



HERITAGE HERALD

Issue Number 53, October 2013 • www.heritageleague.org
Periodical of the Heritage League of the Second Air Division (USAAF)

A Flight to Remember

— by *Irene Hurner*

In June of 2013, I won a certificate for two to fly on Witchcraft, the Collings Foundation B-24, at the 2AD Southern California Brunch. I was so excited! The year before I was bidding and deferred to another woman who wanted the certificate for her husband. Who was I, Irene Hurner, to keep a veteran from taking a flight? This time it was my turn to give a veteran a flight. My sister, Barbara Mello, and I gave the certificate to our father for his 90th birthday with the admonition that I got to be the second person.

I arranged for our plane ride from Livermore, California to Vacaville for May 29, 2013 during the annual Wings of Freedom Tour—a national 120-city tour. Several months in advance, I made calls to be sure of the procedure, double-checked the day before, and asked my sister Barbara to drive our parents from Los Banos to Livermore at the designated time. As it turned out, an article in the local newspaper, *The Independent*, entitled “Flying Back in Time Aboard a WWII Aircraft” had appeared in the May 23rd edition. Most of page 12 was devoted to Carol Graham’s story about her ride on Witchcraft from Santa Barbara to Monterey, CA. I eagerly looked at the pictures and read the article, saving it for dad to read.



Irene Hurner’s dad Albert H. Biel, sitting in his seat on Witchcraft on our flight, May 29, 2013. Photo by Paul Sakamoto. All other photos by Irene Hurner.

My parents, Claire and Albert Biel, and my sister Barbara met me at the airport. We were early so, along with others waiting for the flight, we climbed inside the plane to: walk the cat walk (the bomb bay doors were open so I tried to imagine the sight from

thousands of feet up instead of two feet off of the ground), look at the many dials and gauges up in the cockpit, pass the diffused bombs, and skirt the ball turret on our way to the back of the plane to look at the machine guns that would have been pointed out the open windows. I assumed that the windows would be shut when we took off. Boy, was I mistaken! It was a good thing that the day was relatively warm, though windy. Coats were advised and, now, I

understood why. There was about two inches of space between the floor and the ball turret and, from where dad and I were perched, we could peek through the cracks to see the trees, hills, and earth rushing by below us. When I mentioned the “pneumonia holes” to dad, he asked, “Why do you think we wore electric suits? It could get to 50 degrees below zero when we were flying!” When Barb came out of the plane, she had not-

(continued on page 3)

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Dear Members,

I'm honored and delighted to take on the responsibility of President of the Heritage League of the Second Air Division. Many thanks to the current officers for easing my transition into my new role.



A little background: I'm the daughter of Col. Richard Baynes, a 466th Bomb Group pilot known to many of you. He passed away January 26, 2013 and will be buried at Arlington National Cemetery on October 18.

My husband Doug and I live in Falls Church, VA. I've been with IBM in a variety of sales and marketing roles over the past 37 years, and will retire on December 31st of this year. I'm the secretary of the 466th Bomb Group Assoc. and active in DAR at the chapter and state level. I've attended most of the 8th AFHS reunions since my Dad was the president of that organization.

I know many of you have received an appeal to fund the Second Air Division Library in Norwich, England. I've visited there, and it's a very worthy cause and one the Heritage League supports. But ***please check with your tax advisor about whether or not your contribution to a foreign charity is tax deductible.***

I look forward to getting to know each of you and will do my best to continue to make this an organization we can all be proud of. I hope to meet many of you in person on our trip to England May 24-30, 2014. See page 22 for more details!

Respectfully,

Beverly Baynes Tomb

TABLE OF CONTENTS

A Flight to Remember.....	1	32 nd Annual Southern California 2AD Brunch	14
President's Message	2	Pitch it to Pete	16
1st Lt. Bertram Angus Betts, Jr.....	5	Returning to Savannah in 2013.....	16
From the Desk of Mike Simpson	9	Pilot & RAF Humor	17
Scholar Kate Signs Off	11	Photo Spread From the Savannah Reunion.....	18
In Honor and Memory of.....	12	Once the Wings Go On	21
Folded Wings.....	12	Heritage League May 2014 Trip to Norwich	22
John Gilbert Gives Thanks	12	Trip to Norwich Reservation Form.....	23
NYS Southern Wing Chapter News.....	13		

ed that there is no insulation or inner wall covering. “No wonder a plane could be put together in a day,” she commented. We realized why some people have stated that the planes were like tin cans with wheels and a motor.

When it was time, all of the passengers and crew took their assigned places. We listened as the motors started one by one until all four were running smoothly. After taxiing down the runway, our pilot lifted Witchcraft up into the air and circled the airfield before heading north toward Vacaville. Several minutes after take-off, a bell rang signaling that we passengers could undo our safety belt to walk around the plane. I read one of the signs in the bomb bay with a chuckle, “No Smoking in the Bomb Bay.”

Carol Graham’s article mentioned meeting Eric Buecheler of Santa Cruz on her flight and listening to the story of Eric’s father. Pilot John Buecheler’s B-24 was shot down over Germany resulting in he and some of his crew becoming POWs in Stalag Luft 1 until May 1945, when the Russians freed the camp. Eric was quoted, “It’s a thrill every time I hear the first engine fire up (this was his sixth flight), and feel and hear the power. I can visualize my dad in the pilot’s seat.”

I was the lucky one that Wednesday because I had my dad next to me to tell his story. The noise of the motors was very loud. Much of what dad had to say waited until we landed in Vacaville so that I wouldn’t miss any details. In the meantime, I tried to imagine hundreds of Liberators taking off from their airfields near Norwich and circling until they were in formation and headed out on a bomb run. No amount of visualization could help me truly understand the thunder that the Second Air Division planes made. This was my first flight on a B-24 and, for Pilot 1st Lt. Albert H Biel, this was the first time he had been in a flying B-24 since his last mission from Old Buc to Germany on March 1, 1945.

One of the passengers sitting next to me was Paul Sakamoto. He traveled with a friend, Mike Chan,

from the Palo Alto area to ride on the plane. This was not Paul’s first experience on a Liberator. He took photos that were sent later attached to an email with his family’s story in brief. I want to quote Paul. “One of the real exciting things to happen on these flights is to have the privilege to hear the stories of any veterans that are present. Your Dad was gracious about an-

swering the questions that my friend and I had for

him. One of the hallmarks of “The Greatest Generation” is the overall humility of the group that went off to fight the war. Your father is no exception, discussing his 35 missions in a ‘just another tough day at the office’ manner.” Paul continued, “One thing I am asked periodically is what my family did during WWII. The short story is that my Mom was interned in Canada (she was born in Vancouver, B.C.) and my Dad was in the US Army (he

was born in Idaho). Curiously, my Dad served in the Pacific as an M.P. and an interpreter/interrogator (he was bi-lingual). After participating in the New Guinea and Philippines landings, he was one of the first US Soldiers to arrive in Japan after the surrender...so that is where the Sakamotos were during the war.”

Over lunch, I got to listen to stories that I could not hear while we were flying. The wait was worth it. My day was truly an interesting and exciting one. My admiration was reinforced for what our veterans did for us, a reminder was given regarding the happenings of war, I gained a grasp on the treatment of many loyal Americans, and an appreciation for the friendships that develop under the most difficult of circumstances. This all gave me pause. The United States and its people are special in so many ways. Let us not forget. Again quoting Eric Buecheler from Graham’s article, “Go see the planes, and hopefully fly in one. In either case, you will be glad you did. It’s a one of a kind experience.” I wholeheartedly agree. I only wish that I had done it sooner. For more information, visit www.collingsfoundation.org.

A tribute was paid to dad by his great-grandson Tyler Argentieri this spring. Tyler joined the US

Warning—Live in Bomb Bay!



Barbie Mello (453rd) may not rate as ‘live ordinance,’ but as one of the Biel girls, she seems at home in the bomb bay of the Collings Foundation Liberator! Imagine negotiating this narrow passage with a parachute pack on, or a walk-around oxygen bottle, having to kick out a hung bomb, 22,000 feet over Festung Europa! The ‘catwalk’ is only about a foot wide, but an important structural member of the B-24. Front and rear bomb bays each had a left and right side, each with its own ‘roll-up’ door.





Enjoying passage of time, gracefully. 'Biel Girls' Irene Hurner, left, and Barbie Mello, bracket parents Albert and Claire Biel (453rd) in front of awesome flying museum, the Collings Foundation's B-24J decorated as 467th BGs reliable, good-luck plane.

Air Force and sent a picture standing in front of a Liberator that he visited in May. In addition, another great-grandson Joshua Bourbon and his wife Audrie named their August born son Albert. They decorated the baby's room with airplanes and featured a photo of dad and his crew on one wall. As Lloyd Prang, who was President of the 453rd Bomb Group for many years, would sign off, "Keep 'em flying."



Hear the wind? Low bank over Pacific coast and right waist gunner view is amazing and authentic, nearly 70 years after this plane was an actual war bird.



Both dear to the League. Ann Long served several years as our Membership VP; her father flew out of Wendling (392nd BG memorial marker behind, airfield beyond). Robin Eaton, widow of founding Memorial Trust Governor Tom Eaton, has been a strong League and Memorial supporter from the very beginning.

1st Lt. Bertram Angus 'Bert' Betts, Jr.

by Bert Betts, Jr.



Lt. Betts at Bournemouth. Photos by Lt. Betts.

I was 18 years old on December 7, 1941, a freshman at San Diego State College. I wanted to enlist immediately, but decided to finish the semester and then I went to enlist in the Army Air Force. I was told I had double hernias that would need repair before they would accept me. Following surgery, I returned to enlist, but my eyes

failed. After two weeks of drinking carrot juice, I was accepted as an Aviation Cadet in July 1942. I was called to report in November to Santa Ana Army Air Base in the Western Training Command.

This base was a classification center for pilots, navigators, and bombardiers. We were given many tests: mental, physical and psychological. February 1943 I was classified for pilot training and sent to Hemet Ryan School of Aeronautics for primary training. There was an epidemic of measles at Santa Ana before I left. My case wasn't caught because of the thick hair on my

chest, but two days after reporting to Hemet, I was caught and sent to March Field Hospital. When I returned to Hemet after three weeks, most of my 43-I class had already soloed; I had to play catch-up. The United States was desperate to turn out pilots and aircraft. If you couldn't learn quickly, you were washed out and

transferred to different training. The primary school was where most washed out. Since I was starting my instruction to fly at an odd time compared to the others in my class, I had six different instructors, all wanting

something different. We trained in single engine PT-22s. I passed my 10-hour check flight, but flunked my 30-hour check flight once, again and then a third time. Fortunately, one of my instructors went up with me and explained exactly what he wanted. I practiced what he wanted several hours by myself and then finished my primary training on May 17th, passing my check flight with Lt. Castro.

Our class reported to War Eagle Field at Lancaster, California for our Basic Training. It was a comfortable base where the RAF had trained prior to our entering the war. I had an excellent instructor, Larry Chapman. We were training in single engine aircraft, either a BT-13 or BT-15. It was a nine-week course with night flying and cross-country flying. By the time I completed this course, I could fly. Our class was separated following Lancaster, some for single engine training and others for twin-engine training. We had no choice; it was how each of us was evaluated.

I was sent to Fort Sumner, New Mexico for my Advance Training. It was the opposite of Lancaster, a field so new our barracks only had tarpaper for walls. We flew the AT-17 (UC-78), a very nice two engine aircraft. We flew cross-country mostly with just a little formation flying. I learned later that there was never enough formation training. A big weekend here was going into town on Sunday and buying watermelon to eat. We graduated on September 30th and on October 1st I left the ranks of an Aviation Cadet and was awarded my commission as a 2nd Lieutenant with wings. What a great day! I wanted to go out and win the war single-handedly.

After a short furlough, I reported to Salt Lake for assignment. They had so many coming through, that I was billeted in the horse barns at the fairgrounds. They even apologized to us that we officers would have to make our own beds. That didn't bother me one bit. I was sent to Gowen Field in Boise, Idaho, where I had my first ride in a B-24 Liberator. I was assigned to the 458th Bomb Group, Crew 76. That crew was the final crew making up the 458th Bomb Group. I was the last man to be assigned to that crew. The rest of the crew had already been training briefly in B-24s. I don't know what the rest of the crew's reaction was to this young squirt joining them as one of their pilots. It was luck of the draw where you were assigned. Only three of us had



Bert at Ryan Field.

come together to Boise and at least one of them was later killed in a midair collision. Since I was the last man in the last group, the next draw could have sent me anywhere else in the world.

The 458th Bomb Group trained at Tonopah, Nevada. We did cross country flying, which included flying out over the Pacific Ocean and through the Grand Canyon. The crew consisted of the four officers—two pilots, navigator, and bombardier—plus six sergeants: radioman, top turret gunner, two waist gunners, tail gunner and belly gunner. Our ten-man crew was gathered from all over the United States. We trained together until we were a single unit. Each man had his job to do. All of us depended on one another. As we trained and fought together we bonded together closer than a family. Later we flew 30 combat missions over Enemy Occupied Europe, flying into hell and back without ever losing a man. Ours is camaraderie unequalled. At Tonopah our crew and the group sharpened their skills. We had air to ground gunnery and dropped a few bombs. Even pilots had to try our hand shooting the .50 caliber waist guns at low level. Practice in war weary older model B-24s and in the dark amidst all the mountains and clouds could be very dangerous. Again, we did little formation flying.

On January 12, 1944, we went to Hamilton Field, north of San Francisco and were assigned a B-24H known as “432”. We spent several days calibrating the instruments and making fuel consumption tests. Now we were ready to start for overseas. We flew cross-country to Morrison Field in Palm Beach, Florida with stops at Palm Springs, California; Midland, Texas and Memphis, Tennessee. After three days of briefings, we were given sealed destination orders to be opened one hour after takeoff. When opened, we knew we were on our way to join the “Mighty” Eighth Air Force, Second Air Division, 458th Bomb Group (H), and 755th Squadron in England. We flew the Southern Route because Liberators would ice up in the winter on the Northern Route. We didn’t fly in a group, but as a single aircraft dependent on our newly trained navigator.

The first stop was Trinidad, British West Indies, and then Belem, Brazil at the mouth of the Amazon River. When we arrived, it was raining so hard that it was like landing in a lake. Never before had I landed in such conditions, or since. We crossed the Equator and then landed at Fortaleza, Brazil. After two days, we took off over the Atlantic for Dakar, Senegal, with no land between. Our crew was dependent on our naviga-

tor, Ken Enockson to plot the right course. It was a shock landing at Dakar on a steel mat for the first time; it really made a racket! The next day, the plane ahead of us exploded on takeoff. We had to take off over the burning wreckage for Marrakech, Morocco. When they felt it was safe from Luftwaffe planes, we took off for Valley, Wales making certain to avoid Ireland. (Ireland was neutral, and thought to have some German sympathies because they were ‘anti-British.’ —Eds.) While at Valley, we learned we would be flying from Station 123 at Horsham St. Faith in East Anglia. It is the closest field to Norwich. We arrived at our base on February 5th.

The commanding officer of the 458th Bombardment Group was Col. James H. Isbell; he wash great in this role! I may owe him my life because he insisted on our flying tight formations. His favorite saying was, “Put your wing in the next plane’s waist window.” He took the time to give us some formation practice and diversionary missions before assigning us to combat. He made it clear the Luftwaffe picked on stragglers and groups in loose formation. We learned to fly formation in a hurry!

My fellow pilots and I knew we could fly closer formation when not flying cross-cockpit. Therefore, the one on whose wing we were flying formation would fly the airplane while the other would handle all the gauges and instruments, keep in touch with the crew, watch for enemy aircraft as well as all other duties in the cockpit. Both pilots in the B-24 were kept very busy and under pressure. (The modern term ‘resource management,’ came out of FAA investigations of crashes in the 1970’s; Bert’s innovative leadership anticipated today’s best practices! —Eds.)

We were to fly our first combat mission on March 6, 1944, the first mission to Berlin. The other pilot had a cold so we were scrubbed. We may have been fortunate not to have been able to fly. The mission was rough! We lost 67 planes that day, 670 men. We were



Bert at Fort Sumner pilot Training.

able to fly our first mission on March 8th, back to Berlin to hit the Erkner Ball Bearing factory. It was a very rough mission with heavy flak and fighters. We flew our plane so close we were practically in the other airplane. Two of our superchargers, and my heated suit, went out.

Our next two missions were to Friedrichshafen, Germany, which were long missions with heavy flak and fighters. The fourth mission was back to Berlin to strike the railroad station. It was rough and we had trouble with engine number 3 and engine number 4. The next was the airfield at Metz, France. It was the easiest so far with only two flak holes and only six hours in the air.

A tour of duty at this time was 30 missions, flying into the face of the enemy whose pilots had superb aircraft, and heavy anti-aircraft installations. The missions were often 8 to 10 hours long. The weather was terrible—we experienced fog, rain, clouds and even snow. Assembling the formations with all the aircraft in the air amidst the layers of clouds was an experience.



Bert ready for combat.

Midair collisions were inevitable. The planes were open to the wind and not pressurized. We generally flew at high altitude and the temperature was often 60 degrees below zero. You couldn't touch any metal. Gunners had to wear cotton gloves under their outer leather gloves in case they needed to handle the guns.

Frostbite was common. We had to put on oxygen masks at 10,000 feet. You had to constantly keep breaking up the ice in the mask to keep the oxygen flowing or you would die. There was no toilet. They issued each of us a candy bar at the beginning of the mission, a Milky Way as I remember. However, it soon froze. We couldn't eat it until we let down and it had time to thaw, and that was our only source of energy on a very tiring mission. We often ran hazardously short of gas and oxygen.

The first five missions of the 458th were successful, but we had paid a high price in men and planes. Our squadron had lost six crews (31%), but we had on-

ly completed 17% of our tour. Our crew felt that odds of surviving 30 missions were statistically nil.

Our mission to Bonniers, France was to hit rocket emplacements followed by a mission to Biarritz in Southern France to bomb an airfield. I remember that day was clear and beautiful over the target. We could see the Pyrenees Mountains to the south. At the briefing the man in charge told us we would be helping a graduating class of German pilots celebrate. He reckoned the ceremonies would be underway before the first bomb hit their graduation.

The mission to Brunswick, Germany was rough—lots of Me109s and flak. Our tail gunner George Smith shot down one of the fighters. The following day, Easter Sunday, Crew Number 76 was to stand down and another crew was assigned our plane, "432". Then orders came down for maximum effort and our crew flew in "Plutocrat" for the mission to Tutow, Germany, on the North Sea. The weather was very bad. A formation of Me109s attacked the group and the flak was very accurate. Our "432," flown by Logie's crew, was shot down over Denmark. Three crewmembers evaded and returned to England within three weeks, but the rest of the crew was lost.

Our 10th through the 12th missions were similar, to Oschersleben, Brandenburg, Paderborn and Zweikau, Czechoslovakia. Each was flown in a different B-24. In fact I flew my combat missions in 19 different aircraft. Each one a little different, usually a B-24H, but occasionally a B-24J.

Our crew's 13th mission was to Mannheim, Germany and is an example of what we faced each mission: flak hit the windshield; fighters from 1 o'clock filled the plane with holes, and the stabilizer (as well as recently added armor plate beside me) was hit with a 20 mm cannon shell. An unexploded 20 mm shell lodged in one wing tank, the hydraulic line was shot out, and with gasoline and hydraulic fluid everywhere, we still dropped our bombs on the target and limped back to base. After landing and counting over 300 holes in the aircraft, waist gunners Bark Brown asked me just what I was thinking about while on that trip. I replied, "I wonder if there is any one of our crew who is still an atheist."

A mission to Paderborn, Germany, my 15th, was unique. I flew as Formation Officer leading the second section with Captain Glenn. We bombed the railroad station in the center of Berlin. I flew in the tail turret advising the leader regarding the condition of the formation. I had a spectacular view of everything.

It was a very rough mission with heavy flak. We had fighters from Berlin out. At one point I counted 15 fireballs of planes that had been shot down. The gunners in our plane shot down two fighters.

Crew 76's next mission was an airfield and factory at Braunschweig, Germany, then rocket construction at Cherbourg, France the following day. We were flying at 24,500 feet in clouds and haze all the way. The flak was heavy and intense. We had engine trouble, the wires were hit and gauges out. We were low on oxygen and gas, and had a hole in the top turret.

Our 18th through the 27th missions were to Osnabruck, Germany; Braunschweig, Germany; St. Trond (Liege, Belgium); Epinal, France; Bohlin, Germany; Tutow, Germany; Bourges, France; Mulhouse, France; Zeitz, Germany; and Bertrix, Germany. We were concentrating on strategic targets such as airfields, marshaling yards, and oil refineries by daylight. The British did blanket ('area') bombing by night.

On June 4, 1944 our crew flew our 28th mission in a new B-24H, "Here We Go Again." The target was an airfield at Bourges, France. There were no fighters, and the flak was light. However, the weather closed in, ceiling 200 feet. Instrument and formation flying was difficult! The fog was so dense that we were unable to return to our base. We landed at Kenley, south of London, on a 3600-foot grass runway. We spent the night there and then had to take off the next morning for Horsham St. Faith on the very short runway. As always, there were trees at the end of the runway. We made it.

That night of June 5th we were awakened before midnight for breakfast and briefing for the D-Day missions. We were to bomb the coastal batteries at Nor-

mandy before the first troops hit the beaches. We took off about 2:30 a.m. The black night sky was full of thousands of airplanes amongst the clouds. There was extreme danger of mid-

air collisions. Our navigator Enockson headed us out over the North Sea. Later, he gave us the course to take us back over the target when it was our appointed hour. We joined the first group of Liberators over the beach and bombed the guns facing the invasion forces. We were one of the first four aircraft leading the invasion.

Our first D-Day Mission was seven hours in length. We returned to our base at 9:30 a.m. We were given a meal and Benzedrine, and then we were briefed for our second mission of the day. We flew B-24H "Princess Pat" on my 30th mission. Our target was Avranches, a railroad junction just inland from the Bay of Biscay. Again we had to assemble in formation between the clouds. We were in the air six and one-half hours. On this our last mission we came all too close to a midair collision. We landed almost at mid-

night in darkness and rain. I hoped it really was our last mission. June 6, 1944, truly was our "Longest Day"!

After D-Day, we stayed at Horsham St. Faith flying local trips and the assembly ship while it was determined how the invasion was going. If it had gone badly, they had us combat trained crews in reserve. As soon as the invasion appeared to be successful, I was ordered back to the States in July. My combat out of England was finished.

Before I returned home, I was awarded two certificates of which I am very proud. (Bert attached the citation language for his Air Medal, bearing signatures of Col. James Isbell, CO of the 458th, and Gen. Walter Peck, commanding the 96th Wing. His Distinguished Flying Cross was awarded shortly after his return stateside, by command of General Hodge, CO of the 2nd Air Division. —Eds.)



Bert at the DFC Presentation.



General Peck and Col. Isbell.



Bert with President Truman.

From the Desk of Mike Simpson

Greetings to my fellow Heritage Leaguers! I'm deeply honored by your selection of me to the board of the Heritage League as your new Executive Vice President. Let me start by saying that I will certainly do the best job I can in fulfilling my duties and responsibilities.

As it's been a while since I've attended either a 2nd Air Division Association reunion or a Heritage League reunion, it's certainly not for lack of wanting to go. For the past 10 years I've been working as a senior software engineer for General Dynamics C4 Systems in Scottsdale, AZ. As of May 1st, 2013 I retired after spending the last 33 years in the computer industry starting first with the USAF as a computer systems officer working on the AWACS early warning aircraft; then a tour as a Ada programming language instructor. Had I known at that time about my father's connection to the 2nd Air Division and the 445th Bomb Group, I would have taken more advantage to the multiple trips I made to Germany at the government's expense teaching Ada to military programmers.

After leaving the Air Force in 1992, I worked as a senior software engineer contractor for numerous defense contractors (McDonnell Douglas, Boeing, Litton Data Systems, Rockwell Collins, Raytheon Missile Systems, Lockheed Martin, and General Dynamics). It was my last contracting position that I was offered a direct position.

All of my life I've been interested in the military and have been extremely proud of my service as a US Army Special Forces (Green Beret) Light and Heavy Weapons Specialist from 1970 until 1978 with a combat tour in Vietnam in 1971-1972. While in the Army, I made a parachute jump (one of nearly 3,000) which ended very badly as I broke my back in 2 places during a demonstration free-fall jump as part of Army ROTC recruiting. The nature of the back injury terminated my qualification for Special Forces and I separated from the US Army in May, 1978 to return to school. While attending the University of Texas at El Paso, I was approached by USAF ROTC and was soon back in uniform again – blue instead of olive drab!

What I'm hoping to bring to the Heritage League is the same desire and drive that pushed me to research my father's military service during World War II. Dad never said anything about his service and passed away early in 1967. A chance visit to the old bombardier training field at the Midland-Odessa airport (used to be Midland Army Air Field, largest of the bombardier training centers) to see if my dad received his training there, resulted in an e-mail post to Dan Stockton's B-24 Best Web site. It was the second reply that lit the fuse for

my crusade... Dick Gelvin, former lead crew navigator with the 700th Bomb Squadron, 445th Bomb Group, had my father's name on the overseas movement orders for the 445th as the unit's Group Bombardier.

That e-mail led to a multitude of events starting with a move from Texas to Arizona to be closer to Dick Gelvin and his records. I helped Dick get the many pages of records he copied from the National Archives into a database he could use to create the personal mission histories he did for former members of the 445th and their families. In July, 2005, Dick passed away and I inherited all of his extensive records and research on the 445th. Since then I have continued to generate mission histories in a greatly expanded format. The history Dick did on my dad was only 12 pages long, covering 35 missions. Last December I created a mission history for a crewman who was shot down on his 5th mission. The book I had printed for the family was 96 pages long with details of who he flew with, where they went, copies of the post mission reports, and in this case, a copy of the Missing Air Crew Report for when he was shot down.

I would like to share my ideas of these mission histories as I know the interest is out there. I've had more requests come in for histories this year (2013) than I've had over the past 2 years combined. The families want to preserve a bit of history about their loved ones.

To gather additional information to include in these mission histories, I started procuring microfilm records from the Air Force Historical Research Agency at Maxwell AFB, AL. Through donations made to the 445th website and sales of 445th logo items through Café Press, I have obtained 43 reels of 16mm microfilm and 9 reels of Individual Aircraft Record Cards which I'm making available to researchers of the Heritage League for their respective bomb groups.

Through the grateful assistance of Brian Mahoney, I am working on a data model for the 445th Bomb Group which would allow me to quickly generate a personal mission history using FileMaker as a relational database tool. Once that data model is developed and tested, the schema will be available to the Heritage League with possible distribution to 1st and 3rd Air Division units of the 8th Air Force.

These are exciting times ahead of us for the Heritage League and its members. Let's get in there and make this stuff happen!

When the USA entered the Second World War in 1942, it had been raging for almost three years, and as such quite a number of Bomber Airfields were already established in Eastern England, with Norfolk

probably taking more airfields per square mile than any other county in the UK at that time. To the Allied Command it therefore made obvious sense to hand over a good many of them to the USAAF so that they could fly in and get operational as quickly as possible and bring their weight to bear in the conflict. Although the older B17 Flying Fortress got a great deal of the publicity when it arrived, it was in fact the newer B24 Liberator that provided the greater number of planes and delivered the greater tonnage of bombs in the combat trips over Europe. It was primarily the B24 that set up home in East Anglia

The USAAF command structure designated this area of the European Theatre of Operations (ETO) to the 2nd Air Division. That in turn was sub-divided into Bomb Wings, of which there were initially five, which was later reduced to four in the middle of 1944. Each Bomb Wing was planned to have three airfields (Bomb Groups), and each Bomb Group to contain four Squadrons; and give or take the odd change that is how it worked out.

2 nd Bomb Wing	HQ Hethel Groups Hethel, Tibenham, Old Buckenham
14 th Bomb Wing	HQ Shipdham Groups Shipdham, Wendling, North Pickenham
20 th Bomb Wing	HQ Hardwick Groups Hardwick, Seething, Bungay (Flixton)
95 th Bomb Wing	HQ Halesworth Groups Halesworth, Metfield
96 th Bomb Wing	HQ Horsham St Faith Groups Horsham St Faith, Attlebridge, Rackheath
3 rd SAD/ 25 th Bomb Group	Watton

Watton at the end of the list is the odd-ball airfield in the area as it was not part of the Bomb Wing system. It was first and foremost the home to the 3rd Strategic Air depot (SAD) who were responsible for all the major aircraft rebuilds and for salvaging usable parts from crashes and from planes that were at the end of their lives and classified as War Weary (and prominently marked WW to prove it). Surprisingly it was also home to the 25th Bomb Group which was a real stand-alone Bomb Group whose pilots and aircrew flew a complete cross section of planes from the USAAF Aircraft inventory, from some single engine spotter planes (the Stinson) to several of the huge four engine B24 and B17s. Uniquely amongst the USAAF military, they also flew a squadron of British Mosquitos. The 25th were called a Bomb Group but probably never ever bombed anyone in their lives, but what they did undertake was clandestine photo reconnaissance, agent dropping, radar jamming, test flights and a huge amount of experi-

mental engineering work. They were the team that carried out all the operations that no one kept records for, or ever spoke about.

That said, Watton was nonetheless the biggest of the USAAF's East Anglian airfields by far, at least in terms of the personnel numbers. At its height, the combined personnel count at Watton for the 25th Bomb Group and the 3rd SAD was said to be well in excess of eight thousand, five hundred G.I.s. At that time the rural market-town of Watton that it abutted could probably muster just some fifteen hundred towns folk, and as you can imagine, was somewhat dwarfed by its American military neighbor.

A little later in the war the Metfield aerodrome in Suffolk was to be abandoned by the USAAF after a major explosion in the bomb dump caused extensive damage to the T2 hangars and mangled quite a number of aircraft, some beyond repair; as well as killing many of the GIs who were working in the area. The 452nd Bomb Group then transferred to North Pickenham and the 95th Bomb Wing's sole remaining Bomb Group, the 489th, at Halesworth was absorbed into the geographically convenient 96th Bomb Wing.

Having explained the oddities in the system, it is fair to say that the 2nd, 14th, and 96th Bomb Wings were all formatted to the USAAF three airfield standard model and worked smoothly as such for the duration of the war.

The photographs in this book are primarily those taken by the G.I.s themselves on the cameras they brought with them when they were shipped out from the USA. The remainder are generally the work of the Station Photographic Officers and the men in the group's Photographic Sections. The more well-known publicity shots taken by the excellent professionals employed by such organisations as Stars and Stripes, Yank or even Movietone News, have been deliberately avoided to keep this a very record personal. What this book seeks to convey is the how The Second World war appeared to those young men who occupied the American Air Bases spread across South East of England in the Early 1940s. This is how the war appeared through their eyes.

Many of the photos are in remarkably good condition despite their age, though some that are not quite as good are included here as they depict a unique event that has no other photos available to memorialize it. It is worthwhile recalling that each one of these shots had a young American G.I. peering through the viewfinder when it was taken.

Scholar Kate Signs Off

Kate's Final Posting on the 2nd Air Division Memorial Library Blog

In his poem 'The Road and the End' Carl Sandburg wrote:

*I shall foot it
Down the roadway in the dusk...
The dust of the travelled road
Shall touch my hands and face.*

I echo Sandburg today—my last day as UEA American Scholar of the 2nd Air Division Memorial Library. My heart is heavy and full, so if you'll oblige me, dear reader, I'd like to reminisce a little.

In 2011, I was honored to become one of two American PhD students at the University of East Anglia to be granted a scholarship by the Memorial Trust of the 2nd Air Division. The scholarship annually places two American doctoral candidates from any discipline at UEA in the Memorial Library for 10 hours each week, where they work alongside Library staff members and serve as cultural ambassadors. As many know, our American presence here is an extension of the historical legacy upon which the Library was built.

During my two terms, I immersed myself in learning the rich story of the 2nd Air Division in East Anglia, which continues to fascinate me. As part of my role in the daily operations of a busy cultural center, I was delighted to be given the freedom to develop a variety of seasonal public programming for children and adults. The Scholars play a critical role in maintaining the dialogue between the Library and its visitors: and there's so much to do! Our annual Autumn Lecture Series on American Life and Culture has become very diverse and very popular, and our social network has blossomed thanks to our faithful WordPress and Facebook subscribers. I even got to teach some teenage filmmakers how to jitterbug in their WWII dance-hall reenactment.

One of my favorite experiences has been attending various commemorative events with the Trust Governors and friends. On Memorial Day, I got to lay the wreath at the Cambridge American Cemetery and Memorial on behalf of the Trust, and later in the year attended the beautiful annual service in the American Chapel at St. Paul's Cathedral, London.

It is so rewarding to help to expand the network of people who comprise the story of the 2nd Air



Pointing to Ohio, just like the British did in 1754. Photo: via 2nd Air Division Memorial Library blog.

Division. It's an ever-growing network. In the Library, I have helped many people discover information about their family members using our local resources and genealogical services. Perhaps my favorite connection, though, is the one I made with 2nd Air Division veteran Fred Becchetti, who has graciously contributed his stories and poems to our Memorial Library blog.

As a PhD researcher who lives a fairly isolated life, it has been wonderful getting to interact with visitors every day. It makes me happy when folks are equally happy to see me (or hear me, I should say). "You're not from around here!" "What's that accent?" "Kids, where do you think this lady's from?" I get many blank looks. Ohio's no Florida, you see. Sometimes other Yankees come in and we have a jovial catch-up. Most of the time, it's good old curiosity that brings people in: "I want to make an apple pie." Done. "I need to read the Constitution." Sorted. "I'm going to San Antonio and need a place to stay." One moment, please. "Have you got any Sylvia Plath?" Oh, have we ever. Perhaps it's a bit geeky, and definitely hyperbolic, but here in the Library I have felt like the gatekeeper to all American knowledge. Every question I've been asked has reaffirmed the beauty and value of this great place.

Being surrounded by books is always bliss, but I have been particularly happy to spend time with the staff of the Memorial Library—Trust Librarian Libby Morgan and Jenny Christian, Lesley Fleetwood,

my fellow scholars Elizabeth Rawitsch and Blake Darlin, and so many others. I have been impressed all along by the knowledge, commitment, and respect demonstrated by my colleagues here. Luckily, I get to stay involved as a member of the relief staff, so I won't be gone completely. But since this blog is the Scholars' realm (and you've got a great new duo headed your way!),



Laying the wreath on Memorial Day.

I shall bid a sad but very, very fond farewell to the last two years. Thank you for everything.

Kate Anderson, 2nd Air Division Memorial Library American Scholar 2011-2013

<http://2ndair.wordpress.com/2013/08/17/scholar-kate-signs-off/>

Courtesy of Libby Morgan, 2nd Air Division Memory Library

In Honor and Memory of

John Moulder, In Memory of my old Buddies

Leonard Newton, In Honor of Leonard Newton

James L. Adams, Jr., In Honor of Lt. Col. James L. Adams

Paul Brunner, In Memory of Major Alfred F. Brunner

Ray Lemons, In Memory of KMH5

Jerry Gore, In Memory of 2nd Lt. Marion E. Gore

James Tucker, In Memory of Dewitt C. Tucker

Beverly Baynes Tomb, In Memory of

Col. Richard C. Baynes

Folded Wings

Col Fred Sparrevohn	March 28, 2013	93 rd
Arnold Nass	May 13, 2013	445 th
Wilbur Clingan	Oct. 13, 2012	453 rd
Roy Farnsworth	June 4, 2013	445 th
David Tuckwiller	July 29, 2013	389 th
Jack Stevens	Aug. 3, 2013	467 th
Henry Lively	Sept. 16, 2013	445 th
Joseph Dallan	Aug. 30, 2013	445 th
1st. Lt. Ray J. Rhoades	Sept. 21, 2013	93 rd

John Gilbert Gives Thanks to the Heritage League

August 14, 2013

Dear Sue,

I would just like to say a big thank you to you all for your kind donation towards my plane ticket for the convention in Savannah. I was overwhelmed by your generosity. I had no idea that this was happening for my visit so it came as a wonderful surprise.

I just can't thank you enough.

Please would you also pass on my thanks to the following:

Mary Beth Dyer

Brian Mahoney

Lisa Niehoff

Bob Books

Chris Clark

Irene Hurner

Yours with many thanks
and kind regards,
John Gilbert, Wendling



Marybeth Dyer, John Gilbert and Libby Morgan. Remembrance Day in Norwich, Nov. 11, 2012.

(John has long been a friend and helper of the League, laying wreaths twice now in our behalf at the Normandy Cemetery on D-Day, and touring Yanks around the 392nd's Wendling and Norfolk. The Board extended him a stipend to offset some of the expenses of his attendance in Savannah. We presented him a Certificate of Appreciation at Kalamazoo, in 2007. —Eds.)

NYS Southern Wing Chapter News

by David C. Levitt

The 8th AF Historical Society NYS Southern Wing Chapter had two successful luncheon/meetings this past spring and summer. The hard work of our dedicated members to locate and attract more veterans, families and enthusiasts has been paying off. We had 16 new people, including 4 new veterans, at our events.

Our June 9th luncheon/meeting at the Beekman Arms Inn in Rhinebeck, NY was attended by 25 people including 6 veterans. For a D-day tribute, veterans spoke about their war time experiences. After the meeting most people went to the Old Rhinebeck Aerodrome air show where reproduction WWI flying aircraft provide the backdrop for the history-based fictional story of "Pierre," a French fighter pilot, his girlfriend "Trudy Truelove," and his adversary "The Black Baron of Rhinebeck" a German fighter pilot.

Our July 14th luncheon/meeting at DJ's International Buffet in Garden City, NY had 41 attendees over four generations, including 13 veterans. For a July 4th tribute, 491st BG pilot Alan Kidder spoke about the legacy of the 8th AF and the importance of passing it on to the younger generations. (On July 4, 1942, the fledgling 8th AF flew their first mission in A-20s. Also, the first B-17Es landed in England on that day.) As in Rhinebeck, each veteran gave a gripping account of his war experiences. Jeffrey Rosenking, a representative of Honor Flight of Long Island, also described the no-fee service that they provide to fly WWII veterans to WWII monuments in Washington, DC.

Also at this meeting, Chapter President Joseph 'Pat' Keeley, gave a touching tribute to Gus Nathan who passed away last September at the age of 92. Gus was formerly our chapter president and was a commander of the 486th BG veterans association as well. He was also Pat Keeley's father-in-law. At the time of his passing, Gus was compiling a book of the 8th AF veterans wartime experiences entitled 'Keeping the Memories Alive: The Thoughts and Experiences of 8th AF Veterans'. Pat and his wife, Andrea, Gus's daughter, are currently completing the book and have located a publisher. Eighth AF veterans and family members still can send in stories for the book. For information on the book and on dedication opportunities, please contact Pat Keeley at fxe84@optionline.net.

After the meeting, several people went to the Cradle of Aviation Museum nearby whose exhibits in-

clude a P-47D and other WWII aircraft. Both the restaurant and the museum are on the former Mitchel Air Field grounds. May of the WWII era hangar buildings and grounds are still intact. A touching note was when Yehasha Glatt, a rabbinical student, came with his 4-year-old boy. The youngster wanted to see the airplanes at the museum. Yehasha wanted his son to meet the men who flew and serviced the airplanes that defeated Hitler.

We are planning to hold our next luncheon/meeting at the Thayer Hotel at West Point in New York in the spring of 2014. Veterans will speak about their experiences facing German fighter planes and flak/anti-aircraft exploding shells. We are working to attract even more veterans and other attendees.

Since WWII, there has been a rivalry between B-17 and B-24 airmen stemming from who had the best heavy bomber. It was quite evident from the veterans stories told at our meetings and in Gus Nathan's book that 2nd Air Division B-24 crews and 1st and 3rd Air Division B-17 crews were subjected to the same terror in the frigid skies over Germany. It is apparent that all who served in the 8th AF are brethren. As the WWII generation numbers dwindle, we need to stick together.

Local 8th AFHS chapter meetings and events are meaningful, informative and enjoyable. They provide an excellent means for get-togethers that may be more accessible to some people than the national conventions are. They can serve as a low-cost, geographical nearby complement to the national conventions. As our experiences in the New York Southern Wing Chapter have shown, even as the years go by since WWII, there is still a high level of interest, and many new people, in addition to the long-standing members, enjoy attending these meetings and events. For an updated itinerary of our chapter events and contacts for other local chapters, please contact Pat Keeley. Our chapter's website is <http://blogs.ny8thswcaphs.org>. This website is regularly with our events and other information.

(David is a League member, and with his Chapter President and 'First Lady,' Pat and Andrea Nathan Keeley, socialized with us in Savannah. Our Brian Mahoney partook of gracious Southern Chapter events while he was living on Long Island in recent years. — Eds.)

32nd Annual Southern California 2AD Brunch

— by Irene Hurner



Heritage League President Marybeth Dyer, Francis Birmingham (458th), Irene Hurner, Past-President, Albert Biel (453rd). All Photos by Irene Hurner and Mary Beth Dyer

We, President Marybeth Dyer, her father Frank Birmingham (458th), Irene Hurner, and her father Albert Biel (453rd), met at the San Jose Airport early enough Saturday morning, June 29th, to fly south to LAX and then drive to Anaheim in time for the activities to begin. It was a beautiful day, the traffic was not bad for that region, and so we were able to take the time to visit and prepare for a special day. It was a Father/Daughter Day Away.

The 32nd annual Southern California Brunch was held at The Phoenix Club in Anaheim, CA. Peggy Learman, "volunteer" co-coordinator again arranged, with the help of her committee, to have a wonderful program for those of us who were able to attend. Sponsors for the event were the Southern California 2nd AD

Association and The General LeMay Chapter of the 8th AFHS.

The date was near the 4th of July, a day when we all celebrate the liberty that

we have and thank those who have made our liberty possible. "What better time to gather to honor our veterans?" Peggy asked. "Many attendees have been members of the Second Air Division Association, or are members of the 8th Air Force Historical Society and other



From left to right: Sharon Hoage, Mark Hoage, and their son Christopher, taking a few minutes to relax.

organizations honoring those who served in World War II."

Bill A. Jones served as Master of Ceremonies. The morning's events began with Jones' introduction of special guests that included the keynote speaker Monsieur Axel Cruau, Consul General of the Consulate of France in Los Angeles, B-24 pilot Captain Herbert Guinness,

USAF (Ret.), B-17 pilot, Major Harry H. Selling, POW, and USAF (Ret.), Former Costa Mesa Mayor Jack Ray Hammet, WO, US Navy who runs the Freedom Committee of Orange County, a group that sends WWII veterans into the schools as speakers. Others who were acknowledged were Heritage League President Mary-



Irene's father Albert Biel (453rd) lighting the 7th candle as previous candle lighters Francis Birmingham (458th), (attendant), Bert Betts (458th), and Frank Grew (448th) look on.

beth Dyer, her father Francis Birmingham (458th), Heritage League Past-President Irene Hurner, her father Albert Biel (453rd), Past Treasurer of the State of California and B-24 pilot Bert and Mrs. Betts (458th), and family members of the actor and Major Clark Gable; son John Clark Gable, step-daughter Joan Spreckels and her daughter Molly Rubels.

Opening ceremonies, which included a reminder that over 350,000 men and women served in the 8th Air Force during World War II, the presentation of Colors by the Los Angeles Air Force Base Honor Guard, the Pledge of Allegiance, the national anthem sung by Maria Gunnarsson (448th), the candle lighting ceremony and Taps. Marybeth and I were honored to watch as our fathers participated in the candle lighting. Other candle lighters included Roberto Ruiz (389th), Fred Geritz, Sr. (466th), John Gateley, (44th), Frank J. Grew (448th), Bert Betts (458th). The twenty-five veterans in the room then gathered for a group photo.

Richard Learman, whose father was Vice-President of Consolidated Aircraft Company (it designed and built the B-24 Liberator bombers in San Diego) and Peggy said that support of the brunch is their way of saying thank you to our vets. Peggy noted the passing of Colonel Richard C. Baynes (Ret.) (466th Bomb Group). Dick was a founding member of the nine-person committee that started the 2ADA Southern California reunion. He served as chairman of the brunch for most of the past thirty years, in addition to serving as President of the 466th Bomb Group Association, the Second Air Division 8th Air Force, and the 8th Air Force Historical Society. Dick Baynes's daughter, Beverly Tomb, is now our

new Heritage League President.

After the speakers, President Dyer made remarks on behalf of the Heritage League, Lt. Col. Elmo Maiden (466th) read "Once the Wings Go On," followed by Herb Leopold (466th) who read "Last Formation."

Robert Ruiz (389th) gave the invocation. A champagne brunch buffet was served while the 9 Karat Gold Band gave a memorable performance playing favorites from the 40's and 50's. The Learman family was among

the almost one hundred in attendance that enjoyed dancing and listening to the vocals of Bill A. Jones. The Swing Dolls sang tunes of that era. The harmonies, sounding very much like the Andrews Sisters, added greatly to the entertainment. The veterans, their families and friends used the day to visit and to take in the extensive display of World War II memorabilia presented by Mark Hoage and his family. Their effort to pack, set up and then repack the many items is a labor of love for the veterans.

We arrived back at the airport with an hour or more to spare, so we decided to sit in a restaurant near the airfield, have a cold drink, visit, and watch the planes take-off and land. It was a wonderful way to end a very special day. We all look forward to next year.



Cake before being served.



Marybeth and her father Francis enjoying a dance to the music of the 9 Karat Gold Band.



*-by Pete O'Tube, Expert
(Chris Clark and Brian Mahoney)*

Dear Mr. O'Tube,

We want to know a bit more about the foil strips dispensed from airplanes to confuse enemy radar. Historical film, and our different recollections of the practice from when we were on Liberator crews, got us to wondering: was there one official method, or did it vary?

*S/Sgts Charles Henson Aff
and Winthrop E. Dow, USAAF, retired*

Dear Win Dow and C H Aff,

The practice of using reflective strips of metal, or metallicized paper or plastic, to confound enemy gun-laying radar—the only WWII purpose—or confuse laser- or infrared guided missiles, in more recent years, is rather like ‘technological camouflage.’ In your era, we continually experimented with the length of the strips, based on the wave-length of the Wurtzburg and other radar types used by the Luftwaffe to hone the fire of their FLAK (Flug Abwehr Kanone) against our aerial formations. By the late spring of 1944, Allied losses to ground-based anti-aircraft fire exceeded those to aerial combat with fighters, and the importance of countermeasures never diminished until the last bombing missions were flown.

One of the code names for dispensed foil strips, com-

monly called ‘chaff,’ was ‘Window.’ Another was ‘Carpet Blinker,’ which is somewhat descriptive of the intended effect on the screens of German radar screens: a mixture of foil lengths covered a spectrum of radar frequencies, and where otherwise a useful picture of the location and altitude of our planes might have appeared, the enemy saw a cloud of flickering, useless return signals.

Some bundles contained mixed length strips, others were ‘tuned’ (by their length) to a particular frequency. One order we have seen, signed by no less than Commanding General William Kepner, specified that bundles be dispensed from the designated a/c at a rate of 4 every 10 seconds. There are stories of nervous or uninitiated crew forgetting to pull the tie that released individual strips to flutter down slowly to earth; the brick-like bundle as such was neither an effective countermeasure, or bomb! It seems that persistence of the electronic reflection cloud was essential to the effectiveness of chaff at that time, and Kepner was concerned that on missions with less flak, the crews fell into a practice of dispensing at a lax, ineffective rate.

There was a chute near the waist gunners toward the rear of the plane, big enough for a bundle to pass and then ‘explode’ into a reflective cloud as it hit the slipstream blast of 150-200 mph.

Many contemporary military transports have the ability to dispense high tech chaff, including some that burns brightly, to throw off heat-seeking missiles. It still works, if done in time and correctly.

Keep ‘em flying! Pete

Returning to Savannah in 2013

—Marybeth Dyer

The Heritage League met in Savannah, GA for our 2013 reunion. We joined the 8th Air Force Historical Society at the wonderfully situated Marriott River Front Hotel. The League had its very first stand alone reunion in 2006 in Savannah and going back this year brought back fond memories to those of us who attended that year.

Our annual meeting on Tuesday, July 23rd, allowed me, as outgoing President, to review our accomplishments for the past year.

Membership campaign to 2nd Air Division members

In February, I sent a letter to all of the members of the

former 2ADA and invited them to be an Honorary Life Member (HLM) of the Heritage League. There was no cost to the HLM to join. We did ask for a donation of \$30 if they wanted a paper copy of our newsletter—The Herald. We received an overwhelming response and we are excited so many Veterans are interested in our mission. Many second-gens also joined or re-joined our fold, and many of our newly enrolled made generous contributions, as well.

New database to track our members and work

Brian Mahoney (Past President and current Secretary) developed this new database so we can track all of our members and HLMs. It will be an excellent tool to

use for membership and create a volunteer network for work that needs to be done now and in the future.

Our 501(c) (3) tax exemption from the IRS

In May 2012, with significant assistance from Bob Books, we submitted our application for our own 501(c) (3) tax exempt status. We were hoping to go to the 2012 Chicago reunion and announce we had been approved but that was not the case but I was extremely excited to come to Savannah and announce that our application is approved. Many thanks to Bob Books and Brian Mahoney for all of their hard work on this accomplishment.

2014 Reunion Set for Norwich (in May)

Heritage League Executive Board decided to hold our 2014 reunion in Norwich, England. Irene Hurner (Past President) is Chairing this awesome event. We will be going from May 24 to May 30, 2014. We are designing the program to accommodate Veterans still ready and able to travel, and to deliver terrific experience and value to family members who have not yet been over.

Please see the article in this Herald and reserve your place on this historic trip!

Wreaths laid in foreign cemeteries

Brian Mahoney reported on our now having laid

wreaths at every single one of the US overseas cemeteries where 2nd Air Division men Killed In Action are buried or listed on Walls of the Missing.

This was a biennial election year. I am proud to announce our 2014-2015 Executive Board:

Beverly Tomb (466th)-President
 Mike Simpson (445th)-Vice President
 Brian Mahoney (492nd, 467th)-Secretary
 Sue Risley (446th)-Treasurer
 Marybeth Dyer (458th)-Membership VP
 Lisa Niehoff-Communications VP
 Chris Clark (489th, 44th)-VP for Volunteers
 Irene Hurner (453rd)-Past President
 Billy Sheely Johnson (492nd)-Past President

We had a wonderful time mingling with all of the different bomb groups. We were happy to be the 'host' for most of the 2nd AD groups, and a few others, on the Rendezvous Dinner evening, and hold another 'Candles-of-Remembrance' ceremony in Savannah. We were very happy to have 62 8th Air Force Veterans in attendance to share their stories—my favorite part of a reunion!

We hope everyone will seriously consider joining us in Norwich in 2014!

Pilot Humor

Things which do you no good in aviation:

Altitude above you.
 Runway behind you.
 Fuel in the truck.
 A navigator.
 Half a second ago.
 Approach plates in the car.
 The airspeed you don't have.

Credit: www.flighthumor.com

RAF Humor

A RAF engineering officers joke: What's the difference between a fighter pilot and his aircraft?

The plane stops whining when you shut down the engines.

Phone Etiquette

Having just moved into his new office, a pompous, new colonel was sitting at his desk when an airman knocked on the door. Conscious of his new position, the colonel quickly picked up the phone, told the airman to enter, then said into the phone, "Yes general, I'll be seeing him this afternoon and I'll pass along your message. In the meantime, thank you for your good wishes, sir."

Feeling as though he had sufficiently impressed the young enlisted man, he asked, "What do you want?"

"Nothing important, Sir," the airman replied, "I'm just here to hook up your telephone."

Credit: www.taphilo.com/history/humor

The 2013 Heritage League Reunion Returns to Savannah, GA

Photos by Brian Mahoney.



8th Air Force Historical Society Candle Lighting Banquet night, featuring our ultimate rep from the 2nd AD Oak Mackey (392nd BG pilot) near middle in olive jacket and tie. At near end, our friend, John Gilbert from near Wendling in Norfolk and new Heritage League President, Beverly Tomb (466th)



At ease, paying attention. Beverly Tomb (466th), John Gilbert and Orin Flint (strong UK friends of League and 8AFHS), researcher Annette Tison (392nd) and Sue Nykamp Gill (93rd) moments before Beverly and new slate voted in; Heritage League Annual Meeting.



Beverly Tomb (rhymes with 'home,' 466th BG daughter) upon acceptance of nomination and election as new HL President; Marybeth Dyer (458th) already savoring membership in the Past Presidents' club.

Researcher Jim Marsteller, nephew of 392nd KIA Jim Morris, on the Dallas Books Crew, reviews items in the 392nd BG hospitality suite. Our past board members Ben Jones and Bob Books (Gold Star son of 392nd) always help make that suite one of the best places to be.





Presentation for our presenter. Dr. Vivian Rogers-Price (pictured left, with MaryBeth Dyer and Beverly Tomb), Research Center Director at National Museum of the Mighty Eighth Air Force, has been a friend and resource to League members since our 2006 reunion in Pooler, with memorable activities and banquet there. It was hard to end her compelling program on research, education, honoring activities there.



Doris and Jack Dyson (445th BG, Honorary Life Member of HL) joined our big 2AD gang for Rendezvous Dinner on Wednesday night.



Henry Nykamp—an 'HLM' ((honorary Life Member of the Heritage League) and daughter, League member Sue Gill, enjoy company of Frank and Paulette Bales (492nd/467th BGs).



Best brother act, ever. Bob chortles as Frank recounts; both Birmingham brothers were in the 458th BG, respectively interning in Sweden and safely finishing a 30 mission tour.



Lion-like. Chris Clark, with his personalized challenge coin, admires portraits of Medal of Honor recipients Col. Leon Vance, 489th BG (posthumous) and 44th BG then 14th Wing Leon Johnson.



Outgoing, but not going! Marybeth Dyer (458th) addresses annual meeting for last time, with her father (Frank Birmingham, 458th) front-and-center, flanked by her brother-in-law and sister, Lee and Joan Davis. Marybeth resumes service as our Membership VP.



Bales & Nykamp 2AD friends, Heritage League Honorary Life Members. Frank and Pauline Bales (492nd and 467th BG) dine with Henry Nykamp (93rd).



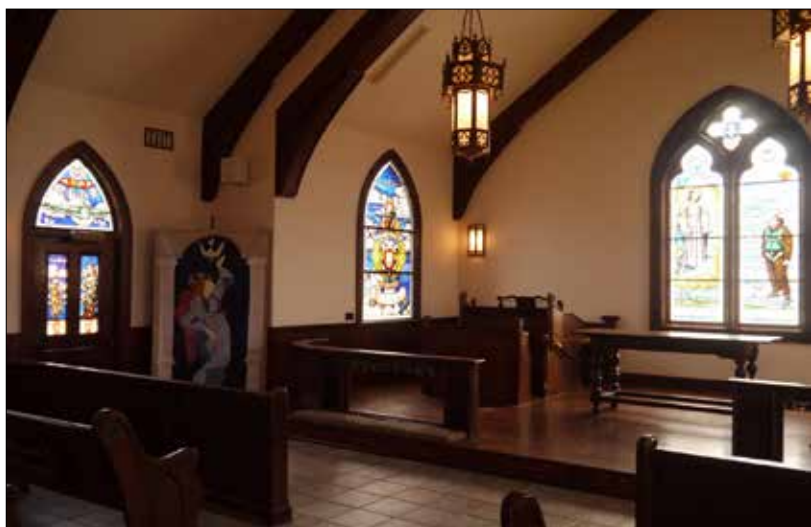
League Treasurer Sue Risley takes in a Frank Birmingham war story over relaxing breakfast among good friends.



League and Friends. Small bomb groups and most of the 2nd Air Division, joined us for Rendezvous Dinner, which began with our unique Candles of Remembrance ceremony, now presented twice in Savannah, the city where the Eighth was founded.



489th stone & Chris, proud nephew. Our VP for Volunteers, Chris Clark, in Memorial Garden of National 8th AF Museum; his uncle Charles F. Clark, served in 489th, then 44th BG.



Chapel of Fallen Heroes is serene, adjoining Columbarium and Memorial Garden behind National Museum of 8th AF in Pooler, GA. Plaque on organ reads: "The 492nd Bomb Group (H) and the United States Air Force Academy Join in presenting this organ to the Mighty Eighth Air Force Museum on behalf of the fallen heroes of the 492nd Bomb Group (H)."



Past President and League Executive Committee member Billy Sheely Johnson is a Gold Star Daughter; her clan memorialized the 492nd's Smiley Crew, KIA 7-July-44 (Bernberg mission). Hundreds of dignified and somber reminders comprise the Memorial Garden at the Mighty Eighth Air Force Museum.

ONCE THE WINGS GO ON....



Once the wings go on, they never come off whether they can be seen or not. It fuses to the soul through adversity, fear and adrenaline, and no one who has ever worn them with pride, integrity and guts can ever sleep through the 'Call of the Wild' that wafts through bedroom windows in the deep of the night.

When a good flyer leaves the 'Job' and Retires, many are jealous, some are pleased and yet others, who may have already retired, wonder. We wonder if he knows what he is leaving behind, because we already know. We know, for example, that after a lifetime of camaraderie that few experience, it will remain as a longing for those past times.

We know in the World of Flying, there is a fellowship which lasts long after the flight suits are hung up in the back of the closet. We know even if he throws them away, they will be on him with every step and breath that remains in his life.

We also know how the very bearing of the man speaks of what he was and in his heart still is.

Because we flew, we envy No Man on Earth.

-Author Unknown

RESERVE NOW!

Heritage League May 2014 Trip to Norwich!

The 2014 Reunion Committee has been very busy building an exciting program at a good value, with enough options and flexible times that your individual pace can be accommodated, whether you are a fourth-generation youngster, or a hale veteran. The more the merrier! We have most of the details scheduled and priced, so we can tell you what the 'base package' and options look like now, with refinements, final pricing, and registration forms all to be available on the website at the end of the year. We will also mail information to those who take the opportunity to RESERVE NOW.

You may hold your reservation by sending \$75, made out to The Heritage League, to Membership VP/reunion registrar Marybeth Dyer between now and December 1. ***If we do not have your registration and final balance in hand by the commitment date of April 1, 2014, your deposit will be refunded.*** So, if there is a reasonable chance you are going, indicate by sending in a reservation check. This will allow us to estimate attendance, and to make transportation, lodging, dining and other arrangements with some accuracy. Please also give us an email address to reach you, or your trusted friend or relative.

All prices given are per person and exclude your transportation to Norwich, England, and home again from Norwich or London. We provide estimates of funds you should have to cover non-package expenses. You may wish to take out trip insurance, should health or other circumstances prevent or interrupt your trip. You can extend your hotel stay—before or after—at our group rates. Registration fee package covers Sunday, May 25th, through Thursday, May 29th, 2014.

Base Registration Package: £400 per person (current exchange rate is approx. \$628 in mid September)

Breakfast is included with your double occupancy room at the oldest continuously operated inn in England, the Maids Head, quaint but modern, and right next to the Cathedral. Charming Tomblands neighborhood is a very short walk to the Marketplace, the Forum, City Hall, 2AD Memorial Library, wonderful shopping, the Norman Keep, scores of pubs; major bus lines right out the door; train station within 1 mile. (Note: an additional supplement is charged for a single person in a room.)

Sunday after cathedral services, join us for a Heritage League reception for 2AD Memorial Trust Governors, our base guides, and others who have helped in the Heritage League mission over the years; light food and drink.

After *Monday* breakfast, we board the bus for Memo-

rial Day wreath-laying ceremonies at Madingley American Cemetery near Cambridge, where 537 2AD warriors are commemorated on the Wall of the Missing, and another 905 Killed In Action, lie in marked graves, among a total of 8,939 US combatants memorialized or buried in this hallowed, moving place. We proceed to nearby Imperial War Museum Duxford (<http://www.iwm.org.uk/>) to visit the excellent collection of British and American warbirds, many in flying condition; light lunch on your own at concessions there. After the coach trip 'home,' you are on your own for dinner and evening exploration.

Tuesday we hold our third 'in England' annual Heritage League meeting which is the second to be held at the Memorial Library in the Forum (as at the rededication, in 2001). It will be followed by a lunch reception, courtesy of the City of Norwich. Relax, explore the Memorial Library and 'City Centre' before we go out as a group for an optional regional dinner.

Wednesday will be real excitement for all who crave a walk on 'their' runway: thanks to Colin Mann and his many helpful friends, we will try to offer all-day guided trips to most or all of bases requested; you will pay your part of the lunch bill in 'your' old neighborhood. Dinner and evening on your own after return to Maids Head.

Thursday you have the option to attend a specially scheduled meeting of the Trust Governors (no fee), or go on the Heritage Site tour (we are looking at Sandringham and other notable properties; £40 option includes lunch), or go on another base visit (allow £30/\$47 for meal, transportation, gratuities). Once you RESERVE, we will supply you with information on the remnants of the bases and ask for your first and second base-visit preferences, to optimally plan Wednesday and Thursday base trips. That evening we will have a gracious banquet, to conclude our overseas reunion trip!

Optional extras

We are allowing £50 for our dinner outing—possibly waterside in The Broads—on Tuesday evening. Note the Heritage Site option discussed above, for Thursday. Friday we offer a coach trip, with box lunch, to London, where a special service is planned for our delegation in the moving and intimate American Chapel of St. Paul's Cathedral. Evensong follows at 5 pm (£25). There will be time for you to drop bags and check in to your hotel. We are presently developing possible group hotel rates and a group dinner or reception for this evening; we will keep you posted!

Guidance for 'on your own' expenses

£30 if you elect a second base day on Thursday. Up to £10 for a light dinner Sunday if the reception leaves you puckish, £20 for normal dinner on Monday, and again on Tuesday if you are not joining the group outing. Allow £10 for lunch on Sunday, Monday and Wednesday, and if not electing options on either Thursday or Friday. Similarly, if electing to be on our own Thursday during the day, plan your expenses.

Summing it up

After your main transportation, for which we will send planning suggestions, expect the package being about \$630 when we fix the price at the first of the year using the exchange rate at that time. Add in the package options, and your 'own expenses.' Add in trip insurance, keepsakes and souvenirs as appropriate.

We are striving to make cost allowances sufficient, but not be 'padded,' either. We aim to deliver a good value and an intensely memorable experience to our Second Air Division 'family,' and have the first-timer especially in mind, so we really hope to hear from you!

WHY RESERVE NOW? Besides helping us immense-ly in engaging restaurants, transportation, and volunteer base guides, you will be giving us an email address to receive our evolving new information, including a few ques-

tions we will be asking all who are 'seriously considering.' Your reservation money is not at risk, but your chance to be included will pass if you have not paid the full fee by April 1, 2014. In addition, we will forward you information on making your own hotel reservation at our group rate of £50 per person at double occupancy (add £20 single occupancy) which includes breakfast or £65 if you would like to include breakfast and dinner at the hotel, and getting or updating your passport. If we calculate a surplus following the trip, all who went, and reserved by December 1, 2013, will be offered a proportionate rebate. We do not anticipate a large surplus, but hope to deliver value 'at cost.'

I'm sold! What do I do NOW?

Reserve your place ASAP or no later than December 1st with a \$75 deposit, as described above. Give us an email address and await more information, finalizing all package and option prices, and giving suggestions for flight planning, for follow-on travel, for other Norwich and East Anglia excursions, etc. Make your travel arrangements early, to realize best pricing. Be thinking about which base(s) you want to see most. Watch *Downton Abbey*, to bone up on your proper English!

"Cheers", from your 2014 Reunion Committee!

CONVENTION 2014, NORWICH

I AM PLANNING TO ATTEND THE HERITAGE LEAGUE 2014 CONVENTION IN NORWICH, ENGLAND FROM MAY 24 THROUGH MAY 30, 2014.

NAME: _____ BOMB GROUP: _____

ADDRESS: _____ SQUADRON: _____

_____ FIGHTER GROUP: _____

CITY: _____ SUPPORT GROUP: _____

STATE: _____ ZIP CODE: _____ DEPOSIT \$75/PERSON
DEPOSIT WILL BE APPLIED TO REGISTRATION FEE

CONTACT PHONE NUMBER: _____ NUMBER ATTENDING: _____

ALTERNATE PHONE, CELL#: _____ TOTAL DEPOSIT: _____

EMAIL ADDRESS: _____

VETERAN WHO SERVED IN 2nd AIR DIVISION: _____

NAMES OF ADDITIONAL PERSONS INCLUDED WITH DEPOSIT AND RELATIONSHIP TO VETERAN: _____

Send form with deposit to: Marybeth Dyer, Heritage League Convention 2014, 1020 Glacier Ave, Pacifica, CA 94044, Phone: (650) 355-8383 or (650) 892-1082

Heritage League of
the Second Air Division (USAAF)
Marybeth Dyer (458th BG)
1020 Glacier Avenue
Pacifica, CA 94044

NON-PROFIT
ORGANIZATION
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID

www.heritageleague.org

2013 Heritage League Executive Committee

President

Beverly Baynes Tomb (466th BG)
2212 Grayson Place
Falls Church, VA 22043
(703) 242-4152
bnbtomb@gmail.com

Vice President

Mike Simpson (445th)
1381 E. Nancy Avenue
San Tan Valley, AZ 85140
(480) 699-7284
mike@445bg.org

Past President, Secretary

Brian Mahoney (492nd, 467th)
1543 North Glebe Road
Arlington, VA 22207
(202) 232-1423
bricamera@mindspring.com

Past President, Membership VP

MaryBeth Dyer (458th)
1020 Glacier Avenue
Pacifica, CA 94044
(650) 355-8383

Communications VP

Lisa Niehoff (Friend and Supporter)
P.O.Box 383
Huxley, IA 50124
(515)-306-0934
lisa@huxcomm.net

Treasurer

Sue Risley (446th BG)
682 Slade Avenue
Elgin, IL 60120
(847) 571-4405
skrisley@aol.com

Past President
Irene Hurner (453rd BG)
46400 San Antonio Valley Road
Livermore, CA 94550
(408) 897-3029
ihurner@sbcglobal.net

Past President
Billy Sheely Johnson (492nd BG)
1526 Mt. Pleasant Drive
Colonial Heights, VA 23834
(804) 526-1624
bcsjohnson@comcast.net

Acting 2AD Memorial Trust
Liaison to Heritage League
Matthew Martin, *Chair*
Dairy Farmhouse, Swardeston
Norwich, Norfolk
NR14 8LG, England
Mtmartindairy@aol.com

VP for Volunteers
Chris Clark (489th BG and 44th)
8427 Willow Glen Court
Manassas, VA 20110

