENSEN (489TH)

The Second Air Division is proud, and rightly so, of the Memorial Library that occupies a favorable location in the magnificent structure that symbolizes the Spirit of our British Comrades, the Forum Millennium Plain in Norwich.

Founded by the foresight of General Kepner at the close of World War II, and augmented by the splendid efforts of the Second Air Division Association and the Memorial Trust Board of Governors, the 2AD Memorial Library honoring our almost 7,000 comrades killed in action while flying bombing missions will endure under the care of the Board of Governors into the foreseeable future.

Second Air Division Association President Alan Senior has honored me with the office of Liaison to the Mighty 8th Air Force Museum located in Pooler, Georgia.

What is the function of a Liaison Officer? Webster's Dictionary describes "liaison" as follows: *The connection or cooperative relationship maintained between armed forces units to ensure concerted action.*

(continued on page 6)

SECOND AIR DIVISION ASSOCIATION



THE SECOND AIR DIVISION ASSOCIATION traces its initial meeting to 1948 in Chicago, Illinois. It was organized as a nonprofit corporation in the State of Illinois on January 10, 1950. Members of the original Board of Directors were 2nd Air Division veterans Marilyn Fritz, Howard W. Moore, Jordan R. Uttal, and Percy C. Young. The association's purpose is to advocate and support an adequate, effective and efficient Army, Navy and Air Force at all times; to perpetuate the friendships and memories of service together in the 2nd Air Division, 8th Air Force in England during World War II; to support financially, and in any other way, the Memorial Trust of the 2nd Air Division as represented by the 2nd Air Division Memorial Library of the Norwich Millennium Library; and to undertake such other activities as may from time to time be deemed appropriate by the membership.

REGULAR (Voting) MEMBERSHIP in the association is limited to those personnel, military and civilian, American or British, who at any time served with the Headquarters organization of the 2nd Bomb Wing, 2nd Bomb Division or 2nd Air Division during World War II and any person who served with any bomb group or fighter group or any other unit of the 2nd Air Division assigned or attached. Provisions are made for Associate (Non-Voting) memberships and also for subscribing memberships (Non-Voting).

We make every effort to mail your *Journal* within 90 days of the article submission deadlines of February 15, June 15, and November 15. Your receipt of the *Journal* will be anywhere from one to four weeks later, depending on the U.S. Postal Service — especially your own post office. If you don't get your *Journal* by the next deadline, contact Evelyn Cohen immediately.

The Memorial Trust of the 2nd Air Division USAAF

BY MATTHEW MARTIN, CHAIRMAN OF THE MEMORIAL TRUST

GREETINGS FROM NORWICH! First of all, I want to share with you all the wonderful news that your Memorial Library has just received a most generous gift of \$100,000. This gift was given by **Joan Patterson** in memory of her husband, **Dave Patterson**, and in appreciation of all the hard work by those members of the 2ADA and those in the U.K. with whom Dave worked so closely for so many years. This is truly magnificent and all of us over here are immensely grateful. This has come at a particularly challenging time for your Library and you can imagine what a marvellous morale booster it is.

And so onto our other news. The Governors and everyone associated with your Memorial Library were delighted to welcome a number of your members and their families in November 2005 for a range of activities. Amongst the group we were very pleased to see Professor **John deCani**, **Geoff Gregory** and his charming wife **Terry**, and our old friend and Governor **Chuck Walker**. We also were delighted to welcome **Joan Patterson** and her daughter **Carol**, **Joe Dzenowagis Jr.**, and **Vicki Brooks Warning** (as the representative of the Heritage League) along with her husband **Kurt**.

At the Governors meeting in November we elected three new Governors, all of whom had recently retired from their full-time occupations. They are **David Douglas**, a banker; **Peter Foster**, a lawyer; and **Mike Longe**, a businessman. I know each of them personally and I know what a valuable contribution they will make to the well-being of your Library.

In February 2006 we were delighted to welcome to your Library the American Ambassador to the U.K., **Robert Tuttle**, accompanied by a very senior member of the British Government. The visit was a short one, but we hope that the Ambassador will be returning to Norwich in May 2006 to spend longer in your Library. The Ambassador is co-managing partner of Tuttle-Click Automotive Group, one of the largest U.S. car dealers, and was personally chosen by President Bush for this ambassadorial appointment.

In my article in a recent edition of *The Journal* I promised to tell you a little more about the finances of the Memorial Trust. There have been significant developments recently. Firstly, as a result of huge generosity on the part of a number of people and organisations including the 2ADA, our capital funds have increased and as of the 30th September 2005 stood at \$2,381,000. These now produce an income which is used towards the running of your Library of \$77,800 per year. A modest proportion

of these funds are invested in Government and corporate bonds, some of which produce a relatively high yield of up to 6%. The bulk, however, is invested in stocks, which have a lower yield but which, over time, grow in value, thereby mitigating the effects of inflation. In addition to this there is the book endowment fund which stood at \$278,000 on the 30th September, producing an annual income of \$13,615. The Governors monitor the performance of all the investments on a regular basis against certain benchmarks.

On the outgoing side the details are still being developed. Until recently the Governors have never known the full extent of the Norfolk County Council's contribution towards the running cost of your Library. However, last summer I was given details showing the level of this contribution. The reason for the local government producing the figures at this stage is that the Council is strapped for cash and is looking to cut expenses. This is common amongst most municipal and county governments at this time. In Norfolk they are looking at areas they have never looked at before because there is huge political pressure to control the level of local taxation. The County's contribution is more sig-

nificant than anything we had previously imagined. Steps are in hand to reduce it.

And so where does this put the Governors of your Memorial Library? Well, we have to accept that the level of subsidy to the Library will be reduced. The challenge facing the Governors is twofold. Firstly we need to increase very significantly the amount of money invested. As part of this process I would therefore like to encourage all members of the 2ADA and indeed anyone who served in the 2nd Air Division to consider leaving money in their wills to the Memorial Trust. I know that there has been a bequest program which will, over time, help. But I cannot emphasise enough the need for all of you to review your wills to see if there is anything you can do to help your Library. The other challenge facing the Governors is the necessity of running your Library without any lowering of standards of service. You know we will do our very best.

Your Library is the only one of its kind anywhere. Over the years the Governors have invested huge amounts of time, energy, and commitment in nurturing it. However, none of this would have been possible without your very generous help, and for that we remain profoundly grateful. ■

Report of the 2ADA Representative on the Board of Governors of the Memorial Trust

BY CHUCK WALKER (445TH)

I started my last report by saying "many things have gone on since my last report." That is not the case for this report. I have not been back to Norwich for a Governors meeting, so I must rely on my frequent phone calls to Trust Chairman **Matthew Martin** for the news. Of course he shares the minutes of Governors meetings with me.

An advance copy of the report of our 2ADA/Fulbright scholar, **Glenn Gray**, for the 15 February Governors meeting stated that he and Trust Librarian **Derek Hills** visited the new satellite library at Dereham. You may recall that library had been closed for many months for remodeling. "In addition to working with them to enhance their stock of American-related material, we agreed to work together on co-hosting some programs aimed at schoolchildren as part of our commitment to reach young people" [in the area]. In January, Glenn visited the satellite library in Sprowston. He also reports that he has been working on a bid that is being put together for a Heritage Lottery Fund grant to support the recataloging and digitization of the veterans' and 2AD Trust records that are presently stored in the Norfolk Records Office. I have been told this would be an expensive project, so we sincerely hope the Lottery comes through.

Derek Hills reports that the December 2005 daily attendance at our 2AD Memorial Library was 144, including two veterans and their families. **Joe Dzenowagis, Jr.** is working with Trust Governor **Andrew Hawker** and the Library staff on the possibility of having a portable plasma screen with VCR/DVD to better display many of the films available at the Library. Joe will no doubt report on this venture, so I will leave it to him.

The latest from Matthew Martin reports that **Mr. Tuttle**, the American Ambassador to Great Britain, will be visiting our Memorial Library on 11 May 2006. I have been planning on attending the July 28th Governors meeting, but if I can scare up enough cash, I certainly would like to be in Norwich when the Ambassador is there. Stay tuned to see how it comes out.

STAY WELL AND HAPPY! ■

The Editor's Comments

BY RAY PYTEL (445TH)

My attention has been called to the USAF Museum at Dayton, Ohio and its recent acquisition of the famous B-17 *Memphis Belle*. At present the *Belle* is in very sad shape, what with some sixty-two years of neglect and outdoor weathering. My information is that it is to be restored to a very high standard well above many of the other planes at the museum, in a place of honor. In addition it appears that the museum intends to turn this display into a memorial for all WWII bomber crews.

The announced plans for the *Belle* are that she will be restored to factory-new condition and will be marked as of her 23rd mission. Because of the gross neglect the plane suffered in Memphis, the B-17 is damaged, corroded, and almost all the original equipment is missing. Restoration is expected to last at least ten years and many thousands of man-hours.

While this is great and the *Belle* does deserve this recognition, a question aris-

es as to another famous WWII bomber at the museum, the B-24 *Strawberry Bitch*. This plane is in much better condition, and even has the original engines that flew her in from the bone yard. I am not suggesting that the *Bitch* replace the *Belle*, but there is another concern — will the *Bitch* be relegated to some backroom display, while the B-24 crews will be included in the honor pool with all the other WWII crews in the B-17 display. Something to think about.....

It has been suggested that the two WWII bombers should be put on display together, honoring the crews of each type of plane in its own space. But here is the rub: While the *Bitch* is in much better shape than the *Belle*, it will not be in the "Mint" condition that the B-17 will be. Considerable restoration would be needed, but certainly it would not take the ten years planned for the *Belle*. It also has been suggested that the *Bitch* be moved to the Smithsonian. Contact and discuss it with your group vice president. Perhaps we can discuss it at the next 2ADA convention, in Washington, D.C. in October.

ANSWERS TO THE WINTER QUIZ

Thanks to the late historian Roger Freeman's book *The Mighty Eighth*, here are the answers to the Winter Quiz:

The three 8th AF commanders in order were: Major General Carl Spaatz (May 1942 to November 1942), Lt. General Ira

Eaker (December 1942 to January 1944), and Jimmy Doolittle, (January 1944 to the end of the war in Europe May 1945).

Roger Freeman lists two second division commanders: Brigadier General James Hodges (September 1943 to January 1944) and Major General William Kepner (January 1944 to the end of hostilities in Europe, May 1945).

The largest heavy bomber action occurred on December 24, 1944 during the Battle of the Bulge. 2034 8th AF heavies took part with additional heavies from the RAF and the 9th AF amounting to some 500 or more.

The last mission for Second Air Division groups was on April 25, 1945, with some groups disbanding even sooner to prepare for the return to the U.S. and retraining on the B-29 while other contingents were shipped direct to the Pacific Theatre.

SUMMER QUIZ

1. Early in the 8th AF's B-24 history, some groups were involved in "moling" operations. What did this involve?

2. Another bomber, not a B-24 or B-17, was operational with the 8th AF during the summer of 1943. What was it?

3. What Allied plane did Hitler envy, and he was to have said, "Why can't Germany build a plane like that?"

4. Who said: "Give me a squadron of Spitfires?" ■

THE HERITAGE LEAGUE

BY BRIAN H. MAHONEY
Heritage League President

My apologies for the missed column in the previous *Journal* — I was moving in September, and Editor Pytel's letter asking for my column caught up with me a week too late! I am penning this on Valentine's Day, and anticipate you reading it just prior to the 61st anniversary of VE, so for the League, let me hope you all had a peaceful Christmas and that you are still keeping your New Year's resolutions, or have at least decided which were the important ones! Good health and happiness to all of you.

"Moving" seems to be a good theme . . . The Heritage League is moving forward with a convention on its own in Savannah, July 13-16, and all are invited to join us. The best way to learn all the details and to register is to visit our website, <http://www.heritageleague.org>. You will see that family groups and all generations are encouraged — by our program plans, by our timing, and by our pricing. I should take this chance to repeat, as I assured Alan Senior when the reunion was first announced in San Antonio: the Heritage League *will* be present and visible with you at the 2ADA convention in October. It is not just to be with you, or to see the completed USAF Memorial. Under President Senior, we anticipate a renewed and productive conversation about proper roles that the 2ADA might hand over to us. We are delighted that this wonderful vet, long an approachable friend and host (with his lovely wife Joyce) of our Executive Committee, is determined to give us a meaningful place at the table.

For our part, we have stuck to our program of clarifying our mission, shaping our outreach to welcome *all* veterans of the 2nd Air Division, in *all* units attached and assigned, and their descendants and

supportive others. We have taken the initiative in raising forward-thinking points with the Trust Governors, demonstrating our solid commitment to the 2AD Memorial Library and the 2ADA/Fulbright Librarian program. We have established friendly relations with other entities whose missions have important common ground with ours, while refining and embracing that which makes us unique — our 2nd Air Division legacy. And most importantly, we have prepared ourselves for taking on activities perpetually memorializing you veterans and your fallen comrades. If your individual group (or 2ADA committee) is not already familiar with our Transition Committee's Mission Statement, please let me set you up with copies at once. (E-mail me at BriCamera@MindSpring.com.) Just as we have taken on annual wreath-laying at five American cemeteries honoring our 2AD veterans, we are open, for example, to supervising your base's marker-maintenance endowment.

And now we are about the fun and timely business of showing you that we have learned how to throw a nice party and invite our favorite generation. Time for you guys to relax a little, and let *us* do the work from now on! ■

RAF Coltishall: Gone – but never forgotten

BY EDWARD FOSS, RICHARD BATSON, AND MARK NICHOLLS

REPRINTED FROM THE EASTERN DAILY PRESS, APRIL 3, 2006 • SUBMITTED BY DAVID HASTINGS

The parades and formalities lasted the best part of five hours, but the final act took just seconds.

Four Jaguars roared low over RAF Coltishall grouped in a tight diamond, until one of them suddenly pulled sharply upwards and out of sight through the white cloud.

This was a “missing man” formation, typically used to mark a funeral, but being acted out on Saturday as a fitting last goodbye to the base from the Jaguars and a precursor to imminent closure.

The formation was the culmination of three parades and several flypasts, held for the benefit of around 3,000 RAF staff, senior military personnel and invited guests gathered at the station.

It was the end of the Jaguar’s 32-year association with Coltishall, the end of 66 years of operational flying at the illustrious Battle of Britain station and, to coin a phrase used many times at the weekend, the end of an era.

What did not, and will not, end was the unforgettable history, the immeasurable pride and the emotional attachment forged across wars and peacetime between personnel, the community and the base.

Overseeing Saturday’s events as reviewing officer was Chief of the Air Staff, Air Chief Marshal Sir Jock Stirrup.

After inspecting the main parade of personnel, held between parades to mark the future roles of 6 and 41 Squadrons, he addressed the gathering and said: “It is always a very sad moment when you have to close a station, a much-loved station.

“And when it is the last Battle of Britain fighter station, then the moment is even more poignant. It has served in splendid fashion and with enormous success.”

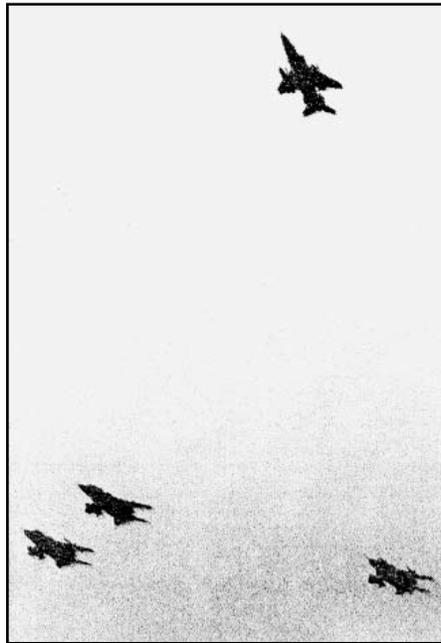
The air chief marshal, who served at Coltishall earlier in his career, added that wherever personnel were posted in the future, the Norfolk base would be a part of them.

“In a few months the gates will close and that will be sad. But the spirit of Coltishall will not close, that will be part of us forever.”

A diamond nine of Jaguars flew over the base a few minutes later, the first of the air displays, which also included a Harrier and two Tornados. But the blustery weather meant planned flypasts by a Spitfire and Hurricane had to be shelved.

Before the highlight of the day, the departure of the last Jaguars, station commander Air Commodore Graham Wright also spoke.

He described the station as “very spe-



The last Jaguars from RAF Coltishall fly the “Missing Man” formation.

cial” and said the day had been emotional. “My life, for one, has been inextricably linked with this place, but today has been better than I could have expected,” he said.

This was the ceremony Coltishall had hoped it would never have to host, though it has been bracing itself for several years as talk of closure had surrounded the station long before the then defence secretary Geoff Hoon confirmed the fact in 2004.

As the pilots and passengers for the remaining six Jaguars left their final Coltishall briefing, they were greeted with spontaneous applause from the crowd as they walked to the planes, acutely aware that this was the last symbolic flight from a station that had seen some of the RAF’s finest aircraft and pilots head skywards along the same runway.

They climbed aboard, taxied slowly past, waving and giving the thumbs up sign as they headed out along the length of the runway, turned around and took off for the final time.

Yet on the first of the month of April, there was a disappointing twist for the thousands gathered to see the final Jaguars fly off.

One of the six was unable to leave because of electrical problems and slowly taxied back to the apron after the other five jets had thundered down the damp runway in a mist of spray, then roared skywards.

Four returned overhead briefly to carry out the last two flypasts over the base be-

fore leaving for their new home at RAF Coningsby in Lincolnshire where they will be stationed with the RAF’s latest super-jet, the Typhoon.

The day had a smooth, military feel to it, but it was also relaxed — a combination of styles for which Coltishall has long been proud.

Showers failed to interrupt proceedings, although a stiff breeze was too much for some, blowing the hats off several parading personnel. A service at Norwich Cathedral yesterday continued the formal commemorations with the laying up of old standards.

The last rites for RAF Coltishall will be delivered in a few months, but after two-thirds of a century serving the nation, the base has effectively breathed its last. ■

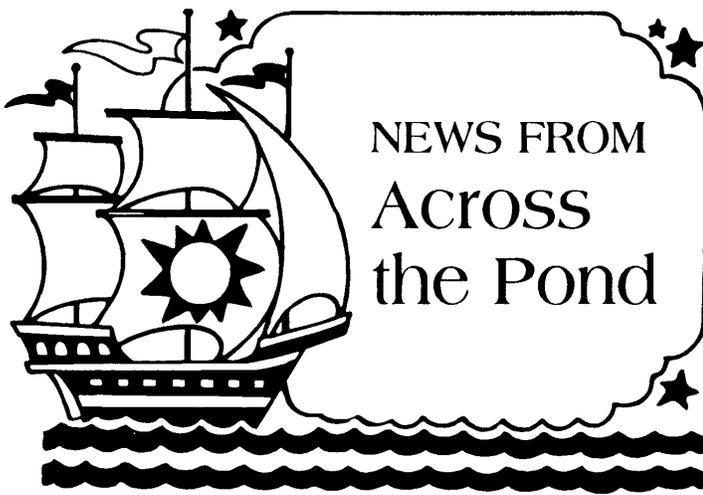
THOUGHTS FROM THE “LIAISON”

(continued from page 3)

What is this action? To preserve the accomplishments of the 2nd Air Division and the Mighty Eighth Air Forces, separately, yet combined. Having increased the scope of the management of the Memorial Library to include oversight of the Fulbright Scholarship fund, also, to the Board of Governors, 2ADA members can now focus on new projects, such as the *Fightin Sam* exhibit at the Mighty 8th Air Force Museum, for which over \$100,000 has been raised. By this, and other projects, the 2ADA can increase the impact of our history in museum exhibits which future generations who cannot journey to Norwich will be able to enjoy.

It is exciting to contemplate a future in which the enthusiasm of the 2ADA will leave lasting footprints as a part of a continuing and dynamic organization such as the 8th Air Force. As in World War II, the 8th represents the greatest striking developed by mankind. Membership will constantly be replenished as women and men retire from active duty with the 8th. It is comforting to know that these retirees of the future will continue the mission we and others began following the formation of the 8th Air Force in Savannah in 1942.

The Museum will continue to improve and expand through future years . . . truly another dynamic and living organization! As our footprints fade, newer and bolder steps will continue to add luster to an organization which we can proudly say the Second Air Division Association helped to pioneer! ■



LIBRARIAN ACTIVITIES

BY GLENN GRAY, 2ADA/FULBRIGHT LIBRARIAN

It has been an eventful few months since I last wrote. The November meeting of the 2AD Memorial Trust Governors was a great success, as I'm sure all who participated will agree. It was good to welcome our visitors from the States, some of whom I'd already had the good fortune of meeting in San Antonio. In addition to becoming acquainted with our new Governors, the week was significant for the Lord Owen lecture at the John Innes Center which had a great turnout. Prior to this, Lord and Lady Owen toured the 2AD Memorial Library, about which they were very complimentary. For me, the highlight of the whole week was the ceremony of rededication of the American Chapel at St. Paul's Cathedral in London, where we were joined by the American ambassador. It was a very beautiful, moving service which those of us who were honoured to be there will never forget.

Also since my first report for *The Journal* I attended the meeting of the Friends of the 2AD Memorial as well as the Thanksgiving dinner sponsored by the Friends. Once again, the dinner was very well attended, so "hats off" to the Friends for all their efforts. In December I had the pleasure of visiting the grounds

of Ketteringham Hall where I was accompanied by two of our casual staff, Jim Rawlins and Anne Goodhew. We were driven by one of our contacts, Bob Dance, who worked for Lotus and is very knowledgeable about the place. We found Ketteringham Hall to be a very serene place, and a good time was had by all.

In January I participated in the Fulbright Forum that was held in London and Belfast. It was interesting to meet the other Fulbrighters and to have this opportunity to learn about various aspects of life here in the U.K.

Closer to home, there is a lot going on. Derek, Jenny, Lesley and I assembled various documentary materials in support of a creative writing workshop on the topic of GI Brides, held in the 2AD Memorial Library in conjunction with the Millennium Library's annual celebration of "Love Week." The workshop, which was led by a local author, proved to be so popular that we had to turn people away, so we may run it again in the future.

I gave a talk about the Memorial Library resources to a class studying American culture at City College, and I am in the process of lining up additional talks to schools in the coming months. In March I will be hosting a meeting of high school librarians and I will be attending a meeting of history teachers, and these will be good opportunities to learn how the Memorial Library can best respond to the educational and informational needs of this population. We also have some tour groups scheduled to visit the Library, and I continue to assess books for purchase.

In February I was pleased to note that the film show sponsored by the Seething group was very well attended. Speaking of films, we've been contacted by Dr. Vernon Williams, a history professor at Abilene Christian University in Texas and Director of the East Anglia War Project. Dr. Williams will be screening his documentary film, *Liberators over East Anglia: B-24 Bomb Groups on the Air Front in England*, in the Memorial Library following the April Board of Governors meeting. We look forward to this opportunity to learn about Dr. Williams' work.

In other news, I have been consulting on a bid for a Heritage Lottery Fund grant to catalogue and digitize the 2AD archival materials that are on deposit at the Norfolk Record Office. As part of this effort I am reviewing the records of the Memorial Trust, which is proving to be a valuable way to bringing me up to speed on the last fifty-plus years! ■

Retirement of a trusted advisor

BY STEVE COX

REPRINTED FROM THE EASTERN DAILY PRESS
DECEMBER 13, 2005

The business life of Norfolk has become a little less rich with the retirement of Tom Eaton, who has decided to call it a day at the age of 87.

Until recently he was still working a five-day week, but has now given up his practising certificate and partnership in Overbury's, the Norwich law firm which he joined from school.

He was articled to his father, Frederic Eaton, in September 1936 and in total the two men gave more than 110 years' service to the firm.

Tom Eaton, who had a distinguished war record and a remarkably varied involvement in public life, specialised in his law career in conveyancing, probate and trusts.

"I was an old-style family solicitor," he said, "someone who in former times would be called a man of affairs. Solicitors in the 18th century were also bankers for their clients and held money for their clients. They were general purpose people who provided advice and were responsible for their clients' affairs — as I was until the time I retired."

In a letter he sent out to clients on his retirement at the end

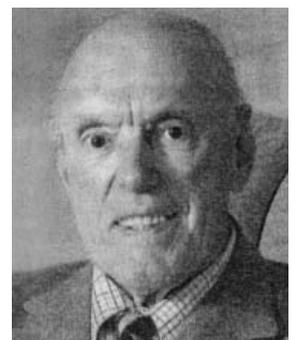
of October, he said he was still willing to be a guide, philosopher and friend although he could no longer give legal advice.

During his long service with the firm, he worked for many of Norfolk's farming, land-owning and business families, setting up and managing their trusts and providing a host of other legal services.

"People relied on me. I remember the wife of one of my clients telling me that when her husband was taken into hospital, he did not ask for doctors but wanted to see me."

It was this close relationship with clients which led to an unusual feature of his office, a standard lamp made out of a stuffed python.

"I had made a will or a codicil to a will for a remarkable woman who was a rally driver and a big game hunter, among other things. It was perfectly straightforward but when she died, as executor, I was responsible for clearing things up. I went to the cellar and found a hand-written envelope addressed to me. She had made a codicil to her will in which she left me a stuffed tiger's head and



TOM EATON is a former Chairman of the Board of the Memorial Trust of the Second Air Division USAAF

(continued on page 18)

389TH BOMB GROUP

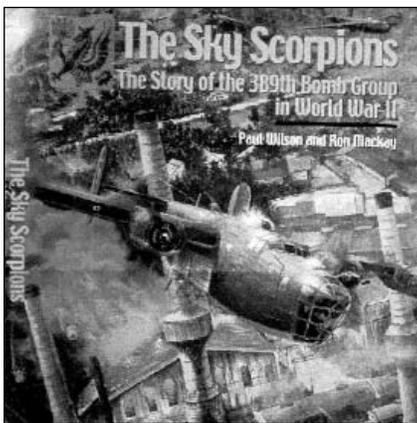


BY EARL ZIMMERMAN

By the time you read this, our reunion in the U.K. will be over. Look for a report in the next newsletter.

I have received quite a few checks for our newsletter and letters to the editor. So it's a toss up, lads, you can send your checks to Allan Hallett, our treasurer, and the letters to Kelsey McMillan, our editor, or send both the letters and checks for the newsletter to Kelsey and she will forward the checks to Allan. We don't wanna make it difficult, guys — keep the letters coming.

Kelsey is working on a Roll of Honor book for the 389th. She has found many mistakes in the 2nd Air Division Roll of Honor. Many names do not belong, and many are missing; for example: Our MOH recipient, Lt. Lloyd Hughes, for the Ploesti mission is in the book, but Capt. Robert C. Mooney, KIA over the target and buried in Izmir, Turkey, is not listed in the ROH book. Hey, all the guys on that mission were on DS to the 9th Air Force and all KIA's belong in the book.



The Schiffer Publishing Spring 2006 catalog lists *The Sky Scorpions* 389th book by Don MacKay and Paul Wilson, although their web page does not have it listed yet. Details of the book: 272 pages, over 420 photographs, ISBN 0-7643-2422-5, price \$59.95.

Hang in, guys, and don't forget to take your pills. ■

Editor's Note: I recall each group VP signed a statement that the Honor Roll was correct before it was finalized.



WENDLING

392nd

BY OAK MACKEY

You are all aware that the 2006 convention of the 2nd Air Division Association will take place in Falls Church, Virginia at the Fairview Park Marriott Hotel, October 13, 14 & 15 and departure on the 16th. Elsewhere in this *Journal* Evelyn Cohen has provided all you need to know about making your reservations. The main event and the purpose for having the convention in Washington, D.C. is to attend the dedication ceremonies at the new Air Force Memorial, located just south of Arlington National Cemetery. Buses will leave the hotel to go to the daytime dedication on October 14. Lunch and dinner will be on your own this day. Buses will again leave the hotel in time for the Air Force Memorial Concert in the evening. On Sunday morning from 10:00-11:00 there will be a memorial service at the Air Force Memorial (transportation on your own).

There are also two tours offered on Sunday, October 15. One is a tour of the new Aerospace Museum's Stephen F. Udvar-Hazy Center out near Dulles Airport. The cost is just \$17.00 for the bus, and this is a must-see tour if you like airplanes and space rockets. You will see the *Enola Gay* B-29 there. Jim Goar and I went on this tour in October 2005 while attending the 8th Air Force Historical Society convention and thoroughly enjoyed it. I can't speak for Jim, but I'll be going out there again this year. The *Enola Gay* is shined to a mirror-like finish and occupies a central location in this very large facility. In total there are over 140 airplanes there, including a Concorde; the very first Boeing 707 built by Boeing, usually referred to as the Dash 80; Wiley Post's "Winnie Mae" Lockheed Vega; and many WWII airplanes (but no B-24; maybe later). There is a space shuttle which has never been in orbit but was used for training, and there is a collection of various space rockets. If you need a rest and a snack, there is a McDonald's inside. You can view the airplanes from the floor, or there are stairs and elevators to the second and third levels and you can view the airplanes from there, which is a good thing because many of the airplanes are suspended from the ceiling. Wear your walking shoes, for this facility is a monster, over three football fields long and three stories high.

The other tour on Sunday, October 15 is a bus tour of Washington, D.C. This is a sight-seeing tour and will be worth the \$37.50 per person price. There are so many things in Washington to see that I can't begin to tell of all the places the tour might take you, but there will surely be a stop at the new WWII Memorial near the Washington Monument. At the Aerospace Museum on the Mall you can see Lindbergh's airplane, *The Spirit of St. Louis*; the Wright Flyer; an Eastern Airlines DC-3; a moon lander; John Glenn's orbiter; and lots of other good stuff — although a bus tour may not allow much time there.

About three years ago Maxine and I went to Washington, D.C. for a look-see, for she had never been there before and I had been there only once but not for sightseeing. We booked an all-day Gray Lines bus tour which included Mt. Vernon, George Washington's home; Old Town Alexandria where Robert E. Lee grew up; Arlington National Cemetery including the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier and President John F. Kennedy's grave; the Lincoln Memorial; the Korean War Memorial; the Vietnam War Memorial; Georgetown; the Capitol; the U.S. Supreme Court Building; the Aerospace Museum; the White House (from a distance); the Mall; and much more, all supremely narrated by a driver who talked nearly non-stop all day while driving the bus. It was incredible!

If you have never been to Washington, D.C. before or if you want to see more of it again, why not stay over for two or three days after the convention and take some time to see the sights. It would be well worth the time and money. For a few days after the convention the hotel will likely offer the same rate. I do recommend a Gray Lines tour, and there are other bus companies who surely are very good also.

How about the *Fightin' Sam* exhibit planned at the Mighty Eighth Air Force Museum in Savannah, GA? As of today, March 3, 2006 as I write this sterling epistle, the museum has collected \$106,000, just \$19,000 short of the goal of \$125,000. You won't receive this message until sometime in May, but when you do, open up that wallet and get rid of some of that excess cash by sending a sizable donation to the Mighty Eighth Air Force Museum, P.O. Box 1992, Savannah, GA 31402. An exhibit honoring the B-24 is long overdue there. Be sure to state that your donation is for the *Fightin' Sam* exhibit!

Most people will never forget a kind deed . . . as long as they're the one who did it.

All the best. See ya in Washington. ■

Author profiles Jimmy Stewart's military career

Starr Smith got to know actor while stationed together in WWII

BY REBECCA SINGER • REPRINTED FROM THE INDIANA GAZETTE, INDIANA, PA

While other Hollywood actors and directors were selling war bonds and making promotional war films during World War II, Indiana, PA actor Jimmy Stewart was taking a more active part in the war—he was flying and training other men to fly B-24 bombers over Europe.

Starr Smith, a Montgomery, Ala., native, freelance writer and author of the book, *Jimmy Stewart: Bomber Pilot*, served in the Eighth Air Force, 453rd Bomb Group, in Europe at the time Stewart was stationed with the group. Smith was the intelligence officer and Stewart was the operations officer.

Smith paid a Veterans Day visit to Indiana yesterday at the Jimmy Stewart Museum for a special lecture, question-and-answer session and book signing. After participating in the Veterans Day parade, he took time to reflect on his time spent in the military with Stewart and explained why he wrote the book, which documents a side of Stewart that few people knew.

"It's the kind of book that should be written," he explained. "It's an American story. It's the story of a man who was a very successful actor but wanted to be fighting in the war.

"Stewart did not want to be an actor in uniform. He played a vital part in the fighting of the war with a very important job. It was in that connection that I worked with him and knew and admired him so much. That's why I decided to do this book."

Jimmy Stewart: Bomber Pilot does not dwell on Stewart's well-known acting days. Instead Smith gives us a look at the man in uniform, the one who was drafted but initially failed his physical because he was ten pounds underweight. While Smith didn't serve with Stewart until they reached England, he spent several years researching Stewart's military background.

"He was probably one of the few people in the history of World War II who appealed his turnaround," Smith said. "What he said to me about that day was 'the day they weighed me, I had a friend manning the scales.'"

Smith explained that once Stewart was in the service, it was natural that he be assigned to the Air Force, because he was already a pilot with more than 300 flying hours and owned his own plane.

"But Stewart didn't want to be just in uniform," Smith explained. "He wanted action. Well, the U.S. Government had decided he was too valuable a person to commit to combat with the possibility of maybe



Starr Smith, author of *Jimmy Stewart: Bomber Pilot* was in Stewart's hometown, Indiana, Pennsylvania to promote his book and participate in Veterans Day activities. Smith was stationed in Europe with Stewart during World War II. JAMIE ISENBERG/Gazette

being shot down and used as a hostage."

Stewart was bitterly disappointed, Smith said, but resolved to not use his name or influence to try to advance. He was assigned to a transitional school for B-17 bombers. Out of the thirty students in the class, Stewart finished at the top of his class, but was the only person not to receive a combat job, and instead was named a B-17 instructor. Smith said Stewart then was sent to Boise, Idaho, for a while, where it was rumored Stewart was to be taken off flying status. At this point, Stewart decided to talk to his commanding officer and see if he could get a new assignment.

Smith explained that Stewart's commanding officer knew of a Liberator B-24 group in Sioux City, Iowa that needed a squadron operations officer, and that was Stewart's background

Within hours, Stewart was on his way to Sioux City. Within nineteen days, Smith said, Stewart was promoted to squadron commander.

"It was the first time he had some confidence that he was really a part of the war machine, and was a really good squadron commander," Smith said. "He was sent overseas and my group followed his a couple of weeks later. We had trouble immediately. We lost our operations officer, and Stewart came in.

"It was in that connection that I knew him and worked with him night after night."

Smith, who was twelve years younger than Stewart, was serving in England as the chief briefing officer for the intelligence side and Stewart handled the operational side. They would put the information together and brief crews that would be flying out in the morning.

"He was a meticulous man, very intelligent. Stewart would have been a successful man no matter what he decided to do. He knew how to concentrate and to work," Smith said.

The journalist in Smith knew that Stewart's story was one that would make a good read, someday. "The idea appealed to me and intrigued me that a man of his background and experience as an actor coming into the military wanted a workman-like job," Smith said.

During the time he served with Stewart, he would take notes but because Stewart was such a private person, he didn't begin serious work on the book until after Stewart had died in 1997. Smith had been in Montreal covering a jazz festival when a friend told him of Stewart's passing.

"I finished out the rest of the concert and then went back to the hotel and stayed up all night freshening my memory. Then

(continued on page 12)

HALESWORTH
489TH
NOTES

BY
MEL PONTILLO

In past columns I have mentioned my visits to air museums. Usually, the subject was coupled to my first-person experiences at 2ADA and/or 489th Bomb Group reunions. Visits to air museums were part of the agenda, just like the dining and tours of the host city. My intention is to keep members informed of business matters while encouraging them to attend these fine get-togethers and enjoy the camaraderie and social aspects of the reunion. In past columns I have dwelt in detail about the museum and library visits, partly out of my own interest in these fascinating displays but also out of concern that our legacy be preserved. I have shared my concern with you that as our numbers dwindle

a record of the sacrifices and achievements of the B-24 crews will lose significance and be forgotten and lost in time.

However, lately my apprehension has been alleviated by my research on the subject. Before continuing, let me state for the record, that a lot of material regarding the 489th has been preserved. In fact, a lot of material regarding the entire 8th Air Force is preserved. Aircraft, mission records, air and ground crew names, places, events, photos, and the list goes on. Fortunately, we live in a society that values the recording of history and historical events. Also we are fortunate in having people with the expertise and assets to do this work. But how did I come to realize that all this existed? After all, books, publications, films and documents were done in piecemeal fashion over a sixty year period. Simply, what was preserved and where might it exist? Frankly, I don't have the entire answer, but I can relate this fact. My journey into the past started in the present on the information highway and my home computer. Please note, I am part of the slide rule generation and this is not an article about computers. If you need help with computers, just approach your grandkids. But I can relay this to you, the

information regarding our topic on the home computer is extensive and informative. It brings all the diverse informational opportunities together in one spot, your home computer.

For example, I found extensive records depicting B-24 nose art and copies of service records for the planes. If you like pictures, the Internet is the repository for B-24 pictures, crew pictures, mission pictures. Likewise, if you would like to read stories, historical accounts abound. Even better is the fact that first-hand accounts by the principals of combat missions are readily accessible. Written by the airmen involved, this is history first-hand. Finally, while surfing the Internet I ran across a curiosity. On the E-bay website, the electronic flea market, I found two interesting items for sale. Believe it or not, for sale was a Consolidated B-24 Liberator PDI gauge, along with a B-24 fuel tank gauge. Also, other old B-24 parts appear periodically.

Only the Internet can deliver such diverse topics regarding one subject. Perhaps we should view the electronic age as one more opportunity in preserving the rich history of the B-24 and the efforts of the airmen who helped create that history.

Hope to see you at the next reunion. ■

KETTERINGHAM HALL
DIVISION



BY RAY STRONG

I send greetings to all of you. I am writing this for the second *Journal* of 2006 which will be mailed out in May. Our next convention will be in October—information about it was published in the last two issues of *The Journal* as well as this one.

There is not much to write about since you have not sent me any news that I can publish. I did receive an e-mail from Jack McKenzie, who was a pilot in the 453rd BG. I thought it was very interesting. Here it is:

In the Fall issue of the Journal you asked for stories about service in the 2nd Air Division. I don't know if the attached would qualify, but I am sending it to you anyway.

My name is Jack McKenzie and I was a First Pilot in the 735th Squadron of the 453rd Bomb Group. I flew 11 missions from February 25, 1945 to April 10, 1945.

I am a ham radio operator, NSMFG, Extra Class, and have a more-than-passing interest in Morse Code. The attached is about my boyhood friend, Morse Code and the fact that it resulted in his death over Japan—the day after the war was over!

— Jack McKenzie, Rt. 3, Box 177-B, Cleveland, OK 74020, n5mfjg3@juno.com

“I Remember Billy”

BY JACK MCKENZIE

His name was Billy Smith and we grew up in the little sleepy town of Mesquite, Texas.

After high school we both went to Texas A&M. This was during World War II and we both hitchhiked to Dallas and volunteered for Aviation Cadet training in the Army Air Forces. We entered service the same day at Sheppard Field, Texas where we were assigned to different barracks according to our last names. When we left basic training, Billy went to Aviation Cadet Pre Flight at San Antonio, Texas whereas I was sent to Maxwell Field, Alabama. In Pre Flight we both had to learn to copy five words per minute Morse Code.

I did . . . he didn't.

After Pre Flight I went to Primary Flight School, followed by Basic Flight School and Advanced Flight School where I received my commission and pilot wings. I then went to the Four Engine School back

at Maxwell Field, where I learned to fly B-24 bombers. This was followed by crew training and eventually to the 735th Squadron of the 453rd Bomb Group (Heavy) of the 8th Air Force in England from where I flew missions over Germany.

In the meantime Billy repeated another two months of Pre Flight whereby this time he had learned to copy Morse Code at twenty words per minute or so. And then, for reasons that would only be understood by someone who has served in the military, he did not ship out again and was held back for another onerous two months of Pre Flight! By this time the need for pilots had declined, and as soon as he got to Primary Flight School he washed out. He was sent, where else, to Radio School.

Radio School took a long time and then he was assigned to a B-29 crew. Crew training took a long time, to the end that his crew did not make it to the Pacific Theater of Operations until the war was nearly over.

On V-J Day all combat crews were stood down and further missions were flown by crews like Billy's who had not been in combat. His crew was assigned to a low level mission to drop food parcels to American prisoner-of-war camps in Japan, a mission for which they were not trained. They flew into a mountain, and Billy was killed along with his entire crew.

Thus Billy died the day after the war was over, and all because of Morse Code.

Life sometimes doesn't seem fair. ■

“Joplin Jalopy”

Distinguished 44th BG World War II bomber flies only in memories

BY ANDY OSTMEYER • REPRINTED FROM THE JOPLIN GLOBE, JOPLIN, MISSOURI • JANUARY 22, 2006
SUBMITTED BY GORDON KENNEDY, PERSONAL FRIEND OF THE EDITOR

The *Joplin Jalopy* came in at just 300 feet above ground level, barely the length of a football field turned on end. It was March 24, 1945.

“Today’s effort . . . was one of the most important since the invasion of France,” reads the mission log. “In order to attain final victory, it was imperative that the ground forces gain a crossing of the Rhine River in order to break out of the north German plain.”

Allied soldiers, west northwest of Wesel, were making a final, fatal thrust into Germany in the waning weeks of the war in Europe. With them, as it had been since the summer of 1944, came the *Joplin Jalopy*, a B-24 bomber named for the town whose citizens had purchased \$300,000 in war bonds.

Sixty-nine tons of supplies were dropped, according to the log, with “excellent success.”

But the price of “excellent success” was severe.

One of the bombers, its engine smoking, stalled, then nosed into the ground and exploded, killing all on board.

Other planes were punched through with anti-aircraft fire.

Sgt. Anibal Diaz, a gunner from Tampa, Florida was standing between the open ball turret well and the bomb bay in the *Joplin Jalopy* when somehow — no one knows exactly why — his chest parachute deployed, spilling out the ball turret well and sucking him out through it.

I saw him go out of the aircraft and hit the ground and bounce like a ball,” said Robert Vance, of Ontario, California. He was a gunner and assistant radio operator who had flown on the *Jalopy* on two previous missions. This day, however, he was flying on *Southern Comfort III*.

“The Germans later reported him as dead,” the log states matter-of-factly of Diaz.

Vance’s plane was then hit, lost control, bounced off the ground and for the next ninety seconds struggled to gain altitude. Then its right wing dipped, struck the ground and pinwheeled the plane into a disintegrating, fiery explosion. Vance was one of the only two crew members to survive, with broken bones and teeth and lacerations.

It was only his eighth mission and already he was an injured prisoner of war. Even in the final week of the fighting, the life expectancy of men and planes was short.

Allied soldiers west northwest of Wesel were making a final, fatal thrust into Germany in the waning weeks of the war in Europe. With them came the Joplin Jalopy, a B-24 bomber named for the town whose citizens had purchased \$300,000 in war bonds.

Scrap Metal

In all of its missions — and there were 66 of them — Diaz was the only casualty of the *Joplin Jalopy*, which is a “remarkable” record, said Will Lundy, a historian for the 44th Bomb Group. He lives today in Cool, California, and said the *Jalopy* was part of the 506th Squadron of the 44th BG.

“Some of the crews who flew in it allegedly regarded it as a lucky ship,” said Robert Smith, of Pittsburg, Kansas, who is researching the Joplin plane for an article and book, and who provided copies of the mission log.

But the *Jalopy’s* luck would soon run out.

Having survived bombing runs over marshaling yards, railways and sub pens, having survived anti-aircraft fire over oil refineries and holdout German troops, it couldn’t survive Joplin, where it was brought after the war to serve as a memorial. Vandalism, indifference and outright cannibalization of parts left little more than the hull of the bomber rotting on the ground. At one point, it was described by an observer as looking like a “beached whale”.

The *Joplin Jalopy* ended up as scrap metal.

But don’t be too quick to judge, said Smith.

“The experience was by no means unique,” he said. Many other cities acquired planes from the war but later scrapped them.

Smith said the *Jalopy* was on something of a parallel course with the more famous *Memphis Belle*, a B-17, which was the first heavy bomber to complete 25 combat missions and keep her entire crew alive at a time when a large percentage of Allied bombers were shot down over Europe.

The *Belle* ended up in the same bone yard in Altus, Oklahoma, as the *Jalopy*, and like the *Jalopy* was purchased for a few hundred bucks to serve as a memorial, said Smith. And, like the *Jalopy*, vandals and indifference nearly destroyed the *Belle*, although it was eventually restored.

“Aviation Bug”

Smith’s passion for the *Joplin Jalopy* stems from his own background as the

son of a Royal Air Force veteran.

“I have had the aviation bug for a long time,” he said.

His American wife works as a professor in the library at Pittsburg (Kansas) State University, and when they visit England they have an agreement.

“We do a cathedral (for her) one day and an air base the next,” he said.

It was while working at the Joplin Public Library that Smith first learned of the *Jalopy*. He later came across a mention of it in another article in a recent edition of the magazine *FlyPast*. His own interest was launched.

It turns out, said Smith, that in 1944, when Americans were hopping through the Pacific and slicing through what Churchill called the soft underbelly of Europe, and preparing for D-Day, Joplin residents were buying war bonds to support those efforts. Hundreds of thousand of dollars in war bonds. It was enough to get one of the new bombers named in the town’s honor. The *Joplin Jalopy* arrived in Europe in the summer of 1944, flying its first mission on July 29 to bomb ship building targets at Oslebshausen

Different crews used the plane, and some flew in it several times. Like Gerald Folsom, 84, now of Salt Lake City, who was a co-pilot, and his tail gunner Perry Morse, 82, of York, Pennsylvania.

They rode the *Jalopy* in October of 1944 for bombing raids of marshaling yards at Koblenz and Kaiserlautern, and oil refineries over other German cities, including Hamburg.

“That was a rough one,” Morse said of Hamburg. “We had a lot of flak.”

Folsom remembered another close call in the *Jalopy*.

“All of a sudden we lost power,” he said, sending the crew scrambling to check for problems. Fuel was okay, Folsom remembers. Their problem stemmed from a blown fuse in the supercharger.

“Nobody had ever heard of a fuse blowing on a supercharger,” he said. But it was fortunate for the crew that it did. “At the moment we lost power, there were
(continued on next page)

“JALOPY” (continued from page 11)

four big fireball explosions right in front of us. We’d have been right there....”

Asked if the plane was lucky, Folsom replied: “We always figured somebody else was flying on that plane that we never did see.”

The *Jalopy’s* last combat mission was April 25, 1945.

Headwind

After Germany’s surrender, pilots and crews returned to the United States to prepare for the war in the Pacific, but ultimately they were not needed. And the *Joplin Jalopy* joined thousands of other surviving planes in salvage yards like the one in Altus, Oklahoma. It was there when the Joplin War Dads voted to buy it, *The Joplin Globe* noted in an article at the time, “as a permanent war trophy for the city.”

It was to be housed at Schifferdecker Park with other memorials of WWII.

In August of 1946, in what would be its last flight, the *Joplin Jalopy* was flown to the Joplin airport.

“Bucking a headwind and not able to make top speed, the famed combat wise *Joplin Jalopy* returned home Sunday, tired and obviously well-worn... but with its shining silver frame still worthy of the title *Joplin Jalopy*,” the *Globe* reported.

A large crowd was on hand for the event, but all of that enthusiasm wouldn’t spare the plane.

The community was only able to raise 19 percent of what it needed for the project, the *Globe* reported, and the airplane remained at the airport for several years until it was eventually scrapped.

It was a different time, Smith explained, and attitudes were different.

One argument for not pushing forward with memorial projects was based on the needs of the soldiers.

“We’ve got veterans who don’t have houses over their heads. Why are you trying to put a roof over the bomber?” went the reasoning, Smith said. In the *Globe* that same summer were stories about G.I. housing being in short supply in Joplin and elsewhere.

Another argument was based on leaving the war in the past.

“A lot of people just wanted to put it all behind them,” Smith said.

Besides serving as a historical touchstone, the plane would have other value today, Smith said; it literally would be worth millions of dollars.

“With its provenance, you could name your price,” Smith said. ■

Folded Wings

44th BG

Robert L. Dunlap
William A. Rendall
Newell B. Thornock

93rd BG

Elden R. Appel
Robert S. Calkins (448th)
Michael J. DeBrino, Sr.
Dale L. Johnson (93rd)
Granville E. Meseke

389th BG

Paul A. Grantham
Nick Hattel
Jack W. Hayden
Theodore Katz

392nd BG

John M. Donnelly
Frank J. Ferenc
James A. Hoover

445th BG

Hobart G. Bowlby
William M. Michelli
Richard F. Parker

446th BG

Richard W. Wann

448th BG

William J. Demetropoulos
William T. Hensey, Jr.
Lawrence E. Keeran
George E. Letlow

453rd BG

Francis A. Gianoli (446th)
Glenn R. Maxie
James G. Reidy
Freeman L. Perreault

458th BG

Howard R. Tibbitts

466th BG

Wayland Buchholz
Lloyd L. Ennis
Joseph J. Rooney
George R. Snowden
Allen Wiedman

467th BG

LTC Edgar P. Cason
Charles J. Ercegovac
John N. Hilton
LTC Donald W. Fraser, Ret. (492nd)

489th BG

J.D. Coffman
Gordon N. Dunham

491st BG

John W. Crowe
Elwood M. Jones, Jr.

492nd BG

Billy Gene Biggs
Benjamin Cohen
Albert J. Flyen (44th)
Harry N. Rawls

HDQ

John T. Klepper

AUTHOR PROFILES STEWART

(continued from page 9)

I realized that if I was going to do the book I’d better get started on it. Once I decided to really do the Stewart book seriously, I knew I was doing a book on his military background that no one else had done and nobody else was in any position to do, because they didn’t know.”

Smith made a trip to Indiana when he started the book to get a feel for Stewart’s hometown.

“I wanted to come up here and walk the streets at night as Stewart did as a boy and talk to people who knew him,” he said.

“I spent a lot of time just wandering around. I came to the museum and spent time. Now that it’s over, I’m glad I spent the time doing it.”

Smith’s book is now in its third printing and has found a home nationwide on shelves at Barnes and Noble booksellers, among other stores.

“The book is being bought and read by people who are interested in it. My publisher tells me that this book will be a constant seller for years, because it’s on the subject of a man who is extremely well-known, but it’s about part of his life that most people know nothing about.” ■

It's time again to write a note or two for *The Journal*. We have received the plans for the October convention in Washington, D.C. It looks as if it is going to be an enjoyable meeting. The tour of the White House can take only 100 people, so if you want to go, you have to let Evelyn Cohen know. There is no charge for this tour. I hope to see many of you in Washington.

There has been some talk of having some regional 2ADA meetings instead of one big annual convention. Toss it around and let us know what you think about this.

My wife and I were going through some old pictures and found some that may be of interest. Those shown below were taken at Tibenham, England in May or June of 1944. The Burr Miller crew flew 35 missions and never aborted once.



The officers are (L-R) Clarence Luhmann (copilot), Burr Miller (pilot), Irving Lerner (bombardier), and Henry Hein (navigator). The second picture is of some of the crew. Back row, L-R: Basil Culver, Eldon Flory, Clarence Luhmann, Frank Tatum, Henry Hein. Front row: Robert Lawrence, Stanley Matican, Russell Maxwell.

THE 445TH MEMORIAL BENCH AT SAVANNAH

The Kassel Mission Historical Society is pleased to announce that the Memorial Bench fundraising goal has been reached and exceeded!

Fifty-three 445th veterans, family members and friends donated to reach and surpass the goal of \$1,500. The bench has been ordered and will be placed in the Memorial Garden at the Mighty Eighth Air Force Museum at Pooler, Georgia, near Savannah, this spring. The inscription on the bench will read:

*Honoring the 445th BG
Always Up and Flying
Let No Man Be Forgotten*

Dr. Walter Brown, the museum's interim CEO and president, is personally selecting a beautiful wrought iron bench rather than the concrete type usually provided, which will do justice to the men who served and died flying from Tibenham in World War II.

The surplus funds raised will be ear-



BY CLARENCE A. LUHMANN

marked for additional plaques honoring the 445th Bomb Group and the men who flew the Kassel Mission. The Kassel Mis-



sion Historical Society thanks all who so generously answered the call for donations. Special thanks go to KMHS Director Bill Mitchell, who spearheaded the Bench Project. Bill was a 701st Squadron bombardier in 1944-45 and received a Lead Crew Commendation for destruction of a military target.

Dr. Brown also mentioned in a telephone conversation with Bill Dewey that the museum is rearranging exhibits and that the Second Air Division B-24 Liberator displays will be given much more space and will be well featured in the rearranged exhibit area.

SAD NEWS

We regret to report that Evan Harris, head honcho of the Norfolk Gliding Club at Tibenham for a number of years, has died.

THE KASSEL RAID

We wish to clarify what appears to be several conflicting statistics in the last [Winter] issue of *The Journal*.

The late George M. Collar collected a

vast array of data on Kassel and wrote a most concise article in the Spring 1995 *Journal*. We have excerpted several paragraphs as to the numbers in question.

"It started out uneventfully enough, with 39 planes scheduled to take off from our Group. By the time we got into Germany there had been four aborts, so eventually 35 planes dropped their bombs."

After describing the events of the battle, Collar lists the following statistics:

"When the smoke of this great battle had cleared, 25 of our bombers had crashed into German soil. Two of our planes crash-landed in occupied France. One had crashed near Brussels, Belgium. Two made it across the Channel to make forced landings at the emergency strip at Mans-ton. One crashed near the base in Norfolk. Only four were able to land at Tibenham."

"Of the 238 men aboard the 25 bombers which went down in Germany, 115 were KIA or subsequently died of injuries. One was killed in the plane which crashed in Norfolk and one was killed in the crash in Belgium, for a total of 117."

"Another American killed that day was P-51 pilot Lt. Leo Lamb of the 361st FG, who belatedly came to our rescue. He collided with an FW-190 in mid-air."

"During the battle the German air force lost 29 planes, with 18 German pilots KIA."

THE GOTHA MISSION

The Kassel raid was not the only great aerial battle the 445th was involved in. There was the Gotha mission as described in this Presidential Citation:

PRESIDENTIAL CITATION

General Orders 42
War Department, Washington 25 D.C.
24 May 1945
Battle Honors – Citation of units
Section IX

As authorized by Executive Order 9396 (sec. 1, WD Bul. 22, 1943), superseding Executive Order 9075 (Sec. III, WD Bul. 11, 1942), citation of the following unit in General Orders 129, Headquarters 2d Air Division, 11 April 1945, as approved by the Commanding General, European Theater of Operations, is confirmed under the provision of section IV, WD Circular 333, 1943, in the name of the President of the United States as public evidence of deserved honor and distinction. The citation reads as follows:

The 445th Bombardment Group (H), 2d Air Division, is cited for outstanding performance of duty in action against the enemy. On 24 February 1944 this group participated, with other heavy bombardment groups of the 2d Bombardment Division
(continued on next page)

How the Spitfire Stole the Thunder from the Hurricane

BY TOM DIX • REPRINTED FROM 8AF BADGER NEWS

This article is taken from the September 2005 issue of the Framlingham Times, edited by Ian Hawkins of Suffolk, England.

It was written by Tom Dix of Suffolk and appeared in the East Anglian Daily Times on 5 July 2005.

In August of 2005, Britain celebrated the 65th anniversary of the Battle of Britain, which the English people consider to be the most important contribution to the survival of the British empire made by the men and women of the Royal Air Force.

There is no merit in the glorification of war, but there are times in our lives when we feel the need to reflect on circumstances which, had they been different, would have changed our lives completely. Shortly, 65 years will have passed since the Battle of Britain in which RAF Hornchurch, Essex, played a major role.

Adolph Hitler had his Panzer divisions lined up for an invasion of our country, having conquered the whole of Europe. However, Hermann Goering, commanding the German Air Force, convinced Hitler that a successful invasion should be preceded by knocking out the RAF completely which, with vastly superior numbers of aircraft, he felt he could easily do. He came very close to doing it, but history shows the RAF had other ideas. He code-named this very costly venture "Eagle Day," which was 15 August 1940. (*Ed. Note: The invasion was called "Sea Lion."*)

The Spitfire was glamourised as having played the major role in the battle, but here are figures that prove that the Hawker Hurricane, designed by Sidney Camm, emerged as the major factor in the outcome. The strategy employed was that the Spitfires would deal with the German fighters, while the Hurricanes, which could out-manoeuvre the Messerschmitts, took on the bombers. It was the bombers that could have caused complete destruction of our cities.

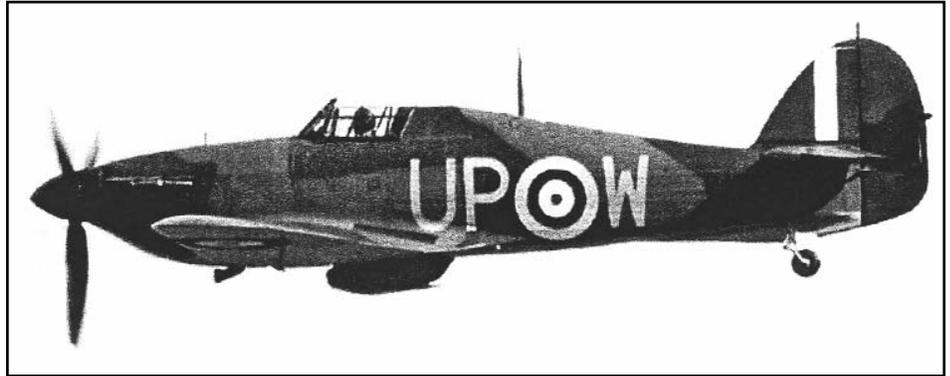
Of the 67 squadrons involved in the Battle of Britain, 13 flew Bristol Blenheims, Boulton Paul Defiants and Gloster Gladiators, 19 flew Spitfires, and 25 flew Hawker Hurricanes. A total of 1,700 Hurricanes were deployed in the battle — more than all other types put together — with 80% of the victories being claimed by Hurricane pilots. There were 242 Hurricane pilots killed in action, compared to 149 Spitfire pilots.

We must not forget that the success of the RAF was due in part to the back-up of the ground personnel. Aircraft were refueled and rearmed much faster than the Germans, so the pilots could get back in the air to reengage the enemy.

Young people today find it difficult to envisage the "old codgers" to have been the gallant swashbucklers that they were — and why not, when the mass media shows

the survivors in their mid-80's. During the battle, pilots were in their late teens and

early 20's. The aging process does not respect a person's appearance. ■



This Hawker Hurricane, R4118 Mk I, is one of the earlier models. It is shown flying at Duxford in May 2005. It was built by Gloster in 1940 and suffered both battle and accidental damage during the war. During one of the repair sessions, it had new Canadian-built wings installed. In 1943, it was shipped to Bombay, India and converted to an instruction airframe for use by the Banaras Hindu University. After much effort, it was acquired and returned to the United Kingdom in 2001. After restoration, it flew again in December 2004.

PHOTOGRAPH BY NORMAN FELTWELL

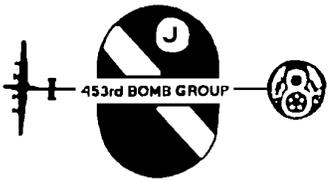
445TH BOMB GROUP *(continued from page 13)*

sion, in an attack on the Gothaer Waggonfabrik, A.G. located at Gotha, Germany. On this occasion the attacking bombers met and overcame the fiercest and most determined resistance the enemy was able to muster in defense of this target, so vital to his ability to wage war. Unprotected by friendly fighter cover the 445th Bombardment Group (H) was under almost continuous attack from enemy aircraft for a period of 2 hours and 20 minutes. Although antiaircraft fire was hurled at the formation along the route to and from the target as well as at the target itself, the most deadly opposition was given by enemy aircraft. For 1 hour and 20 minutes before "bombs away" savage attacks were made by single and twin-engined enemy fighters in a vain attempt to keep the bombers from reaching their target. On the actual bombing run, the critical period of each bombardment mission, fierce and relentless attacks were unable to keep the bombers from accomplishing their task. For another hour after bombing, the group continued to be the object of ferocious fighter attacks. Of this group's 25 aircraft which penetrated enemy territory 13 were lost to these fierce fighter attacks, which numbered approximately twice the loss suffered by any of the other groups participating in this mission. In addition, 9 of the surviving 12 aircraft returned from this mission with battle damage. With heroic determination, the 445th Bombardment Group (H) flew its assigned course, destroying 21 enemy attackers, probably destroying 2 more, and damaging 7 during the long running battle. The target was located and bombed with extreme accuracy and devastating results. This target, the most important source of Me. 110's, was so well hit that the enemy air force suffered a most telling blow. The courage, zeal, and perseverance shown by the crew members of the 445th Bombardment Group (H), 2nd Air Division, on this occasion were in accordance with the highest traditions of the military service of the United States and reflect great credit on themselves and the group, and the Army Air Forces.

By Order of the Secretary of War

G.C. Marshall, Chief of Staff

Official: J.A. Ulio, Major General, The Adjutant General ■



NEWS OF THE 453RD FROM FLAME LEAP

BY LLOYD W. PRANG

It's quite hard to put a positive spin on my feelings as I try to write this article. A good part of my "distress" comes from the fact that the 453rd has probably had its last stand-alone reunion. The planning of these reunions takes a lot of work and the glitches during the actual reunion can make you swear that you'll never do it again. That having been said, I miss it all anyway. An abbreviated version of the events of this last reunion was in the March Newsletter. Looking back, we had a darn good time. It was worth all the aggravation.

From the Internet comes the following: *Milord's, Ladies and Gentlemen, kindly raise your glasses in special tribute to all the girls we've loved before. How's this for depressing??* *Brigitte Bardot-71; Sophia Loren-71; Gina Lollobrigida-78; Doris Day-81; Leslie Caron-74; Carroll Baker-74; Debra Padgett-72; Rita Moreno-74; Jean Simmons-76; Kim Novak-72; Jane Powell-76; Shirley Temple-77; Jane Russell-84; Kathryn Grayson-83; Esther Williams-82; Gale Storm-83; Liz Taylor-73. Unbelievable! How in the world did they get so old...AND WE DIDN'T???*

Last August, Derek Hills, Trust Librarian at the 2nd Air Division Memorial Library, sent a list of the books purchased in the name of the 453rd Bomb Group. The inscription: "Presented by the 453rd Bomb Group (H), B-24s, 2nd Wing, 2nd Air Division, 8th Air Force, Old Buckenham, England." The books were: *Tour of Duty: John Kerry and the Vietnam War* by Douglas Brinkley, and *The Institutional Presidency: Organizing and Managing the White House from FDR to Clinton*. Also men-

tioned were the books purchased via the 453rd Bomb Group Endowment for Jay Jeffries Jr. The inscription read: "Presented by the 453rd Bomb Group in Honor of S/Sgt. Jay Jeffries Jr., Waist Gunner, 453rd Bombardment Group (H), Old Buckenham, England." The books were: *American Nomads: Travels in a Restless Land* by Richard Grant, and *Eighth Air Force Bomber Stories: A New Selection* by Ian McLachlan.

Derek also wrote, "Sixty years after the end of hostilities in Europe it is encouraging to note the continuing output of published material on World War II, including two new 2nd Air Division unit histories."

Finally, about six months ago I received a letter from Sid Blake. Sid was the top turret gunner on the Jim Reidy crew, 735th Squadron. Although this is primarily a 453rd matter, perhaps some others of you may be able to help Sid. Sid wrote:

"During Christmas of 1944 the 453rd sent presents from English kids to the kids in Paris. Reuben Brockway, who was fluent in the French language, was sent as Santa Claus. During our reunion Brockway told me that someone (he could not remember who) made a documentary of the event. They went to Florida to interview him. A copy was sent to him. He was to have made a copy for me but the VHS tape had been misplaced. The last Christmas card I received from him said the tape still had not been found. If anyone knows of this 453rd documentary and where I might get a copy, please let me know. My address is: Sid Blake, 447 Crestview Place, Monrovia, CA 91016-2330, e-mail: KB2STAR@aol.com. Thank you." ■

The Day Before Christmas

This narrative is taken from the diary of Lt. David Dobreer, navigator with the 453rd Bomb Group. The entry was made on December 25, 1944.

The day before Christmas was the first completely clear day in a long time — a perfect day for bombing. For the better part of a week, low clouds had kept the Allied air forces on the ground and Jerry had picked this time to start a new offensive that was taking big bites out of our battle lines in Belgium and Luxembourg. It was our chance to give the boys on the ground some needed support, and we took advantage of it.

Just about every plane that was in shape to go on a mission was put in the air. According to radio reports, the 8th Air Force put up 2,000 bombers and 900 fighters. This was exclusive of the aircraft put up by the Ninth Air Force and the bombers sent out by the RAF last night. Our group, alone, put up a record sixty-five B-24s.

Yesterday's mission was the 31st for our pilot, Bill Traylor, the 29th for me and the 30th for the rest of the crew. Our target was the railroad yards at the small town of Mayen, somewhere in the vicinity of Koblenz. However, we did not get to the target with the rest of the group, because a cylinder blew out in No. 4 engine and the propeller had to be feathered. This happened before we reached the I.P. and we were unable to keep up with the rest of our formation.

We picked up a target of opportunity, a railroad junction, and started a run on it. Just then a formation of B-17s passed over us with their bomb bay doors open. We had to give up our solo run and get out from under in a hurry or run the risk of being bombed by our own air force. Minutes later, we spotted another junction and drew a bead on it. This time we were able to get our bombs away. We were just outside a town called Lissendorf, about thirty miles west of Koblenz. We were losing altitude fast and we were unable to fall in with any other formation, so we returned home alone.

Fog rolled back in today, so we were grounded again, but nobody minded the chance to relax on Christmas Day. I don't imagine the boys on the ground, up at the front, had much of a chance to relax. ■

IT'S THE RESULTS THAT COUNT

FROM 490TH BG "BOMBS AWAY"

A minister dies and is waiting in line at the Pearly Gates. Ahead of him is a guy who's dressed in sunglasses, a loud shirt, leather jacket and jeans.

Saint Peter addresses this cool guy . . . "Who are you...so that I may know whether or not to admit you to the Kingdom of Heaven?"

The guy replies, "I'm Peter Pilot, retired American Airlines pilot from Dallas."

Saint Peter consults his list. He smiles and says to the pilot, "Take this silken robe and golden staff...and enter the Kingdom of Heaven."

The pilot goes into Heaven with his robe and staff. Next, it's the minister's turn. He stand erect and booms out . . . "I am Joseph Snow, pastor of Saint Mary's in Pasadena for the last 43 years."

Saint Peter consults his list. He says to the minister, "Take this cotton robe and wooden staff and enter the Kingdom."

Just a minute," says the minister. "That man was a pilot and he gets a silken robe and golden staff, and I get only cotton and wood. How can that be?"

"Up here . . . we work by results," says Saint Peter. "While you preached . . . people slept. While he flew . . . people prayed." ■



492nd BOMB GROUP HAPPY WARRIOR HAPPENINGS

NORTH PICKENHAM

BY WILLIS H. "BILL" BEASLEY

The 492nd BG will have wreaths laid on Memorial Day, May 29, 2006 in the following American Battle Monument Cemeteries in honor of 492nd Bomb Group veterans who are buried there or are listed on the Wall of the Missing: Ardennes (44), Cambridge (123), Henri Chappelle (9), Lorraine (4), Netherlands (25), and Rhone (6). **Ferdinand Dessente** will again do the honors in the Ardennes Cemetery for our group.

Paul Arnett was contacted via the 492nd website by **Stephanie Meyer** of Belgium regarding 2nd Lieutenant **Leonard H.H. Meyer** (O-702313), 858th BS, 492nd BG (H) who was KIA on 19 May 1944 on the mission to Brunswick. He was a member of the **Pratt** crew. His home was in Nebraska.

Stephanie has adopted Lt. Meyer's grave. As a volunteer her mission is to learn as much about him as she can and to tend to his grave, keeping the headstone clean and laying flowers on special occasions.

This volunteer adoption program has been up and running for the past two years. Every grave in the Netherlands Cemetery has been adopted. Over half of the graves in the Ardennes have been adopted. I do

not have statistics on the other ABMC cemeteries at this writing.

FOLDED WINGS

Ben Cohen was a member of the 2ADA and the 492nd Bomb Group. He became a stamp dealer following the war. Many of our mailings had his beautiful stamps affixed. **Lou Gallo** of the 491st BG (now deceased) and Ben swam together at the YMCA, and over a number of years became very good friends. Ben and Lou lived on Long Island, New York. However Ben was a member of the 801st/492nd "Carpetbaggers" never having been to North Pickenham. Lou argued with him that he belonged in the 492nd until Ben agreed with him and happiness prevailed for them.

Ben would call periodically to chat. On February 7, 2006 Ben called to thank us for what we did for the group and tell us how much he enjoyed our friendship. It was his goodbye call. His son Paul called on the 21st to tell us that Ben passed away on Valentine's Day.

Another very supportive member of the 492nd who has passed away is **Harry Rawls**, who died on December 10, 2005. We are happy to say that Katherine and

their children will be joining us in Dayton, Ohio in June.

PIGEONS IN THE MILITARY

A famous WWI Homing Pigeon named "**Cher Ami**" finished his distinguished career by delivering a vital message: the location of the famous "Lost Battalion." That mission alone is credited with saving nearly 200 human lives! Cher Ami was awarded the French Croix de Guerre with Palm for his heroic service. Because of Cher Ami's heroism, the 77th Infantry was able to advance closer to the German Frontier than any other troops (U.S.A.R.). The heroic journey became Cher Ami's last trip back to headquarters. He died of extensive battle wounds.

Cher Ami perished in 1919 after saving 252 men. In 1931, he was inducted into the Racing Pigeon Hall of Fame and was awarded a gold medal from the Organized Bodies of American Racing Pigeon Fanciers. Cher Ami's body is on display at the Smithsonian.

One WWII homing pigeon named "**GI Joe**" flew twenty miles in twenty minutes preventing bombing an Italian town that had been taken by the British, saving 1,000 Allied soldiers' lives in a single mission! He was awarded the Dickin Medal, the animal equivalent of the Victoria Cross. His average speed on that flight was 60 mph!

Despite enemy fire, pigeons achieved a 98% success rate in missions flown in WWII — often with mortal injuries to themselves.

The French, Swiss, Israeli, Iraqi, and Chinese armies still use homing pigeons today! Pigeons proved valuable in the Gulf War, as their messaging was not affected by electronic jamming.

The pigeon has the rare ability for a large bird to be able to fly nearly straight up. Racing pigeons routinely maintain flight speeds of 50 to 60 mph.

Although a bat and a pigeon are not in the same family, this story needs to be told. In World War II, the United States planned a secret weapon to be used against Japan. This weapon was a bat. The plan was to attach incendiary bombs to bats and let them loose over Japanese cities. They would fly into the nooks and crannies of buildings, go to sleep, and a little while later, blow up. The cities would be set ablaze and forced to surrender. In this way, Kamikaze bats would defeat Kamikaze pilots, without any humans — err, American men — actually having to die. The bats were tested in New Mexico, but the plan was abandoned when the United States discovered the A-bomb and decided to try that instead. It would have been a sight to see.

The above information was taken from an article by **Katie Herman** and *Pigeon Facts*. ■

ARDENNES AMERICAN CEMETERY AND MEMORIAL

4121 Neuville-en-Condroz

Parrainage d'une tombe d'un Soldat américain

Mademoiselle Stéphanie MEYER

a adopté la tombe carré D, rang 12, tombe 42

*Second Lieutenant Leonard H.H. MEYER (O-702313)
858 Bomber Squadron 492 Bomber Group (Heavy)
19-May-44 Nebraska*





BY PERRY MORSE

The 44th Bomb Group Veterans Association's Annual Reunion was held at the Doubletree Hotel at the Seattle/Tacoma Airport in the state of Washington. President-elect **Paul Kay** was the reunion chairman.

The group enjoyed an outstanding tour to Mount St. Helens, with all the awe and majesty of viewing a volcano that had wreaked unbelievable havoc over a wide area of the mountain terrain. Rangers explained the educational value that the volcano provided—erupting sideways and throwing rocks at 350 mph into the countryside, and disrupting the efforts of the timber industry, which was a major economic loss to the state.

A trip to the Boeing (creators of the B-17) Museum provided a backward look at all the technological developments that led to the high level planes that protect our land and transport us to all parts of our world.

Banquet night was a night for multiple honors. **Col. Richard Butler (Ret.)** presented two Air Medals to **Lois Cianci**, earned by her father, **T/Sgt. Clair P. Shaeffer**. **Jackie Roberts** received an Air Medal for her father, **S/Sgt. Jack Ostenson**. Both men were lost on the same mission to Escalles Sur Buchy, 21 January 1944.

William Ward received the DFC + DFC/OLC #1 + AM/OLC #5. **Bernard W. Bail** received three DFCs and AM/OLC #4, and the DFC which had not arrived in time for the presentation.

These belated honors were made possible by Awards Chairman **Lee Aston**, who could not be present, so his wife **Mary** arranged the ceremony. **Col. Richard Butler (Ret.)** did the presentations. **Mary Aston** presented him with a 44th BG suncatcher.

The highest honor that the 44th BGVA offers is the Leon Johnson Award for members who have made outstanding contributions to preserving the history of the 44th. Two were presented this year. The first went to **Robert Lehnhausen**, who had been instrumental in creating the organization after the previous group had collapsed. He served on the Board continu-

ously, accepting the presidency for one year upon the urging of the late "Mike" Mikoloski.

The second Leon Johnson Award went to **Roy Owen**, outgoing president. Owen was the 44th BGVA's first president. After serving his term, he moved into the same position four more times when ill health or personal circumstances prevented others from completing their terms.

Both Lehnhausen and Owen had worked for the creation of the 44th BG Database, containing the complete history of the 44th.

Paul Kay moved into the presidency. **George Washburn** was elected Vice President. **William Ward** became a Director. ■

Lesson #1 – Don't Talk Too Much

A man and his wife were sitting in the living room and he said to her,

"Just so you know, I never want to live in a vegetative state, dependent on some machine and fluids from a bottle. If that ever happens, just pull the plug."

His wife got up, unplugged the TV and threw out all of his beer. ■



446TH BOMB GROUP

FLIXTON-BUNGAY UPDATE

BY CARL H. ALBRIGHT

I am honored to be the new 446th Bomb Group representative to the 2ADA and hope that I can fulfill the duties of this position. I know that following Link Veazey will take a bit of doing.

I am a Lt. Colonel, USAF, Retired. I started my career in the USAAF by enlisting in the Aviation Cadet Program in June 1942 at Peoria, Illinois. At that time I had just finished my sophomore year and was ready to enter my junior year at Western Illinois State Teachers College in Macomb, Illinois. I was told to return to college and that I would be notified when the service was ready for me to go on active duty. I reported to a Processing Center in Chicago, IL in March of 1943 and was shipped, as an Aviation Cadet, to Biloxi, Mississippi for Basic Training. Upon arrival a trainload of us were informed by a corporal that we weren't Aviation Cadets, we were "nothing." Well, Basic Training lasted two weeks before I became a part of a group of 150 sent to Waynesburg College in PA to start a new College Training Detachment. We were placed in quintiles of thirty students so that the first quintile could leave in two weeks to make room for an incoming group of thirty students. My CTD training again lasted two weeks! The next assignment was to the Classification Center at Nashville, TN. After being selected for pilot training I was sent to Maxwell Field, AL for preflight training and it was there that I started to learn what military life was like.

My flight training followed the normal routine of Primary Flight School at Cape Girardeau, MO; Basic Flight Training at Malden, MO and Advanced Training in twin engine aircraft at Stuttgart, AR. I received my commission and wings (Class 44B) on February 8, 1944. My next assignment was to B-24 transition training at Maxwell Field, AL (this for a person who wanted to fly P-38s). I picked up my B-24 crew at Westover Field, MA and completed crew training, and from this point on we became a flight crew. Our original bombardier was pulled from the crew to go to radar bombardier training at Boca Raton, FL. The rest of the crew went to Langley Field, VA and flew training missions with new radar bombardiers. We picked up a new radar bombardier and on 30 September 1944, were sent to the 8th Air Force with a final destination at the 446th Bomb Group at Bungay, England.

I flew my first combat mission as a copilot with a veteran crew for a check ride on 19 October 1944. Our crew flew our first mission as a complete crew on 30 October 1944 and finished our 35th mission on 21 March 1945. Our copilot, really the other pilot on the crew, saved his 35th mission to remain with the Group as a briefing officer. ■

The Roger Freeman Story: A Tribute

BY MATTHEW MARTIN, CHAIRMAN OF THE MEMORIAL TRUST

Roger Freeman, who was a Governor of the Memorial Trust for nearly thirty-five years, very sadly passed away on the 7th October 2005. In an obituary in the national daily newspaper, the *Daily Telegraph*, later that month, Roger was described as an “East Anglian farmer who became one of the world’s foremost historians of military aircraft in his spare time.”

Roger specialised in the history of the USAAF Eighth Army Air Force, the largest air striking force ever committed to battle. He grew up on a farm in Suffolk where his father farmed before him. His enthusiasm for aircraft was ignited when a number of airfields were built in his local area, with one of them, Boxted, next to the Freeman farm. Escort fighters flew from Boxted and the Freemans were given permission to cut hay and carry out other agricultural activities on the airfield. Roger delighted in raking hay while surrounded by the fighters of the 56th Fighter Group, which provided escort for the armada of bombers.

With his teenage friends he cycled hundreds of miles to watch and record the activities of aircraft on other airfields. He always knew where to go, thanks to school-boys’ word of mouth. On one occasion Roger recalled seeing more than thirty formations of bombers, totalling more than 1,000 aircraft, head for Germany.

In 1959 Roger took over the family farm, but it remained his ambition to chronicle the activities of the Americans who lived in his local area. He soon became a name in aviation magazines.

Following the outstanding success of his first book, entitled *The Mighty Eighth*, Roger spent the next thirty years combining his farming activities with writing. He eventually produced more than sixty books and countless articles dealing with the USAAF and RAF air offensive over Europe. He was in great demand on both sides of the Atlantic as a lecturer, and he made many visits to America to meet veterans. He became the approved historian of the 20,000-strong Eighth Air Force veterans’ association, participating at twenty symposia. He knew and met many distinguished airmen and commanding generals of the wartime force including Generals



Ira Eaker and James Doolittle.

Roger also contributed to scores of documentaries and films about the Eighth and advised on the development of the American Air Museum at the Imperial War Museum at Duxford.

It is a measure of the esteem in which Roger was held in the United States that the library complex at the Mighty Eighth Air Force Museum at Savannah, Georgia, is named “The Roger Freeman Mighty Eighth Air Force Research Centre.”

A quiet man of great modesty, Roger was always prepared to assist others, novices and experts alike. He downplayed accolades, saying that his writing was “simply an extension of my enthusiasm for the memory of a unique period of history.” He was utterly stalwart in his support of the Memorial Library, travelling to Norwich on innumerable occasions to attend Governors’ meetings. He was completely loyal and upright in all his dealings.

In a letter Roger wrote to me only a couple of weeks before he died, he said, “My morale is good and my only emotion is anger at not being around for a few more years. But on reflection, I’ve had more than seventy-seven years, whereas most of those nearly 7,000 young men whose sacrifice the Memorial Library honours never lived beyond their twenties. There is no other memorial that has such a worthwhile objective, the maintenance of a bond of friendship between two nations.”

We will miss him most terribly. ■

RETIREMENT OF TOM EATON

(continued from page 7)

the standard lamp.

“My wife would not given them house room and so I sent the tiger’s head to auction and put the python lamp in my office. The only problem was that one of my clients was terrified of snakes and we had to move the lamp to my secretary’s office whenever she called.”

Among staff and clients’ memories of Mr. Eaton are his fondness for quoting poetry and his stalwart membership in the Norfolk Club, a few doors along Upper King Street from Overburys’ office, where the same table setting was always reserved for him.

The Second World War interrupted Mr. Eaton’s articles. He served in the 4th Battalion Royal Norfolk Regiment, was wounded in action and spent more than three years as a prisoner of the Japanese in the notorious Changi prisoner of war camp in Singapore.

He qualified as a solicitor in January 1947 and then spent eleven months with Heningham & Armstrong in York before entering into partnership with his father in March 1948.

As well as being managing partner of Overbury’s, previously known as Overbury, Steward & Eaton, he engaged in what he calls “extra-curricular activities.” These included being a city councillor for 24 years, Lord Mayor of Norwich in 1957/58, a deputy lieutenant of Norfolk in 1971, a freeman of the city, a trustee of the Town Close Estate charity, president of the Norfolk & Norwich Law Society in 1966/67, a governor of Wymondham College, an unsuccessful parliamentary candidate for the Conservatives in Norwich North in 1951 and 1955, president of the Norwich branch of the Far East Prisoners of War Association, and chairman of the Memorial Trust of the Second Air Division USAAF.

Explaining his decision to retire, Mr. Eaton said: “I was away for the weekend with my wife when I had a fall. Nothing was broken, but the doctor said I shouldn’t drive anymore and I needed to be careful because if I fell again, I might not be able to get up.

“It meant I could not continue to go to the office, but fortunately my mental capacity seems to be reasonable and I am able to maintain my interest in my extra-curricular activities.” ■

25th Annual Southern California Regional Reunion

SUBMITTED BY HARRY TANZER (467TH)

The 25th Annual Southern California Regional Reunion of the 2ADA was held on February 25, 2006 at the Phoenix Club in Anaheim, CA. This year's event was a Saturday noon brunch (two years ago an overwhelming number of veterans voted for the change to a lunch instead of a dinner). Guest speaker was **Jonna Doolittle Hoppes**, granddaughter of **General Doolittle** and author of an interesting book about her grandfather. She related some fascinating insights into the life of the General. **Miss Jane Russell** was in attendance once again; as were George Welsh of the Liberator Club and Mark Hoage, displaying a few items from their collections of WWII Air Force memorabilia. The reunion committee chairman was **Dick Baynes** of the 466th BG. ■



Bronze B-24 sculpture in Balboa Park, San Diego



Jane Russell sat for this picture with some of the reunion attendees



George Welsh



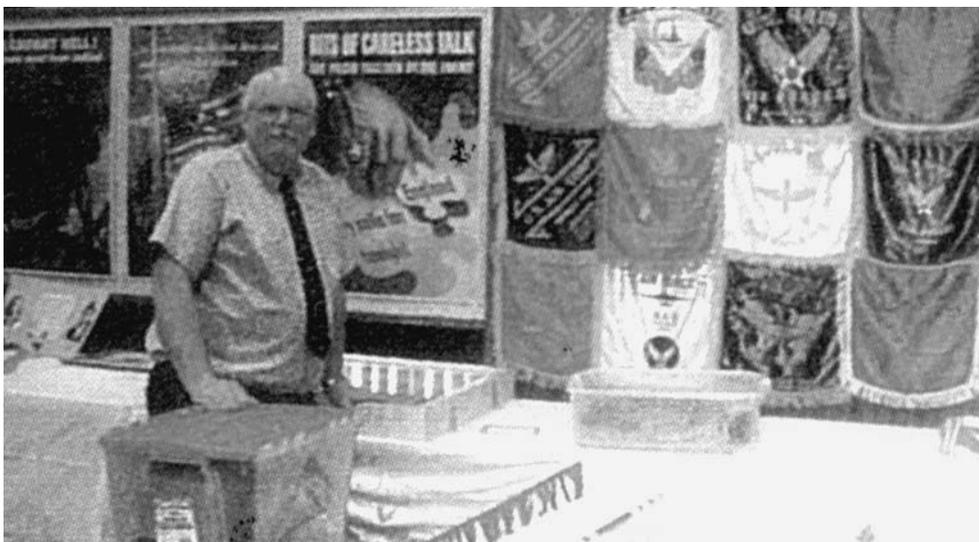
Mrs. Shower



Bud Chamberlain



Dick Baynes



Mark Hoage with his display of World War II Air Force memorabilia



Jonna Doolittle Hoppes

446th BG war vet's story to grace the silver screen

BY KATHLEEN E. CAREY • REPRINTED FROM THE DELAWARE COUNTY DAILY TIMES, APRIL 3, 2006

SUBMITTED BY ROBERT MURRAY (453RD)

COLLINGDALE, PA — Joseph Quirk was 23 years old when his B-24 was shot down over German-occupied France, causing him to be rescued by the French Resistance. Now, his tale has cast him as a subject in an independent film of the ordeal.

Six weeks ago, British independent filmmaker William Ennals contacted Quirk's daughter, Eileen Young, and arranged to interview and videotape the former tail gunner.

Ennals is working on a one-hour documentary titled *Rose*, about a 101-year-old lady, Andree Viroit Peel, who headed the Resistance in her hometown of Brest and had moved to the Bristol village where Ennals lives.

It was through her efforts that Quirk and 99 other Allied servicemen were able to escape France.

"It stuck in her that the Germans had sort of taken over her country," Ennals said.

By day, she ran her beauty salon, selling perfume to German soldiers. The rest of her time she devoted to the Resistance.

Quirk, now 86 with a family of ten grandchildren and seven great-grandchildren, remembers serving in the 446th Bomb Group, 8th Air Force during World War II.

On November 14, 1943, he had left Africa in a B-24, bound for England with thirteen other men. The Germans intercepted their radio communications and dictated false directions, leading them straight through occupied France.

The plane was shot down over Brest.

"It burst out in fire," Quirk said. "It burned back to the tail. They told us to bail out. I was always prepared to jump."

So, he did.

As he floated to the ground, he remembered seeing and hearing children, who scurried as he approached.

"At dusk, several men came out looking for me," Quirk said. "They found me in the weeds. I didn't know if I was caught."

"Comrade," they called, making him think, "Maybe it's all right."

He was taken to a garage and then to some apartments. He was constantly moved.

"They were afraid to keep me," Quirk said.

"They had to appear as friends and acquaintances," Young explained.

At one apartment complex, he had a collaborator living beneath him and a Nazi



Joseph Quirk of Collingdale, PA displays a portion of the parachute he used to land in France during World War II. Quirk's tale is going to be featured in a British filmmaker's independent documentary.

PHOTO: ROBERT J. GURECKI

soldier living above him.

Quirk remembered Peel as "Rose," which was her code name. He recalled once being told to follow her, wearing a large hat, down a crowded French street.

Then, on the night of December 1, 1943, he was told by one of his keepers to get ready to go.

Ennals explained that escapes were tricky, occurring "when the tide was right and the moon in the right quarter."

Quirk said he was taken to the beach on this cold, moonless night. He and several others had to swim against strong currents to a nearby island, about 300 meters away.

There, they were told to await a signal.

They heard someone shout, "Ahoy," but Quirk said they didn't know if it was friend or foe. So, they waited and heard it a few more times before they decided to respond.

Directed down the shore, Quirk found his way to one of three rowboats.

"The boat I had had a hole in it," Quirk said. But he lucked out — the other two boats, Young said, broke apart.

Of Quirk's boat, she said, "He pushed with one hand and bailed water with his boat."

When it arrived at the waiting gunboat, a final wave crashed over it, capsizing it into the sea. Quirk grabbed onto a rope thrown over the side of the boat and was flipped onto the deck by a British sailor.

"They were within minutes of the gunboat going up and going back," Young

explained.

Decades later, Quirk is still thankful.

"These English sailors had a lot of courage to come that close into German waters," he said.

Thirty-two men were rescued that night.

Peel was eventually exposed to the Germans and sent to the Ravensbruck and Buchenwald concentration camps, where she stayed until the Allied liberation, after which she returned to a bombed-out Brest. So, she and her mother relocated to Paris and opened a restaurant, where she eventually met her British husband.

Quirk was finally able to begin his trek home to the United States on Christmas of 1943, after he was positively identified as an American.

"I didn't arrive until two days later," he said. "I was afraid my mother was going to have a heart attack."

When word spread he was home, Quirk said he was met with a line out the door. "They kept coming," he said. "I don't know how many times I told the story." And he's still telling it, as his family treasures the piece of parachute that landed him, as well as a dog-tag-sized piece of his plane.

Ennals is hoping to submit his film to various international festivals, as well as possibly showing it on television or having it available for purchase on DVD.

A film editor by trade, he was also thankful for crossing Rose's path.

"If ever there was a subject for a documentary, this is the one," he said. ■



491st BOMB GROUP
 POSTREMUM ET OPTIMUM
the
RINGMASTER
REPORTS

BY HUGH BENNETT

As I write this article in February our winter weather in Florida (60° to 70°) has left us and we are back in the 80°'s plus, which isn't hard to take when you are in the 80's yourself.

The article in the Winter *Journal* by Michael Donahue (93rd) about the trailing wire antenna brought back memories. In Pueblo, Colorado, the fence at the end of the main runway had several lead balls with sections of wire draped over it. Fortunately ours wasn't one of them. We were

about to land after a cross-country flight when I discovered I still had not retracted about 100 feet of antenna. Talk about a fast reaction; I hit the retract button and prayed at the same time. Lucky for me it made it just before we touched down and I didn't have to explain the loss of an antenna.

The Heritage League of 2AD under the leadership of President Brian Mahoney is showing signs that they will be very capable of carrying on the goals of the 2nd Air Division Association when we are no longer here. The Heritage League will be holding its 2006 convention July 13-16 at the new Holiday Inn near the Mighty 8th Air Force Museum in Pooler, Georgia. Members of the 2nd Air Division have been invited to join them.

With the resignation of John de Cani, I congratulate Alan Senior as our new president of the 2nd Air Division Association. Alan has very good ideas for the future of

the 2ADA. It's time we all work together in harmony for the good of everyone.

The *Fightin' Sam* project at the Mighty 8th Air Force Museum is still short about \$19,000. I'm sure we'll reach this amount. If you haven't already made a contribution, please try to be a part of this great endeavor.

The 491st Bomb Group will be holding its 2006 reunion in Denver in October. Unfortunately this will conflict with the 2ADA convention in Washington, D.C. which will be held October 13-16, 2006. At this time the Air Force Memorial will be dedicated. As group vice president I'm obligated to be in Washington.

May God bless the USA. ■

**KILROY WAS
 HERE**

DEDICATION TO THE FLY GIRLS OF WORLD WAR II

BY I. D. BROWN



On 23 September 2005, the **Charles E. Glover Gallery** was dedicated at the Mighty 8th Air Force Museum in Savannah, Georgia. This "Fly Girls of World War II" section was opened with a ribbon-cutting ceremony. The ribbon cutters were (from left) M/G William P. Bland, Jr., retired; Major I.D. Brown, retired; Mr. Jimmy Hayes; WASP Marion Stageman Hodgson; and Mr. Mark Glover.



Above: WASP Captain Marion Stageman Hodgson presents an autographed copy of her book, *Winning My Wings*, to Major I.D. Brown (USAF Retired) at the Gallery opening. **Below:** The plaque at the entrance to the Gallery recognizes the major sponsors of the "Fly Girls of World War II" exhibit: The James M. Cox Foundation in memory of Charles E. Glover; Major I.D. Brown in memory of his wife, Lillian Grace Brown; Delta Air Lines; and The State of Georgia. ■

**The Museum recognizes the following individuals and organizations for their generous support in funding
 Fly Girls of World War II.**

**James M. Cox Foundation in memory of Charles E. Glover
 Major I. D. Brown in memory of his wife, Lillian Grace Brown
 Delta Air Lines
 The State of Georgia**

Thoughts and Free Advice About Flying Airplanes

Though I Fly Through the Valley of Death, I Shall Fear No Evil. For I am at 80,000 Feet and Climbing!
(Sign over the entrance to the old SR-71 Blackbird operating base at Kadena, Japan)

The only time you have too much fuel is when you're on fire.

Blue water Navy truism: There are more planes in the ocean than there are submarines in the sky.

If the wings are traveling faster than the fuselage, it's probably a helicopter and therefore unsafe.

If one engine fails on your twin-engine airplane, you will always have enough fuel left to get you to the crash sight.

Without ammunition, the USAF would be just another expensive flying club.

What is the similarity between air traffic controllers and pilots? If a pilot screws up, the pilot dies. If a controller screws up, the pilot dies.

Never trade luck for skill.

The three most common expressions (or famous last words) in aviation are: "Why is it doing that?", "Where are we?", and "Oh S--t!!!"

There's progress in commercial airline flying. Now a flight attendant can get a pilot pregnant.

There was a time when sex was safe and flying was dangerous.

Try to stay in the middle of the air. Do not go near the edges. The edges can be recognized by the appearance of ground, buildings, oceans, trees and interstellar space. It's much more difficult to fly there.

When a flight is proceeding incredibly well, something has been forgotten.

Advice given to RAF pilots during WWII: When a prang (crash) is inevitable, endeavor to strike the softest, cheapest object in the vicinity as slow and as gently as possible.

If you're faced with a forced landing, fly the thing as far into the crash sight as possible.

Mankind has a perfect record in aviation. We never left anybody up there.

The Piper Cub is the safest airplane in the world. It can just barely kill you.

Never fly in the same cockpit with someone braver than you.

A smooth landing is mostly luck; two in a row is all luck; three in a row is prevarication.

Flashlights are tubular metal containers, kept in flight bags, for the purpose of storing dead batteries.

The altitude above you, the runway behind you and the fuel not in the plane are totally worthless.

A pilot's job is very simple. There are three lights on an aircraft, red on the left wing, green on the right wing and white on the tail. Your job, as a pilot, is to keep the plane between those three lights.

If something hasn't broken on your helicopter, it's about to.

Flying the airplane is more important than radioing your plight to someone on the ground who is incapable of understanding or doing anything about it.

Weather forecasts are horoscopes with numbers.

A pilot who doesn't have any fear isn't flying his plane to its maximum.

The best things in life are a good landing and a good bowel movement. Landing at night on a carrier is one of the few opportunities where you get to experience both at the same time.

Just remember, if you crash because of weather, your funeral will probably take place on a sunny day.

Airspeed, altitude and brains – two are always needed to complete a successful flight.

The two most abundant things in the universe are hydrogen and stupidity and I don't know which is the more abundant.

You've never been lost until you're lost at Mach 3.

More Information on 2nd Air Division Operations

BY JORDAN R. UTTAL, 2ADA HONORARY PRESIDENT AND HISTORIAN

Cordial greetings to you all. Since last I wrote, I have reached my 90th birthday at my senior residence. Although I cannot walk without my four-wheel walker, I am reasonably well and very satisfied with my living conditions.

I was glad to attend the May 2005 convention in San Antonio, and I strongly hope that I will be able to be with you in October 2006 in the Washington, D.C. area.

Now then, we were in the aerial bombing business, and I am happy to report, once again, that we showed steady improvement in accuracy (with some dips) from January 1944 through April 1945. Although we received figures immediately after each mission, the record-keeping system was not satisfactorily established until the beginning of 1944 when finally information was developed in the Photo Section and recorded in the Stat Control Section. So, here is the information we submitted to 8AF Headquarters, which had to be correct.

The table shows the bombing accuracy results for the 2nd Air Division as a whole, mainly by month, but three of the periods had to be two-month results be-

Period	% of bombs falling within 2,000 feet of target	% of bombs falling within 1,000 feet of target
January 1944	50%	23%
February 1944	53%	27%
March 1944	49%	26%
April 1944	54%	25%
May 1944	66%	34%
June 1944	62%	32%
July 1944	56%	26%
August 1944	65%	35%
Sept-Oct 1944	56%	32%
Nov-Dec 1944	43%	23%
Jan-Feb 1945	71%	46%
March 1945	73%	45%
April 1945	79%	58%

cause of reduced mission figures from September 1944 through February 1945.

As you can see, we increased from 50% to 79% in the 2,000 foot circle, and from 23% to 58% in the 1,000 foot circle. In 2,000 feet – only two dips below 50%.

In 1,000 feet – four dips below 27%. In ten of the thirteen periods (2,000 feet) we hit 50% or higher. In all thirteen periods (1,000 feet) we scored 23% or higher. This information is also available by group!

Best to you all. ■

LET'S KEEP OUR EYES ON THE BALL!

BY JORDAN R. UTTAL, 2ADA HONORARY PRESIDENT

As one of the seven 2nd Air Division veterans who in 1946, in Chicago, decided to try to form an alumni group, I have had the real pleasure of helping our mission succeed. We managed to get a group of close to 100 for the first Chicago get-together in 1948, and watched this number grow to over 8200 members by 1992, all the while concentrating on the objectives we established.

For a score of years or more, our *Journal* editor has printed our mission statement in the upper right-hand column of page 3 in every issue, and we have been delighted with the success of what I have considered the two most important parts of the statement, as follows:

A) "To support financially and in any other way, the Memorial Trust of the 2nd Air Division as represented by the 2nd Air Division Memorial Library of the Norwich Millennium Library," and

B) "To perpetuate the friendships and memories of our service together in the 2nd Air Division, 8th Air Force in England during World War II."

We can justifiably be proud of our almost sixty annual conventions and the other group and regional get-togethers as evidence of the success in perpetuating the relationships and even more so of the tribute to the 6,881 veterans whose names are recorded in the lovely Roll of Honor in the 2nd Air Division Memorial Library which has become one of the cornerstones in dear old Norwich. Our Memorial is unique in U.S. military history. We know of no other living memorial established by any other unit, and the ongoing support of the Memorial Trust Board of Governors and the people of Norwich has been incredible.

Now, dear friends, why do I write of this now? Very simply, I and many of my 2ADA colleagues do not want to see the 2nd Air Division Association members take their eyes off the ball. It has been distressing to receive copies of letters written by some of our members expressing dissatisfaction with current Association leaders and urging support of other 8AF veterans organizations, one established in

1972 and another in 1996, 24 and 48 years respectively after we came into being.

I and other 2ADA officers joined these other organizations from their beginnings, and the Association also made opening contributions, but we still must concentrate on the perpetuity of our 2nd Air Division Association, and wish to do so until we have definite word from the Governors of the Memorial Trust that our Capital Fund has reached the point where they are reasonably sure of the perpetuity of the Memorial Trust and the Memorial Library.

Based on my 58 years of experience with the 2nd Air Division Association and the Memorial Trust, I say to you that these recent efforts to discredit both are not only out of order, but are inaccurate and uncalled for. We can be extremely proud of our tribute to our fallen and to the many years of pleasant interaction through the 2nd Air Division Association. I will welcome any inquiries that you may care to make. Meanwhile I wish you well.

Most sincerely,
Jordan R. Uttal ■



BY JACK STEVENS

As I write this article in the middle of February, some things have happened while others are looming in the future.

WHAT'S HAPPENED?

(1) The 8th Air Force 2nd Air Division "Debriefers" are still going strong. A group of "Debriefers" from Los Angeles and Orange Counties, along with King Schultz (448th) and Jack Stevens (467th) who fly up from San Diego, have been meeting each month for well over ten years now. We start with a buffet lunch, and then, "Bud" Chamberlain (489th), the organization's originator, starts off with The Pledge, followed by a review of historical events of the month (mainly air-related), acknowledgement of that month's members' birthdays and/or wedding anniversaries and the status of our halt-and-lame. After that, there's usually a humorous story or anecdote, and then, the program. Programs have varied widely — combat mission experiences, a description of a volunteer service to assist senior citizens, a talk by a middle-aged married couple who had just returned from two years' service in Rumania. Probably the most moving program was the experience of Lou Zamporini, the world-class mile runner who competed in the 1936 Berlin Olympics and who later, as a B-24 bombardier, survived ditching in the Pacific and drifting in a rubber raft for 47 days before being captured and suffering inhumane treatment as a prisoner.

(2) On 11 November 2005, DFC members, 2ADA members, and other Air Force types participated in San Diego's Armistice Day Parade and then attended the dedication of San Diego's Veterans Memorial Garden and its centerpiece, a bronze 18-foot wingspan B-24 poised above a circular pool, in front of the San Diego Veterans Museum.

WHAT'S IN THE FUTURE?

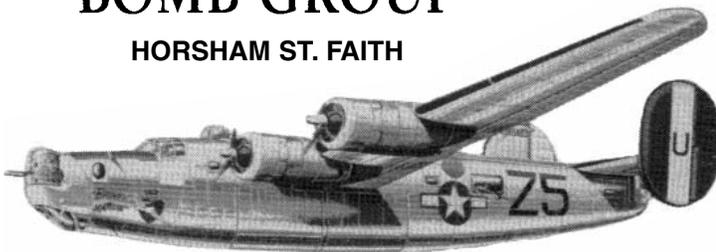
(1) The 2ADA's 25th Annual Southern California Reunion Dinner will be held on Saturday, 25 February, at the Phoenix Club in Anaheim. The guest speaker will be Joanna Doolittle Hoppes, granddaughter of General Doolittle and author of a very interesting book about her grandfather. And indications are that Miss Jane Russell will enjoy the proceedings with us again; Mark Hoage will have items from his B-24 memorabilia on display; and George and Michelle Welsh will display some Liberator Club and Bomber Legends memorabilia.

(2) The 2005/2006 467th Reunion will be in San Diego, at the Holiday Inn Select, from 20 to 24 April 2006. Col. Shower's son, Jay, told a San Diego friend about his father's WWII bomb group and of our planned reunion in San Diego. The friend belongs to the Warbirds West Air Museum (WWAM), an association that restores privately-owned military aircraft and vehicles and then operates them at air shows, parades, and patriotic events. So, we've been invited to use their Gillespie Field hangar as a hospitality room on the day we're scheduled to visit the airport and view the annual "Wings Over Gillespie" air show AND the Collings Foundation's B-17, *Nine O Nine*, and B-24, *Witchcraft* (with 467th BG markings!) That evening we'll attend the WWAM/467th Bomb Group Dinner Dance in the hangar. So, if you think about our scheduled visit to the San Diego Veterans Museum and its recently dedicated Veterans Garden with a bronze 18-foot wingspan B-24 poised over the center of a circular pool, and our cruise through San Diego Harbor that President Ralph Davis had already scheduled for earlier that day, it's shaping up to be a big day and a reunion that we'll remember — with thanks to a big assist from Jay Shower and friends.

(3) Our 2ADA VP for Membership and Conventions, Evelyn Cohen, has planned a trip to the White House and reserved seats at the Air Force Memorial dedication, in connection with the 11 to 16 October 2ADA Annual Convention in Washington, D.C. If you want to attend any of these events, contact Evelyn Cohen *immediately*. Check the Directory on page 2 of this *Journal* for her address and telephone number. ■

458th BOMB GROUP

HORSHAM ST. FAITH



BY RICHARD PULSE

An English family has asked me to try to locate a Charles Rhoades who was a tail gunner at Horsham St. Faith early in the war. His home was in the Chicago area. In their search they have determined that his father was Lester Rhoades. I cannot find his name in the records I have. If anyone can provide any information about this man I'll pass it on to the English.

The last issue of *The Journal* included an article concerning a pilot who had an unexpected emergency during a flight (I guess an emergency is always unexpected). In any case a similar problem arose for our navigator on a training flight out of Westover Field near Springfield, Massachusetts. We were over Buffalo when the problem arose. He went back to the waist, borrowed some newspaper pages from one of the gunners, disposed of the problem into the newspaper and then tried to throw it out the cam-

era hatch. He wasn't strong enough to overcome the blast of the wind but eventually managed to force the package out, cleaned himself up and went back to his duties. Every time I am near Buffalo I wonder where the package landed and if it broke up into messy pages of newsprint, etc.

While we were at Springfield we had training pilots who had previously flown the Atlantic at low level searching for German submarines and became bored. They loved to fly low over the beaches off New England and look for people on the beach to force to a flat position. They were very adept at it. We were very uncomfortable about their fun and did not try it.

Later we were sent to Langley Field at Newport News, Virginia for additional training. We were walking along the hangar line one afternoon and noticed an open door with the partially covered nose of an aircraft sticking out. The odd thing was that it did not have a propeller. In fact there was no indication of a place for a propeller. We had no clue how the plane could fly. Several months later some German jets went through our formation. They were being chased by P-51s and didn't fire at us. We realized that the plane we saw at Langley had to have been a jet-propelled aircraft.

Finally we were assigned a brand new B-24 and started our trip to England. The takeoff location was Bangor, Maine, using the only runway I have ever seen that has a hump in the middle, which means you cannot see the far end from the starting point. I believe that the hump still exists. After a stop in Iceland, we landed in England and were relieved of "our" brand new aircraft. Our next stop was in Ireland for lectures by men who had been shot down, managed to avoid capture, and eventually reached neutral or Allied ground. Most had vivid stories, some of which were

(continued on page 26)

Bill Phillips is renowned for the way he uses light to add drama to his aviation paintings.

Yet when it was the 60-year-old Ashland artist's chance to stand in the spotlight for ten paintings that are printed on a new set of postage stamps, his name went overlooked in the news.

"It doesn't really bother me," said Phillips, who seemed relieved to go unnoticed and said he generally tends to shy away from media coverage.

This is the second time Phillips has painted aviation art for a set of postage stamps. In 1997, twenty of his paintings were reproduced on stamps. The series became the second most popular of the year, barely losing out to a cartoon character. "I missed No. 1 by a hair," he said. "Bugs Bunny beat me out."

One of Phillips' friends, Central Point resident Pete Brown, described him as unassuming and personable. "He's one of the greatest aviation artists anywhere," Brown said. "He's well respected in that realm."

Brown and Phillips became friends after meeting at an air show in Medford in 1997. Brown, who has helped build some of the model planes in Phillips' workshop, is an artist in his own right, having built a model of firefighters at the 9/11 terror attacks that is now at the White House.

Phillips often travels throughout the world in order to see firsthand the ship or plane that he is about to draw. An Air Force veteran who served in Vietnam, Phillips also likes to ride in the planes.

"There is a tremendous adrenaline rush with high-performance flying," he said.

He just finished a painting of the *USS Harry S. Truman*, which he said likely will grace the stateroom on the ship.

In 1988, Phillips was chosen as a U.S. Navy combat artist and was awarded the Navy's Meritorious Public Service Award and the Air Force Sergeants Association's Americanism Medal.

Phillips also was chosen for a one-man show at the Smithsonian Institution's National Air and Space Museum in 1986.

"This is more than I could ever dream of," said Phillips of his renown. He had studied law at what is now Southern Oregon University before deciding to devote himself to painting in the '70s.

Aviation art might be his specialty, but Phillips also produced a poster for the Britt Festivals in 2004 and is known for his landscapes. His wife, Kristi, runs their business matters.

A large painting that he said accurately depicts the geological formations of the Grand Canyon makes his dining room feel like you're overlooking the rim. "It took me seven and a half months to complete," he said.

Art that Soars

BY DAMIAN MANN • SUBMITTED BY ELLIOTT H. LOVELACE (453RD)
REPRINTED FROM THE MAIL TRIBUNE, ASHLAND, OREGON, 8/13/2005



Bill Phillips has made a name for himself in the world of aviation art. Ten of his paintings grace a new set of postage stamps — his second series for the U.S. Postal Service. The series includes the B-24 Liberator and the P-47 Thunderbolt. PHOTO: ROY MUSITELLI

In his tribute to firefighters who lost their lives in the World Trade Center terrorist attacks, Phillips used a couple of local firemen as models in the painting "A Prayer for My Brother."

A firefighter in Ashland for twelve years before becoming a painter, Phillips said of this work, "I wanted it to be like a picture of a knight who has an indeterminate ethnicity," he said, speaking of one of the figures in the work. "It could even be a woman."

Many of Phillips' paintings will be depicted in an upcoming book titled *Into the Sunlit Splendor, the Aviation Art of William S. Phillips*.

Striving to be technically accurate in his paintings, Phillips is given to whimsy at times, particularly with his "Phillips Bay" series. "It depicts a fictional town that I can change at will," he said.

Phillips said he prefers to go unnoticed through life partially because of memories of his youth when celebrities used to visit his father, William Phillips, a character actor who appeared in about ninety films, including *High Noon* and *Thirty Seconds over Tokyo*.

When his father was alive, other actors would heap praise on him, but when he died, they never came around to visit the family, Phillips said.

"We ended up on welfare when we moved up here," he remembered.

With more than 1,000 paintings under his belt, Phillips said he can't keep up with the demand for commissioned paintings and other work, such as the ten paintings he did for the U.S. Postal Service.

"I grew up as a kid cutting out old air mail stamps," he said. "I never dreamed my work would be going out all over the world." ■

New Members of the 2ADA

389th BG
George F. Schwemley

448th BG
John Birkhead

453rd BG
William R. Linke
Jerry Shulman

467th BG
Bernard J. Farrell

489th BG
Robert M. Haley
Lloyd W. Zrumrey



HARDWICK

Open Letter to the 93rd

BY JOHN LEE

How many of you still have a diary you kept while serving in the 93rd? Mine is still around, along with a few old photos and my log book, collecting dust. I think I mentioned in some previous articles the night that some of us young, eager soldiers went to the Latin Quarter in New York before leaving for England in 1944. Recently I came across a photo of three of our crew, including myself, taken in that beautiful club with the head waiter hovering nearby. I hardly needed a diary entry to remember that night. It was quite an unforgettable experience.

A few of you have sent me e-mails recalling some of your favorite memories. This column is a tribute to the young, happy-go-lucky men we were. You may get a smile or even a laugh, and it may just spark a long-forgotten memory for you. Happy reading.

The first story comes from **Fernley G. Smith**, Class of 44-F, who is currently president of the 93rd:

FIRST SOLO

It was a beautiful, partly cloudy day in Perrysville, Missouri and my first day to take wings alone in my beautiful PT-17 in December of 1943.

So up I go, diving on the clouds, trying some snap rolls and having a great time attacking those enemy clouds. So much fun. The time was flying by and I looked at my watch to find I was already overdue to return to the base. Here is where the story begins, for I was totally lost, and had no idea how far I was from the base. I checked the remaining fuel and decided there was no other choice but to land ASAP to find out how to get back home.

I picked a very nice, large piece of farmland, with a white house at the end of the plowed rows, landed safely and taxied up to the farmhouse. I was met by the owner, holding a shotgun, but after a brief shouting discussion, he approached me and finally provided the information I desperately needed to get home.

It seemed simple: Turn around, take off, turn left until I get to a railroad, turn left again, follow it until I see a bridge over the Mississippi River, then take another left and start looking for the field.

Off I go, but my Stearman just won't break ground in that plowed field, and looming straight ahead is a large row of tall trees. Just by chance, I discovered that I had accidentally pushed the trim too far forward, and then when I pulled

it back off, I went instantly into the wild blue and was on my way home.

Arriving at last, one and a half hours late, I was met by my flight instructor, Mr. Schmidt, who obviously saw all the mud on my wheels and aircraft hull, and asked me politely, "Where have you been, Smith?"

With a straight face, I outright lied that I was having so much fun, the time must have gotten away from me; to which Mr. Schmidt replied: "And what about all that mud on your wheels and hull, Smith?"

"Sir, it must have happened when I was taxiing in."

He smiled and laughingly walked away, shaking his head the whole time.

That simple decision saved my Air Force Cadet career, for it was a mandatory directive that should a forced landing be necessary, upon landing the base was to be immediately notified by phone and they would travel to the site to determine the cause. If it was mechanical, no disciplinary action would be taken. If it was the fault of the pilot, he would have immediately washed out of the Cadet Pilot Program.

I have been forever grateful to Mr. Schmidt for his support. Not only did he save my career, but with the completion of pilot training, he changed my life.



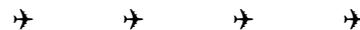
This next story was sent to me by **Steve@cox.net**. I have tried to contact Steve for more information but am including his memory here as he thought it might provide a laugh or two. He says he has others, and after you read this you may feel as I do — bring them on! He writes:

I'm not certain when the following occurred, since there is no notation in my diary. However: In addition to being the pilotage navigator, I was the nose gunner. This meant that, before takeoff, I had to make sure that I had wipe the dew from my turret and remove the covers of my two 50 caliber machine guns. The latter was most important, since the guns might explode if fired with the covers on (at least that's what I was told). To do this, while the other crew members were doing their preliminary jobs including testing the engines, I would find a large ladder that rolled on four wheels, push it to the plane, climb up to the turret, wipe the turret and remove the gun covers.

On this particular very early morning I must have been late, because as I reached for the gun covers, the airplane began to

move forward with all four engines roaring. I grabbed the ladder and began shouting, to no avail. Slowly we taxied. In the dark, we, the plane, the ladder and I rolled past the other planes being prepared for the mission. Finally we came to the top of the runway and Stepp stopped the plane to make the last minute check before take-off. I clambered down the ladder and pushed it along the length of the wing until it was clear. Shoving it away, I ran under the wing to the bomb bay and began banging on the bomb bay doors.

Somebody heard me and opened the doors, and I pulled myself up onto the narrow walkway. I squeezed my way up front as the checklist was completed and we took off. There was some handshaking, but no questions were asked. When I later climbed into the turret, however, I did have a problem. The gun covers were still on. There was no way to remove them from inside the turret. We were to "test-fire" our guns while climbing into the bomber formation. Each gunner reported in turn, as did I. "Nose guns OK," I said, but I kept my hands off the triggers the entire mission.



If you have enjoyed reading these stories, why not send me some of your own? Or if you are able, why not come to Savannah, Georgia, July 13-17 for our annual reunion. There you can sit in the hospitality room and recall all sorts of memories with new and old friends. The reunion will take place at the same time that the Heritage League of 2AD will be meeting, so there may be time to exchange some ideas and objectives. More information about the reunion will be in the *Ball of Fire*. ■

458TH BG (continued from page 24) probably largely true. The base was being closed at the end of our visit and we were invited to help dispose of the supply in the bar. The highlight of the trip was cold baked beans for breakfast on a boat crossing the Irish Sea, our first sample of British cooking.

When we arrived at Horsham St. Faith and reached our quarters, we found that the belongings of the prior crew were still there, including a Bible on a bed. That was a wake-up call. In exchange for the shiny brand new airplane we took over to England we were assigned a war-weary drab one, which carried us through our tour. She crashed on take-off shortly after we finished — another wake-up call.

So much for a look at the early part of the saga of the Perry crew. I'll continue it in a future column and would be happy to have some of you compare or add your experiences. I'm sure there are some great stories out there. ■

THE REVENGE OF CORPORAL WEINBERG

BY LT. SAMUEL W. TAYLOR, HQ. USSTAF • REPRINTED FROM THE SEPT. 1945 ISSUE OF "AIR FORCE" MAGAZINE

When, in November of 1938, the Gestapo threw a 16-year-old boy into a concentration camp, they didn't dream of the retribution it would entail. He was but one of thousands of boys taken in a roundup following the death of a member of the German legation in Paris named Von Rath who was allegedly killed by a young Jewish boy. The Nazis might well regret that. Despite the brutal treatment they received, he and his family managed to get to America, where Erwin eventually became a corporal in the U.S. Army Air Force.

Corporal Weinberg was never to fly a mission, drop a bomb, or fire a .50 caliber machine gun at the enemy. Yet he was to enlist the enormous might of the 8th Air Force to settle his personal score. He had a very large account to settle with the Gestapo, and now that his people would not suffer any more, his story can be told.

He and his father were arrested and thrown into a boxcar crammed with other Jews. They knew their destination was Buchenwald, a name to be spoken in a whisper even in 1938. At Weimar, they were ordered out, faced against a wall and beaten over the head from behind with rubber truncheons by SS troopers.

"This wasn't the experimentation program," Erwin Weinberg said, "That didn't come until later. The Nazis merely wanted to discourage us and get us out of Germany. We were to be released if we could arrange to get out of the country." Experimentation or not, five hundred Jews died the first month.

The Weinberg family had been trying to get to America since 1936 and their names reached the top of the waiting list in 1940. Erwin arrived in his new country on a Tuesday and went to work Friday morning in a Philadelphia factory making Army uniforms, where he sewed GI blouses and waited.

The British began bombing Germany after they won the Battle of Britain and from that Erwin got the idea of how to settle the score. But he was just one person and he didn't know how to go about doing what he wanted to do. When America entered the war, he couldn't enlist because he was an alien. He wondered whom he could tell his idea to, but it seemed impossible that anyone would listen.

There is something about determination that makes the breaks. He earned his citizenship papers after taking classes at night and that helped a lot.

In June 1943, the Army accepted him for the Air Force and that was just where

he wanted to be. The following February he landed in England, again just where he wanted to be. But still, he was only a private at the very bottom of Army channels. What could a lowly private do to convince the Army brass that he had a good idea?

He obtained permission from his 1st Sergeant to speak to an officer. "Sir, I have information that I think is of value to the 8th Air Force. My hometown is Fulda, Germany. Fulda has never been bombed, yet there is a ball bearing factory there, Gebaur and Moller. Gunniwerke Fulda AG is a rubber factory and there is also an enamel factory making war materials. I know the location of all three plants."

The officer listened and suggested that Erwin talk to an intelligence officer. Two days later Pvt. Weinberg was transferred to the U.S. Strategic Air Forces in Europe where he talked with a Major John Simone. Major Simone was more than interested. He called for the target folder on Fulda and learned that a ball bearing plant was known to be there, but its location was unknown. Intelligence was not sure which of the two factories was the rubber plant.

To prove he knew what he was talking about, Weinberg took pencil and paper and drew a sketch showing the two plants in relation to roads and rivers. Satisfied, the major requested air reconnaissance on the target, but the air forces were very busy, at the time, preparing for D-Day and other reconnaissance targets had priority over Fulda.

Erwin was then assigned the job of interpreter and file clerk for reconnaissance photos. As each new batch of photos came in, he hoped one of them would be Fulda. Meanwhile, the attacks on ball bearing plants were discontinued — their purpose of impairing the production of ordnance and aircraft had been achieved. Aren't they ever going to bomb Fulda?

Then one day the major called him in and handed him several reconnaissance photos of Fulda. "Can you pinpoint those three targets?" "Yes Sir, I sure can!" And Private Weinberg proceeded to circle the ball bearing plant, the rubber factory and the factory that had been making enamel.

Finally, in August, the major called him in again and showed him a series of strike photos of bombs exploding on the rubber plant and in the marshaling yards. A photo taken after reconnaissance showed extensive damage to both.

Eighth Air Force heavy bombers struck Fulda twice more in December 1944, again

in January 1945 and again in March. To make sure the three plants were completely destroyed, the 9th Air Force sent medium bombers to hit the target one last time in April.

Weinberg's targets were bombed six times on the basis of information he had supplied and he began to collect spare photos of them. The one he likes most of all shows where a bomb fell outside the target area and made a direct hit on his father's house. This was one of the houses the Nazis took without payment. Now they would never be able to use it.

Private Erwin was a little disappointment in the fact that they never sent a lot of bombers over Fulda, never more than 100 in any one raid. However, even that was a pretty fair sized air force for a lowly private. "I think I did all I could for the 8th Air Force," he said. Few will question that. How many have done as much?

He is now a corporal, but he doesn't connect his promotion to his contribution towards the destruction of the Fulda target. He says it's just Army T/O.

His one remaining goal is to visit Fulda, after the war, to view the destruction. Considering what he accomplished as a private, no one doubts that he will be able to do just that. ■

Louder Than Words

A truck driver stopped at a roadside diner for lunch. He ordered a cheeseburger, coffee, and a slice of apple pie. As he was about to eat, three motorcycles pulled up outside. The bikers came in, and one grabbed the trucker's cheeseburger and took a bite from it. The second one drank the coffee, and the third wolfed down the apple pie.

The truck driver didn't say a word. He simply got up, paid the cashier, and left. When he was gone, one of the motorcyclists said, "He ain't much of a man, is he?"

"He's not much of a driver, either," the cashier replied. "He just backed his truck over three motorcycles." ■



SEETHING

The 448th Speaks

BY KING SCHULTZ

FOLDED WINGS OF THE 448TH

Jack R. Callison – 9-05

Oscar Crutchfield – 4-05

Rex Furness (navigator on E.J. Malone's lead crew)

Frank Gibson – 1-25-06

Worth O. Hamilton, Monroe, N.C.

Ben W. Johnson, Jr. – 9-05 (S/Sgt gunner with Wm. Smith crew)

Martin Joseph – 12-05

Bill Lantz (flight engineer on E.J. Malone's lead crew)

Theodore A. Singerman – 12-05

William D. Smith (nose turret gunner, 713th Squadron)

Karol L. Underwood – 9-12-05 (Greencastle, IN)



Open Day at Seething,
August 2003

Bill Lantz and Rex Furness of the Malone crew stayed close with fellow crew member Bill Kirner for sixty years.

Ben Johnson, Jr.'s grandson-in-law, Larry Haynes, wrote an ode to him, "My Pawpaw's Fingerprints," which is printed on page 29.

THE STORY OF "DO BUNNY"

The following is excerpted from the rededication speech and ceremony at the memorial at Seething "To The Men of the 448th Bomb Group Stationed at Seething, November 1943 to June 1945," by **WALTER CURRIE**, Retired Hospital Chaplain.

The 448th Bomb Group arrived in Norfolk at the end of 1943, and on the same day that the last of the nearly seventy planes flew in, many of the Seething Liberators were taking off on their first mission—22 December 1943.

Two hundred and sixty-two missions later, on 25 April 1945, it was all over, and by then there had been nearly five hundred men lost. In June of that year the Group returned to the States and decommissioned on 4 August 1946.

And now for the story of *Do Bunny*:

For this occasion I'd like to recount the story of *Do Bunny*, one of those planes on one of those missions. I'm grateful to **Ian McLachlan** and his book, *Eighth Air Force Bomber Stories*, for the details that follow.

Not being very familiar with American slang, I am not going to speculate in too much detail about the name! "Bunny" equals our English "Dolly bird" and "do"? Well, the GI's dream girl: "she can do smart," "she can do helpless," "she can do cute," "she can do bunny"! Perhaps one of the vets can tell me!

On 25 March 1945 at 0600, twenty-six Liberators took off from this airfield on the Group's 244th mission. Their target was a petroleum storage depot at Buchan, near Hamburg. Amongst those aircraft was a Liberator of the 713th Squadron called *Do Bunny* with crew 7179 piloted by **Paul Jones** and **James Mucha** on their 23rd mission. Because of bad weather the squadron became separated from the main formation over the Dutch coast. Navigator/engineer **Herman Engel** wrote at the time:

"The mission should be a milk run. The usual flak at the Dutch coast and the target; takeoff was at 0600 and with climb and assembly time we made it to the target on time. Milk run so far, although we did see flak and fighters which were hitting every other bomb squadron (we were in line to be missed). Bombs away at 1133, the last entry in my navigation log for the mission. The Me 262s attacked suddenly and unexpectedly, coming in out of the sun . . ."

That first attack set No. 1 engine alight. The crew looked on helplessly as the lead aircraft was shot down in flames—although three of the crew of that plane were to survive. (When a plane

returned to one base the crew counted the holes in the fuselage and reckoned about 2,000, with no one seriously injured!)

The second attack filled the plane with yet more holes. The tail gun took direct hits and Staff Sgt. **Edward Danecki** was blasted back along the fuselage amongst shards of shattered Perspex, armoured glass, and other bits from his turret. Amazingly, Danecki was virtually uninjured. Severed fuel lines and punctured tanks bled gasoline into the fuselage to mix with hydraulic fluid. The explosive cocktail somehow failed to ignite as it evaporated into the slipstream—they had not had time to close the bomb bay doors after the drop. Now engines 2 and 3 were gone. After the nose gunner had fired the last of his 800 rounds the attack ceased.

The crew resisted pilot Paul Jones' instructions to bail out as they were still over Germany and there were unpleasant stories of what happened to aircrew who bailed out over German soil. So they set course for Wesel on the Rhine as the closest friendly territory. This was 180 miles away, so all unwanted equipment was jettisoned in an attempt to save weight and reduce the descent rate. But they were going down at 1,000 feet per minute and achieved only 36 miles towards Wesel.

Paul Jones had obviously done his PFLs (practice forced landings) because the forced landing, in a ploughed field near Soltau, was almost textbook until the port wing dug in and the plane swung round and broke up in an abrupt stop. It had been just twelve minutes from attack by the German fighters to the crash. As almost always happened with Liberators in any kind of crash, the top turret broke loose and fell on the men beneath. The pilots climbed out along with three of the gunners, leaving four members of the crew trapped inside.

Almost immediately a hostile crowd of people gathered, their anger inflamed by two young SS soldiers on leave from the front line. Fortunately an ugly situation was defused when a Wehrmacht officer, Oberleutnant **Joachim Grauenhorst**, successfully challenged the SS to take charge of the prisoners until they could be handed over to the Luftwaffe. Consequently, efforts to release

(continued on next page)



BY JIM LORENZ

The next 2ADA convention is set for October 13-16, 2006 in Arlington, Virginia/Washington, D.C. with the highlight to be the dedication of the new Air Force Memorial on Saturday, October 14. Evelyn Cohen has arranged for all 2ADA attendees to have special seats for this event; please let me know as soon as possible if you will be attending. Detailed convention information can be found on page 35 of this issue of the *Journal*.

The Heritage League has a convention scheduled at the Mighty 8th Air Force Museum, Savannah, Georgia, July 14-16, 2006. Several BGA groups are planning to also attend — check out the League website (www.heritageleague.org) for the latest information and registration data. Come down and see all the new displays.

The 8th Air Force Historical Society and our 466th BGA are meeting at the current 8th Air Force Base at Barksdale, Louisiana, October 4-8, 2006. This will be a good time to see the current 8th AF in action.

Our 466th BGA (which is now a 501(c)(3) tax exempt group) has decided to continue as an organization and has added two younger generation members to the Board of Directors. The 466th BGA will most likely not hold further separate group meetings, but will meet with other organizations (such as the Heritage League, 8th AFHS, or other bomb groups). Thus, for now, we and the 466th BGA will continue to place wreaths at our Attlebridge Memorial on Memorial Day and Veterans Day. More on this later. ■

THE STORY OF “DO BUNNY” *(continued)*

the trapped men were soon underway. The radio operator/gunner had a broken leg but the other three were less seriously injured. They were taken to a local hospital for treatment before being reunited with the rest of the crew. This was followed by interrogation and eventual transport to a POW camp.

The camp was liberated by the Russians a month later. By 20 May, less than two months after *Do Bunny* went down, Herman Engel was back home in Brooklyn. He later wrote these words: “To my dying day there are some things about those twelve minutes I will never know. How, with hundreds of holes in the aircraft, no one received a serious injury? Why didn’t the aircraft burn or explode in flight or on crash landing?”

Fortunately, the crew of *Do Bunny* all survived that eventful journey which had begun early on Palm Sunday, 1945.

I hope this gives you a taste of what these aircrew faced mission after mission in those months towards the end of WWII. ■

An Ode to Ben Johnson, Jr. (448th BG) My Pawpaw’s Fingerprints

When a master potter sits at his wheel
The clay soon takes its shape
As his fingerprints leave an indelible mark
On all that he creates
Pawpaw, you helped shape us all
But it’s you we’ll always treasure
For you’ve changed our lives and blessed in ways
That we simply cannot measure
My life is so much richer now
For your love was so immense
And now I’m covered from head to toe
With my Pawpaw’s fingerprints
I’ll never be a craftsman like you
I can barely hammer a nail
But my mind will forever overflow
With the stories you loved to tell
I’ll never be called a war hero
Or have medals pinned to my chest
But you said a real hero is any man
Who always does his best
Time is the thief that stole your strength
And caused your body to weaken
But even then when you may have been down
I knew that you were never beaten
I’ll miss your stories, your sense of humor
Your courage and warm, gentle touch
But most of all I’ll miss the man
That I’ve grown to love so much
My love is great, my heart is broken
Yet my affections I cannot detach
For the man who claimed me as one of his own
And loved me with no strings attached
People say I’m a stubborn, but loveable dreamer
Whose ideas have caused many to scoff
But Pawpaw, I’ll tell them these are your fingerprints
And nobody’s ever washing them off!
I wish that I had just one more day
An hour or even a minute
Just to tell you I love you and that my world
Won’t be the same without you in it
I know these tears are for myself
For you are walking the streets of pure gold
A place where sorrow doesn’t exist
And our bodies will never grow old
No sad goodbyes are whispered there
And there’s no room at the table for death
Only praise for our Savior and the language of love
Will be spoken with every breath
Pawpaw, I rejoice with you, but miss you still
And though in time the pain will relent
I’ll forever be touched and proud to show off
My Pawpaw’s fingerprints!

Written by Larry Haynes,
Ben’s grandson-in-law, 09/08/2005

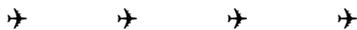
LEST WE FORGET: "The Black March"

BY JOHN FRISBEE & GEORGE GUDDERLY

Reprinted from "AIR FORCE" Magazine, Vol. 80, No. 9, September 1997

This article by John Frisbee, co-authored by Col. George Gudderly, chronicles the Black March and its casualties. Col. Gudderly survived the march and went on to a successful career in the Air Force. Instrumental in the effort to place a monument at the location of Luft IV, he regularly writes and lectures on the subject.

Hugo O. Hassloch (389th BG) made this death march. See his letter on page 33 for details.



During the winter of 1944-45, 6,000 Air Force noncoms took part in an event of mass heroism that has been neglected by history. Most Americans know, in a general way, about the Bataan Death March that took place in the Philippines during April 1942. Few have even heard of an equally grim march of Allied POWs in northern Germany, during the winter of 1945, (the most severe winter Europe had suffered in many years). The march started at Stalag Luft IV in German Pomerania (now part of Poland), a POW camp for U.S. and British aircrew men.

Early in 1945, as the Soviet forces continued to advance after their breakout at Leningrad, the Germans decided to evacuate Stalag Luft IV. Some 1500 of the POWs, who were not physically able to walk, were sent by train to Stalag Luft I... On February 6, with little notice, more than 6,000 U.S. and British airmen began a forced march to the west in subzero weather, for which they were not adequately clothed or shod.

Conditions on the march were shocking. There was a total lack of sanitary facilities. Coupled with that was a completely inadequate diet of about 700 calories per day, contrasted to the 3,500 provided by the U.S. military services. Red Cross food parcels added additional calories when and if the Germans decided to distribute them. As a result of the unsanitary conditions and a near starvation diet, disease became rampant; typhus fever spread by body lice, dysentery that was suffered in some degree by everyone, pneumonia, diphtheria, pellagra, and other diseases. A major problem was frostbite that in many cases resulted in the amputation of extremities. At night, the men slept on frozen ground or, where available, in barns or any other shelter that could be found.

The five Allied doctors on the march were provided almost no medicines or

help by the Germans. Those doctors, and a British chaplain, stood high in the ranks of the many heroes of the march. After walking all day with frequent pauses to care for stragglers, they spent the night caring for the ill, and then marched again the next day. When no medication was available, their encouragement and good humor helped many a man who was on the verge of giving up.

Acts of heroism were virtually universal. The stronger helped the weaker. Those fortunate enough to have a coat shared it with others. Sometimes the Germans provided farm wagons for those unable to walk. There seldom were horses available, so teams of POWs pulled the wagons through the snow. Capt. (Dr.) Caplan, in his testimony to the War Crimes Commission, described it was "a domain of heroes."

The range of talents and experience among the men was almost unlimited. Those with medical experience helped the doctors. Others proved to be talented traders, swapping the contents of Red Cross parcels with local civilians for eggs and other food. The price for being caught at this was instant death on both sides of the deal. A few less Nazified guards could be bribed with cigarettes to round up small amounts of local food.

In a few instances, when Allied air attacks killed a cow or horse in the fields, the animal was butchered expertly to sup-

plement the meager rations. In every way possible, the men took care of each other in an almost universal display of compassion. Accounts of personal heroism are legend.

Because of war damage, the inadequacy of the roads, and the flow of battle, not all the POWs followed the same route west. It became a meandering passage over the northern part of Germany. As winter grew to a close, suffering from the cold abated. When the sound of Allied artillery grew closer, the German guards were less harsh in their treatment of POWs.

The march finally came to an end when the main element of the column encountered Allied forces east of Hamburg on May 2, 1945. They had covered more than 600 miles in 87 never-to-be-forgotten days. Of those who started on the march, about 1,500 perished from disease, starvation, or at the hands of German guards while attempting to escape. In terms of percentage of mortality, it comes very close to the Bataan Death March. The heroism of these men stands as a legacy to Air Force crewmen and deserves to be recognized.

In 1992, the American survivors of the march funded and dedicated a memorial at the former site of Stalag Luft IV in Poland, the starting place of a march that is an important part of Air Force history. It should be widely recognized and its many heroes honored for their valor. ■

Excerpt from Chris Christiansen's book: Seven Years Among Prisoners of War; Ohio University Press, Athens, Ohio (1994):

As early as March 1944, the camp commandants had received instructions that in case of imminent invasion all POWs were to be evacuated from the border areas and the invasion zones. From September 1944 onward this evacuation claimed an incredible number of victims. And the closer the Allied armed forces came to the German borders, the more chaotic and undisciplined was the evacuation. I do not know just how many Allied POWs were killed in the process, but the number of British and Americans alone might be an indication; during the period from September 1944 through January 1945, the evacuations had claimed 1,987 victims, but during the last three months of the war that number increased to a total of 8,348. With so many dead among those who were relatively well treated and who — much more importantly, received Red Cross parcels with food for their daily meals, it can be assumed that the number of dead among the Russian POWs must have been considerably higher. About one hundred thousand POWs from the camps in Silesia were evacuated and marched through Saxony to Bavaria and Austria. Transportation by train had been planned, but had proved impossible because of the rapid Russian advance. Lack of winter clothes, food and quarters claimed many victims. Over-excited party members and nervous home guard (members of the "Volkssturm") decided the fate of the POWs in these last weeks of the war. The German High Command wanted to keep the POWs at any cost, to be able to negotiate more favorable peace terms, and it was therefore necessary to evacuate them under these most inhumane conditions instead of just leaving them to await the advancing Allied armies. ■



To the Editor:

Re: The Black Cat and a Lucky Airman:

This article brought back some positive memories. My crew flew the *Black Cat* on my 30th and last mission, on January 5, 1945 to Kern, Germany with Col. Steadman as command pilot — a happy day for sure.

Bill Hendrix and I were friends, and remained in contact until his death.

I am very proud of the stamp series honoring the WWII planes — especially the use of the *Black Cat*.

Heath H. Carriker (466th)
113 Hwy. 73 W.
Ellerbe, NC 28338



To the Editor:

I flew with the 392nd BG in '44 and '45. My plane was shot down in the Battle of the Bulge. Ernie Parks was 14 years old when I first met him. He used to come to our barracks to pick up our laundry for his mother to clean.

In 1986 a friend of mine and I went back to England and found both our air bases. At mine, Ernie was riding a tractor. He then gave us a tour of what was left of our base. He has been writing at Christmas time ever since. It is interesting how he ate at our mess halls and saw the USO shows!

Dick Esenwein (392nd)
2040 Cranbrook N.E.
Grand Rapids, MI 49505

Here are some excerpts from a letter from Ernie Parks to Dick Esenwein:

Dear Dick:

Just a few lines hoping you are in good health and had a good Christmas. Thanks very much for the parts of the magazines you sent me, it is some interesting reading.

I got a plastic folder and put each page in separately so they become sort of a book. When I have read it all, I will lend it to a couple of my friends that worked on the air bases during the war.

I received nine other cards from the States. This number gets to be fewer every year, but one or two of the wives still keep in touch.

It was nice to hear that you may be

coming over in 2006, and I do hope you look us up. The road is Sloane Lane and you will see a few model ships on poles in the garden, B-24s and a Spitfire. We will be looking forward to seeing you all.

As long as it is possible I shall try to keep in touch with all you good friends over there in the good old USA 'Uncle Sam's Country.' The years 1943 to 1945 stand out more in my memory and my lifetime than many others.

I suppose the only thing I can thank Hitler for is helping me meet a lot of you guys while "working" and dining with the air crews from the 578th and 579th Squadrons. Both were only forty yards from our house and everyone had to pass our garden to get to their barracks. Also a lot of MPs were at gate #2 just in front of our house. A workshop was on the other side of the road next to the guardroom and fire station.

I did eat in the enlisted men's mess, the flying officers' mess and at odd times the ground officers' mess. I also used to go to the theatre and the Aero Club.

I saw many films and stage shows including Bill Conn, Tommy Dorsey, and Glenn Miller in #1 Hangar on the 25th of August 1944, my 15th birthday, that put me 'In The Mood'.

Very Best to a Yank from a Limey as I was known to the G.I.'s.

God Bless,

Ernie and Audrey Parks
No. #1 Sloane Lane
Beeston, Kings Lynn
Norfolk, England PE32 2NB



To the Editor:

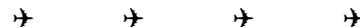
The Journals have just arrived and we will be mailing them out this morning. Once again congratulations on yet another superb issue, and the photo of Bernard Matthews on the cover looks great. He has been such a friend to the Memorial and aviation locally for so many years. All the 2ADA conventions he supported, on the "Diamond Lil" project in 1992 he was a main sponsor, and the list goes on and on. Even last November when we held the final Norfolk Vintage Pilots Dinner at RAF Coltishall before the station closes in April, he kindly provided his own brass band for us at no charge. We can never thank you enough for all your hard work as editor, for *The Journal* is what keeps us all together on both sides of the Atlantic and as we get older your superb editions become even more important.

I cannot remember if I sent you the article on Tom Eaton which appeared recently in the local press. If not I have enclosed a further one in the hope that you can print it in *The Journal*, as without the vision

and leadership of Tom over so many years there is no doubt that we would not have the superb 2AD Memorial Library we have today, nor the close links we enjoy with the 2ADA. (Ed. Note: See page 7). Jean and I still call to see him regularly to keep him cheerful after his last fall; indeed we called yesterday to deliver his *Journal*. Despite not being able to walk properly his mind is still as bright as a button and he loves to talk about his beloved Memorial Library, which means so much to him.

Finally, the "Friends of the 2nd Air Division Memorial" are now extremely active with much good news on their support for the Memorial as well as many of your old bases. They are thinking of sending you a regular report, which I hope might be of interest.

David J. Hastings



To Evelyn Cohen:

We are so looking forward to seeing you again and of course all our dear friends across the pond. It's been too long!!! We shall be staying with Charlie and Helen Freudenthal before the convention. We remember so fondly our previous conventions, right back to our first in Hilton Head. It seems to us both at this twilight time of the 2ADA that we should attend. You all mean so much to us in East Anglia. *Never* to be forgotten!!

Paddy & Jan Cox
1 The Limes
41 London Road
Halesworth
Suffolk IP19 8LT
England



To the Editor:

It is a very sad day for Norfolk as we still cannot believe that our Battle of Britain station has closed, especially those of us who have known it since 1939. (Ed. Note: See article on page 6.)

The Station has always been such a true friend of the 2nd Air Division USAAF and the 2nd Air Division Association, both in war and peace. We will never forget that special air show they put on for one of the Norwich conventions, as well as the fact that they have always provided us with bands, guard of honour and fly-pasts. Everything we asked for in the planning of the conventions, they never hesitated, and in 2001 to have *four* Battle of Britain Standards paraded in your honour was really something.

Saturday was a most moving day for Jean and I as we joined the 2,000 veterans invited to attend the closure. The three formal parades were superb, and after lunch

(continued on next page)

LETTERS (continued from page 31)

when the Jaguars taxied out for their final departure there were many tears, especially after the first low fly-past was then followed by the "Missing Man" formation.

In the evening over 800 people attended the "Disbandment Ball" in the famous Mess, and it was a joy to see so many old faces and pilots who had flown from the base since the 1950s when we became Honorary Members. The Mess staff excelled themselves with the catering, but it was sad to realise that we will never eat again in that wonderful building. After a huge fireworks display we sadly drove home but are left with so many wonderful memories.

David J. Hastings

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To the Editor:

On reading the Winter 2006 issue of *The Journal*, the article entitled "It's a Small, Small World After All" set my grey cells in action to remember that some fourteen years ago I commenced correspondence with a gentleman who had seen a photograph of the *Sweetest Rose of Texas* whilst staying at Tibenham, Norfolk. He had a query as to what the various markings on the stabilizer referred to, and I was able to enlighten him (copies of photos enclosed, showing various numbers of missions).

Les Willis
39 Coughtrey Close
Sprowston
Norwich, Norfolk
NR7 8AT England

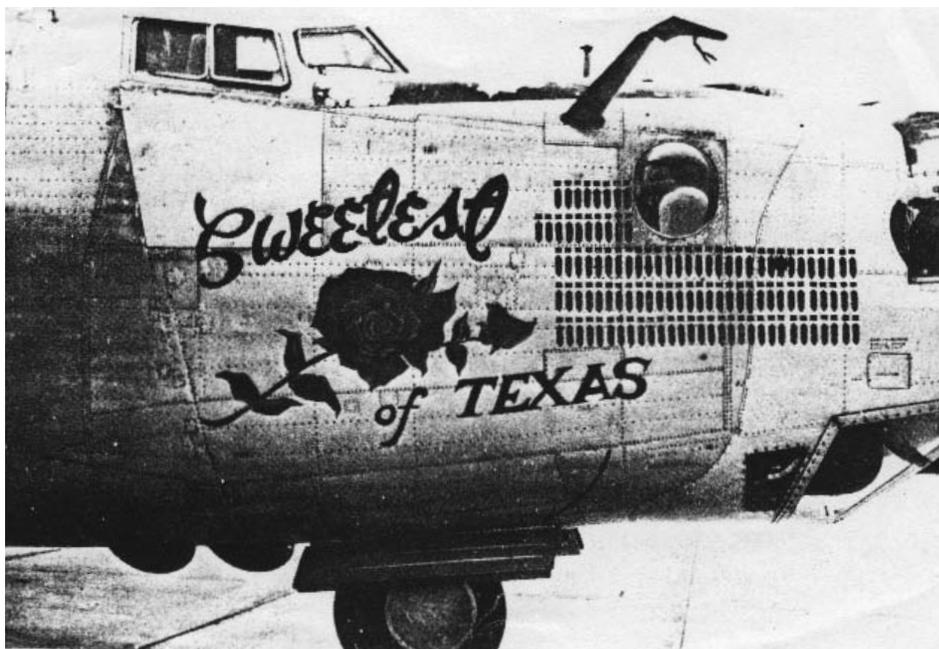
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Ed. Note: The following letter was forwarded to me by Starr Smith. We know absolutely nothing about the project mentioned by this letter writer, Barry Smith. Perhaps some of the Journal readers have encountered this incident and can comment on it.

To: Mr. Starr Smith
2983 Old Farm Road
Montgomery, Alabama 36111

My name will be unfamiliar to you, but please allow me to introduce myself. My name is Barry Smith (there are a lot of Smiths around!) I am forty-five years old and live in New Jersey. For the past thirty-two years, my father and I have collected World War II artifacts. This interest led me to write a book about a special German Luftwaffe fighter unit, a project that I have been working on for eighteen years.

The unit that I am writing about was named Sturmstaffel 1 (Assault-fighter Squadron 1), which was specifically created to combat American four-engine bombers. It was formed in Achmer near Osnabruck



under the leadership of Major Hans-Gunter von Kornatzki from October to December 1943. The squadron flew specially armored FW190s. Using innovative tactics; the unit attacked in strength (on average, nine aircraft) from behind bomber formations and only opened fire when reaching approximately 400 meters. The pilots were required to sign an oath stating that they would bring down a bomber during each of their missions, and if their weaponry failed or their aircraft were critically damaged during the approach, they would ram the bomber. This was not intended to be a suicide mission since pilots were supposed to strike the tail of the bomber in such a way to allow them to bail out. During the unit's six-month trial period, this only occurred twice. The unit flew its first mission on 11 January 1944 from Dortmund, moved to Langenhagen in February and then to Salzwedel in early March.

The Luftwaffe viewed the Sturmstaffel as successful and thus created three Sturmgruppen (Assault-fighter Groups). My final analysis has shown that these units were no more effective than normal fighter units.

I see that you served as an intelligence officer with the 8th Air Force. I am wondering if you remember any discussions concerning the Luftwaffe's use of ramming attacks during 1944 and if so, how concerned were the USAAF command and the bomber crews about them? Any information regarding this subject would be of great interest to me and I will happily give anyone credit in my two-volume project.

Barry Smith
850 Shewchenko Avenue
Millville, NJ 08332
Phone: 856-825-8627
E-mail: Feldpost@aol.com

✈ ✈ ✈ ✈

To the Editor:

I am enclosing a copy of a letter I wrote to the *Yorkshire Post* recently. Lindis Percy is what you would probably describe as “a pain in the butt.” She has been arrested on something like forty occasions. She and her followers turn up at RAF Menwith Hill (a station operated as a “listen post” by American personnel) every Tuesday night and make a thorough nuisance of themselves. I thought her appealing at such a minor punishment was an insult. I couldn’t let her get away with it, so I had to defend the American service personnel.

I feel very privileged to belong to, albeit in a small way, and to be able to support an organization such as the 2ADA. I think we in England owe a great debt to the American servicemen and women who fought, and in a lot of cases gave their lives, for the cause of freedom during World War II along with all the Allies.

An RAF friend,

John Threlfall
30 Lower West Avenue
Barnoldswick
Lancashire BB18 6DW
England

TIME TO REFLECT

Letter to Yorkshire Post from J. Threlfall, November 26, 2005:

I was amazed to read that the peace protester Lindis Percy was appealing against a court order that she should be electronically tagged and put under a curfew for a period of eight weeks (*Yorkshire Post*, November 19).

Does she really think that she and her fellow supporters should have the divine right to insult military personnel and their national flag with impunity?

What kind of message do they think their actions send to the families of the many thousands of American servicemen and women who gave their lives for the Allies in the struggle against Hitler and his allies?

The Second Air Division of the Eighth USAAF lost more than 7,000 men alone.

Maybe next time they are preparing to go to demonstrate outside Menwith Hill, they should share a few minutes thanking God for these, and all the other Americans, who made the supreme sacrifice for them, instead of throwing this back in their faces.

✈ ✈ ✈ ✈

To the Editor:

I was the pilot of crew 34A assigned to March Field for B-24 replacement crew training in the spring of 1944. During my training there (May-July 1944) a rumor went around the base about flying for a movie called *Winged Victory*.

Shortly thereafter several ships, my memory says six, flew to San Francisco. We flew separately to San Francisco, then singly in train, and in three-ship formation over the Golden Gate at bridge tower top level. There was a March field instructor in my ship.

At about the same time, on a day when I was flying, there was a camera crew close along the runway filming takeoffs and landings; again the rumor was “filming for *Winged Victory*.”

There is no doubt in my mind that March Field RTU provided the aircraft for the takeoff and landing scenes and the San Francisco departure scene for *Winged Victory*.

Walter Hughes (93rd)
15-1477 Keaau Pahoa Road
Keaau, HI 96749-9108
E-mail: libpilot@hawaii.rr.com

✈ ✈ ✈ ✈

To the Editor:

I’m enclosing a copy of the story of the 87-day death march which began February 5-6, 1945 and continued until May 1-2. (*Ed. Note: See page 30.*)

Having made this march myself, it has always seemed strange that it was never recognized by the Army Air Force.

My local Georgetown Scott County Museum, 229 East Main Street, Georgetown, KY 40324, phone 502-863-6201, has quite a lot of my World War II memorabilia on display. The curators are hoping to get more POWs to write about the march, and they are willing to put the letters on their website.

The article “Lest We Forget” speaks of 6,000 non-coms, but add in Lager B and you have a total of 8,000 8AF non-coms that started the march from Stalag Luft #4 (Lagers A, B, C and D).

A commander named Hauptman was in charge of three Lagers of Stalag Luft #4 (A, B, and D) and one of his subordinates was in charge of Lager C when the camp was evacuated. For years I’ve been lecturing in the local schools about how cruel the march had been. But when I saw on the Internet the description some gave about the march, it was total shock on my part. After reading all the remarks made about Lager C and their treatment, I realized that this Lager actually lived better than they did in the prison.

I was also referred to a book written by Charles Janice, published in 1950 — *Barbed Boredom!* This book has 5,000 names and home towns listed in the back of it. He was in Lager D under Hauptman. Pages 48 and 49 describe the starvation the same as I had been telling about in Lager B. The first fifty days I had one Red Cross pack-

age and was never allowed to build or get close to a fire. Had soup about four or five times, plus potatoes no more than twice a week if that often. 3/4 of a loaf of bread was issued to us for the entire march.

I urge all 8AF members who had been on this march to contact the museum or me and describe your experience now!

Hugo Hassloch (389th)
500 E. Jackson Street
Georgetown, KY 40324

✈ ✈ ✈ ✈

To the Editor:

I went to the *Mail Tribune* office and got a copy of the August 13, 2005 newspaper with the article about Bill Phillips, the artist, and the B-24 postage stamp. (*Ed. Note: See page 25.*)

Again I want to thank you for taking the time to visit on the telephone and sharing so much with me. Your experiences and information were very enlightening. I tried to recall as much as I could to share with Mary, my wife. At one of the occasions when the B-24 landed in Medford I walked Mary through the plane.

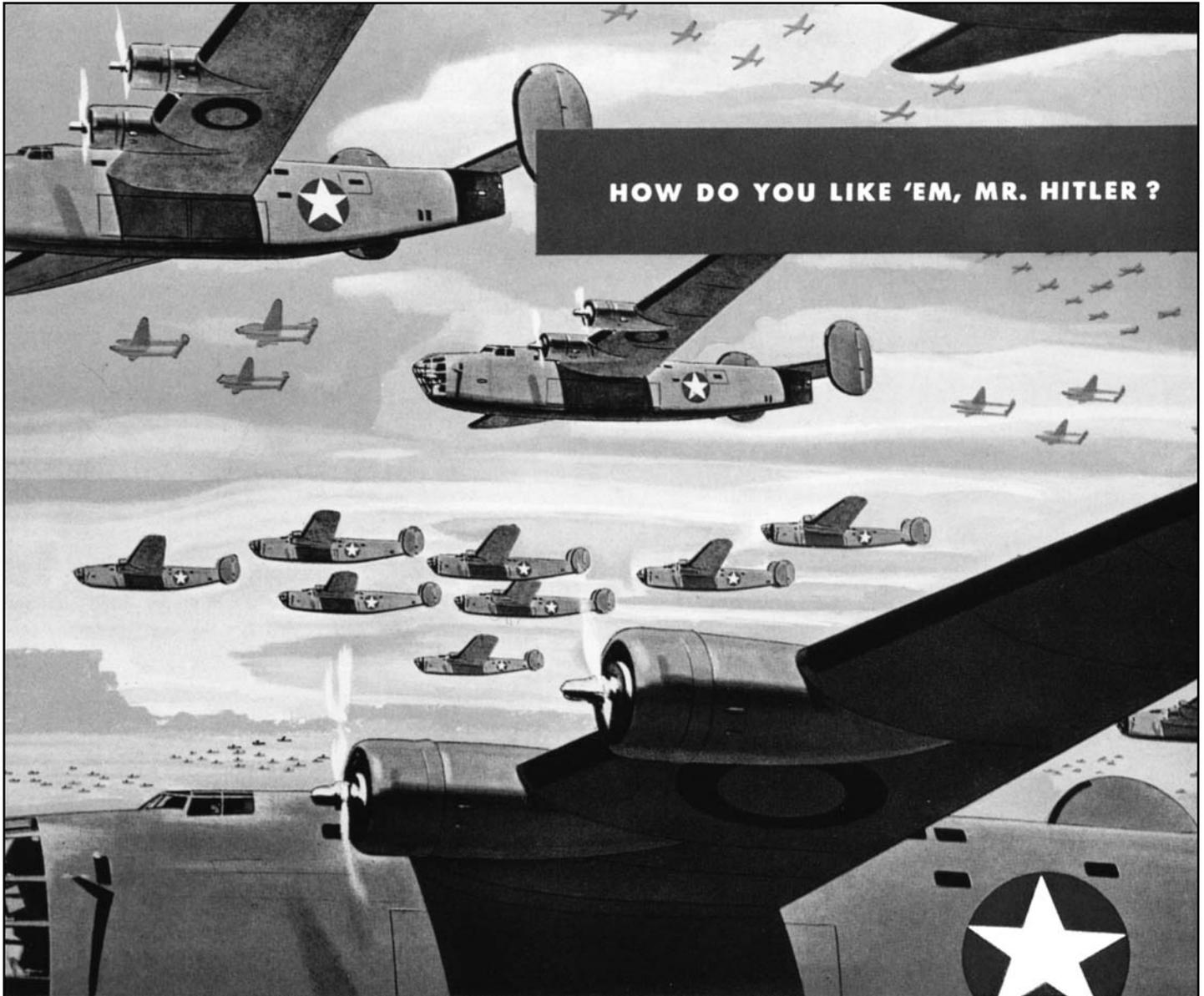
You know as the war was coming to an end our group made what they called “trolley runs.” They invited ground crew personnel to fly over to the Continent to view bomb damage. I jumped at the chance and was on one of the first flights. We flew at 1500 feet, went in over Ostend, Belgium and down to Frankfort/Mannheim and then up the Rhine to Dusseldorf. I stood at the waist gun position and had a great view. I have always appreciated the Air Force making that special effort to include the men who worked in the various shops — machine shop, prop shop, sheet-metal and welding, etc.

You know as we sweat out D-Day we never knew when it would happen. Just before that climactic moment . . . the bombs were hanging up in the shackles on our planes. So, they were removed and brought to the machine shop and we worked 36 hours without a break modifying them. But we had no idea about the significance. When I sacked out I just about died, but very early before daylight I woke up and heard engines revving up. Our first mission that morning was at 5 a.m. When I got to the shop later a 2nd Lt. told us that THIS WAS THE DAY! Our Group flew five missions on that memorable day.

By the way, my brother was in the 9th Army under General Simpson and went all the way from France to the Elbe River.

Elliott H. Lovelace (453rd)
P.O. Box 1106
Talent, OR 97540

✈ ✈ ✈ ✈



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Registration
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Buffet Breakfast
Business Meeting
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Buses to Air Force Memorial
Buses to Air Force Memorial Concert

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 15

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Special Options**
(Aero Space Museum, Tour of Washington, D.C.,
Memorial Service at Air Force Memorial)
Cocktail Party – Cash Bar
Banquet

MONDAY, OCTOBER 16

Buffet Breakfast

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The Sky Was Never Still

BY ROGER A. FREEMAN • SUBMITTED BY BUD CHAMBERLAIN (489TH)

The old man sat in the English pub
As he had for many a year
And listened to the strangers talk
As he sipped a temperate beer.

A stranger asked how long he'd lived
In the village here about.

"Why all my days," the old man said,
"An age, without a doubt."

"I envy you," the stranger sighed
"Your tranquil village life,
The gentle fields, the muted sky,
Devoid of urban strife."

The old man smiled a wistful smile,
"That's just a townie's dream.
For I have seen the sky aflame
And heard the meadows scream."

"I've known a thunder at each dawn
That shook the very ground
As warplanes sought to gain the clouds
From airfields all around."

"They called some Forts and others Libs
And there were fighters too
I've counted hundreds at a time
Yes, what I tell is true."

"They'd climb and soar like flocks of roo
And round and round they'd mill
From north and south, from east and west
The sky was never still."

"Sometimes there'd be a wondrous sight
A sight beyond compare
The bombers going out to war
Forging the frigid air."

The old man drank and then replied
"It happened in the war."

"They were but boys and many died
Some lost without a trace
For then the sky in foreign parts
Could be a violent place."

"Yes, they were boys and me a child
But I remember well
And if you have the time to spare
There's more that I can tell."

The stranger said that he must go.
"Perhaps another day."
Indifferent to the old man's tale
He quickly slipped away.

The old man turned to inward thought
His memories to tend
He knew that those who were not there
Could never comprehend.

Those who'd not known the crowded sky
The sounds that drenched the land
Or stood in awe and wonderment
Would never understand.

The old man left the English pub
And stood awhile outside
The evening vault was milky blue
Cloud-free and stretching wide.

He raised his head and scanned the sky
That held so still and clear
And in his mind a memory
And in his eye a tear.

— ROGER A. FREEMAN



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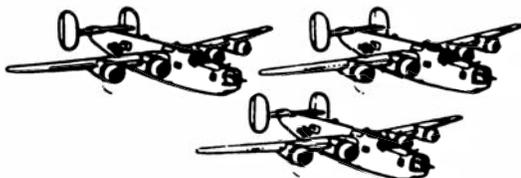
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