



HERITAGE HERALD

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Defeating the Luftwaffe: Attrition, not Blitzkrieg

by Tom Eisele

In World War II, the Second Air Division was part of the effort by the 8th Air Force to defeat the German Luftwaffe. Much of the time in the Herald, we look at individual battles and even individual exploits, within the general effort to overcome the air arm of Nazi Germany. In this article, however, we step back and look more broadly at the entire effort. How did the men of the Mighty Eighth effect the destruction of the Luftwaffe?

Nazi Germany perfected the technique of Blitzkrieg. When the Nazis invaded Poland, then Denmark, then Norway, and finally the Netherlands and France, the pattern of lightning strikes was the same—the Luftwaffe disposed of the opposing air forces in rapid succession. This remarkable record of quick victories for the Luftwaffe early in World War II probably created what turned out to be misleading expectations among those who thought about possible future air engagements in Europe.

In fact, the Allies faced an altogether different situation once Nazi Germany had consolidated its control over the European continent. It was not by way of any one battle, or a quick strike, or even one lightning campaign that the 8th Air Force would manage to beat the Luftwaffe. Rather, it would take a concerted effort through many battles and several campaigns—eventually numbering over 940 separate missions—before the air war was won. The European air war became a war of attrition. It would be a matter of wearing the enemy down, doing more damage to them than they did to us, over months and months of desperate struggles. As we now know, the effort to win took enormous amounts of resources and logistics and will-power, as well as taking an enormous toll on our men and their flying machines.

It is not clear whether we initially understood the vast extent of the challenge facing us. It seems fair to say that the air war in Europe, when the Americans entered the scene in late 1942 and into early 1943, did not start out to be a methodical war of attrition. Some in the U.S. Army Air Force [“AAF”] believed that long-range precision bombing of



Postwar scrap. Results of Army Air Force fighter sweeps on Luftwaffe air fields. Starting with ‘Big Week,’ American fighters, after escorting bombers to their targets in Germany, would strafe Luftwaffe airfields to catch the German fighters on the ground. Photo: USAF Air University Archive photo.

the European continent could be successfully accomplished by heavily-gunned four-engine bombers alone, flying in tight formations on their own. “[General Ira] Eaker had always believed in the self-defending capability of the large daylight bomber formation. The Eighth Fighter Command under Brig. General Frank

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2019 HERITAGE LEAGUE TRIP TO NORWICH, ENGLAND

June 9-14, 2019 Registration Deadline March 30, 2019

Details on pgs. 11-13

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

—Marybeth Dyer



Hi Heritage League Members, Happy New Year 2019.

I am always amazed how time goes so quickly and can't believe it is already February. Since our last convention in Dayton, the Executive Board and volunteer members are working hard to get lots of work done. Here are some of the projects we are working on:

- An upgraded Heritage League Web Site is here! Thanks to the great volunteer effort of design professional Nancy Hildebrandt, we have almost completed upgrading our Webpage to a brighter, more user and mobile friendly platform; many thanks to Nancy. Work is still in progress and you can check it out at our usual web address. Please let us know what you think. <https://www.heritageleague.org/>.

- We are currently in our Membership renewal campaign. If you have not renewed your membership or know of anyone who is interested, we hope you will join us in our mission. The Membership form is in this Herald.

- Our Norwich Committee is working hard to plan a really fun and enlightening convention. The Registration form is also in this Herald. All fees must be paid in full by March 30, 2019. We hope you will join us. This will be the trip of a lifetime!
- We are in the process of reaching out to active bomb group organizations who would like to add a contribution to our Herald newsletter. If your bomb group is interested, please contact me and we would be happy to include your contribution.
- We will nominate and elect our Heritage League board members this June. All members are welcome to participate in the process to nominate, or sign up to run for a board or board protégé position. For more information, see election details in the next story.

As you can see there is a lot going on and I would encourage all of our readers to consider being a volunteer for the Heritage League. We have a form on our website with information about areas where we could use some help. <https://heritageleague.org/volunteer/>.

Our lives are filled with busy moments and events. Take some time to remember a Veteran and thank them for their service. It will mean the world to them.

Heritage League Members: it's election time, and you can help in the process...

We want your participation!

Biennial election of Heritage League Officers will be held at the business meeting, June 10, 2019 at the Norwich England Convention. Acting President Marybeth Dyer requests all League members to participate in this process. Board positions are: president, executive VP, treasurer, secretary, membership VP, communications VP, and VP for volunteers. Please participate by any of the following ways:

- Help identify capable persons—participate in the nominations committee. All League members are eligible to participate and recommend a slate of officers for election—perhaps you or someone you know. Contact Nominations Chair and HL Secretary Colleen Mersman (contact info on back page). Members can also nominate at the meeting.
- Step up and volunteer by submitting your name as candidate for one of the positions. Or volunteer to be a protégé to one of the VP positions. Protégés shadow the VP and assist in duties to gain experience for a potential future nomination. All HL members are eligible for Board or protégé positions.

We hope many of you will participate and contribute to this biennial election process.

(continued from page 1—Defeating The Luftwaffe)

Hunter shared Eaker's view that unescorted bomber operations were possible." [Richard Overy, *The Bombing War*, p. 359.] In this regard, the B-24s and B-17s were far better and stronger bombing platforms than any aircraft the German Luftwaffe had designed or created during its Blitzkrieg rampage through Europe. Still, it turned out that American long-range bombers could not win the air war on their own.

The disastrous twin bombing raids against the ball-bearing factories in Schweinfurt—the first raid on August 17, 1943, the second raid on October 14, 1943—proved decisively that long-range bombers on their own, without heavy and sustained fighter escort, would be decimated by the defending German fighters and flak gunners. The former mission in August was Mission 84 to the cities of Regensburg and Schweinfurt. Its cost was 60 bombers lost and an additional 75-90 bombers damaged, out of a total of 376 heavy bombers. The later mission in October, Mission 115, was aptly called "Black Thursday." It cost the AAF another 60 bombers lost outright. An additional 17 bombers were so badly damaged that they had to be scrapped and another 121 bombers were damaged but repairable. These casualties in October 1943, were from a total force of 291 B-17s. (An additional 60 B-24s from the 2nd Air Division aborted due to weather conditions in October or else were diverted.)

Loss rates on individual missions hovering between 15-25% of the attacking air force were prohibitive. Accordingly, long-range bombing missions penetrating deep inside Germany were suspended for the next four-five months. The sad conclusion reached in the fall of 1943 was that "the Eighth Air Force had for the time being lost air superiority over Germany." [Cate & Craven, *The Army Air Forces in World War II*, vol. 2, pp. 704-05.] How might the Eighth Air Force regain air superiority over Germany?

Mulling over these hard-earned lessons, the American long-range bombing strategy changed from

dramatic raids aimed at achieving a decisive victory in a short period of time, to a more methodical and deliberate attempt to achieve sustained wastage in the German air force and in the German industries supporting the Luftwaffe. Attrition of German pilots and planes was our primary goal but, secondarily we sought attrition in the German industrial power that fed and supported the German Luftwaffe.

Richard Overy summarizes the change in AAF strategy as follows:

In the end, the defeat of the German Air Force was an American achievement. [Commanding General] Spaatz divided the campaign into three elements: Operation Argument to undermine the German aircraft production; a follow-up campaign against the German oil industry to starve the air force of its most precious resource; and finally, continuous counter-force attacks against German fighters and their organization. [Overy, *The Bombing War*, pp. 368-69.]

Let's look in turn at each of these three elements in the air war campaign, considering how each of them contributed to the eventual defeat of the Luftwaffe.

Operation Argument:

During the suspension of deep-penetration bombings, from October 1943, to February 1944, the focus of the 8th Air Force was on more circumscribed goals, often targeting easily reachable facilities in Western Europe. Still, plans for bigger projects were in the works. A draft plan was initiated in November 1943 by which the AAF would seek to destroy German aircraft and ball-bearing industrial capacity. The plan was "Operation Argument" and it proposed a complicated series of raids by the heavy bombers of the 8th Air Force, escorted by plentiful fighters, against the Third Reich's industries connected to the production of German aircraft. Weather conditions at the end of 1943 and into

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the beginning of 1944 temporarily prevented implementing this new AAF bombing plan.

During this respite, the Allies solved (or at least improved) various logistical problems with bomber supplies and maintenance. As well, the US and British engineers and airmen combined their experiential wisdom to develop the P-51 Mustang. It was a long-range escort fighter capable of providing cover for the otherwise vulnerable heavy bombers on long missions. All this pre-operational activity coincided with a buildup of US heavy bomber capacity. From fewer than 400 operational heavy bombers being available in the summer and fall of 1943, the 8th Air Force grew by January 1944, into a force with over 800 heavy bombers in operation. [Overy, *The Bombing War*, Table 6.2, p. 317.]

Mid-February of 1944 brought a change in the weather for the UK and for continental Europe. From February 20th to the 25th, “Operation Argument”—also known as “Big Week”—was carried out. This entire oper-



‘Shack Rat,’ B-24H with the 786th Bomb Squadron, 446th BG. Damaged by flak on mission to bomb airfield at Gutersloh on 19 April 1944, totally destroyed in the crash-landing at Attlebridge. Photo: USAAF photo via warhistoryonline.com.

ation included missions flown by the 9th Air Force and missions flown from Italy by the 15th Air Force (more fully described in Bill Yenne’s *Big Week: Six Days that Changed the Course of World War II* [2013]). I am limiting my description here to some of the basic details of the 8th Air Force efforts:

- **Mission 226** took place on Sunday, February 20, 1944. Three separate attack flights, comprising 1003 bombers and roughly 830 escorting fighters, hit 14 different sites in Germany: airfields, aircraft manufacturing and assembly sites, and various targets of opportunity. This was the first 8th Air Force mission to muster a thousand bombers.
- **Mission 228**, on Monday the 21st, 861 bombers and about 680 fighters were dispatched to hit six airfield and aviation industry targets in Germany.

- **Mission 230**, Tuesday the 22nd, saw 789 bombers and around 650 fighters dispatched to hit more German airfields and aviation industry targets. Unfortunately, bad weather affected targeting over many bomb sites and results were quite mixed, including the accidental bombing of civilians in Holland.
- **Mission 233** was flown on Thursday, February 24th against several widely dispersed primary sites in Germany. This was done to reduce the ability of the Luftwaffe to aggregate its responding fighters. 809 bombers participated and once again heavy cloud conditions impaired their bombing results.
- **Mission 235**, flown Friday the 25th, had 754 bombers and almost as many escorting fighters hitting four German targets connected to the aviation industry.

How did “Operation Argument” fare? The results of Big Week were ambiguous at best, albeit mildly encouraging to the AAF. Our losses over this six-day period numbered nearly 250 American bombers and another 30 fighters. But these losses, as costly as they were, could be made up by the Allies. Germany on the other hand, had lost as many as 355 of its front-line fighters. Especially savaged were their squadrons of twin-engine fighters which had been specifically designed to interdict and break-up American bomber formations (by using their long-range armaments, such as under-wing missiles or rockets and aerial mortars). As important as were these German losses in planes, however, even more important was the loss of their airmen. Almost 100 German pilots perished during this six-day onslaught. These Axis pilots proved to be irreplaceable.

Operation Argument was not dispositive in stopping or reducing German aircraft production. While it is true that, at the end of the Allied onslaught, Germany’s monthly production figure dropped to a low of 1700 replacement aircraft; the Germans bounced back from this dip. The Reich was able to increase its eventual production numbers to a peak figure of 3700 replacement aircraft (turned out in September 1944). One reason for this surprising rebound in German aircraft production was the direction of Albert Speer, who during this time, took over leadership of German armament programs. Speer rationalized and stream-lined the German production systems, as well as dispersing German fabrication and assembly plants, making it much more difficult for the Eighth Air Force to locate and target these decentralized aircraft production facilities.

Despite this instance of German resilience and resolve, it ultimately was to no avail. Training programs for replacement pilots were not well maintained by the Germans. If the Americans could continue the drumbeat of bombing operations, as inaugurated by Operation Argument, challenging the German pilots to defend the Reich, the bleeding in trained personnel would inevitably continue. “The bombing raids forced the Germans to fight and imposed a continuing battle of attrition on their fighters. ...This high attrition of pilots resulted not only from combat operations but also from the continued dilution of the [German fighter] force by inexperienced, ill-trained pilots, who in winter’s bad weather conditions were as dangerous to themselves as enemy fighters.” [Williamson Murray, *Strategy for Defeat: The Luftwaffe 1933-1945*, pp. 180, 183.]

The increased attrition rates among German pilots could spell doom for the Luftwaffe. Men and machines, meanwhile, were pouring into the UK from the United States at an ever-increasing rate, replenishing and indeed growing the ranks of the Eighth Air Force. [See Stout, *The Men Who Killed the Luftwaffe*, pp. 190-92.]

Oil Campaign:

Great Britain had long recognized that Germany was deeply dependent on its oil resources and oil reserves to keep its highly mechanized Panzer groups and its lethal Luftwaffe functioning. Early in the European air war, however, the UK had no ability to hit back at the oil plants and fuel depots. And, when the UK later gained that ability, this objective remained secondary to British Bomber Command’s avowed purpose of night-time saturation bombing of major metropolitan areas—targets easier to reach and to bomb effectively using night bombing methods. It remained for the US to attempt to bomb German oil facilities in daylight missions.

The famous raid on the Ploesti oil fields in Romania [“Operation Tidal Wave”] took place on August 1, 1943, by units from the 8th Air Force and 9th Air Force. The raid proved disastrous. However good the plan may have been, its execution was flawed. With 178 heavy bombers from five Bomb Groups participating in the raid, only 88 bombers returned to their bases in Libya, most with heavy battle damage. Almost 60 bombers were destroyed and more than 30 bombers were diverted to Turkey or other countries around the Mediterranean. Little curtailment of fuel production was achieved by this raid; whatever diminution was accomplished was redressed

quickly by the Germans and Romanians, leading to even greater oil production output after the raid. While the Romanian oil fields and facilities remained a favorite target for the Allied air forces, the fields were never fully put out of action until their capture on August 30, 1944, by the Russian Army advancing from the East.

Taking account of the disastrous results and high costs of the Ploesti raid, cooler heads prevailed at the AAF. Rather than continue with “all-or-nothing” raids, planners in the Eighth Air Force gradually came to see the need to concentrate on the breadth of the German oil industry. Systematic and sustained attention to oil industry fixtures became a more pronounced item on the Allied bombing agenda. Even then, however, as a bombing priority, it sometimes slipped. Oil facility bombings were suspended, for example, in favor of engaging in bombing missions that prepared the ground for the D-Day landings. In addition, some Allied strategists pushed the “Transportation Plan,” which focused on interdicting German and French transportation capacity and facilities. And toward the end of the war, with the rise of German terror weapons – the first cruise missile in the V-1 and the first ballistic missile in the V-2—sometimes bombing priorities were shifted to support attacking the various launch sites of these terrible “vengeance” weapons.

Nevertheless, the predominance of oil and later, synthetic fuels as essential to the continued operation of the German war machine, meant that the Americans gradually came to re-focus their attention on these industries and their fragile infrastructure. During the last twelve months of the European air war (May 1944–April 1945), the Eighth Air Force alone conducted 233 attacks on German or Axis oil and synthetic fuel targets. The Ninth Air Force conducted an additional 220 attacks (and the British Bomber Command an almost equal number of attacks) within that same twelve-month period. More than 600 bombing missions from combined Allied air forces, then, brought about a crippling halt to the production and delivery of necessary fuels to the German armed forces.

The development of German jet fighters – most famously, the ME-262 twin-jet fighter—could have significantly impacted the AAF. Americans had nothing like it. (Occasional victories by P-51s over ill-flown ME-262s do not contravene this basic point.) Both the V-weapons and the jet aircraft developed by the Germans could have been decisive in the last year of World War II. They were not, because their runways

and launch sites were suppressed, and their fuels reduced by the bombing campaign of the 8th Air Force.

Less fuel meant that the Germans had less ability to train replacement pilots for the planes still being produced by the German aviation industry. We noted before in this article that 3700 replacement planes were still produced by Germany in September 1944. This is an incredible number, considering the intense bombing pressure, night and day, imposed by the US and British bombing campaigns. Even with such industrial output of planes, the Germans still did not have the resources to produce pilots who could fly those replacement planes. Therefore, since the Germans had no fuel to train men into competent pilots, their empty planes—however brilliant those planes may have been in terms of being technical advances in aviation—stood grounded, suitable only to serve as strafing targets.

Oddly though, the Allied air attacks on the oil industry were sporadic and intermittent. This ambivalence in Allied bombing strategy proved puzzling even to our enemies.

The Germans had found the failure of Allied bombing to strike the synthetic oil industry inexplicable. Writing to Speer in March 1944, Keitel’s staff thought it possible that enemy air forces would attack the oil industry to achieve a quick end to the war. In April, a Luftwaffe staff officer was more direct. Considering that the major German refineries and fuel plants lay within ‘the zone threatened by air attack,’ he found it extraordinary that enemy airpower had not struck the oil industry – a target that would jeopardize the Reich’s entire war effort.”[Murray, *Strategy for Defeat*, p. 201.]

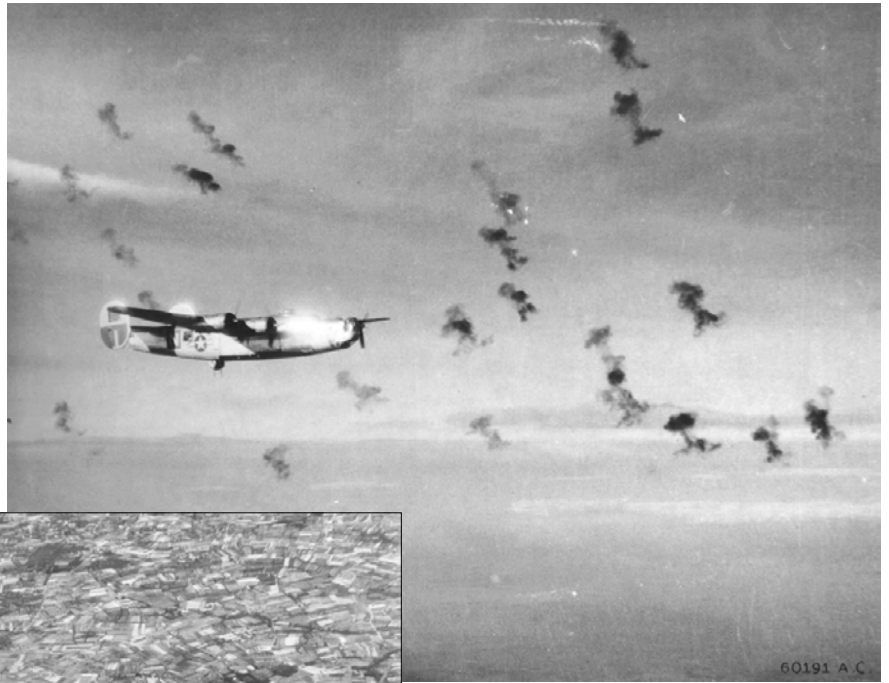
After the war, Nazi defendants at the Nuremberg War Trials (and Germans in other venues) expressed astonishment that the Allies had not concentrated their attention earlier on the fragility of Germany’s oil production and supply lines. Unlike aircraft assembly and fabrication processes, fuel production, transport, and storage facilities were large and immobile. They could not be dispersed, as Speer had done with the aviation industry components. This ambivalence on the part of the Allies remains a topic of discussion and debate by historians and critics to this day.

Operation Pointblank:

The third and final leg in the tripartite plan



B-24 hit by Flak. The 100 octane avgas is very volatile and explosive when hit. Only one crew member survived. USAAF photo posted by wwiiiphotos at piclic.com.



Liberator of 464th BG (15th AF) bracketed by flak bursts from German anti-aircraft guns, Nov 1944. Photo: via D. Sheley, ww2dbase, United States National Archives.



By Aug 13 1944, flak was taking more victims than Luftwaffe fighters in Northern Europe. B-24Js of the 565th BS bomb targets in St. Malo, France. Nearest aircraft was destroyed the next day when it crash landed and burned at 389th BG field, Hethel. Photo: via D. Sheley, ww2dbaseUnited States National Archives.



When this 8th AF Flying Fortress hit an aircraft plant in November, 1943, manufacturing was not yet dispersed into small, easily hidden locations. Armaments Minister Albert Speer oversaw dispersal of critical manufacturing in response to ever-increasing toll of strategic daylight bombardment. Photo: USAAF photo in the public domain.



Dense and accurate, you could almost walk on it. B-17 formation encounters determined, deadly German defense over Merseberg. Photo: USAAF photo in the public domain.

of the AAF to win the European air war was the emphatic effort by the Americans to engage the Luftwaffe whenever and wherever the German air force could be found. It was a principle of attrition pure and simple: find them, confront them, destroy them.

This seemingly simple strategy was devilishly difficult to implement. Early in the European air war, the Germans had failed in their own attempt to defeat the RAF. Why? Because the Germans left off attacking RAF air bases and instead switched to conducting large bombing raids against British metropolitan centers. This switch may have satisfied Hitler's appetite for revenge after the British bombed German cities, but it gave time to the over-stretched fighter units of the RAF to replenish and refit without the constant harassment of German air attacks. This change in German bombing priorities was the point in the Battle of Britain,



A 489th BG Liberator hit by flak narrowly misses 'Renegade' by a few feet before it trailed down into the clouds. "Bombers were getting hit, pieces flying off; B-24's exploding in mid-air, their debris falling 19,000 feet to the ground below." After diving to evade the dying bomber, Renegade rejoined the formation and continued the bomb run through heavy flak near Paris, France. Photo: USAAF Photo hvia echoesofawar.wordpress.com/tag/consolidated-b-24-liberator.

when the principle of attrition stopped being applied to the RAF fighters and began to be applied (with a vengeance) to the German bombers and escorting fighters. British attrition of the Luftwaffe in 1940 is the main reason why Hitler gave up his cross-channel dream of invasion. "Operation Sea-Lion" was never launched because Hitler never established aerial superiority over the proposed landing beaches.

The Americans did not want to make the same mistake. In the AAF's air war strategy, every effort was to be made to close with the Luftwaffe planes and destroy them. The general principle of establishing air superiority over continental Europe was set out in June

1943, with a joint American-British directive known generally as "Operation Pointblank." The goal of this strategic directive was two-fold. In the first instance, the Allies intended to establish cross-channel air superiority such that they could eventually invade Europe, setting up a Second Front in the European theater of war. Ultimately, as this directive evolved, the larger objective for the Allies was to destroy the Luftwaffe as an effective means of defending the Reich. In this regard, "Operation Pointblank" tried to reorient the focus of the strategic-bombing campaign toward the 'intermediate' goal of defeating the Luftwaffe fighter force." [S. Zaloga, *Operation Pointblank* 1944, p. 12.]

Initially, this effort did not go well. Fighters such as the P-38 and the P-47 were reasonably well-matched with the German ME-109 and FW-190 in terms of aerial performance; yet the American fighters ran out of fuel before they could engage German fighters deep inside Germany. And the fallacy of the original American idea that heavily armed B-24s and B-17s could defend themselves against German fighters was (as was noted above) conclusively demonstrated by the twin Schweinfurt raids. What to do?

The range of P-38s and P-47s was improved by the innovation of drop-tanks under their wings. This served the bombers better by ensuring a deeper fighter escort into Germany, and it gave the American fighters more range, thus enabling them better to close with the German defenders and shoot them down. The most dramatic and heralded Allied fighter innovation, however, was the combined creation of the P-51, a fighter with an American airframe and a British Merlin engine. Until the very late appearance of the ME-262 jet fighter, the P-51 was the premier fighter in the European theatre. Introduced to the theatre in increasing numbers in early 1944, just as Operation Argument (or "Big Week") was opening, the P-51 was an immediate game-changer. Suddenly, American bombers had an agile, hard-hitting fighter escort that could accompany the bombers anywhere and bring them back alive. Morale soared for the Allies; it plummeted for the Luftwaffe. [See generally Zaloga, *Operation Pointblank* 1944, p. 21.]

Tactics for the fighter escorts also changed. In January 1944, General James Doolittle took over command of the 8th Air Force. He inaugurated two important tactical policy changes for fighter escorts. The first change was called "phased escort" where escorting fighters were now to join the bomber stream at various junctures being "phased in" along the way. [Stout, *The*

Men Who Killed the Luftwaffe, pp. 176-77.] This was a method of ensuring that, with the added under-wing drop-tanks, escorting fighters would be able to protect the bomber stream all the way to the target and all the way back. Periodic injection or substitution of escorting fighters, timed and calibrated all along the bomber route, meant more bombers reaching the target—and more bombers returning home.

The second tactical policy innovation, announced by General Doolittle slightly later in 1944, was “freedom of escort.” Prior to this decision, Allied fighters were required to stick close to the bombers that



Routine raid. Natural oil refineries such as Ploiesti, Rumania, were targeted throughout the war, pressuring Germany to develop synthetic fuels at far greater expense of war effort. Synthetic-fuel production was never sufficient, thanks to frequent disruption and destruction from heavy bombers until the end. Photo: USAAF in the public domain.

they were escorting, even if Luftwaffe planes presented themselves. The earlier escort policy made sense to the bomber crews who wanted their “little friends” not to stray far from the

bomber stream. Yet, as a matter of fighter tactics, this earlier policy made little sense. Handcuffing US fighters to the bombers forfeited some great virtues of fighters (their speed, agility, and maneuverability). In truth, this escort policy stymied fighters’ pursuit capability. Doolittle decided that freeing the fighters from the bomber stream was worth the risk. It was true that the bombers might become more vulnerable to attack, when their escorts left, by other Germans appearing on the scene. Yet, if the escorts were free to engage the Luftwaffe and to take the fight wherever it might lead them, Doolittle believed that the American fighters would destroy the German fighters engaged in this fashion, thus eliminating those German fighters (and pilots) from later attacking the bombers. It was a calculated risk and Doolittle had the courage (and audacity) to take it. [See Stout, *The Men Who Killed the Luftwaffe*, p. 183.]

These two changed escort policies, along with introducing the improved fighters and their improved range, led to significant attrition of the Luftwaffe throughout 1944.

The effects were immediate. The Luftwaffe

units were most effective when they massed their attacks, but assembling large numbers of fighters and getting them into position were problematic on the best days.... However, the task became impossible when under attack by even one or two fighters. When the newly empowered Americans struck, the large German formations invariably broke down into many smaller, less effective packets. Ultimately the change in tactics produced more dead German pilots and better-protected bombers. [Stout, *ibid*, p. 184.]

This change in tactics, coupled with the overall “Operation Pointblank” aim of pursuing maximum confrontation of enemy aircraft by means of relentlessly engaging enemy aircraft whenever and wherever the AAF found the Luftwaffe, led to the end of the German air force.

Conclusion:

The attrition process began with “Operation Argument” during the “Big Week” in February 1944. It continued through 1944 and into 1945, with the oil campaign’s increased pressure on fuel resources and supplies. And it came to an end in the effective accomplishment of Allied aerial superiority, which was a major goal of “Operation Pointblank.” These three strategic decisions, taken together, led to the defeat and destruction of the German air force.

Toward the end of 1944 and into 1945, the Allies began calling the Luftwaffe, “the jack-in-the-box air force.” Occasionally when American bombers flew into Germany, the Luftwaffe would pop up and challenge the bombers. They risked their hides in view of the overwhelming U.S. fighter escorts. More and more frequently however, beginning with the Normandy invasion in June 1944, the Luftwaffe would fail to show, declining any opportunity to engage with American airmen.

By and large in 1945, with the loss of its pilots, planes, and fuel, the German air defenses counted on flak, not fighters, for opposing American air raids. Flak alone would prove to be insufficient to stem the tide. Thankfully our airmen prevailed, a feat we respectfully honor—yet, at a cost that we all are still trying to comprehend now decades later.

—fnis

Presidential Unit Citation for 445th BG 'Big Week' Missions

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

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

The 445th Bombardment Group (H), 2nd Air Division, is cited for outstanding performance of duty in action against the enemy. On 24 February 1944 this group participated, with other heavy bombardment groups of the 2nd Bombardment Division, in an attack on the Gothaer Waggonfabrik, A.G. located at Gotha, Germany. On this occasion, the attacking bombers met and overcame the fiercest and most determined resistance the enemy was able to muster in defense of this target, so vital to his ability to wage war. Unprotected by friendly fighter cover, the 445th Bombardment Group (H) was under almost continuous attack from enemy aircraft for a period of 2 hours and 20 minutes. Although antiaircraft fire was hurled at the formation along the route to and from the target as well as at the target itself, the most deadly opposition was given by enemy

aircraft. For 1 hour and 20 minutes before "bombs away," savage attacks were made by single and twin-engined enemy fighters in a vain attempt to keep the bombers from accomplishing their task. For another hour after bombing, the group continued to be the object of ferocious fighter attacks. Of this group's 24 aircraft, which penetrated enemy territory, 13 were lost to these fierce fighter attacks, which numbered approximately twice the loss suffered by any of the other groups participating in this mission. In addition, 9 of the surviving 12 aircraft returned from the mission with battle damage. With heroic determination, the 445th Bombardment Group (H) flew its assigned course, destroying 21 enemy attackers, probably destroying 2 more, and damaging 7 during the long-running battle. The target was located and bombed with extreme accuracy and devastating results. This target, the most important source of ME 110s, was so well hit that the enemy air force suffered a most telling blow. The courage, zeal, and perseverance shown by the crew members of the 445th Bombardment Group (H), 2nd Air Division, on this occasion were in accordance with the highest traditions of the military service of the United States and reflect great credit on themselves and the group, and the Army Air Forces.

**BY ORDER OF THE SECRETARY OF WAR
G.C. MARSHALL, CHIEF OF STAFF
OFFICIAL: J.A. ULIO, MAJOR GENERAL,
THE ADJUTANT GENERAL**

Heritage League Welcomes New 2nd Air Division Trust Librarian and American Scholars

Orla Kennelly joined the 2nd Air Division Memorial Library as Trust Librarian in October 2018. Orla holds a BA in History and Politics, an MA in Public Affairs and Political Communication and is currently studying by distance learning for a Master's Degree in Information and Library Studies with Aberystwyth University Wales.

Orla grew up in the West of Ireland and moved to the UK in 2013 where she has worked for the museums, archives and libraries services in Norfolk.



In 2017, Orla was selected as an Emerging Leader in the Arts by the Clore Foundation and has completed a programme of CPD with Clore. She is a member of CILIP; The Library and Information Association and the UK Museums Association.

"I am really proud to have been appointed as Trust Librarian and it has been a very exciting few months. I have already had the opportunity to meet with many people for whom this memorial means so much. The 2nd Air Division Memorial Trust AGM took place right after I took up post. I was delighted to meet Beverly Baynes Tomb of the

Heritage League & Joe & Joan Dzenowagis. Of course, a special privilege has been meeting Allan Hallett who served as a gunner with the 389th bomb group at Hethel. In November, we enjoyed a full programme of activities

with the US visitors and we look forward to welcoming the Heritage League to our Fair City in June this year. Our new website has just launched <https://www.2ndair.org.uk> and our programme of digitization continues to make our collections more accessible to interested parties outside of England. We have also begun a programme to refurbish the library in time for the 75th anniversary of the end of WWII. It is a very exciting time for the Memorial Trust and Library”. Orla Kennelly, Orla.kennelly@norfolk.gov.uk.

MEET OUR INCOMING AMERICAN SCHOLARS

Francis Agnoli

“Hello! My name is Francis Agnoli. I was born in Chicago and raised in a combination of Tennessee, Kentucky, Minnesota, and Iowa. I’m here in the UK earning my PhD in Film, Television, and Media Studies. So, if anyone wants to stop by the 2AD Memorial Library to chat about Classical Hollywood or Golden Age Cartoons, I’m your guy. Outside of school, I really love baking and cooking. I look forward to getting to know the community here at Norwich and the Memorial Library.”

Michael Strinden

Hi, I’m Michael Strinden. I was born and raised in Fargo, North Dakota. I was fortunate enough in my youth to travel frequently which inflicted me with the travel bug, eventually aiding my move to the UK. My academic path has been extremely circuitous due to my interests in myriad subjects. I began with dual degrees in Anthropology and History from the University of North Dakota. Following this, I moved to Boulder, Colorado where I spent 4 years earning an MA in Anthropology. I ended up back in North Dakota where I studied for, and received a Master’s in Public Health (MPH).

I am currently earning a PhD from the UEA Faculty of Medicine and Health developing a new DNA sequencing-based method for diagnosing and tracing the spread of Tuberculosis; a far cry from my early career as a historian and anthropologist studying primate/human interactions.

In my personal life, I enjoy amateur photography, scuba diving, and reading.

Heritage League to Norwich June 9-14, 2019

Registration Deadline: March 30, 2019

The Heritage League goes ‘across the pond’ for our visit and annual convention this June. We have room arrangements at The Maids Head Hotel, where we stayed in 2014, and have many exciting events planned.

- Evensong at The Norwich Cathedral followed by a Welcome Reception in the Weston Room at the Cathedral on Sunday June 9. The cathedral construction began in 1096 and completed in 1145 with the Norman tower still shining high above the city. The spire is 315 feet tall and the second tallest in England.
- On Monday, June 10, we will have our Annual Business Meeting including election of Officers in The Forum. After the meeting you can visit the the 2nd Air Division Memorial Library. The Memorial Library is a living memorial to honor the casualties of those in the 2nd Air Division. We will also have a special film showing on life during WWII for you should you be interested.
- Monday evening we are invited to dinner to the Salle Park Estate as guests of Sir John White. The estate has a working farm and several beautiful gardens.
- The highlight of our trip will be our Base Day. On Tuesday, we will visit four of the WWII bases near Norwich. Our dear friend, Colin Mann from Norwich, is working hard to make sure that we make the most of this important day.

Old Buckenham 453rd Bomb Group
Hardwick 93rd Bomb Group

Hethel 389th Bomb Group
Seething 448th Bomb Group

If your bomb group is not listed above, we will be more than happy to put you in touch with the base con-

tact. You can make the necessary arrangements with the base contact to visit your base on our free day, Thursday, June 13.

- Wednesday we will have one of our optional excursions. We will take a steam train between Holt and Sheringham. Holt is a small market town of 3,800. Sheringham is a seaside town whose motto is Mare Dicit Pinusque Decoret, Latin for "the sea enriches and the pine adorns." The town boasts a traditional high street with a wide variety of privately-owned shops, coffee shops, restaurants and pubs.
- We have left Thursday, June 13 open with the exception of our annual banquet that will be held in the Minstrel Room at the Maids Head in the evening. There are many things to do in and around Norwich. You can tour Sandringham Estate, the Norfolk retreat of HM The Queen, tour The Norfolk Broads, a system of inland waterways in the historic county of Norfolk, shop in the Norwich Market, an outdoor market consisting of over 200 stalls, rest, relax, etc.
- Friday we have another excursion to St. Paul's Cathedral in London. We will take the bus from Norwich to St. Paul's. We have arranged hotel rooms very near St. Paul's should you choose to stay in London or you can return to Norwich on the bus. Tours of the Cathedral have been arranged followed by a service, just for us, in the American Memorial Chapel. At the heart of the chapel, you will find the 500 page, leather bound book – the roll of honor of the 28,000 Americans who were stationed in the UK who gave their lives throughout WWII. The book was unveiled in 1958 at a service to dedicate the Chapel.

Rooms will be available at the Maids Head Hotel, Tombland, Norwich, Norfolk, NR3 1LB, with a discounted rate, beginning Saturday, June 8. Please contact the Maids Head directly to make your reservations. Your room reservation must be made no later than **April 15, 2019**. Be sure to mention Heritage League convention **contract ID 2676** to get the discounted rate. Speak with Melissa 9-5 pm UK time. Please note that breakfast is included with your room.

Call from US 011-44-160-327-2007

Fax 011-44-160-361-3688.

Email: reservations@maidsheadhotel.co.uk.

If you choose to stay in London after the St. Paul's trip, we have room arrangements at The Grange St. Paul's Hotel, 10 Godliman Street, London, EC4 5BD. This is located beside St. Paul's Cathedral. Reservations should be made directly by **May 15, 2019**. Mention the Heritage League **Group ID 140619N** for the discounted group rate.

Call from US: 011-44-207-074-1000

Fax: 011-44-207-074-1110.

Email: stpauls@grangehotels.com.

You will need to make your own travel arrangements to and from England. Amsterdam is a short connection to Norwich. From most major airports in the US, you can fly nonstop to Amsterdam. You can also fly to London and take the train, bus or hire a car to Norwich.

We hope that we have given you reason to want to join us in England in June. We are excited about this trip and would love to have you join us.

Questions? Contact Marybeth Dyer, smbdyer@sbcglobal.net or Irene Hurner, ihurner@sbcglobal.net.



Our Norwich accommodation is longest in continual operation in the entire United Kingdom but is continually upgraded and very comfortable. Photo: Courtesy of Maids Head Hotel.



Roof terrace view of St. Paul's from our London hotel. Close enough? Photo: Courtesy of Grange St. Paul's Hotel.

2019 Norwich Reunion Registration Form – JUNE 9–14, 2019

Registration deadline: March 30, 2019

names as they should appear on name tags:

relationships to the named 2nd Air Division veteran:

1 _____

this is the contact person for your party

2 _____

3 _____

4 _____

'Your veteran' of the 2nd Air Division _____ their bomb group (s)/unit(s) _____

contact person's email _____ phone (_____) _____

To register additional people, please fill out additional form(s) or contact us for special handling.

ITEM	Price per Person	Number Of People	Total
full REGISTRATION FEE if you did <i>not</i> make deposit	\$250.00		\$
<i>Already sent your deposit? USE THIS LINE instead of above</i>	\$150.00		\$
Sunday -----Cathedral reception		← ←all of these items ←included in the ←registration fee ←	
Monday -----Annual business meeting in Memorial Library			
Monday -----Dinner at Sir John White's			
Tuesday -----Base Day--lunch included – <i>we'll send your menu options soon</i>			
Thursday ---Banquet – menu options later " " " "			
Banquet ONLY – <i>we'll send your menu options soon</i>	\$75.00		\$
Optional Tours			
Wednesday – Train ride to/from Sheringham and Holt	\$35.00		\$
Friday ----- London coach to St Paul's Cathedral – includes boxed lunch on coach	\$75.00		\$
SUBTOTAL			
Add \$15.00 fee <i>per person</i> if using PayPal (credit or debit card)	\$15.00		\$
Payable to Heritage League- TOTAL			\$
EMERGENCY CONTACT information			
Name:	Phone:		

Mail this form to: Sue Risley, Heritage League Reunion, 682 Slade Ave., Eglin IL 60120

If you want to pay through PayPal, please visit our website at heritageleague.org

Hotels: please make hotel reservations yourself.

Reservations at the ***Maids Head Hotel*** should be made by calling – 011 44 1603 272007 to request rooms for the Heritage League Convention-our group ID is: **2676**. Talk with Melissa- 9am-5pm UK time Monday through Friday or email at reservations@maidsheadhotel.co.uk. Reservations must be made **by April 15, 2019**.

Reservations in London at the ***Grange St. Pauls' Hotel***. To receive the special price, reservations must be made no later than **May 15, 2019**. When calling **011 44 20 7074 1000**, be sure to mention the Heritage League and group ID **140619N** Reservation line is open 8am-8pm UK time.

Questions? Contact Marybeth Dyer – smbdyer@sbcglobal.net or Irene Hurner – ihurner@sbcglobal.net.

We appreciate the generous gifts from members inspired by an individual to whom we are all connected. We wish to thank members who have given the Heritage League recent contributions as follows:

IN HONOR OF...

Donors

Albert H. Biel (453 rd BG)	<i>Rose Biel Lighty</i>
Allan Hallett (389 th BG)	<i>David P. Long</i>
Allan Hallett (389 th BG)	<i>Beverly Baynes Tomb</i>
Perry Kerr (466 th BG)	<i>Beverly Baynes Tomb</i>
Joh Kraeger (466 th BG)	<i>Beverly Baynes Tomb</i>
Burton Madison (453 rd BG)	<i>Deborah Simms-Watson</i>
Elmo Maiden (466 th BG)	<i>Beverly Baynes Tomb</i>
Earl Wassom (466 th BG)	<i>Beverly Baynes Tomb</i>

Heritage League Revised Webpage

Have you gone to our webpage recently?

You will find a new look, friendly to the small touch screens on your smart phones and tablets, created by an awesome professional, volunteering time to give us a modern tool for presenting and upgrading content. Nancy Hildebrandt, a design professional who led several board members through an excellent process of prioritizing and modernizing our content, is a longtime friend of Irene Hurner, and delighted to contribute her initial design time to The League.

It will take time, but Nancy is showing us the simplified ways we can swap out our old pages for new ones, over the coming weeks and months. Nancy's business site <https://simplestorefronts.com/> is worth a visit, especially if you are looking to launch a website, or modernize an existing one. Thank you so much, Nancy!

We will tell you more in the next Herald, but meanwhile, 'look around' now and again at <https://www.heritageleague.org/>.

IN MEMORY OF...

Donors

Nona Allen	<i>Russell Neatrou</i>
Franklyn Bachman (491 st BG)	<i>Helen Bachman</i>
Audrey Griffiths Baynes (WAVE)	<i>Beverly Baynes Tomb</i>
John Henry Baynes (USAAF)	<i>Beverly Baynes Tomb</i>
Richard Calvin Baynes (466 th BG)	<i>Beverly Baynes Tomb</i>
Claire Biel	<i>Mary Cordeiro</i>
Claire Biel	<i>Sara Cross</i>
Claire Biel	<i>Barbara Currier</i>
Claire Biel	<i>Irene Hurner</i>
Claire Biel	<i>Barbara Mello</i>
Francis P. Birmingham (458 th BG)	<i>Karen Cormia</i>
James L. Bruner (466 th BG)	<i>James E. Bruner</i>
C.N. "Bud" Chamberlain (489 th BG)	<i>Dana H. Chamberlain</i>
Robert F. Chapin (389 th BG)	<i>Travis Chapin</i>
Alexander D. Ciurczak	<i>Alexis Ciurczak</i>
Lt. Col Dario A. de Julio (458 th BG)	<i>Diane de Julio</i>
Ralph & Rachel Dimick (448 th BG)	<i>Anna Dimick</i>
Bernard L. Dispenza (389 th BG)	<i>Lee T. Dispenza</i>
Jack Dyson (445 th BG)	<i>Debbie Duke</i>
Bradford Eaton (2AD vet)	<i>William Long (3rd SAD)</i>
Charles Freudenthal (489 th BG)	<i>Helen Freudenthal</i>
Amisa M. Gilpatrick (458 th BG)	<i>Rory Gilpatrick</i>
James V. Goar (392 nd)	<i>Debbie (Goar) Beigh</i>
Jean H. Hallett	<i>Allan Hallett (389th BG)</i>
Robert R. Harvey (491 st BG)	<i>Dorothy Harvey</i>
Paul Ryder Harwood (93 rd BG)	<i>Richard Harwood</i>
Col. James H. Isbell (458 th BG)	<i>Charles Booth III</i>
Bruce Jones (2AD vet)	<i>William Long (3rd SAD)</i>
Bud Koorndyk (389 th BG)	<i>Marsha Peters</i>
Frank & Helen Koza (392 nd BG)	<i>Susan Scavone</i>
Oak Mackey (392 nd BG)	<i>Randall Mackey</i>
Stanley L. Marr (93 rd BG)	<i>John Marr</i>
Samuel Mastrogiacommo (445 th BG)	<i>Joan Mastrogiacommo</i>
Dean Moyer (2AD Hq)	<i>Barbara (Moyer) Coverdale</i>
John H. Nacey (466 th BG)	<i>Susan Nacey</i>
Thomas O'Neill (445 th BG)	<i>Anne O'Neill</i>
Carl D. Peterson (466 th BG)	<i>Robert M. Hammond</i>
Alida Ruesch (Army nurse)	<i>Beverly Baynes Tomb</i>
SSgt Gale M. Rucker (491 st BG)	<i>Major Stephen F. Rucker</i>
Leo W. Ryan (453 rd BG)	<i>Geraldine Suskin</i>
John (Jack) E. Stevens (467 th BG)	<i>Pam Stevens</i>
Wilbur Stites (453 rd BG)	<i>Jeane Stites</i>
Fred A. Strombom (93 rd BG)	<i>Karen Strombom</i>
Stanley Stupski (392 nd BG)	<i>Cathy Stupski</i>
J. Fred Thomas	<i>Terry Johnson</i>
David Eugene Tuckwiller (389 th BG)	<i>Carol Tuckwiller</i>
Charles Yant (448 th BG)	<i>Kathy Jackson</i>

—Folded Wings—

<i>David Greene</i>	04/02/14	392 nd
<i>Walter Morris</i>	05/18/17	453 rd
<i>Norman Felbinger</i>	06/07/17	467 th
<i>Paul Hedges</i>	07/10/17	389 th
<i>Lawrence McNary</i>	10/15/17	389 th
<i>E.A (Rick) Rokicki</i>	01/14/18	458 th
<i>William Davenport</i>	02/10/19	446 th



MISSION BRIEFING

Heritage League Volunteer Program

by Chris Clark, Program Protégé &
Brian Mahoney, VP for Volunteers

Thank you to those who have answered the appeal to use our online Volunteer Form (heritageleague.org/volunteers) Thanks also to Jan de Wilde, who has helped with a research assignment for this Herald, and others who are presently considering specific tasks to which our Volunteers database have matched them. One of our newsletter contributors has offered to be the maintenance webmaster for our revised website, effectively answering the appeal in the previous column.

One friend has come forward with a concept for a program that would have volunteers ‘adopt’ a vet for phone companionship, to operate under Heritage League non-profit auspices; more on this next time!

Still open positions previously described include:

- *Text editors* (1 -3) to refine grammar and expression in articles submitted to Herald
- *Data Manager protégé* to maintain and QC our member data, and serve data needs of Volunteer, Membership, and other VPs
- *Graphic artist(s)* to refine and extend League’s collection of signage, logos, etc., and to convert raster art to vector art
- *Digital records assistant* to Secretary, Data Manager, others needing ‘in-house’ support collecting, organizing, supporting our growing collection of working and historical content
- *Photo editors* (1-3) to tweak photos for *Herald* publication

New ‘wish list’ listings:

- *Assigned researchers* who will help *Herald* staffers find photographs as assigned
- Feel free to contact the relevant officer directly or us (Brian and Chris) for more info. Thanks!

Shopping Alert

The Heritage League is participating in the Amazon Smile program. The idea is simple: you shop AmazonSmile and they donate a portion of the proceeds to the Heritage League of the 2nd Air Division—USAAF.



Here is how it works: visit <http://smile.amazon.com>. Log in with your Amazon account username and password. If you don’t have an account, create one.

Select the (charity) Heritage League of the 2nd Air Division—USAAF.

In the future, whenever you shop Amazon, shop smile.amazon.com, the Heritage League (name) will be on the top.

Best part—every eligible purchase is a donation. It’s easy and we all win. Thanks for the support and KEEP SHOPPING!

history snapshot— this time-frame in 2nd air division's past

—compiled by Doug Dovey
photo: Ron Cole's Aircraft **



- **January 27, 1943. USAAF bombers mount the first all-American mission against Germany, bombing Wilhelmsaven.**
- **February 13, 1945. Royal Air Force Lancasters begin firebombing of Dresden.**
- **February 20, 1944. 'Big Week' begins with an all-out aerial offensive aimed at destroying the Luftwaffe.** *Courtesy of 2nd Air Division Journal, 2012ii Summer, pg 32-33.*

The possibility of good weather in central Germany in February meant that the long-awaited plan called Argument could become reality. The aircraft factories which had been priority targets for so long seemed about to be laid bare.

The weather was not perfect but it was good enough to permit the sustained attacks which gave title to the period after February 20th as "Big Week." During the morning of that cold Sunday, England was blanketed by clouds with snowflakes drifting down onto the broad shoulders of the Fortresses and Liberators in the hardstands. Soon a thousand heavies were airborne bound for a dozen targets deep in Germany. The major force, Second Air Division Liberators following the First Division B-17s headed for central Germany, were accompanied by all available long-range fighter escorts. To facilitate fighter cover, the bombers would stay together until west of Brunswick, then divide to attack their targets and link up again for the flight back. Hindered at some targets by clouds, the operation was still a success and the next day a similar force was dispatched to repeat the dose. The main targets were at Brunswick but weather intervened and the bombing had to be blind. Only the Diepholz air depot was hit as planned and some of the bombers were forced to resort to targets of opportunity.

The Eighth flew its third mission in as many days on February 22, breaching very bad weather to get to the targets. Assembly was so hazardous and so ragged that the Second Division's Liberators were recalled; some B-24s already over the Low Countries sought targets of opportunity and one group mistook Nijmegen for a German town and killed two hundred Dutch civilians.

On February 23, less than ideal conditions over the targets and the need for maintenance and repairs to the bombers caused the Eighth Air Force to stand down but on February 24 the Liberators made amends for their previous mission. They waded through the most savage Luftwaffe interception to that date to bomb their snow-covered targets at Gotha. While a brand new group, the 458th, flew a diversion over the North Sea, the eight B-24 groups set out to destroy the Messerschmitt 110 factories in three unwieldy wing formations. The 2nd Wing went in first and met the enemy fighters over an hour before the target. At the Initial Point the leading 389th Bomb Group aircraft slid off course and released her bombs when an oxygen failure caused the bombardier to fall over his sight and trip the bomb release. The other Sky Scorpions naturally also dropped but the 445th behind them realized it was a mistake and carried on. After they had bombed, they received special attention from the German fighters and in sixty minutes of turmoil, thirteen of their twenty-five aircraft were blasted away. The leading Sky Scorpions lost six.

Behind them, the 14th Combat Wing had been battling with fighters since the Dutch coast. Up front the 392nd Bomb Group planted 98 percent of their bombs within two thousand feet of the aiming point and the Eight Balls added to the good bombing. The mission cost the 392nd seven B-24s.

The final day of Big Week sent the Liberators to Furth and fine weather gave good results before the clouds came back to Western Europe. *[See the Presidential Citation for gallantry during 'Big Week', in this Herald on pg. 10 —Eds]*

- **MARCH 6, 1944. BERLIN—most costly 8th AF mission of the war.** *Courtesy of 2nd Air Division Journal, 2012ii Summer, pg 32-33.*

The Liberators met less opposition than the Fortresses during the March 6th attack on Berlin, the most costly Eighth Air Force mission of the war. Less than two days later the bombers were being readied to go back to the German capital again, but the city was covered by clouds and the enemy fighters stayed on the ground. In the middle of March, the Eighth was able to make its first visual attack since Big Week but the smoke screen at Friedrichshafen on March 18th was so effective that radar bombing was still necessary. Smoke floats on Lake Constance contributed to a screen which completely blanketed the city and the fighters knocked out most of the forty-three bombers which went down. A dozen Liberators landed in Switzerland, a neutral haven for crippled aircraft which received around eighty Eighth and Fifteenth Air Force Liberators before the air war ended.

Another group, the 466th, flew its first mission in March joining the Eighth's attack on Berlin on March 22. This group was suffering casualties which could not be afforded—on the first mission two of its B-24s collided on the way in and the following day two more slammed into one another near Osternburg. On March 27th still two more collided in clouds while assembling, bringing the group's losses to six Liberators in just five days. Perhaps the pilots had let their attention to the job of directing the lumbering bombers ebb, perhaps their training had not prepared them for the conditions, but either way it could not be allowed to happen.

One answer to the assembly problem which a 446th pilot likened to Russian Roulette, was the use of gaudily painted, flare-firing assembly ships. Old war weary Liberators, stripped of their armament and bedecked with lights; the planes in clown makeup at least partially solved a real problem. The 466th received an old and battered veteran from the Travelling Circus called "Ready and Willing" which had survived the low-level mission to Ploesti; they scraped her bare and painted red lightning flashes all along her. But what the 466th really needed was the experience that their Judas goat had in such abundance.

- **March 7, 1945. US troops invade German territory crossing the bridge at Remagen.**
- **May 8, 1945. Victory in Europe Day.**
- **June 6, 1944. D-Day. The 75th Anniversary this June 2019.** *[Herald will print a D-Day air campaign article in the next edition – Eds]*

***[see other fabulous B-24 art prints at: roncole.net/search?type=product&q=b-24—Eds].*

To our 489th Veterans, Families and Friends Greetings from Halesworth England!

by Marjorie Shiers

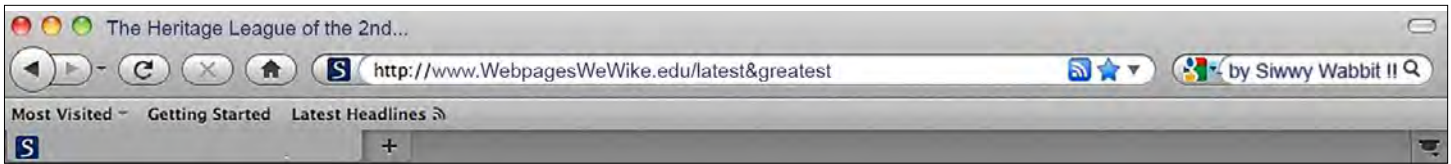
The Remembrance Day Services were held today at St. Peter's Church, Holton, and at the Halesworth Airfield Memorial Site. Our friends from RAF Lakenheath came over to join us for the day and as we walked to the airfield from the church, they read aloud the names of all the American servicemen who lost their lives whilst serving here in Halesworth. Poppy wreaths were laid by these young people on each of the memorials on Holton airfield, to the 56th Fighter Group, to the 489th Bomb Group and to the 5th Emergency Rescue Squadron.

Our connection with RAF Lakenheath came about when Lt. Col Joe Stangl visited the museum and told us his father, the late James Stangl, flew from Holton (Halesworth) Airfield during 1944 on the Shickel Crew (B-24 'We Weary Warriors'). Joe has now gone back to the States and their new commander brought two young airmen with her today to continue our friendship, and for this, we are very grateful. It was an honour for us to have them all with us today.

The day dawned overcast and wet, but before the Remembrance Service began, the sun came out and it became a lovely day. After the short Service at the airfield, refreshments were served inside the warm museum.

We remembered our young Americans today and we will continue to remember them.

With our best wishes, The Friends of the 489th Bomb Group, Halesworth, UK



You can find almost anything, on the ‘net.’ If you are relying on it for factual accuracy, though, be ready to check a variety of resources, and look for citations of official records or known experts. Our interest area, WWII airpower and such, has attracted the whole range of content, from informal ‘family album’ type pages, to scholarly researched stuff, from cited prime sources. We favor those that avoid the urban legend/‘war story’ presented as historical fact. The actual accounts and history of the 2AD bomb groups do not need embellishment or exaggeration. As consumers and producers of web content concerning our inherited legacy, let’s promote the good stuff. In that spirit, here are a handful that are worthy of your time and curiosity.



<http://www.4thfightergruppassociation.org/> This site concerns one of ‘our’ 5 fighter groups, assigned to protect the 2nd Air Division. They have a unique, storied history, as the first personnel were volunteers in the RAF ‘Eagle Squadron’ before The US was in the war, and proved themselves in first Spitfires, then P-47 Thunderbolts, and ultimately were the ‘debut group’ for the P-51 Mustang that was such a huge game changer because it could escort bomber formations to beyond Berlin, and back.

This website is like a nice family album, with a well-organized mix of stories, and photos. They still have an association, now entirely led by ‘second gens,’ and a message board to answer your questions about the group that billed itself as “The Fourth, but First.”



<https://www.b24.net/>. The link opens on the 392nd BG page, recently redesigned by our former Webguy, Executive VP, senior legacy member, ‘idea guy,’ researcher and friend, Bob Books. The layout is logical, clean and inviting, which suits the excellent content; lovingly built over time by a cadre of researchers we are also very happy to call HL members and friends. With its powerful aircrew roster search, this site is a model for any WWII bomb group. Not just a data-rich resource, it is also very ‘approachable’ and enjoyable for all of the photographs it presents. This site tells an accurate, detailed and engaging story of one of the original 8th AF three outfits that went to North Africa, participating in the low level Ploesti raid of August 1, 1943.



<http://eastangliamemorials.blogspot.com/>. Laurie Atkins is an American (and DAR member, like three of our current Executive Committee Members) whose blog represent several years of posts about finding and photographing memorials to USAAF WWII outfits in England. It is quite riveting, and will rev-up your wanderlust, or at least let you do a great deal of enjoyable ‘vicarious travel.’ This is another accessible way to get the compelling picture of just how substantial the ‘Yankee Invasion’ was, and how profoundly their service and sacrifices are still appreciated in the UK. 179 posts offer great photography and principal historical points on a sweeping range of fighter and bomber groups.



<http://www.ukairfields.org.uk>. Richard E. Flagg’s astoundingly extensive collection of present day photography and descriptions of US and British airfields, memorials, primarily in the UK, but also in the US and scores of other countries, is a stunning travelogue. Historian-researchers will appreciate its many linked resources on top of its own varied lists of quantitative information. Casual visitors will be impressed by excellent illustrative photography and Flagg’s substantial labor of love.



<http://www.hardwickfilm.com>. 93rd BG grandson Michael Sellers has nearly finished the final cut of his multi-year documentary, and we hope to see it released in 2019. Inspired by his grandfather, the late John Sullivan, it incorporates interviews, period imagery, and loving views of present-day Hardwick, as visited by vets and members of their association in recent years. Michael is gifted in several roles: his skill at eliciting hard answers is matched by his visual and spoken story telling. Congratulations, Michael; you’ve done Ted’s Traveling Circus proud.



<http://www.2ndair.org.uk/digitalarchive>. The Norfolk Records Office, a world-class, state of the art archival facility in Norwich, is steward to the Second Air Division Memorial Library’s archival collection, and has been continually digitizing images and records to present the fact and feel of the USAAF as individuals and a complex military organization during WW II. This site presents thousands of digital images of their varied holdings.

Renewal / Application for Heritage League

We strongly encourage you to pay through PayPal. It is a safe and secure way for you to pay your membership and contributions. LOG ON TO: heritageleague.org/membership

Otherwise, please mail this page with your check, payable to the Heritage League, to:

Marybeth Dyer, Membership—VP
6410 Valley Oak Plaza, Martinez, CA 94553

NAME _____ SPOUSE _____

ADDRESS _____ TELEPHONE (____) _____

CITY, STATE _____ ZIP _____

E-MAIL _____ @ _____

(If you are receiving the newsletter by email, please make sure you provide your email address above)

NAME of related 2nd Air Division Veteran _____

Their BG or Unit No. _____ Their relationship to you _____

Dues for friends and relatives of 2nd Air Division Veterans, check one:

☐ PDF Newsletter via Email *-provide email address above-* \$20

☐ Printed Newsletter sent by US mail \$30

2nd Air Division Veterans are eligible to be a Honorary Lifetime Member; check one:

☐ PDF Newsletter, via Email *-provide email address above-* \$0 (free)

☐ printed Newsletter via regular mail \$30

(If the cost of the printed newsletter presents a hardship, please let us know)

ADDITIONAL CONTRIBUTIONS

Contribution to the Heritage League operations \$ _____

Contribution to 2nd Air Division Memorial Library (Norwich,UK) \$ _____

Contribution to Flower Fund for Cemeteries \$ _____

If you like, we would be pleased to note your contribution as...

In Memory of (deceased) _____

OR

In Honor of (living person) _____

Questions, please contact: smbdyer@sbcglobal.net TOTAL ENCLOSED \$ _____

VOLUNTEERING YOUR TIME AND TALENT

We are *very appreciative* of the strong fiscal support you have shown for The League and related entities. Would you also be able to share your time and talent with us? At heritageleague.org/volunteers you can fill out a form that lets our expanded Volunteer Program pair you with work that *supports our mission!*

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