

Heritage Herald



Issue 23

September 1998

With library, vets honor living and dead



Tribune photo by Chuck Berman

Calvin Shahbaz (center) of Sacramento talks with Jean Bennett (left) of Rotonda, Fla., and her brother Hugh Bennett (right) of Rotonda at the 2nd Air Division Association reunion in Oak Brook.

It was 1946, and seven buddies who had served in the Army Air Force 2nd Air Division during World War II decided to get together for a few drinks at the Chicago apartment where one of the veterans lived.

Twenty-four hours and a few bottles later, the get-together broke up.

But, building on the experiences that led to the impromptu reunion, the men forged something strong that day in the apartment on North Hoyne Avenue.

It was enough to create the 2nd Air Division Association, a group established to recognize a military unit based 125 miles north of

London. The division, famous because it included Jimmy Stewart and Walter Matthau, was considered the most potent strike force to that point in history - especially tragic for the 6,700 men lost in air battles.

But perhaps most noteworthy about the 2nd Air Division Association, holding its official 50th reunion this Memorial Day weekend in suburban Chicago, is the way it decided to honor the men who made the supreme sacrifice.

The veterans, men and women, helped build a library where they fought World War II - a memorial believed to be the only one of its kind. And, through the years, as

death has thinned the ranks of the veterans of the 2nd Air Division, remaining members steadfastly have maintained and strengthened the bond to the community surrounding Norwich, England, where their base was situated.

Over the weekend, 600 or so have gathered in west suburban Oak Brook. On Monday night, they will submit a check for \$10,000 to the Norwich Central Library in England to extend the commitment.

They are holding raffles for quilts, wall hangings and clocks to continue the support, and they are talking about the latest effort to maintain that link. A Fulbright Foundation Librarian program, to fund a visiting American employee, was established at the library in 1991, after the Association raised half a million dollars.

But, mostly, the alums have been visiting, lamenting the passing of old friends and getting caught up on one another's lives since the last reunion.

"We are a group of friends who are bound together by what one of our more literary members calls the gossamer thread of a shared experience," said Jordan Uttal, 82, of Dallas, who is honorary president of the group. "For me, it's a steel cable that binds us together."

Uttal was among those seven buddies who gathered at the North Side apartment of Howard Moore in 1946. Moore and one other member

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AS I SEE IT.....

by Earl Wassom (466th BG)

President, 2nd Air Division Association

A realistic reminder came to me recently. A journal article reported that 10,800 U.S. baby boomers become 50 years of age each day. Wow! I am one of the producers of two of those baby boomers. Where does that leave me? The days tick off, the months roll by and the years add up. The WW II members of the Eighth Air Force are graying. The average age is now 78 and none of us can deny that we are slowing down slightly. We are not an inactive group but those things which we undertake, do require more effort than they once did.

Because of this reality, the Second Air Division Association passed legislation at its last meeting in Oak Brook, IL in May, 1998 which is called "The Legacy Continuation Plan". This new thrust is to encourage the younger generation (the baby boomers) and place them in positions to learn the governance and workings of the Association. The EXCOM of the 2ADA incorporated this concept by placing Heritage League Members as non-voting observers into its standing and special committees structure.

At the meeting of the Heritage League, I, after collaboration with Craig Beasley, your Heritage League President, identified and then named members to these important committees. Since this was the first time this situation has arisen after the legislation was passed by the EXCOM, and in the interest of time, I made one-time appointments to several of the standing committees. In the future, the Heritage League EXCOM will be required to select names and present a slate of appointees to the President of the 2ADA prior to the Annual Conference. The incoming 2ADA President will honor these choices of the Heritage League EXCOM and name them to the committee specified. This will be an on-going administrative matter which must be accomplished by the Heritage League to insure continuation. All Heritage League Members assigned are designated as Heritage League Observers (non-voting) and are so noted as HLO in the *DIRECTORY, 1998-1999, Second Air Division Association Officers and Members of Standing Committees*.

The following were named and are listed in the *DIRECTORY*.

Audit Committee	Ed Zobac
2ADA/FMLA Oversight Committee	Ed Zobac
Nominating Committee	Ruth Anderson
Awards Committee	Billy Sheely Johnson
8th AF Relations Committee	Neal Bostwick
2ADA Historian	Mary Beth Barnard
Journal Stand-By Committee	Kathy Jackson
Roll of Honor	Susan Horlock
American Education Foundation, Inc.	Vicki Brooks
Warning	
Heritage Museum Committee	Mary Beth Barnard
Year of the B-24 Committee	Ken W. Blackburn,
	Chris Brassfield, Alan Blue
Board of Governors, Memorial Trust. . .	Craig A. Beasley

Since these appointments have been made, many Committee Chairman have been using the HLO skills with gratifying results and the Heritage League individuals are enthusiastic in this new role.

It was also my privilege to appoint Felix Leeton (389th Bomb Group) as my replacement as the 2ADA Liaison Officer to the Heritage League. Felix and his wife, Marjorie are a wonderful and devoted couple who will be a supportive team working with the Heritage League Executive Committee and its membership. I had the honor of introducing them at the business meeting in Oak Brook. They were warmly received by, what I have been told, a record attendance for a Heritage League business meeting. As time diminishes the membership of the 2ADA, leadership will continue to emerge in the Heritage League and membership will grow as active recruiting efforts are undertaken.

My wife Cynthia and I are most appreciative for the reception we received from you while serving as Liaison Officer to the Heritage League during the past two years.



Second Air Division

HQ - Ketteringham Hall

Bomb Wings

2nd Hethel
 14th Shipdam
 20th Hardwick
 95th Halesworth
 96th Horsham St. Faith

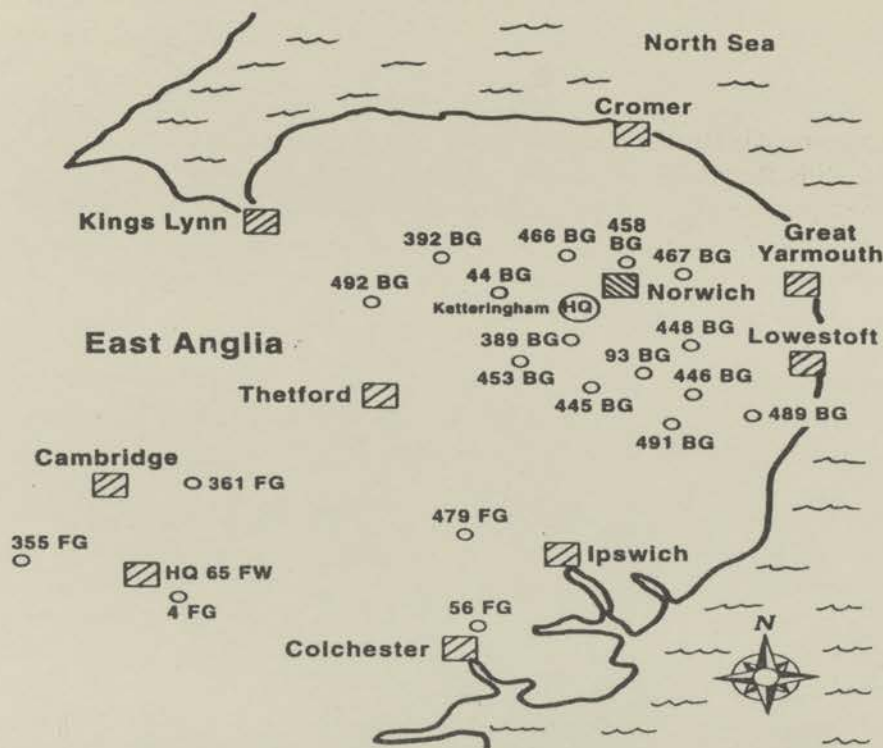
Bomb Groups

44th Shipdam
 93rd Hardwick
 389th Hethel
 392nd Wendling
 445th Tibenham
 446th Bungay
 448th Seething
 453rd Old Buckenham
 458th Horsham St. Faith
 466th Attlebridge
 467th Rackheath
 489th Halesworth
 491st Metfield
 492nd North Pickenham

Fighter Groups

4th Debden
 56th Boxted
 355th Steeple Morden
 479th Wattisham
 361st Bottisham

8th Air Force - England



Heritage League New Members

John A. Barron, Jr - 445
 Brian W. Fields - 445
 Bruce W. Fields - 445
 Darlene Grair - 445
 Nancy Pease - 389
 John Rice - HQ
 Dr. Harry E. Siegrist III - 453

A memorial brick will be placed on the Wall of Valor at The Mighty Eighth Air Force Heritage Museum in honor of Ruth Hunter Berkeley, Heritage League President, 1990-91.

The Heritage League :

<http://www.primenet.com/~hl-2ada>

email: hl-2ada@primenet.com
 (Our web page will be updated in
 Sept. - be sure to check it out !)

The Mighty 8th Heritage Museum:

<http://www.mighty8thmuseum.com>

2ADA Memorial:

[http://www.ecn.co.uk/memorial/
index.htm](http://www.ecn.co.uk/memorial/index.htm)

Second Air Division Association Annual Convention Highlights

by Barb Marsteller

The 1998 Second Air Division Association annual convention, the 50th Anniversary of the 2ADA, was held at the Oak Brook Hills Resort in Oak Brook, IL, May 23-25. This year's golf outing was organized by Vicki Brooks Warning, past president of the Heritage League. As always, tours were available for those in attendance. Some chose to visit historic Long Grove Village while others toured the many sights of downtown Chicago. A topic of discussion at the convention was the dedication, this coming September, of the bronze replica of a B-24 bomber to be placed at the Air Force Academy in Colorado Springs.

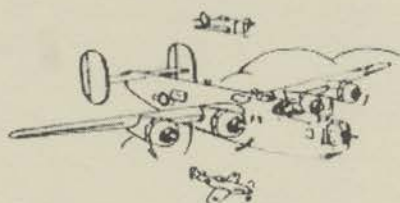
The program after the buffet dinner Saturday evening was a combined video presentation of past conventions and activities of the Second Air Division Association. The bomb group dinner meetings Sunday night provided an opportunity to conduct group business, socialize, and reminisce.

The Heritage League met Monday morning, May 25, 1998. The sixty-five members present voted to install the current officers for another term. Information was provided about the Heritage League web site now accessible at: <http://www.primenet.com/~hl-2ada>. Earl Wassom, Second Air Division Association liaison to the Heritage League, informed the League that he would be stepping down as liaison because he would be "getting another job", President of the Second Air Division Association. He appointed Felix Leeton as the next liaison. Earl commented about the legacy continuation plan of the 2ADA and elaborated on the role Heritage League members would play as non-voting members (Heritage League Observers) on the various 2ADA Executive Committees. Earl announced the Heritage League members he would recommend to the 2ADA Executive Committee for approval. (*See article on page 2 for a list of committees and HLO's*) Future placement of Heritage League members on 2ADA committees requires an election by the league and then approval by the Executive Committee of the 2ADA.

David Hastings extended greetings from the Board of Governors and Friends of the 2ADA. He highlighted their year in England. There were more visitors than ever to the Memorial Library and the World Wide Web site had 250 visits each week. The Millennium Library, in particular, the new 2ADA Memorial Library, will be opened to the public in early 2001. To increase links with the Heritage League, the Friends have appointed James Wright as liaison officer from the Friends to the Heritage League. David indicated that, as part of the Governor's plan to place the name of the 2ADA everywhere, a tourist railroad is rebuilding a diesel locomotive to be named Second Air Division, USAAF. The meeting concluded with the approval of a monetary donation to the Heritage Museum in honor of Mary Beth Barnard. Jordan Uttal announced that he would be donating his complete set of 2ADA Journals and memorandums from 1945 to the present to the Heritage League.

The convention culminated with a banquet and dance. At that event, the founding members of the 2ADA were honored. How fitting that its anniversary convention was in Chicago—where it all began 50 years ago.

Next year's 2ADA convention will be held in Austin, Texas, over the Memorial Day weekend. See you there! Get involved!



It's a Small, Small World, After All!

by Jack Pelton (445th), Original Pilot of the "Briney Marlin"

It was August 16, 1944, over Dessau, Germany that some lucky flak gunner found the "Sweetest Rose of Texas" at about 20,000 feet, just after bombs away. This wasn't our regularly assigned B-24; our war weary old bird was hangar-bound back at Tibenham and we had been assigned Arnold Nass' "The Rose," as it was affectionately known by its crew. Whoever the gunner was, he really peppered out big-gas bird with 88mm shells until he got lucky and severely damaged our flight control system with a hit that affected our elevator trim tabs in such a way that the elevators were thrown into a full nose up position. The result was a full hammer head stall out of formation.

After dropping rapidly to about 15,000 feet before recovering control of the "Rose", we surveyed our situation to determine our next move. The plane looked like a flying sieve. It had about 150 flak holes, radio knocked out, and severe damage to the flight control system; so bad, in fact, that my co-pilot and I could only maintain level flight by bracing our knees against the wheel and "stiff-arming" it with both arms. Fortunately, we still had all four fans running, although No. 3 had a flak hole in the reduction gear housing and had lost all of its oil. Thanks to Mr. Pratt &

Mr. Whitney, who made a superb engine, it continued running, without oil, all the way back to England!

Needless to say, we made it back to England with an escort of P-51's, Jugs (Thunderbolts), and a covey of P-38's for top cover and set the old girl down on the crash landing strip at Manston (or was it called Woodbridge?) We were afraid we might have flat tires from Flak damage around the wheel wells, so I "gently" dropped her in from about 100 feet with a 30 degree crab. But you know the B-24; she behaved like the lady she was and rolled to a stop in about 1500 feet or so. Best part of it all was, Ray Pytel, my flight engineer, didn't even say "boo" about the heavy landing. He just got out and kissed the ground like the rest of us.

The scene now changes to Hawthorne Municipal Airport in the Los Angeles area of Southern California. It is late May of 1993 and I have gone to Hawthorne Airport to see the "All American" B-24 and that restored four engine primary trainer, the "909" B-17. I also was responsible for the Second Air Division Association recruiting booth that day.

I noticed a man and his wife carefully examining our display of

1944 Group locations and airfield layouts in England which was designed to attract the curious. I approached the couple and asked if they were interested in what they saw, and did they have any questions. He answered, "No, I vass on de odder end." I said, "What do you mean, de odder end?" He replied, "I vass a flak gunner mit de Cherman ground forces in central Chermany." Not only was he a flak gunner, it turned out that he was directing fire over Dessau on August 16, 1944!!! He even remembered knocking 2 or 3 Liberators out of the sky on that fateful day. I asked him how they could have been so damned accurate with those 88's. He told me that they had optics so superior that he could see the waist gunners firing. He was only 14 years old and had been "recruited" into the Hitler Jugend Corps when there were no mature men left to man the flak guns.

Well, we had an interesting conversation and came to the conclusion that it was highly likely that he had actually been responsible, perhaps directly, for our near demise in the skies over Dessau on August 16, 1944.

It is, indeed, a small, small world, after all !!!

(reprinted from the 2ADA Journal, Fall 93)

Jack's "Perfect Landing"

by Ray Pytel (445th)

Author's Note: The following is "The Rest of the Story" or an addendum to Jack D. Pelton's "It's a Small, Small World, After All!"

It was a cold and sunny day in 1943, when what was to become known as Pelton's crew first assembled and met each other for our final three months of training in Colorado Springs before assignment overseas. The three officers were apprehensive about how to relate to each other, as well as the six enlisted

men, and the enlisted men wondered among themselves how they'd fit in and work together as a team when hitherto, nearly all communication with officers was usually very formal, best to be avoided, and flowed from a self-proclaimed "king of the hill" who seldom, if ever, considered that anyone below his rank knew anything worthwhile or had anything to contribute.

Final training as a crew requires not only knowing your own job, but the

job of everyone else on the crew, and each position draws its respect from the knowledge that without complete two-way communication, no member of the crew can perform "to the best of his ability," thus endangering the whole crew in combat. We soon established a working relationship, the training exposing each crew member's shortcomings and idiosyncrasies. On our crew we soon established an evaluation of performance process that included

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everyone's performance on each practice mission, including the entire crew's critique of the pilot, "smiling Jack" Pelton as he was affectionately called, although not always in his presence.

At first, just like with any new pilot, Jack's landings were somewhat less than perfect; in fact, sometimes so bumpy that they woke up our then waist gunner, Jim Henderson. Jim (now deceased), a native of the state of Arkansas, in the truest of the southern tradition, operated at a very leisurely pace. Nothing, except a lively poker game, disturbed him very much, so when he drawled, "Something must be done about this," the rest of the crew quickly devised a plan to help him out.

It was the now deceased Harold Kennedy, our assistant engineer, and father of Mary Beth Barnard, the 445th's capable historian, who suggested that a simple testing device could be used...an open bottle of beer on the bomb bay catwalk...if Pelton's landing tipped the bottle over and spilled the beer, it was my job as the person usually found between the pilot and co-pilot to immediately convey a "message of displeasure" from the passengers back in the bowels of the mighty Liberator. This soon became a ritual, and on a rare occasion a "boo" was said.

On this particular mission, when Jack dropped the "Rose" gently from "100 feet with a 30 degree crab" for a perfect "3-point landing, I heard

nothing but a loud "Swoosh" from the rear of the plane, and no one was left to evaluate this particular landing, and in a split-second decision I felt it would be presumptuous to speak for the entire crew...needless to say I made this decision on the way out, bumping into Tom Hart in the bomb bay. Tom, our radioman, got delayed by the rest of the crew on the way out! Now this is the true story behind Jack's "perfect landing" without "nary a boo" from me. It is apparent that in the rush of the moment, this evaluation never materialized, so this must go into the records as a perfect landing.

(reprinted from the 2ADA Journal, Winter 93)



MAILBAG.....

29 May 1998

From:
The Mighty 8TH Air Force Heritage Museum

To: Craig Beasley

Thank you for the recent donation to the Mighty Eighth Air Force Heritage Museum, which was designated for the following projects:

Books for the Library

This letter serves as a receipt for this donation.

Thank you once again for your support.

Sincerely,
Debra L. Smith
Chief Financial Officer

From: B-24 Groups Memorial Inc.

To: Heritage League Members

This will acknowledge your gift of \$450.00 received on 5-26-98.

B-24 Groups memorial, Inc., of the Army Air Forces is a non-profit corporation, organized in the State of Wisconsin, for the purpose of gifting the U.S. Air Force Academy at Colorado Springs, Colorado with a giant 19 foot bronze sculpture of a B-24J.

The sculpture will be erected in the Honor Court of the Academy to aid in the education of the air Cadets.

Since nothing of value is given to you in return for your gift, the entire amount qualifies as a charitable contribution.

Thank you !

Sincerely,
Neal E. Sorensen, Treasurer

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of the original group have died. The five survivors will be honored at a dinner Monday night.

Two years after those seven unofficially started the association at the animated, inebriated bash of Army buddies, approximately 100 people attended the first official reunion at Chicago's Sherman Hotel.

But the idea for the memorial library came before the reunions began, unofficial or otherwise. When the men and women of the 2nd Air Division were discharged, three senior officers ordered all of them to contribute to a memorial - one British pound for enlisted men and women, five British pounds for officers.

"We chose something that people could come to and get something out of every time they visit," said Jim Reeves, 79, of Moultrie, Ca., past president of the association.

They raised some 20,000 British pounds, far short of what was needed to build a library. Even if they had raised enough, the war had ravaged England and building a library was low on the list of construction projects.

The association waited, held more fundraisers and reunions, kept pressing to build and by 1963, the 2nd Air Division Memorial Library was dedicated as part of the Norwich Central Library.

"There's nothing like it in the world," said Evelyn Cohen, a WAC with the 2nd Air Division.



Tribune photo by Ed Wagner

Carl Rambo of Livermore, Calif., looks over models of World War II-era aircraft at the 2nd Air Division Association's 50th reunion.

"Why would we want to build a statue?" she asked. "Nobody will ever know what a statue is for, but a library It's a living memory."

It is that and more. The 2nd Air Division memorial includes books, periodicals and other conventional library resources "covering every facet of American life," Uttal said. But the wing also is stocked with audiotapes of veterans dictating their war experiences, war diaries, handwritten mission orders, a tail fin from a B-24 Liberator aircraft and the Wall of Honor, a vellum list of all those Americans from the 2nd Air Division killed in action during World War II.

The community values the library. Even after fire destroyed the structure in 1994, it was moved to temporary quarters and fully restocked within seven months. A reconstructed library, to be complete by the year 2000, will include a 2nd

Air Division Association space that is twice as large as the previous room.

It is clearly a source of pride for the veterans who were milling about the Oak Brook Hills Resort on Sunday.

"It's not just a war memorial," said Calvin Shahbaz, 74, of Sacramento, who was a 20-year-old bombardier from Gary when he was shot down east of Berlin. "It's an American memorial. People who are planning a trip to England go in there and look up all sorts of information and the people who run it tell us it's the most used part of the library."

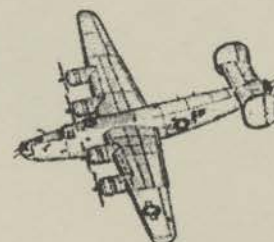
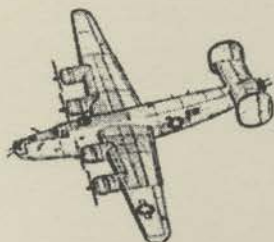
Unfortunately, the number of attendees at the reunion continues to fall. In 1992, the most popular year of the reunions, nearly 1,600 attended.

Perry Kerr, 72, of Bellville, Texas, is one of five men still living from the nine crew members of the B-24 in which he served as nose gunner.

On Sunday, looking over the emerald green golf course at Oak Brook Hills, he said the people with him appreciate what he means when he talks about the three pairs of gloves he had to wear to compensate for the cold in the airplane and the way the plane shook when flak would burst just outside the three inches of glass surrounding him and his perilous perch.

"We talk about things that probably to the average person don't mean a thing, but to us mean a lot," he said. "We can picture everything . . . Everything."

(reprinted with permission from the Chicago Tribune 5/25/98)



A Tribute to Uncle Bill

by Carol Lozowski Gerard



As I was growing up, I had always heard the most interesting things about my uncle, Bill Lozowski. I had never known him, as I was just seven months

old when he died. There had always been questions concerning the deaths of him and his crew members while on a bombing mission over Germany, February 3, 1945.

About eighteen years ago, I came across a list of government addresses that could possibly shed some light on those fateful circumstances. Much to my amazement, one source led to another and the project began to snowball. My quest for information ended up filling two large books. These books will eventually be turned over to Bill's son, as it is his heritage, and I hope they will be passed on to future generations.

Bill worked at AMPCO Metal while living in Milwaukee before entering the service in 1942. He wanted to fly, and graduated as a B-24 Liberator pilot while stationed in Fort Worth, Texas. While in training, he met Iris Thompson of Waco, and they were married on July 9, 1944.

In August of that year, Bill and his crew were sent to the European Theater. They made their home at Hardwick Airdrome in East Anglia, England. They were now part of the 8th Air Force, 93rd Bomb Group, 328th Squadron.

After many successful bombing missions, Bill and his crew were sent to a magnificent mansion call "Tiverton Manor" for R&R. They were treated royally and the amenities were wonderful, but Bill wrote home to say he

was anxious to return to Hardwick to complete his required missions. He looked forward to returning home, as he and Iris were expecting their first child in April.

With only five more missions to complete, while on their 30th bomb run they developed engine problems and had to leave their formation. Frank Glut, co-pilot, shut off the engine, but too much oil had been lost and the prop would not feather. This windmilling caused a drag and they began to lose altitude rapidly. Suddenly, they took a hit from flak and the order to bail out was given. Three of the crew managed to bail out safely. They were: Seymour Weisman, engineer; Mickey Schleicher, bombardier; and John Coradetti, nose gunner. There were wounded aboard, tail gunner Cornelius Carter, radio operator Paul Colby, and waist gunner James Seger were found in the aft section of the bomber. Bill, Frank Glut, and navigator Anthony Marulli were too close to the ground for their parachutes to deploy. They died upon impact in a farmer's plowed field. The deceased were buried in the township of Benth. Later they were temporarily buried in Belgium, and finally laid permanently to rest back home.

The survivors were interrogated and made POWs for the duration of the war.

In my search for information I have made wonderful friendships. Survivors Weisman and Schleicher provided me with their excellent recollections. I had not been able to locate John Coradetti, and found out he had passed away some years before. I am eternally indebted to Dr. Volkmar Wilckens, a German who was a flak battery helper in his early teens during the war. He is writing a book on the war from a German perspective. A pilot, he located the exact site of the crash and photographed it

from the air as well as ground level. He took pictures of and interviewed people who remembered the crash. A farmer name Meyer provided Wilckens with a metal piece of a flak jacket retrieved from the plane. That piece is now in my possession and I have had it silverplated and a hole bored into it. I wear it as a pendant as a remembrance of those who served and gave their lives for our country. Julia Glut, the co-pilot's widow, learned that in the wreckage a pair of baby shoes had been found. She knew that Frank had always taken them along with him on missions for good luck, as they belonged to their son Donald.

I still continue to receive information about Bill and his military record. Clarence Barton, a 2ADA member, recently sent me many interesting items that have now become a part of my book. It turns out that Clarence, also a pilot, flew many missions together with my uncle. Clarence's name was written on Bill's missing air crew report, as he gave the position of Bill's plane when they were last seen.

It has been a source of comfort to me to know that my father, Joseph (Bill's brother) knew as much as possible about Bill's last flight not long before he died. He was very happy to have met Mickey Schleicher, one of the last to see Bill alive. Mickey very kindly presented my father with some of the very medals he earned while serving with the 8th Air Force.

I hope some day to visit the site in Germany where all those fine young men met their fate, and to lay flowers in their memory.

I know that Uncle Bill, had he survived the war, would be a member of the various groups he was associated with, as he loved to fly and was so proud to be in the Air Force. I am here to represent him.



Excerpts from The Mighty Eighth Air Force Heritage Museum News

- Dr. Barry Buxton has been selected as the Executive Director of the Mighty Eighth Air Force Heritage Museum. He will take over the responsibility of overall operations of the Heritage Museum. Lt. Gen. E. G. Shuler, Jr., who has been doing that job since the museum opened, will remain as Chairman and Chief Executive Officer but will concentrate on the larger issues such as fund raising and getting wider exposure for the museum.
- Museum curator Derrell Westberry announced a dozen new exhibits that he, archivist John Edwards, and collection manager Jeffrey Bilderback have recently completed and another dozen that are being created. "We have just finished the wall exhibits for photo reconnaissance and special operations, two vital activities that you don't hear as much about as others. We have just hung the 1/6 scale models of the B-24 and B-17 done by sculptor Robert Henderson of Canon City, Colorado. And we now have on public display new exhibits about several specific World War II Eighth Air Force units: the 1st Strategic Air Depot, the 18th Weather Squadron, the 34th Bomb Group, and the 452nd Bomb Group. We are averaging 1-2 new exhibits each month."
- The Heritage Museum also expanded and reworked the prisoner of war exhibit originally donated by Stalag Luft 3 Association and completed the Escape and Evasion area that depicts stories about downed airmen who were rescued and returned safely.
- The Heritage Museum will also receive, restore and display a B-47 Stratojet bomber aircraft from Florence, S.C.
- Also on the horizon are exhibits about the Polish Air Force, the Berlin missions, and a diorama that will dramatically portray the Ploesti oil field missions.



THANKS FROM ACROSS THE POND

Now that we have returned safely home after the 50th Anniversary Convention in Chicago can I express the very sincere thanks on behalf of all your British visitors for your great kindness, friendship and hospitality for it was a truly memorable occasion. Thank you Evelyn for making it all possible.

In this special year we were so delighted to bring you all the exciting news on your unique and living Memorial library in Norwich – the only one of its kind in the world – the arrival of the 30 million pound grant from the Millennium Commission,

the detailed plans of the new Library, the success of the rebuilding appeal, the wonderful cache of the Fulbright Librarian and their outstanding work with the Library team, the new Governors, the great pledge of support from the Friends of the Memorial, that great band of local people who look after your old bases, the links with Wymondham College and the naming of a locomotive on the Bure Valley Railway "2nd Air Division USAAF" in your honour.

Everything at Chicago was just perfect, the meeting of old friends,

the Early Bird Party, the Group Dinners, the moving new Dzenowagis film, the discussions on the future, the Heritage League meeting, the Business meeting and finally the Banquet. So many memories that we will treasure for the rest of our lives. Can we also express our deepest thanks for that wonderful cheque for \$10,000 for the rebuilding appeal of your Memorial which will be a tremendous boost to the fund raising efforts. Also our thanks to the WACS for the \$1300 for the endowment fund.

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(Continued from page 9)
fund.

We were also so delighted to meet the new 2nd Air Division Fulbright Librarian Judy Jerome and we know that she will be a wonderful asset to the Norwich Library team when she joins us in September. Your vision of

giving us an American Fulbright Librarian each year is a gift beyond price.

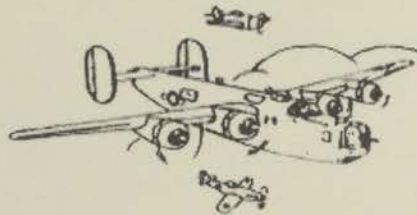
We pledge that your new 2nd Air Division Memorial Library will be the finest in the world and in Chicago we felt so proud to be back once more with such a great family.

We will never forget you.

Yours sincerely,

David J. Hastings

Vice Chairman, Memorial Trust of the 2nd Air Division USAAF



Generation Learns of WW II Truth

by Roberta de Boer

There's an interesting screen credit for Steven Spielberg's new movie that almost says it all.

"Corpse and animal effects designers".

And so it is that *Saving Private Ryan* is hailed now as the most realistic celluloid depiction of World War II.

Is this a truly great movie? No, not really. But is it stunning to the point of being transformative? Absolutely.

For my baby-boom generation, after decades of John Wayne movies and postwar TV shows such as *Combat*, this is the single most illuminating close-up shot of what is inarguably this century's defining event.

If that had been the baby boomers fighting World War II, there still would be, even this weekend, "Big One" Support Groups meeting in dank church basements from coast to coast. We would not be anywhere near finished, even 50 years later, with the messy and self-absorbing task of "processing" our "feelings."

Nothing of the kind, of course, transpired for the actual veterans of WW II.

No, they came home from the war and set about the business of life. They went to school, or to work. They tried, in the quaint parlance of that time, to better themselves. They broke their backs for

even greater opportunities for their children.

They moved into those tract-house subdivisions, the ones where all the houses looked alike, no doubt attracted by an orderliness that many of their children later would mock.

And all the while, the veterans remained characteristically stoic. Here's how they processed their feelings: They wrangled themselves an annual parade, and for the rest of the year, they got together once in a while at the VFW hall to have a few drinks and maybe play some cards.

We, their children, grew up exasperated by what struck us as their utter inability to express themselves, or, more accurately put, to understand us when we expressed ourselves.

Oh, they got what they wanted, all right, that WW II generation. They got peace and prosperity in such abundance that their children never had any idea the price that was paid or even what had been at such great risk.

The boomer's parents spawned an entire generation for whom the mightiest test of character and inner strength might well be whether we really will find it in ourselves to perform aerobic activity three times in one week.

My father, a Dutch citizen and soldier,

was in a Japanese prisoner-of-war camp many years. His brother had two ships shot out from under him in the Atlantic. His sister spent the war years hiding Jews in the Dutch countryside, relying on her occupation as an obstetrician to explain why she was out and about at odd hours and peculiar places.

My Indonesian mother spent her teen years island-hopping with her family, trying to avoid the occupying forces, and wound up in a refugee camp.

Me? Well, in the course of my 42 years, I would have to say that they most trying incident came when the epidural wore off during labor. See what I mean? We are untested by our times and generally too oblivious to even be grateful.

Stephen Ambrose, the great historian who served as a consultant to Spielberg's latest opus, put it this way: "The search for *Private Ryan* is fiction, but of the kind that illuminates truth rather than diminishing it."

As the WW II generation begins to take its leave of this planet, it would seem that it's a mere movie that offers the rest of us our best chance to gain just a glimmer of understanding into the greatest cataclysm of the last 100 years.

(reprinted from the *Toledo Blade*,
July 28, 1998)

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*Keep
'Em
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Thanks to everyone who contributed articles for the *Heritage Herald*. Please continue to send items of interest about members of the League or of a historic nature. We really need everyone's support. The deadline to submit articles for the next issue is Nov. 15, 1998.
Kathy Jackson

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