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Getting Men and Equipment Home

—by *Annette Tison*, 392nd Bomb Group Memorial Association historian



By late spring 1945, all 392nd Bomb Group Wendling personnel knew it was just a matter of time before Germany surrendered. They were also fully aware that they would return to the U.S., go on leave for 30 days, and then reorganize to defeat Japan.

John Matishowski, 576th Squadron navigator (who later changed his last name to Matt) flew the last mission of the war on 25 Apr 1945. After that, he wrote in his book *Crew Dog*, “The Eighth Air Force had one big job left to do, and that was to get everyone back home as soon as possible. Wendling emptied out quickly as Liberators were ferried back and the Base people and extra flight crews were sent southward by train to make the trip to the U.S. on ships like the Queen Mary. Some navigators like myself were kept behind to join ferry crews for return flights later on. Every night was ‘going away party night’ at the club and some of (continued on page 8)



RMS Queen Elizabeth, built for 2,100 passengers would carry upwards of 15,000 servicemen home and anxious to dock in New York. Photo: Public Domain.

Frank Birmingham—A waist gunner’s missions to end the War

—by *Tom Eisele*



A young Frank Birmingham, in uniform and ready to fly. Photo: Marybeth Dyer.

Frank Birmingham was born in 1924. As with most children of the twenties, he went through the trials of the Great Depression as a growing youngster; then he had to go through the horrors of war as a young adult. His was “the greatest generation,” likely because his generation had the most obstacles put in its way and the most hurdles to overcome.

Frank’s parents, Edward and Ida Birmingham, created a loving family, and a large one, in the Milwaukee, Wisconsin area. Frank had five siblings

(Dolores, Yvonne, Denis, Robert, and Marie). As a young man, Frank was a member of the Boy Scouts, and he played football in high school—pretty standard stuff for a young man of the twenties and thirties.

But then the war came. With its coming, Frank joined the Army Air Corps, entering in July, 1943. His training took him first to Biloxi, Mississippi. This change in climate must have been a bit of a shock for a young man from the Badger state. In one of his letters home, he wrote; *We do a lot of marching and physical training in hot sun without much rest, plus studying in the lecture hall.* Frank was a hard worker, though, and he very much wanted to become a bombardier.

This goal was to prove to be impossible; in fact, it was out of Frank’s control. The Air Corps changed its bombing policy, so that most (continued on page 4)

**Mark Your Calendar—Join our Heritage League
Virtual Reunion Saturday, October 3, 2020 Details on pg. 3**

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

—Marybeth Dyer



Evolution and Technology....
How times have changed with communications from when our Veterans were in East Anglia in the 1940's, and how we are communicating in the present. It's been an amazing transition and evolution.

There were many methods used by the military to communicate in WWII. Here are a few:

- Radio—B24 used a complex intercom system on the plane which linked up all crew members with a headset and throat microphone. Radios were also used as an instant way they could communicate to the ground.
- Telegraph and teletype messages were transmitted as they were keyed and messages were printed when received.
- Mail service was a way for them to get caught up on what was going on at home. It helped boost their morale. Letters going home were censored.
- Telephone served as a way for troops to communicate with one another. It was not always available to communicate with their families.

In 2020, how things have changed. We use the internet (www) to connect our computers for fast look-up. We use cell phones, take them with us wherever we go, and can video chat without leaving our home or office. We can talk to devices like Google and Alexa to

get instant information. Most importantly, our current military members in deployed locations have access to internet, satellite, and cell service for immediate communication with each other and their families far away. Do we write letters as often as we should? How things have changed!!!

Speaking of communication: The Heritage League Executive Board will hold a special event this October on the internet using Zoom. We will have a panel of our WWII veterans, a guided tour of Rackheath airfield (home to 467th BG) along with our Annual Meeting on Saturday, October 3rd. More details are provided in this *Herald*. We will also send a letter to all of our active members with information, details about the schedule and instructions how to join. Our website, www.heritageleague.org will also provide information or you can email your questions to: heritageleagueinfo@gmail.com. We invite everyone to join us.

On a solemn note, we were sad to hear about the passing of Heritage League past president and good friend Billy Sheely Johnson. She was so compassionate and loving. Her contributions to our association were something we will never forget. She honored her father well and earned her place in heaven. We will miss her!

We hope you and your families are staying safe during these uncertain times. We miss seeing you all in person but look forward to seeing you on Zoom this October.

Finally...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.

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Heritage League Special Event

*You are invited to our first **virtual reunion** featuring our WWII Vets, a hosted tour of Rackheath base, and our League's Annual Meeting!*

Our Reunion, using Zoom, will open its doors at **1:00 PM Eastern time, Saturday, October 3, 2020**. By the way, you can also join in by old fashioned telephone (audio only) if your computer, laptop, or smart phone are not available to the internet.

Over the years, many members who were interested in the annual meeting, have not been able to afford the time or cost of coming to our meeting and reunion events. One tiny silver lining with the current COVID-19 pandemic is that the ordinary barriers to your participation are gone. If you have a computer, tablet, or phone; you can join us, and you are kindly invited.

That's it! We have an interesting program planned, similar to what is offered at reunion gatherings to round out our annual meeting. We trust our British friends and supporters will join us as well.

Program Schedule:

1. **Zoom 'conference room' opens—1:00 PM Eastern Time.** The Reunion doors open. Come on in, get settled. Any questions about the event, this is a good time to ask?
2. **Welcome and Introductions—1:15 PM.** Meet your hosts and have a chance for short conversations with others in the group.
3. **Veterans Panel—1:30-2 PM.** Brief accounts from WWII veterans, each telling us about a specific 'thing we should know,' which few of us are familiar with. Veterans will address questions you submit in advance, regarding a specific thing you have always wondered about, but never found an answer for. The chosen queries will be of general interest and focus on the personal experience of Second Air Division men in combat, in support roles, in training, and at ease.
4. **Annual Member Meeting—2:05-2:50 PM.** President Marybeth Dyer and Heritage League officers will report on recent and future activities, and the health of the organization. Active members will vote for approval of the Minutes of the last annual meeting published in the Heritage Herald, Issue 68, pg. 19: <https://heritage-league.org/orig/files/68.pdf>.
5. **Bomb Group Base Guided Tour—2:55-3:30 PM.** Using lots of 'then-and-now' photos and maps, Brian Mahoney and an active explorer 'on the ground' at Rackheath, will show you how to explore and experience physical remnants of the 467th BG's station #145. Ongoing 'digs' and restorations will take you there, and probably whet your appetite to go to 'your' airfield, as soon as conditions allow.



Reunion Veteran's panel dry run. Heritage League reunion committee had a Zoom meeting with Vet Allan 'Bud' Hallett (389th BG) (center) with his nephew David Long and past President Beverly Baynes Tomb, to go over Vets panel discussion ideas. Photo: Doug Dovey.

How to Join Us.

Instructions with more detail will be mailed to members in September, or (if you are an eHerald subscriber) sent in an email message. It will provide you with more details on how to join us with meeting

ID number and password. If you are not on our mail list, you can RSVP by contacting us via our website or email: heritageleagueinfo@gmail.com.

Ahead of time, if you want to orient yourself with easy-to-use Zoom features; go to www.Zoom.us to see their free application by opening the 'RESOURCES' tab at top and select 'Download Zoom client.' Also, there are various tutorials and information on how the forum works. Note: you don't need to pre-download Zoom to attend the reunion. When you supply the meeting ID code, it will automatically install for you.

Other information and Reunion updates will be posted on our Website at www.heritageleague.org. Be thinking of your questions you would like to ask the veterans! Please email them to heritageleagueinfo@gmail.com by October 1st. Please join us, we look forward to 'virtually' seeing you.



(Frank Birmingham...continued from page 1)

planes in a bombing formation dropped their bombs on cue from the lead plane, thus reducing the need for bombardiers. By January 1944, during his continued Air Corps training, Frank had moved to Nashville, Tennessee. While his scores were good enough to gain entry, the quota for bombardiers had already been met.

There was, however, still a pressing need in the Air Corps for men who understood armory and gunnery matters. So, Frank turned his talents toward that field of fighting. In early 1944, Frank was assigned first to the Technical School Squadron at Buckley Field near Denver, Colorado; then he moved to gunnery school in Harlingen, Texas. Frank was learning about guns, bombs, fuses, and the like—all matters crucial to the mission of heavy bombers.

In May 1944, Frank received his Armory-Gunnery wings and a rating as a Corporal. He was no longer an Air Cadet; he had arrived as a military aviator.

Now for a crew. At Chatham Field in Savannah, Georgia, Frank was assigned to a flight crew. He became a staff sergeant in charge of all the armament on the crew's new B24H Liberator. The ship was christened the

Briney Marlin. Frank's crew made the journey over to England in late 1944, where the men became members of the 754th Bomb Squadron of the 458th Bomb Group, located at Horsham St. Faith (Station 123).

Frank's first mission was a big one for the 8th Air Force. It came on Christmas Eve, December 24, 1944, eight days after the beginning of the Battle of the Bulge (December 16, 1944). Hitler's hordes had surprised the U.S. Army with an attack through the Ardennes Forest. For a week, the American soldiers had been pushed back by the Germans, and the U.S. Air Force could do nothing in response because of abysmal weather both in England and over the European continent.

Finally, the weather broke, ever so briefly, with a high pressure system pushing away clouds from southwest Germany, where many of the staging areas for the German army were situated, as well as many Luftwaffe airfields. For the 8th Air Force overall, this was Mission 760, and it called for a maximum effort. All three Air Divisions participated, sending every available plane on this mission. The 1st Air Division dispatched 14 Bomb Groups against multiple targets; the 2nd Air Division

(with which Frank flew, in the 458th BG) sent all operational aircraft against fifteen targets; and the 3rd Air Division sent all operational aircraft as well.

The target for Frank's squadron in the 458th BG was an industrial complex near Schonecken. Despite the forecast of more favorable weather conditions, persistent fog, clouds, and winter freezes made flying difficult. There were multiple accidents in England upon attempted takeoffs and more accidents and near misses over the continent. Many crews and even squadrons had to bomb "targets of opportunity" because their assigned targets simply were indistinguishable through the cloud cover. Frank reported in his personal mission list that this one was "rough." Indeed it was. But the aircrews desperately wanted to do everything they could to support the troops battling on the ground.

On the same mission, but in a different plane with the 458th BG, was Sgt. Donald Shannon, top turret gunner and engineer. He reported the following: *The target today was ground support, designed to break up the German counter-attack into Belgium. ...Finally, we came in and bombed any place there might be concentrations of German troops. Our target was the village of Schonecken. We hit our target hard. Flak was moderate but accurate. We lost two bombers. Coming home, we passed over Luxemburg and Brussels, then back to base on Christmas Eve. [War diary of Donald Shannon, 2nd AD digital archives; digitalarchive.2ndair.org.uk].*

This 8th AF Mission 760 was led by General Frederick Castle, the commanding officer of the 4th Combat Wing. General Castle's bomber developed trouble in the #4 engine over the battlefield and then was set upon by ME-109s. Still carrying a full bomb load, General Castle attempted to divert his plane from crashing near Allied troop lines, but the general and the pilot of the bomber both died in the ensuing crash-landing of their plane. General Castle was awarded posthumously the Congressional Medal of Honor for his brave

leadership.

Not all of Frank's mission were quite so eventful, although of his crew's first eleven missions (through February 22, 1945), nine of them Frank annotated as "rough" or "very rough" in his personal mission list. Very few proved to be "milk runs." Amongst Frank's first eleven missions, his 7th, 8th, 9th, and 10th were all to the same place: Magdeburg. There were tank factories, marshalling yards, and an oil refinery near the vi-



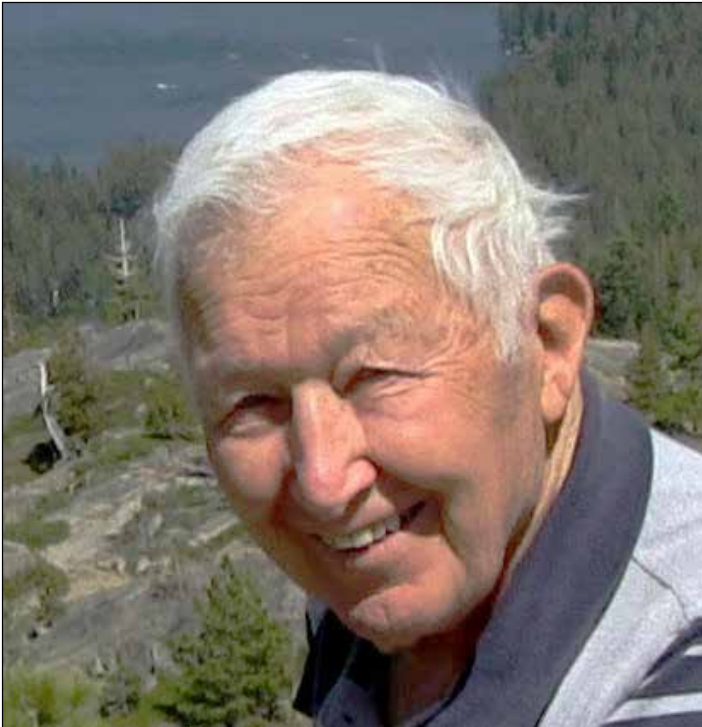
Frank's B-24H crew. (standing, from left to right): L. Rosemann, T. Walsh, B. Everett, G. Shupp (kneeling): F. Birmingham, G. Bake, J. Needham, J. Bradley, J. O'Malley, K. Konkle. Photo: Marybeth Dyer.

cinity of Magdeburg, plus an abundance of flak batteries. (These same missions were, respectively, the 8th Air Force's Mission 796 on January 16, 1945; Mission 817 on February 3, 1945; Mission 821 on February 6th; and Mission 832 on February 15th.)

At this stage in the war, the Battle of the Bulge had been won and the German armies were in full retreat—but not yet beaten. And the Rhine River barrier still needed to be crossed.

On Frank's 8th mission, his squadron was hitting a tank factory and marshalling yards in Magdeburg. Other bomb groups were targeting communication centers and transportation centers. A navigator in the 755th Bomb Squadron of the same group, the 458th BG, reported on this mission flown February 3rd against Magdeburg: *When we got over the target it was cov-*

ered by clouds, so we took a target of opportunity. ... They really had the planes out today, our group put up four squadrons. The flak wasn't bad because of the clouds. [Navigator Charles A. Bosshardt, 458th BG, digital archives; digitalarchive.2ndair.org.uk].



Frank—retired and relaxed. Photo: Marybeth Dyer

Many of the 8th Air Force's planes that same February 3rd were headed to Berlin. Col. Lewis Lyle, commanding officer of the 379th Bomb Group, was the Air Commander of Mission 817 on February 3rd and he reported that there was a bomber stream three to five hundred miles long. ...[T]here were bombers heading to Berlin, practically all the way back to England. It was a very successful mission. (For Frank, it was "rough.")

February 22nd, Frank's 11th mission (8th AF: Mission 841) was special. First, it mobilized more than 1,425 bombers and 860 fighters to hit the German rail and road system as well as airfields, hoping to paralyze the German war machine and stymie its mobility. What was extra-ordinary in the 8th Air Force mission orders was their direction for the planes to bomb from 10,000 feet! This was less than half the altitude of most missions (where bombing was done from 22,000–25,000 feet). It was thought prudent for Mission 841 crews to bomb from such low altitude because the targets were selected as having few or no flak defenses.

On Frank's 11th mission, the 458th BG was part of more than 450 B-24s from the 2nd Air Division attacking over fifteen separate targets. Frank's squadron attacked the marshalling yards at Peine, and Frank not-

ed in his personal mission list that they bombed at 8,000 ft. He called it a "very rough" mission. Their relatively low level bombing height would have made their planes incredibly vulnerable. And yet, the 8th Air Force planners must have known what they were doing, because the 2nd Air Division lost only 4 bombers that day (although another 68 B-24s did suffer some kind of battle damage). Navigator Charles Bosshardt left a record of his thoughts on this unique low level bombing mission:

Something new has been added—today we bombed from 10,000' instead of the usual 22,000'. Of course there wasn't any flak at the target. Today was the first time I've seen our bombs hit.... The 500 pounders make quite a blaze. Smoke and flame really gushed up. The 8th Air Force was all out today. We passed several smoking towns. Our gunners saw one ship get a direct hit in the wing. It blew the wing off, and the ship spun in. There were no chutes. [Navigator Charles A. Bosshardt, 458th BG, 2nd AD digital archives, Ibid.]

Frank's 14th mission, on February 26th, 1945, was to Berlin, the only time his squadron went to that most difficult target. This was another mission that he marked as "rough." More than 1,200 bombers and 725 flights were dispatched by the 8th Air Force on Mission 849, aiming to knock out railroad yards and rail facilities that day. The 2nd Air Division put up 361 B-24s specifically tasked with taking out the North rail station in Berlin. Again, we have the notes left by Navigator Charles Bosshardt, who reported:

Today was the group's 200th mission in less than a year. To celebrate, we hit the 'Big B' – Berlin, with its 600 guns. I wasn't overjoyed by the prospect, but luck was with us, we had 10/10 cloud cover, and went in on instruments. The flak wasn't even near us, thank goodness. [Navigator Charles A. Bosshardt, 458th BG, 2nd AD digital archives, Ibid.] If you can believe it, Bosshardt also noted an amazing deed done in his own bomber: One of our bombs hung up. Scottie, the engineer, went out on the catwalk, and tripped the release with a screwdriver. The brave man was James H. Scott of Idaho.

Although several of Frank Birmingham's 31 missions were "rough" ones, generally speaking, as the war moved into March and April of 1945, most of the missions became easier (relatively so). Men and planes still were lost, of course, but not nearly so many of them as before. For example, on Frank's 20th mission to the marshalling yards in Freidberg (8th AF: Mission 883)

on March 12th, a force of 1,350 Liberators and Flying Fortresses was split, some planes heading toward the Baltic Sea, the others heading to the Rhine River. For the planes, such as Frank's that were bombing rail yards along the Rhine, only one bomber was lost.

Later in March, on Frank's 23rd mission, to the airfield at Leipheim (8th AF: Mission 896), 341 B-24s from the 2nd Air Division took out several Luftwaffe airbases, including an airfield where dangerous jet aircraft (the ME-262 and the ME-163 Komet) had been staged. Again, only one B-24 was lost on this mission. Regarding this mission, on March 19, 1945, Frank's 458th Bomb Group diary gives the following account:

On the 19th we were again favoured with a visual (bomb) run and proved that the eyes of the bombardiers had not lost their keenness after such a prolonged run of instrument bombing. Our hapless victim for the day was the (airfield) at Leipheim, the first (airbase) we have attacked in quite some time. This was the 3rd largest producer of the jet ME-262s therefore (it) warranted some good bombing results. ... Crews reported good to excellent results... . Boy that is bombing accuracy any way one wants to look at it. Now give us a few more visual (bomb) runs and let us show what we can accomplish. [458th BG Combat Diary, 2nd AD digital archives, Ibid.]

The war kept going, of course, and these occasional respites were only that—occasional interludes of relative success when weather conditions and a lack of Luftwaffe opposition made the bombing missions less lethal for the Americans flying those missions. But mostly, men still died, and planes still were lost.

March 21st, Frank's 24th mission was to an airfield at Hesepe. This mission (8th AF: Mission 901) was flown in support of the Allied armies crossing the lower Rhine River. Over 500 B-24s flew on this mission and 21 bombers suffered battle damage. And on March 23rd, Frank's 25th mission, his plane bombed Osnabruck. There were more than 310 B-24s on this mission (8th AF: Mission 908), three of which were lost, and 95 of which returned with battle damage. Frank characterized it as "very rough."

Finally, in April 1945, the bombing campaign came to an end. Frank Birmingham was there, right up to and through the final mission. This was the 8th Air Force's Mission 968, and Frank's 31st, and it took place on April 25th. Frank's squadron bombed

Bad Reichenhall. Their final mission is described in Navigator Bosshardt's notes: "The target was the railroad at Bad Reichenhall, south Germany. It was visual over the continent. We could see a lot of the ruined towns and villages, with buildings burned and blasted to bits." [Navigator Charles A. Bosshardt, 458th BG, 2nd AD digital archives, Ibid.] For the last time, the men returned safely to base at Horsham St. Faith.

All told, the 458th BG had flown 240 missions during the war with 5,760 individual sorties. They dropped 13,204 tons of bombs, and they lost 47 aircraft during that time. Frank Birmingham had been there for 31 of those missions, sweating out the takeoffs, the bomb runs, the landings and all the flak barrages and enemy fighter attacks in between. He was a waist gunner who did his duty, who persevered and who made the long haul home, safe and sound. Nothing flashy, nothing glamorous—just the hard road of doing what is right, not bragging about it, but with the quiet, calm confidence that he had served well his country.

I suppose that there also may have been a certain satisfaction—even fascination—with the wonders of flying (we don't know, since we don't have many notes or any diaries from Frank B. on which to base our speculations). There is, however, this wonderful piece of reporting from Sgt. Donald Shannon, another member of the 458th BG, who shared some of the same missions with Frank Birmingham. Sgt. Shannon leaves us with this impression of the spectacular experiences, not of war, certainly, but of the sheer joy of peaceful, serene flying:

I should mention...the fantastic clouds we flew thru today. One of the real compensating joys of flying, even combat flying, is the days when the huge billowing clouds form deep valleys into which you can fly, free to enjoy the beauty of the cloud formations around you, relatively free from fighter attacks. Today was such a day, with the sun shining down from above, as we wove our way home down those beautiful cloud valleys. Everyone who has flown will know the beauty and joy I am describing. [Sgt. Donald Shannon, 458th BG, 2nd AD digital archives, Ibid.]

Editors note: Frank was the father of our Heritage League president Marybeth Dyer. He folded his wings in 2016.

Printed with permission of *Forward in Flight* magazine, Spring 2020.

(Men & Equipment Home...continued from page 1)



This photo, taken during one of the experimental passenger flights that led to the successful Operation Home Run, shows just how tightly-packed the B-24 was with only 10, or one quarter as many as those in the initial trial runs. Photo: 392nd BGMA.

them got pretty wild as the pressure relief valves blew. The parties got smaller and smaller and as I awaited my orders, I managed to attend most of them.”

SUPPORT UNITS GET READY

According to *Headquarters and Base Services Squadron May 1945 history*,

“As the month opened all the personnel of the outfit were making wagers and sitting on pins and needles awaiting the end of the war. That is, the declaration of VE day in Europe. We all waited tensely and lost many a good pound sweating it out. Strangely enough when the actual proclamation itself arrived on the 8th of May most of the fellows shrugged their shoulders and then waited for news as to what in the hell would happen to us and when would we go to the Pacific. Most of the men did not celebrate the end of the war as all they saw and could think was that as far as a Yank was concerned the war was not over and that we would go fight our own war in the Pacific.”

The 653rd Air Materiel Squadron history notes:

“The 15th of May [1945, we were] alerted along with the other Service Group Squadrons and the Bomb Group for return to the Zone of Interior [the USA]. This one order was the one we’ve worked and waited for, for two long years. The joy was unanimous: Everyone was now in a fever. One meeting followed another; one teletype changed or rescinded the previous one. The men now worked both day and night crating and packing supplies and equipment. Hangar #1 was set up as a central place for preparing material for shipment. A space was allocated to each squadron as a work area, a power saw was placed in the center of the hangar for the use of all squadrons. A supply room was set up for the issue

of redeployment materials. On the 31st of May, we were paid in good old American greenbacks. All British currency was converted to U.S. currency. We were all happy.

“By the 4th of June all preparations for movement had been completed. Supplies had been disposed of, TAT equipment was boxed, files disposed of, show down of clothing completed and shortages filled. We were then just ‘Sweating it out.’ ”(653rd equipment intended To Accompany Troops included the essential items they had to bring with them in order to function as soon as they arrived in the Pacific. A “showdown” was an inspection of a soldier’s (or airman’s) gear by a senior enlisted man or officer to ensure it was all present and in a usable status.) Station Ammunition Officer Charles E. Dye also noted, “All of the bombs, fuses, fins and other ammunition had to be inspected and packed for ocean shipping to the Pacific. This was tedious work as we dared not get careless. We had lived through the war so we did not want to get killed packing up for shipment.”

Air Engineering Squadron. The 465th Sub Depot, now part of the 829th Air Engineering Squadron, was “busier than hell,” according to its historian, 1st Lt. George L. Griffith. “The historic month of May will long be remembered by men in the ETO and especially by men of the 829th. The 829th, having spent the latter part of April getting activated and organized for war against the enemy in Europe, found itself, during the month of May, doing an about face and preparing for warfare against the enemy in the Pacific.

“On the 15th of the month the 829th received the news for which it had been waiting ever since coming overseas. This was the official notification that the 829th was being redeployed to another theater through the States. This means a thirty day furlough at home. This was wonderful news for the men, especially for those who have been overseas for almost three years.

“The 829th became a beehive of activity almost immediately. Modifications to aircraft were completed, hangar #2 broke all records in building new engines to insure perfect performance of aircraft redeploying by air. Packing and uncrating were started at once. All equipment not being used was packed first and other machines and tools packed when their operation needs dictated. Hangar #1 was cleared as soon as all planes were modified and a central packing and crating factory was established. The carpentry shop kept the power saw busy day and night cutting lumber for all organizations.

“By the 26th of the month packing was well along. On that date all Quartermaster, Chemical, Engineer and Signal items were shipped out to their respective depots. By the 30th of the month all Air Corps equipment had been loaded on freight cars and was ready for shipment to the depot. By the 1st day of the month all equipment which was to accompany troops was packed and ready, all men were processed, both for clothing, physical exams, records, and the outfit as a whole was ready to go. Since receiving the movement orders the men have worked both night and day in preparation for the move and have demonstrated the same skill, efficiency and close cooperation which was characteristic during the time when maximum effort was needed to meet operational requirements for the aerial offensive against the Reich.

“Another morale booster came on pay day. Instead of being paid in English Sterling, the men were paid in good old American ‘cabbage.’ From the expression on the men’s faces, you could see that besides being glad of just being paid, they were glad to get a pock-



2nd Lt. Cranson's very excited passengers as they anticipate getting back to American soil for the first time since they went into combat. Photo: 392nd BGMA.

et full of our own currency.”

FLYERS GET READY

Black Widow Flights. Meanwhile, crew chiefs and mechanics worked feverishly to get the planes in shape for their return trips to the US. The 392nd conducted at least two experiments (called “black widow flights”) to determine just how many men and how much luggage could be crammed into a B-24 while still leaving it air-worthy.

On 4 May 1945, 578th Squadron radio operator Tom Edgington later recalled, pilot-in-charge Maj. Harley Sather “made a test flight to determine the feasibility of carrying 40 passengers plus crew of 10 on

returning to the USA in a B-24.” This sortie “lasted about 8 hours, making four round trips from the base to Liverpool. The fifth round trip was canceled when it was determined that the plan was not feasible.” Two days later, Maj. Myron Keilman, 579th Squadron CO, flew 10 hours with 45 men, each with 65 pounds of luggage.

Undoubtedly because of the lessons learned during these sorties, when 74 Liberators eventually departed from Wendling—carrying more than 700 combat airmen and 615 ground crew—none had more than 20 men aboard.

On Our Way!

Some of the crews aboard those planes had flown dozens of missions. Others—like five crews ordered to the 392nd BG on 19 Apr 1945—saw Germany only on “trolley missions” in early May, when they flew ground crew personnel at low level over the defeated land, so they could see what their hard work on the ground had enabled the combat men to do in the air.

Departing airmen and passengers were ordered to “proceed on or about 28 May 1945 via Valley (Wales) by best available air route to Bradley Field, Windsor Locks, Connecticut, thence to Camp Miles Standish, Boston, Port of Embarkation.”

Several memoirs specifically mention the trip home. 577th Squadron gunner Dick Esenwein recalled, “We took with us all our equipment and six ground crew with their equipment. We flew to Valley, Wales, and stayed a couple of days. We were flying this old war weary plane and all we saw sitting there were brand new B-24 planes by the hundreds.”

H. Bruce McClellan. In his memoir, 578/9th Squadron pilot H. Bruce McClellan wrote, “The telephone message came when I was in London. ‘Captain, you’re headed home in two days. You had better get back to the base tonight.’

“It didn’t take me long to reach Wendling, turn in to the Quartermaster the night field glasses and .32 caliber carbine which I had purloined and hidden in my footlocker and complete the required paper work... As the senior Staff officer available I was to carry in a carefully sealed bag the orders for the group to fly to the States. We climbed aboard with a consignment of passengers and headed for the embarkation field in Valley, Wales. ‘You can’t go today,’ said the weather officer. ‘Iceland is closed in solidly and probably will be for two or three days.’ ‘What about the Azores?’ I asked, knowing that the ‘great circle’ route across the North

Atlantic could be navigated either by way of Iceland or the Azores. 'Well, I suppose you could do that,' was the response...and nothing could have prevented our immediate take off.

"So there we were at an Air Force Officers' Club on the Azores drinking cold American beer. And there we stayed for a week while the weather closed in on us. Eventually we were free to fly to Gander—a very different crossing from the east bound flight in July of 1944. In bright weather we cruised on autopilot, and I smoked a pipe and read *Crime and Punishment*. We were going home!

"From Gander we angled southwest along the coast towards Bradley Field, near Hartford, Connecticut. Looking at the chart I realized that our course would take us near Deerfield (in Massachusetts, site of the premier college preparatory school attended by both McClellan and his father. The two also attended William's College in nearby Williamstown. This area was therefore very special to him.)"Over Keene, New Hampshire, we broke into the clear and began to let down on a southerly heading. Finally I picked out familiar landmarks just north of Greenfield and headed down the Deerfield River. Suddenly we were directly over the (Deerfield Academy) campus with the school buildings under our left wing.

"Banking sharply, I turned up over 'The Rock' and circled to return to the campus where I could see the American flag, the school band, stands full of spectators, and baseball teams about to start what I realized must be the traditional Commencement Day game. I increased the RPM and shoved the throttles forward as we did a chandelle (a controlled aircraft maneuver where the pilot combines a 180 degree turn with a climb) as an acrobatic salute. We flew on to Bradley Field, where we landed in a great crush of returning planes. While we had been weather bound on the Azores, others had flown through by way of Iceland, and I couldn't find anyone to take the sealed bag of orders which I had thought were so important. A thirty-day home leave came next, but...I'm home."

McClellan's son Rob comments, "Deerfield is about 30 miles north of Bradley Field and must have been almost directly on the flight path. I can only imagine the glee Dad felt when he realized he'd have the opportunity to 'greet' his former teachers and administrators on his way past. I have heard it made quite a stir, and I can only imagine the sight and sound of a low altitude B-24 pass. It is wonderful to think of the smile

that must have been on his face as he made those passes over Deerfield."

Walt Cranson. In *My Combat Diary*, 26 Jan – 6 June 1945, 578th Squadron copilot Walt Cranson wrote that he spent some time the morning of 31 May 1945 straightening up his hut. He and fellow copilot Frank E. Moser Jr. "got the place fairly well cleaned up but undid our results with our putting .50 caliber shells in the stove. Boy they made a racket—and smoke and flame! Stood in the door watching each time shells put in the stove. Hmm! About 9:25 they started screaming, '10:00 take off—hurry up!' so, like mad we catch a truck, round up last belongings and off to the plane."

Pilot 1st Lt. Thomas N. Sisson, Cranson, and their crew flew home aboard #44-50542, Agony Wagon. Cranson recalls, "Took off for Valley, Wales at 10:00 (English time) trying to beat a front moving in there. Had a screwy take-off with the load and 11 passengers...but made it. Nice trip. Saw Stone (our first camp in UK) and several nice towns. Last look at England... out around the mountains—over Irish Sea and then south to Valley."

The next morning, the two pilots, navigator 2nd Lt. Donald J. Greening and radio operator T. Sgt. Robert L. Strausburgh attended a briefing on "weather, route, loading and navigation." Afterward, Cranson "got the boys and ship ready. Dug into bags for all the electric suits we had—and heavy clothing for our altitude assigned 8,000-10,000 ft. and I know it'll be cold for the passengers anyway. Got 'em fixed up best I could..." Cranson notes that his plane carried "3 sacks of mail, 5 boxes of K-rations, 3 five gallon cans of water, 11 passengers, 9 crew members, 28 pieces of luggage and 2,750 gallons of gas, for a total weight of 61,015 pounds on take off."

They flew first to Iceland, where they spent the night, then on to Greenland. "Soon we see the tremendous fields of solid ice and snow, as far as can see—level and white. Icebergs look green—much floating ice as we entered the coastline. Over the middle now—lots of rocky-bare peaks and valleys. Navigator spots the field nestled below and we begin the descent. I've never seen anything so breathtakingly beautiful in all my life. Blue water in endless valleys, greenish white icebergs floating there, green/grey hills, peaks, blue sky and white splotches of snow on peaks & crevices, a waterfall here as we circle down to traffic altitude (2,000 ft). And there—man's little effort—a little white two-strip landing field just under one mountain and reaching into the Fjord and river...so pretty!!

“It was warm enough that one of the crew went wading and Cranson even “sunned about 4 hours.” At a 4 pm briefing, it was learned that they wouldn’t be taking off right away as they’d hoped. Instead, Cranson was told “the sad tale of their filling our gas tanks with dirty gas! Ran in some old rusty stuff out of barrels that had sat around 2 years—several fistfuls of slime had accumulated in nozzle of hose, etc. Boy, that burnt us up... lucky we caught it.”

After chow, Cranson “went down to ship and tried to get them busy emptying the full 2,700 gallons and flushing and re-filling. Was some 2 or 3 hours getting started. And then the very slow process draining thru those tiny pipes after siphoning out the most of it. I was still busy overseeing this...and everybody else starts take-off. For 3 hours we wait while it slowly drains out. Drip-drip-drip (it seems that slow).” Finally, all was ready and the Sisson crew and passengers took off about 3 or 4 hours after the others. Eight hours later, they landed at Bangor, Maine, on 3 June 1945. It was four months to the day since the Sisson crew had left the USA for England.

Three days later, they took off on their last leg, to Bradley Field, Connecticut. Cranson noted that they “Circled (crew chief M. Sgt. Arthur H. Knipe Jr.’s) hometown (Haverhill, Massachusetts) and the boys threw out 5 rolls of toilet paper in various forms...he really went wild when he saw his house...yelled like mad.... Sure glad we could do it for him—he enjoyed it—and naturally I did!”

RMS QUEEN MARY

Most of the 392nd BG returned to the US aboard RMS Queen Mary. Per *New York Times* reporter George Horne in a 21 Jun 1945 article, “A gallant lady

of the sea, her gala pennants flying and her deep horn blasts resounding across the city, came up the bay yesterday to land the largest single contingent of American fighting men and women to come home from the wars.

“She was the Queen Mary, giant 81,235-ton liner of Britain’s ‘merchant navy,’ and packed through her decks and labyrinthine cabins and compartments were 14,526 Americans—men of the Air Forces, dogfaces of Europe’s million foxholes, WACS, Medical Corps men, naval officers, Army nurses and seamen. All were



RMS Queen Elizabeth, built for 2,100 passengers would carry upwards of 15,000 servicemen home and anxious to dock in New York Harbor on 20 June 1945 with thousands of American soldiers and sailors aboard. “Among the first and liveliest troops to debark,” according to an article by Betty Moorsteen in PM, “were 150 members of the 392nd Bomber Group. Photo: Public Domain.

bound for furloughs at home and most of them for more fighting in the war on the other side of the world.... One by one the weary and hot companies marched down, their duffles touching end to end. At the bottom of the planks they were checked out on lists, and then formed in lines to await transportation. The two hospital units (the 112th and 107th General Hospitals, which served in England) went to Camp Kilmer, New Jersey, by bus and train. Then came an air service group and several air engineer squadrons. They were followed by the headquarters and base service squadron. All went to Camp Shanks, New York.

“Five bombardment squadrons, numbering more than 700 men, came down and filed off the end of

the pier to the (steamer) Sandy Hook, which was to take them up river for transfer to Camp Shanks. As the night wore on more hospital detachments, service squadrons and other units filed down, gratefully partook of the inexhaustible supply of milk, coffee and doughnuts brought to the pier by the Red Cross Emergency Canteen's unprecedented staff of 100 workers and then set out together on the next lap of the journey toward home.

"They came as they went, but under different circumstances. When they left, most of them two years or more ago, they rode from Kilmer, Shanks and other deployment stations in darkened trains, marched silently onto the piers and into the blacked out vessels waiting to sail. Last night there were lights and music, and brighter prospects.

"The Queen was commanded by ruddy-faced Commodore Sir James G.P. Bisset, ranking skipper of the Cunard White Star Line. Thousands of tourists remember Commodore Bisset, who was knighted for his war service. More thousands knew the Queen Mary before her ten miles of red carpet were rolled up and packed away, before her partitions were altered for more serious duty and she steamed out of New York on the morning of March 21, 1940, wearing battle dress of gray. Since that day the Mary and her sister, the Queen Elizabeth, have carried 1,243,538 soldiers, most of them across the Atlantic. They are bringing them back now, and yesterday's voyage was the first wave in the returning tide."

In another article two days later, *The New York Times* proclaimed "The Mary Did Her Bit." An unnamed author noted that "The luxury liner Queen Mary, launched in 1934, was built to carry 2,100 passengers at a speed of about 32 knots. But another kind of destiny was in store for her. Instead of 2,100 passengers traveling in style, she carried loads of 15,000 or more traveling to get where their services were urgently needed.

"The most amazing feature of the story (Commodore Bisset) told reporters was its lack of narrow escapes. The Mary never saw a submarine, never fired her guns at a foe and was never fired upon. The Italians sank her once, but only on paper. The nearest she came to action was two years ago when a geyser spouted up 300 feet off her beam near the British Isles, but no harm came to her. No one was ever washed off her decks. No American soldier died of any cause aboard her. But going to sea all alone, relying on her speed for safety, she was ready for what might come. She is a modern vessel, complete with all the up-to-date gadgets, but we know that what took her through every danger was an old-fashioned thing—the heart of oak in captain and every member of the crew. Half a million American families have reason to be grateful to those British seamen who carried our boys safely over the great waters."

—By permission, courtesy of 392nd BG Memorial Association. Edited for space.

News from the American Library

Library Refurbishment and Progress



The Memorial library closed on February 10, 2020 for a planned redevelopment. The relaunch as the new American Library was postponed from last April due to the COVID-19 pandemic.^h

Libraries all over the UK are now reopening in line with legislation and Government guidance. This enabled work on the American library refurbishment to recommence in July 2020. We are now working towards a reopening date in line with COVID Safe working. Our team has started to slowly return to work at the library where we are now working very hard to process lots of books and get them on our shelves, configure our new office space and make sure the library is a warm and welcoming place for the return of customers.



New Library furnishings. The B-24 Witchcraft high in the background overlooks the seating arrangement along the back wall. Graphics, posters and photographs will also be installed. Unfortunately, due to COVID-19 restrictions, all seating will be removed and stored until further notice. Photo: American Library photo.

Programs

We've worked with our colleagues in the Norfolk Heritage Centre to bring audiences a new podcast series "Conversations with Strangers." We've used the video footage of the 2008 2nd Air Division Association Reunion in Dallas. In that year the library, with funding from the U.S. Embassy in the U.K., supported students from the local Arts University in Norwich to attend the reunion and interview veterans. These have been available on our YouTube channel for many years and are now available as a podcast here: <https://thenorfolkheritagecentrepodcast.wordpress.com/>.

Our Trust Librarian, Orla, was featured as a guest on the University of East Anglia Library podcast and you can listen to that here: <https://soundcloud.com/user-155391441/libpod-episode-3-the-american-library>.

Our enquiry service has continued remotely and we are excited to be assisting in research for two new memorials to the 2nd Air Division in East Anglia. Please make sure to get in touch on: americanlibrary@norfolk.gov.uk if there is anything we can do to assist your own research.



Library entrance as seen from main library atrium. Note the new Library banner on entry wall. Furnishings await installation. Photo: American Library photo.

You'll also regularly hear from our American Team Members on our YouTube channels and on Facebook as they bring us recommendations in our "Reading America" series. Margaret and Danielle, the 2019-2020 scholars were joined in this project by Dr. Linda (McCarthy) Sheppard who was a library scholar in 2015-2017 and has remained on our team as a casual library and information assistant. The books they are recommending can be borrowed locally here in Norfolk but are also certainly available through your local public library in the USA.

Our digital archive, containing 30,000 original photographs, letters, memoirs and other documents, is available as normal at: <http://digitalarchive.2ndair.org.uk>. Books from our collection as well as the wider Norfolk Libraries catalogue can be borrowed as e-books. We are still active on Facebook and Twitter, too. You can also email us at: americanlibrary@norfolk.gov.uk.

American Scholar Interns

Margaret Sessa-Hawkins has been reappointed and will re-join us from September. Margaret is a journalist from Washington D.C. who is completing her research into Afro-Politan literature at the School of Literature, Drama and Creative Writing.



Margaret Sessa Hawkins returns for a second year and still celebrating World Series champs Washington Nationals. Photo: American Library photo.

Our new scholar, Suzanne Solomon will join us for 1 year from October. Suzanne is a postgraduate researcher in crime fiction with a background in law and publishing. She was born in Miami, Florida, obtained her juris doctor from the University of Florida, and, after a successful career as a legal editor and writer (both staff and freelance) in New York, moved to Norwich in September of 2019 to pursue her PhD in creative-critical writing at the University of East Anglia. Her stories have been published in the anthologies *Cutting Edge: New Stories of Mystery and Crime by Women Writers*, *New Jersey Noir*, *Jewish Noir* and other collections and crime fiction magazines in print and



Suzanne Solomon joins us for the upcoming year. She moved to Norwich in September of last year to pursue her PhD in creative-critical writing at the University of East Anglia. Photo: American Library photo.

online. Her thesis is a feminist re-examination of the femme fatale figure in noir fiction and a novel about a trio of teenaged grifters reunited as adults.

We have been working to recruit our next pair for the University of East Anglia American Library Scholarship. We've made some changes to the format of the scholarship and the incoming scholars will now spend a full year rather than an academic year with us at the library. We had intended to continue the 1 year PhD scholarship for one student, and also offer a scholarship to one student for the entire duration of their three year university program. Unfortunately, the pandemic has made recruitment from the USA difficult and we are once again appointing two 1 year scholars for this year.

In other staffing news, our long standing Library Manager, Jenny Christian, retires in September 2020. Jenny will work her last day at the library on September 21st. We are sad to lose her but send her our very best wishes for her retirement. Jenny will share some reflections on her time with the library with us before she leaves, and the library is happy to pass on any well wishes to Jenny.

The Governors of the Memorial Trust of the 2nd Air Division USAAF and the staff team look forward to welcoming you all to the new American Library in the future, and will keep you informed of progress. Latest updates can be obtained at our new webpage at: <https://www.americanlibrary.uk>.

Renovation Update from the 2nd Air Division Memorial Trust Governor

Unfortunately, I am still not able to give you any date for opening the American Library but you will know



Inside Library entrance. Here the B-24 model was previously suspended from the ceiling. Photo: American Library photo.

that parts of the Millennium Library and a number of libraries in the County are now open on a limited basis. There has been a lot of work going on be-

hind the scenes in American Library.

The building work for the project is drawing to a close. The works are complete apart from 2 large glass panels



The B-24 now flies above new cabinets. Touch screen displays will be located throughout. Photo: American Library.

and some of the associated manifestations and this work should be completed by 15 August. The furniture and fit out is complete apart from 2 minor pieces of touching up. The books are back and the staff have been arranging them. Unfortunately however, the majority of the new furniture we have bought will

have to be stored as there will be no seating areas in the Library for the foreseeable future, and live meetings are currently prohibited.

The graphics, posters and photographs will be installed. The display blinds for the meeting room are being printed and will be installed in the next few weeks. The audio visual displays are almost complete and can be uploaded from a data stick very quickly. We are exploring other ways of making the audio visual content more accessible in this CV-19 world, including installing audio jacks so that people can use their own headsets.

In summary, the refurbishment should be finished by the time of this publication. The Library Service has planned opening the next tranche of libraries on 4 August. The American Library, however, will not open until refurbishment work is completed, hopefully, by the end of August, and after a health and safety audit.

I would like to record my thanks to Richard Hill for all the work he has done over the duration of the project, especially dealing with the extraordinary conditions we have found ourselves in during the last 4 months. Throughout, he has remained calm, approachable and focused to make sure the project was completed as soon as possible. We were reluctant to let him go in August, but we have to move on and take ownership of the American Library that he has enabled on our behalf. Thank you Richard.

When we have a better idea about a possible opening date we can decide how to mark it. We hope to have some kind of virtual event/events, perhaps with a live blessing from the Bishop with a small 'crowd' at some stage.

Regards,
Richard Middleton, Trust Governor, July 2020

Heritage League Bids Farewell to Jenny, Indispensable American Library Manager



Jenny Christian retires on September 30th from her role as Trust Library Manager, American Library, with her last working day on Monday September 21, 2020. The members of the Heritage League will miss her very valuable presence. In her own words:

I would like to take the opportunity to say what a privilege it has been to work in such a unique library promoting American Life and Culture and honouring the 2nd Air Division. It has been a pleasure to work with three Trust Librarians, library staff and a number of Trust Governors over the last 22 years. I have enjoyed meeting many veterans over that time and listened to accounts of what 'their war' was like.

Whilst their experiences may have differed,

they all shared an enduring fondness for Norfolk, its people and the 'Living Memorial.'

I wish these last few months could have been spent working in American Library as planned but I have appreciated the involvement I have had over the last two years as plans have developed, and it has been possible to form an idea of just how impressive the 'new' library will be when the doors are finally able to open. I have a separate seven hour contract with the Library Service and intend to work one day a week for the time being so I will still be able to keep up with American Library!

I wish you, your fellow Trust Governors and staff of American Library all the best for the future.

Yours sincerely,

Jenny Christian



Memorial Library Staff at the then new 2009 enquiry desk. Seated: Tom McKeown and Lesley Fleetwood. Standing: Jenny Christian (left) and Libby Morgan, long serving predecessor to Orla Kennerly, current Trust Librarian. Photo: via Libby Morgan.

Kids Corner! Word Search

Please share this with children to continue our legacy and begin enlightening them about their ancestry and the Second Air Division in World War II. The mission of The Heritage League is to educate our next generations about the sacrifices of our ancestors of the Bomber and Fighter Groups of the Second Air Division in England during World War II.

G	X	M	V	M	O	P	I	R	A	U	A	O	Y	C	E	G	O	R	Z
L	I	B	E	R	A	T	O	R	V	I	I	B	N	R	A	M	E	W	N
E	K	L	T	I	W	T	D	E	G	T	R	I	O	L	A	I	O	G	P
A	O	R	E	H	A	S	T	S	R	Z	P	F	F	M	D	R	X	H	D
G	C	U	C	G	R	E	F	U	L	X	L	H	O	L	B	H	B	M	N
U	E	J	I	O	R	B	X	H	S	M	A	N	O	R	P	E	F	I	A
E	S	V	N	A	P	V	P	T	A	A	N	S	K	I	C	F	R	U	L
H	A	R	N	Q	E	G	A	T	I	R	E	H	L	J	I	E	N	M	G
N	B	S	N	O	R	W	I	C	H	Y	V	O	Q	J	U	Y	O	F	N
O	S	T	A	R	W	H	Q	S	F	Z	T	Q	P	C	B	R	M	U	E

Find these words looking across, up, down or diagonally.

1. The men and women were members of the **AIRFORCE**.
2. Do you know what **AIRPLANE** our veterans flew?
3. The men and women lived on a **BASE** while in England.
4. Many flew on a **BOMBER**.
5. The 2nd Air Division was based in **ENGLAND**.
6. Do you fly a **FLAG** at your house?
7. The **HERITAGE** League honors the veterans.
8. **HERO**—the name we give to our veterans.
9. Do you think the veterans were glad to be **HOME** after the war?
10. The Heritage **LEAGUE** are volunteers; do you want to help?
11. The B-24 was known as the **LIBERATOR**.
12. The **LIBRARY** in Norwich is a living memorial.
13. One position on the plane was a **NAVIGATOR**.
14. Many went on leave to the town of **NORWICH**.
15. The **PILOT** is the one who flies the plane.
16. Do you want to be a **SOLDIER** when you grow up?
17. The Air Force symbol has a **STAR** in it.
18. We are so very happy to live in the **USA**.
19. We are very proud of our **VETERANS**!
20. Our veterans fought in the Second World **WAR**.

British Girl's Drawing

You may remember our last Herald, VE edition, asked for your children to color in the B-24 drawing we provided. Five kids responded with their colorings. Some are posted on our Facebook page at: www.facebook.com/HeritageLeague2AD/photos/ and our webpage at: heritageleague.org/.

Coincidentally, there was a similar effort sponsored by the U.S. Embassy in England to print, color, and display drawings commemorating the 75th anniversary of VE day. Due to COVID restrictions this youth (seen at bottom center) posted her pictures from her house window for display near RAF Lakenheath.



Photo: Air Force Magazine

Happy Birthday VETS!

The Heritage League is pleased to acknowledge our Veterans' whose birthdays are coming up. We have been able to get photos of some, but not all of our Veterans who served in the 2nd Air Division.

We strive to highlight more Veteran birthdays as a regular feature in future Heralds but we need your help as we do not have photos of all. Please email with "2AD VET Birthday" in the subject line to heritageleagueinfo@gmail.com.

Our country is filled with much promise for tomorrow's generation, all because it was shaped by legends like you who risked your lives every day defending our nation. HAPPY BIRTHDAY. We honor you and thank you for today's freedoms.

Whatever you guys are doing—keep it up!



392nd BG waist gunner Havey Naber is going strong and hits 102 on November 14th. Photo: Doug Dovey.



Don O'Reilly served as an MP for 305th BG (a B-17 group based at Grafton Underwood) then in the 491st and 44th BGs. On the 16th of November, he turns 99. Photo: Doug Dovey.



Fighter pilot Charles Screws turns 99 on December 7th. His legendary 361st Fighter Group, part of the 65th Fighter Wing was in 2AD. Bomber crews were glad to see their 'Little Friends' as vital escorts through enemy skies. Photo: Doug Dovey.



466th BG veteran Earl Wassom, always beaming, and inspiring when pressed into Chaplin duties by his Group, Heritage League or 8AFHS. He celebrates his 97th this September 20th. Photo: Doug Dovey.



445th BG navigator Joe Reus was shot down twice and on his second mission became a POW. He went on to serve in Korea and Vietnam. Major Reus turns 98 on November 2nd. Photo: Curt Reus.



Aubrey Burke, 392nd BG machinist, keeps the candle lit. He reaches 97 years this October. Photo: Annette Tison.



453rd BG pilot Russell Neatrou turns 98 years this October 19th. Photo: Doug Dovey.

Memorial Day—2020

—by Irene Hurner and Marybeth Dyer

Our Memorial Day is a holiday for honoring and mourning all military personnel who have died serving our country. The Heritage League particularly honors those brave airmen of the 2nd Air Division serving in WWII. We lost approximately 7,000 souls in the fight for freedom in Europe.

In past years, we had wreaths placed at 13 overseas ABMC cemeteries with 2nd Air Division airmen to honor those we have lost. This year was different. The ceremonial wreath laying ceremonies were cancelled or held virtually with no spectators present. But all was not lost.

Our British friends shared with us the small individual observances they had at their respective bases. Colin Mann, a special friend to the League, wrote about his experience and reflections that day: “Normally today we would lay two wreaths at Cambridge Cemetery for Memorial Day remembrance but sadly it is closed to the public this year. So today we have laid two bouquets at the memorial marker stone at Hardwick. One for... men and women of the 93rd BG Association and one for the Second Air Division USAAF Heritage League.” He also included this well known poem:

*They shall grow not old, as we that are left grow old;
Age shall not weary them, nor the year's condemn.
At the going down of the sun and in the morning
We will remember them.
“Lest we forget”*

A special video tribute was recorded by ABMC on behalf of Cambridge and Brookwood American cemeteries on YouTube. See it at: www.youtube.com/watch?v=kFCfNM6BRLI&feature=share.

The Dutch conducted a very special ‘social distanced’ ceremony attended by high ranking government and military VIPs. A Dutch F-16 missing man fly-by concluded the event at Margarten American Cemetery where 598 2nd AD airmen are memorialized.

In the U.S., Heritage League former President Beverly Baynes Tomb and her husband Doug made a special memorial visit to several 2nd Air Division airmen interred at Arlington National Cemetery. Her description of the visit, “We left 3 roses at my Dad’s grave (one from each of his children). Then we walked to honor pilot Milton Veynar’s grave. Another distance walk followed to find H. Ken Jordon, a 466th BG pilot whose son Steve is now President of the 466th BG Association. Next, we drove to find Ralph Lamma’s grave, father of Ralph Winter (392nd BG president). By the time we found it, my sweater was off; it was warm in that beautiful sun!”

We are grateful to our special friends for helping us offer our remembrance under these extraordinary circumstances. More of their photos are on our Facebook page: www.facebook.com/HeritageLeague2AD/.



Despite the pandemic, a small but very distinguished group gathered at the Netherlands American Cemetery in Margraten to place large floral wreaths for Memorial Day. The King of the Netherlands Willem-Alexander attended. Speakers were American General Tod D. Wolters, Commander, U.S. European Command and NATO's Supreme Allied Commander Europe (SACEUR) and Mrs. Ank Bijleveld, Minister of Defence for the Netherlands. Photo: Dutch Defence PA.



The Royal Netherlands 322nd Squadron concluded the ceremony at Margraten with a missing man formation. Watch an outstanding 2 minute Facebook video of the ceremony at www.facebook.com/Commandantderstrijdkrachten/videos/285066906222924. Photo: Dutch Defence PA.



Nathan Hollis's son salutes on behalf of the fallen at the memorial for the 458th BG and RAF at Horsham St. Faith, Norwich. Photo via Nathan Hollis.



Our very special Heritage League friend, Colin Mann, places flowers at the 93rd BG memorial at Hardwick base. We thank him for that and the beautiful Remembrance poem he submitted. Photo: Colin Mann.



Beverly Baynes Tomb at the Arlington National Cemetery grave marker of pilot veteran of the CBI Theater Milton Veynar, whose wife Hathy was a 2 AD Headquarters veteran and served as our first Heritage League president. Milt and Hathy were strong supporters of the Heritage League. Photo: Doug Tomb.



Leda Hayton places a wreath at the 492nd and 491st Bomb Group Memorial at North Pickenham base. Due to virus restrictions she could not source fresh flowers. Instead, she obtained a handmade wreath by a disabled veteran in Edinburgh. "I do it because it means so much to the relatives. Some have told me that it eases their hearts as they are unable to travel so far to visit the memorial themselves." Photo: via Leda Hayton.



From our friends at the 446th Bungay base. Photo: 446th BG.



Thanks to Paul Hindle for placing the beautiful Memorial Day wreath at the 466th BG Memorial near Attlebridge Air Field. Photo: Paul Hindle.



From our friends at the 489th Halesworth base. Since the Cambridge American Cemetery was closed to the public, flowers were presented on behalf of the fallen at their Memorial to the 489th BG, the 56th FG and 5th ERS. Photo: Marjorie Shiers.

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

Oliver Morris (453 rd)	Irene Hurner
Jean Stites	Irene Hurner

IN MEMORY OF...

Donors

Delores Betz	Delores Hogan
Albert H. Biel (453 rd)	Irene Hurner
Claire Biel	Irene Hurner
James L Bruner (466 th)	James Bruner
Maurice Earl Chapman (453 rd)	Louanna Burch
James Dyke (453 rd)	Irene Hurner
Jack Dyson (445 th)	Debbie Duke
Members of the 492 nd BG	Roby Scott
1 st Lt. Arnold A. Piskin	Brenda Piskin
Lloyd Prang (453 rd)	Irene Hurner
Irene Prang	Irene Hurner
Gale M. Rucker (491 st)	Stephen Rucker

Col. Jack Stevens (467th)
Wilbur Stites (453rd)
Edward M. Wall (489th)

Judith Palmer
Irene Hurner
Mary Wall

—Folded Wings—

John Echols	11/13/13	458 th
Orville C. Baker	10/15/15	445 th
Kenneth W. Barnet	09/13/17	448 th
James S. Hiner	09/02/17	458 th
Walter S. Bala	01/17/18	453 rd
Louis Freiberg	03/01/18	458 th
Charles L. Belvin	12/26/18	458 th
Don E. Echols	01/15/19	458 th
Donald Neoholme	06/02/19	93 rd
Elmo W. Geppelt	06/27/19	458 th
Elmer Fisher	07/06/19	445 th
Charles H. Booth	08/04/19	458 th
John R. Hildebran	01/11/20	453 rd
Frank Grew	03/25/20	448 th
Louis Huisman	04/04/20	453 rd



Historical Society Announces Postponement of Memphis Reunion

The 8th Air Force Historical Society Board announced August 9th the Memphis Reunion will not convene this year. It is postponed to October 19-23, 2022. Next year's reunion will be in Savannah, October 27-31, 2021. The decision was necessitated by the realities of Covid-19, and they are investigating a Zoom meeting platform for Saturday, October 24, 2020 so that the members of the Society can touch base via this format. More details will be forthcoming.

Fall-Winter 2020 Heritage Calendar & History Spotlight

Upcoming Events of 2nd Air Division Interest

Please Note: most calendar events will be affected by COVID-19 virus restrictions. Check the respective website for the latest schedule.

American Library ribbon-cutting. To be announced when the Norwich Library reopens after virus restrictions are lifted. Check its new website at: <https://www.americanlibrary.uk/>.

September 2020

US Air Force National Convention (U.S. Air Force's 73rd birthday). This year the Air Force Association will sponsor a Web virtual conference on September 14-16. It will offer the same exceptional line-up of speakers and world-class (virtual) exhibits. Info at: www.afa.org.

National Museum of U.S. Air Force. Dayton OH. Plane Talks—73rd Anniversary of the Air Force and National POW/MIA Recognition Day. Friday, Sept. 18. www.nationalmuseum.af.mil.

1939—*Germans begin their invasion of Poland, forcing England and France to declare war. Sept. 1.*

1944—*Operation Market Garden begins with Allied airborne forces landing in the Netherlands, Sept. 17.*

October 2020

Heritage League special event; virtual reunion via Zoom webcast on October 3 at 1:00 p.m. Eastern Time. We invite all to attend and participate with a panel of our WWII Vets and a guided tour of Rackheath airbase. More details on page 3 of this Herald and at our website at: www.heritageleague.org.

8th Air Force Historical Society Reunion, Memphis, TN. Postponed due to COVID restrictions and re-scheduled for 2022. Instead, the Society is looking into a Zoom event on Saturday, Oct 24. Note: next year's 2021 reunion will be in Savannah, GA, Oct. 27-31. Info at: www.8thAFHS.org.

392nd Bomb Group Memorial Association annual reunion. Via Zoom Saturday, Oct. 24, 3:30 p.m. Eastern time. RSVP at: dbeigh@aol.com.

November 2020

Veterans Day Activities, Norwich, England. Observed on the second Sunday of November over there on November 8th as 'Remembrance Sunday.' Heritage League normally presents a wreath at Cambridge American Cemetery on Veterans Day, November 11th, also referred to locally as Remembrance Day.

2nd Air Division Memorial Trust Annual General Meeting is scheduled for November 9. COVID restrictions may alter these plans.

December 2020

National Museum of U.S. Air Force, Dayton, OH. Holiday Concert featuring the U.S. Air Force Band of Flight, December 12 and 13, 7:30 p.m. www.nationalmuseum.af.mil.

1939—*Anniversary of Consolidated's B-24 first flight, Lindberg Field, San Diego. Dec. 29.*

1944—*Battle of the Bulge begins. Germans launch the last major offensive of the war. Dec. 16.*

Other future activities

467th BG Association. Launching a \$58,000 campaign (\$36,000 raised so far) to place an accurate B-24 model (about 6 foot wingspan) in the restored officers club at Historic Wendover Airfield, Utah. More information at: www.467BG.com.



HERITAGE LEAGUE VOLUNTEER PROGRAM

—MISSION BRIEFING—

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

We want to start by offering our continuing thanks to volunteers that have stepped up to ongoing roles that are very supportive of League work. Nancy Hildebrandt, who modernized our webpage last year, continues as our webmaster, and is a knowledgeable design professional, giving us a fresh eye look at our face on the internet. Until recently, Paige Hurner served as our first Social Media Director, tapping our visual resources as content for our Facebook page. Lisa Niehoff continues as a volunteer on the Heritage Herald staff, refining punctuation and expression. And recently, Joan Mastrogiacono, widow of the late great Sam M. (445th) has helped us with outreach to our Honorary Life Members. She also researches our Vets so we can send cards and note birthdays in the Herald.

Thanks also to those who have indicated on their membership renewal form, or by completing the online volunteer form: heritageleague.org/volunteer/ indicating they have skills and energy to contribute. There is work to go around, and Chris and Brian are determined to make as many good matches as we can (volunteer to task).

As ever, your Executive Committee is 'all ears' to your proposals for new ways our mission can be realized with practical and inspiring volunteer-driven projects.

In each Herald, we will list some currently identified jobs available, covering a range of skill areas and levels, and your time availability. Not all tasks are ongoing, and some will only require the discipline to see that recurring routine tasks are done reliably.

Here are some tasks presented in the context of bigger projects:

YouTube channel. We have set up a YouTube channel in anticipation of sharing the upcoming Annual Member Meeting with any who will not be able to participate 'in real time.' This naturally led to us think of the ways our educational mission could be supported by content we develop, or made available by recommended play lists. We could set up curricula in WWII history, the technological advances of that era, and how the Greatest Generation came together with a world-saving purpose. Historical research, scripting, production, and course design tasks abound! How can you help us realize this potential?

Sharing newsletter collections. You are no doubt aware that virtually all of the newsletters (Journals, and differently named precursors going back to 1950) are accessible on our website, as are Heralds starting in 2002. Seeing these has inspired people to think of original printed collections from the various bomb and fighter groups getting the same treatment. We know what's needed, we know how to do it; and boy, is there material out there! We are working with our webmaster to enable you to do comprehensive collection-wide searches, via your browser. The primary value is that we and other researchers can tap 2AD history and first-person accounts, as were recorded only in this way. Secondly, we have a rich account of social and organization activities of our vets as veterans in organizations for decades following the war.

Won't you fill out your form today?

Free a Man to Fight— Rosie the Riveter

—by Lisa Niehoff



This poster is fine example of bold graphics used to motivate female workers and others at the home front. Poster by J. Miller for Westinghouse Electric.

She is 'Rosie the Riveter,' with movie-star looks, hair pulled up in a colorful bandana, sleeves rolled up high, ready to take rivet gun in hand. Everyone knows Rosie. She had not worked before the war. With 'her man away fighting,' however and 'not much else to do,' she was cajoled into taking one of those dirty

*wartime jobs—out of patriotism or boredom (or both). Attired in new-found overalls and bandana, she riveted away for the duration of the war, dreaming of a time when she could return to her home and tend to her domestic chores. [Sheila Tobias, *Faces of Feminism*].*

Duty and love for country were two very moving reasons for women to answer the call to work defending the United States. The concept of having women take on non-traditional jobs when the nation is at war is not a new one. Even during the American Revolution women stepped in to fill male occupational roles, thereby freeing more men for military service and answering the call of duty. And answer the call they did! Rosie represented the ideal female, who was as strong and hard working as she was. In the advertisements, Rosie was shown as a muscular and strong woman. She was shown to be saying, “We can do it!,” a motivational phrase for the era. Rosie the Riveter was meant to encourage women to help out with the war. Thus, American women entered the workforce in unparalleled numbers during World War II being both a patriotic responsibility and an opportunity for employers to support the war economy.

Rosie the Riveter not only represents roughly 6 million American women who surged into the workforce between 1940 and 1944, but became a symbol of a cultural icon, and was represented as a sym-

bol for women in the workforce and for women's independence. Women were encouraged to be brawny and strong (like Norman Rockwell's interpretation of Rosie) so they could do the grueling industrial work that needed to be done.

Rosie is not a single woman, but in fact, she is the symbol of millions of women who worked hard for their country. Although a fictitious character, the strong, bandanna-clad Rosie became one of the most successful recruitment tools in American history, and the most recognized image of working women during the World War II era.

The common thread among so many of the women was that they wanted to help in the war effort. Patriotism ran deep, so it wasn't a difficult decision for them to go to work. Thus 'Rosie' engaged in what were traditionally men's jobs such as riveting, producing munitions, war supplies and other war-related industrial jobs. Indeed, World War II opened the door for women to work in more types of jobs than ever before; from working in aircraft factories to shipyards, they were critical to the war effort. Many of these women worked in shifts around the clock bagging gunpowder and manufacturing artillery shells and other high explosives. They suffered the effects of spray painting, welding, hanging from single suspension scaffolds and shooting hot rivets into aircraft and ships under construction, working with all kinds of dangerous chemicals and many other equally hazardous jobs. While the risks of being killed or wounded by the enemy were pretty much none, the risks of injury and death they faced were often equal to those faced by the men overseas. Although 'she' expected full and equal pay for a full day's work, they were 'first' and 'above all' dedicated patriots standing in while husbands and boyfriends were on the Front. Their desire was to earn a living for their family, and to help their men come home safe and soon.

Rosie is a timeless symbol of what a strong, dedicated, productive and respected woman represented that will forever mark the transition of women's role in American society.

Editor's note—Who was Rosie?

'Rosie' the inspiration portrayed in Lisa's article, was influenced by two women in both name and function according to Wikipedia. And both were associated with aviation! Initially, the 1942 song which influenced the movement was inspired by Rosalind P. Walter. She “came from old money and worked on the night

shift building the F4U Corsair fighter.” Later in life Walter was a philanthropist, a board member of the WNET public television station in New York and an early and long-time supporter of the Charlie Rose interview show.

Another Rosie closely aligned with our fabled 2nd Air Division B-24s was Rose Will Monroe who was born in Kentucky in 1920 and moved to Michigan during World War II. She worked as a riveter at the Willow Run Aircraft Factory in Ypsilanti, Michigan building B-24 bombers for the Army Air Forces. Monroe was asked to star in a promotional film about our war effort at home. The song “Rosie the Riveter” was popular at the time, and Monroe happened to best fit the description of the worker depicted in the song. ‘Rosie’ went on to become perhaps the most widely recognized image of that era. The films and posters she appeared in were used to encourage women to go to work in support of the war effort. At the age of 50, Monroe realized her dream of flying when she obtained a pilot’s license. In 1978, she crashed in her small propeller plane when the engine failed during takeoff. The accident resulted in the loss of one kidney and the sight in her left eye, and ended her flying career. She died from kidney failure on May 31, 1997, at the age of 77.



Rosie became a symbol of a cultural icon and was represented as a symbol for women in the workforce. Painting by Norman Rockwell for cover of Saturday Evening Post.

Hard working and skilled Rosies proved women could work the factory as well as men; who were thus available for military service. Photo: Vultee aircraft.



Riveters (4 of them) working on the tail section of a B-24. Citizens' participation in the war economies of all Allied powers was critical to our ultimate victory. Photo: Howard Hollem/US Office of War Information via Library of Congress.



HISTORY SNAPSHOT THIS TIME-FRAME IN 2ND AIR DIVISION'S PAST

—compiled by Doug Dovey
art credit: Ron Cole **



1939-29 December. The Consolidated B-24 Liberator flew for the first time 81 years ago. Newer, more efficient and more versatile than the B-17 Flying Fortress, more Liberators were built than any other military aircraft in American history.

1941-Dec 7th. *Japanese bomb Pearl Harbor.*

-Dec 11th. *Hitler and Mussolini declare war on U.S.*

1942-15 January. The 44th Bombardment Group, Flying Eightballs, was activated at McDill Field, Florida and equipped with B-24Cs. The Group then moved to Barksdale Field, Louisiana and acted as a training unit for the 90th, 93rd and 98th Bomb Groups and also flew anti-submarine patrols. *

1943-27 January. USAAF bombers mount the first all-American mission against Germany, bombing Wilhelmshaven. *

-13 September. The **2nd Air Division** came into being following the reorganization of the [VIII Bomber Command](#) as the [Eighth Air Force](#). Existing as a separate entity the [2nd Bomb Wing](#) started operations on 7 November 1942, was reorganized as the 2nd Bomb Division on 13 September 1943 and redesignated the 2nd Air Division in January 1945. The division continued operations until the end of the war, flying the last combat sortie on April 25, 1945.

The division completed 493 operational missions in Europe during World War II consisting of 95,948 individual aircraft sorties operating the [Consolidated B-24 Liberator](#) aircraft from airfields in Norfolk, England.

Within the 2nd Air Division, six groups received presidential citations for outstanding actions. Five airmen received the highest US award for bravery, the Medal of Honor, four of them posthumously. A total of 1,458 B-24 aircraft were lost in action and 6,700 men lost their lives. **Source: Wikipedia.**

-8 October. The shipyards and industrial areas of Bremen, Germany were the primary targets for this mission, but cloud cover causes some formations to bomb targets of opportunity. The attack consisted of four main elements. First element is a combined force of 118 B-17s, second element is a combined force of 56 B-17s, third element is a combined force of 170 B-17s. The **fourth element was a combined force of 55 B-24s from: 389 BG (18); 93 BG (19); and 392 BG (18)** dispatched to bomb the U-Boat pens at Vegesack, Germany. 43 are effective on the target. 3 aircraft Failed to Return (FTR) 21 KIA, 9 PoW; 1 other airman in a returning aircraft was KIA and 5 were Wounded in Action (WIA). 21 aircraft were damaged. The bomber gunners in this element claim 17-1-7 of attacking German fighters. *

October 1943 turned out to be the worst loss rate for 8th Air Force for the entire war. 163 B-17s had been lost (lost rate 7.5%) and 9 B-24s were lost (loss rate 2.9%). These loss rates meant that the B-17 crews chances of completing a 25-mission tour was only 28%. The losses on the 10-Oct-43 mission to Munster of 30 aircraft, followed by the devastating losses of 60 aircraft on the Second Schweinfurt mission of 14-Oct-43, caused the USAAF high command to re-think the whole theory that the bombers could effectively protect themselves without long range fighter escort and some even questioned the whole strategy of "daylight bombing." *

-3 November. 8th Air Force went back to attacking Germany with a vengeance. The mission was an all-out dispatch of 438 B-17s and 117 B-24s to bomb the German port areas of Wilhelmshaven, Germany. The mission would also be supported by 333 P-47s providing penetration and withdrawal support and 45 P-38s which would go all the way to the target and back with the bombers. **B-24s made up the third attack element with a force of 117 B-24s that included: 44 BG (28); 93 BG (28); 389 BG (33); and 392 BG (28)** dispatched to bomb Wilhelmshaven, Germany. 105 aircraft were effective on the target. There were no losses or claims in this element, but 5 aircraft were damaged. *

-18 November. The German airfield of Oslo/Kjeller, Norway is the target for a force of 102 B-24s from 2nd Bomb Division that included: 44 BG (34); 93 BG (20); 389 BG (26); and 392 BG (22). 82 aircraft are effective on the target. 9 aircraft Failed to Return (FTR) 61 KIA 30 Internees. 1 aircraft crash landed upon return at Shipdham, UK. *

-24 December. These missions were directed at **V-Weapon sites** in the Pas-de-Calaise area of France. 526 B-17s and 196 B-24s participate, largest raid to date and the first of major strikes against missile sites. 23 V-Weapon sites are attacked. The mission was composed of three elements. The second element was a force of **196 B-24s from 2nd Bomb Division that included: 44 BG (24), 93 BG (25), 389 BG (30), 392 BG (28), 445 BG (35), 446 BG (27), and 448 BG (27)**. 192 were effective on a target. There were no losses, claims or casualties. 26 heavy bomber groups are now operational. *

1944-Dec 16. Germans launch the Battle of the Bulge.

-1 August. Eighth Air Force B-24s conducted numerous raids against V-1 launching sites across northern France as B-17s dropped supplies to underground forces over France. A force of over 320 B-17 and B-24 bombers hit targets in Paris and Tours. **Source: Daedalion airpower blog; Jul 27, 2020.**

1946-Dec 31. Official end of World War II.

* **Source: American Air Museum in Britain database: www.americanairmuseum.com.**

** See other fabulous B-24 art prints at: <https://roncole.net/>.



—by Pete O'Tube, Expert

Dear Pete,

If you don't mind, would you tell us again how you got your name? I have been a fan for years, so I'm somewhat embarrassed!

*Loyally yours,
Albertson Timothy Idder*

Dear Al Tim Idder,

Don't fret over that; it was 18 years ago! I am named after the protruding pipes on most planes, which are rather formally called a 'pitot tubes.' (My name should guide you in the correct pronunciation.)

On a B-24, the most common placement was on the 'cheeks' of the fuselage, just forward of

the pilots, one on each side. When you spy one or more on a plane, it will tell you a lot about the aerodynamics of that particular model, because the engineers put a lot of work—and wind tunnel time—finding a place where the air pressure has remained unchanged by the bow-wave of the plane, over the full range of operational airspeeds for the craft. You would expect that for this purpose, it would point straight ahead if they were situated in undisturbed air orientations of the tube...and they usually are. But when you see ones that are subtly canted off that axis, it's telling you the relative direction of the air at that location during actual flight. Especially when other design considerations require pitot tubes to be less than all the way forward, these indications of actual airflow can be jarringly counter-intuitive. (Most jet fighters have one tube pointing a good ways straight forward from the tip of the nose.)

OK, you ask, what is so important about capturing that 'clean air'? First and foremost, the Air Speed Indicator takes this as its sole input. The pilots must pay attention to several critical airspeeds, such as stall speed and maximum dive speed, to name just a few. 'Flying outside the envelope,' the bounds of a particular plane's controlled performance, is inherently dangerous. 'Pushing the envelope' or determining if an aircraft's performance limits have been expanded by a modification, or a novel arrangement of controls, is also inherently dangerous, and should be left to experienced test pilots. But I digress!

The pitot tube helps to determine barometric pressure, a critical input to the altimeter. Having very precise measurement of your height above sea level is a matter of life-and-death, when flying on instruments, especially if lacking ground sensing radar. In the droll language of air accident reports, many human-caused accidents get lumped into the broad category 'controlled flight into terrain.' A large portion of these accidents entail ignoring information supplied by the pitot tube.

The tube itself has vulnerabilities. It will not read true if blocked by icing in the air, and many of them require heating in flight. It won't read at all if the walk-around inspection fails to remove the brightly colored weather covers fitted in winter or sand conditions.

I am not quite as sensitive or critical as my namesake, but let's keep that just between us.

Technically yours,
Pete



USAF Museum Liberator showing off its pilot-side pitot tube projecting into the air stream above where the number 24 appears. This model B-24 has a matching pitot tube on the copilot side. Photo: Pete O'Tube..

Dear Pete,

I remember years ago hearing some of the old RAF fighter guys singing the praises of Miss Schilling's Orifice, or Miss Tilly's Diaphragm, as having saved Western Civilization. I did not want to encourage them in what seemed like a risqué tale being told at my expense. Sadly, all of my Battle of Britain heroes are now gone...but at least it is now safe to ask: was there any such device, and was it really critical?

*Yours in reminiscence,
Lady Isadore Shubert, House of Temme*

My Dear I. Shu D' LeTemme,

The old boys were not pulling your leg; the story itself is indeed remarkable, and their appreciation is reflected in their contrived names for the 'Royal Aircraft Establishment (R. A. E.) restrictor.' All of their monikers for the simple yet game-changing device involve gentle affectionate ribbing of its equally remarkable in-

ventor, Beatrice Schilling.

Our average 'second generation' reader is familiar with the carburetor, the trouble-prone device on internal combustion engines of yore, phased out in consumer automobiles starting in the 1970s, and almost entirely by the turn of the millennium. Its replacement, metered fuel injection, is a system of parts that used higher pressure fuel pumps, distribution plumbing to all cylinders, and an injector at each cylinder, to deliver the exact required squirt of fuel at the instant of need. By contrast, the carburetor harnessed gravity and the low pressure created by the rushing flow of intake air to atomize the correct amount of liquid fuel into that airstream to deliver the correctly mixed 'charge' to all of the combustion chambers via one or more manifolds. (The manifold is that branching cluster of tubes that ran from a 'carb' to all of the intake port of the multiple 'jugs' it serves.) The manifold survived the transition to injection and still conducts the airstream between the throttle body and the cylinder head.

If you are not already an engine mechanic you would need to carefully reread the previous paragraph to espy the carburetor requirement that made it problematic for piston engine fighters—here comes a big hint!—that had to be able to perform negative-g maneuvers without the engine cutting out. 'G' there stands for 'gravity.' The Spitfire pilot in the Battle of France and then the Battle of England (both in 1940) was at a distinct disadvantage to the rival Luftwaffe pilots in Messerschmitt 109 or Focke-Wulf 190 fighters when transitioning into a dive. When momentum thrusts the pilot outward against his straps, it is centrifugal force, acting on every part of the airframe and all it carries, counteracting the normal 'down' flow needed by a carburetor, but not required at all in a pressurized fuel injection system. And who do you suppose had fuel injection? The Jerries.

In combat maneuvers, the only way the RAF flyer could pursue the enemy into a dive was to first roll the plane and dive inverted, at least through the rapid direction change. He had to keep 'gravity' (or the overwhelming g-forces) acting 'down' relative to the plane, so fuel would flow from the bowl to the throat of the carburetor. Merely pushing his nose down, like his foe with fuel injection, immediately negated the fuel flow, thus negating the running of the engine! As if that were not bad enough, the next thing was that the float valve inside the fuel bowl, which also relied on gravity (or the

positive centrifugal force generated in their hack maneuver) to keep the fuel pump from over-delivery of raw gasoline...was also negated. After the initial starvation that would cut power, often to the point of engine stalling, an unregulated rush of avgas now flooded the engine, finally stalling any still sputtering engine, and then seriously hamper a restart. It would take many turns of the engine to clear the overflow liquid, unmixed with the air essential to combustion.

Until Rolls Royce engineers came up with a mechanical fuel injection system for the marvelous 12-cylinder Merlin engine, to replace the original SU down-draft carb, the Brits had to rely on the quick roll into a dive to keep their engine on, and still lost the German they were chasing. Enter one highly regarded female engineer working at the R. A. E. Farnsworth facility. Beatrice Schilling came up with a solution which could be installed in the field, only briefly taking the Spitfire (or under-heralded Hurricane) out of service.

The R. A. E. Restrictor was essentially a flat washer between the fuel pump and the bowl of the carburetor, with its hole sized to momentarily allow just enough fuel to keep the engine at full power without stalling from either starvation or flooding.

As a result, the Spit was no longer at a performance disadvantage, in diving or any other areas. The Luftwaffe was kept at bay, fighters survived to escort bombers against the German defenders, taking out strategic targets, turning the tide, and so the war was won!

Well, I'm getting a little carried away, and completely understand how and why the old boys were too, by this effective stopgap measure and its brilliant inventor!

Going with
the flow,

Pete



A Researcher's Perspective—

Delve into your Veteran's history

The Benefit of Special Orders, Part II

—by *Christopher Clark, 489th & 44th BG*

Most of our WWII relatives didn't speak much about their experiences and therefore, we have more questions than answers about their roles. I am starting a new Herald segment to help uncover some of those hidden events. I need your help.

If you happen to have "Special Orders" or "General Orders" that you would like to share with the Heritage League for research purposes, please scan them and send to Chris Clark. We will be starting new research resources with these orders. Find what you can about your veteran by starting some research soon. If you know nothing, start by asking some questions, such as who was in the crew with my veteran? Most orders have many names on them and include such things as promotions, temporary duty (TDY), training, and R&R assignments. Do these men have relatives in the Heritage League? You can uncover a lot just by trying. Take a shot at it.

For example, when Mr. Freudenthal, 489th BG Historian, shared the seven "Special Orders" with me, he did much more than give me the paperwork. He taught me that SHARING the info with others was just as important as the info by itself. As an example, here are the seven "Special Orders" he provided:

- (1) S.O. 285, 12 Oct 1943. From Assignment of 411 B.S., 29th BG to Gowen Field, Boise, Idaho 489th Bomb Group
- (2) S.O. 299, 26 Oct 1943. Gowen Field to Orlando, FL. TDY
- (3) S.O. 17, 17 Jan 1944. Wendover, UT 489th BG. Assigned to Crew 76 (Geo. W. Smith crew)
- (4) S.O. 52, 21 Feb 1944. Wendover, UT 489th BG. Placed on Permanent Flying Status.
- (5) S.O. 202, 28 July 1944. AAF Sta 365 Halesworth, England. Reassigned from 847th Personal Pool to Crew 90 (Robert McMahon crew)
- (6) S.O. 233, 29 Aug 1944. AAF Sta 365 Halesworth, England. Promoted to Staff Sgt.
- (7) S.O. 292, 30 Oct 1944. AAF Sta 365 Halesworth, England. TDY to Rest Home at Southport, England (Louis C. Confer crew).

This was such a great find for my file on my uncle. It would take me years to fully appreciate just how much help the seven Special Orders were to the time line I was reconstructing. Along with the Special Orders, Mr. Freudenthal gave me contact information on some of the crew of Robert McMahon and Little Iodine B-24. I wrote them all a letter, and all 6 wrote me back. The bombardier, Alfred Brunner sent me my S.O. # 8.

- (8) S.O. 203, 29 Jul 1944. Crew 90 to Crew 26 (still on McMahon crew, read S.O. 202 again)

After a letter from Co-Pilot Orville D. Curtis (after McMahon crew, on Confer crew now), I received the 9th and 10th Special Order.

- (9 and 10) S.O 319, (44th BG) 16 Nov 1944. Having reported this station from par 1, S.O. 320 HQ, 2BD dated 16 Nov 1944. Rest Home, Southport, England for seven days.

I later shared with Orville Curtis some work I had done on a 29 Dec 1944 44th BG mission. From Orville's letter to me on Jan 22, 2004 he stated: "I wanted to send you a letter thanking you for the information about my 36th mission that has been credited to me while in the 44th BG. I have been in contact with R. Lee Aston of the 44th in regards to my getting another Oak Leaf Cluster for my Air Medal. Without your help I would have not known anything about the credit of the mission of 29 Dec 1944 (I shared the info of my uncle about the mission, and it was determined that the crew was to be given credit for the mission all those years later). According to the last letter I got from Mr. Aston, I should receive the Oak Leaf Cluster in a couple of months."

As it all turned out, Orville D. Curtis not only received his Oak Leaf Cluster, he also received the DFC. That is one of the proudest things I have ever done for someone!! All this came from sharing information. Here is an example of information you can determine when your Vet is not listed in the order.

(11) S.O. 101. Shows no Charles Clark on crew 76, Smith crew transiting from the U.S to England. So a mechanic could be with the aircraft, one aircrew member went by boat. My uncle, therefore, was the one chosen to go by boat, which the U.S.S. Wakefield.

Additionally as a result of sharing, a new special order came to me which unlocked some more of my uncle's wartime history. Really! After 28 years, in just the last month, I have received my 12th Special Order about my uncle, not to mention a picture from EBay of the B-24 Pregnant Peggy. My uncle was part of the first crew of the 847th BS, 489th BG the Geo. W. Smith crew)

(12) S.O. 156, 489th BG 9 June 1944. Charles F. Clark's name on list of those receiving the "Good Conduct" medal. (Note: I just got this paper work by sharing info with Pam Gibbs, daughter of Robert Hurst, of Little Iodine after the first part of this story).

So, give it a go. Each item shared unlocks more of the story. You can find out more about your veteran from those Special Orders tucked away in those old attic files. Other sources for Special Orders would be historical societies, museums, Mighty 8th Museum in Savannah, and our Heritage League under this new program. Just scan or copy them and send to Chris: clarkhistory@aol.com. I am available for your questions.

RESTRICTED
STATION HEADQUARTERS
489TH BOMBMENT GROUP (H)
Office of the Station Commander
AAF STA 365 APO 558

9 June 1944

SPECIAL ORDERS)
NUMBER.....156) *****

E X T R A C T

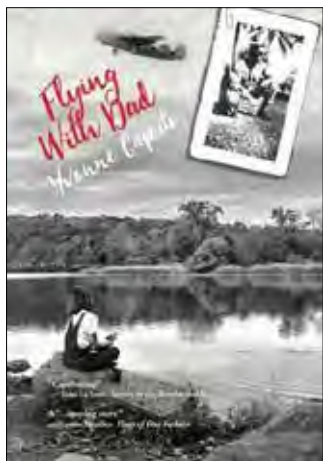
11. Under the provisions of AR 600-68, dated 4 May 1943, a Good Conduct Medal is awarded each of the following named enlisted men of the 847th Bomb Sq (H), 489th Bomb Gp (H), this stations:

T/Sgt Robert J Burrington	39188723	Sgt George F Copenhaver	35678785
T/Sgt Lloyd H Edmiston Jr	17025741	Sgt Robert W Courtney	18209808
T/Sgt Richard Hershey	36500311	Sgt Donald O Davis	33127217
S/Sgt Richard R Albrecht	18106990	Sgt John W Dunn	38305402
S/Sgt Morris Benado	39278927	Sgt Fred G Barnhardt	34598162
S/Sgt Bernard C Breen	37170496	Sgt William H Dandish	18035505
S/Sgt Richard C Butler	12095055	Sgt Vertus W Ewoldt	37663935
S/Sgt Timothy R Burns	35583961	Sgt Albert J Fabbiani	12152844
S/Sgt Arthur G Cressler	36141687	Sgt Walter O Freed	17152369
S/Sgt Billy R Eads	15126279	Sgt James F Gallagher	32893223
S/Sgt Walter Eiseman	34321111	Sgt Walter S Godlewski	32915589
S/Sgt Clifford Hanekan	39615597	Sgt Carl B Goeltenbott	36636966
S/Sgt Frederick C Hoffman	32024057	Sgt William A Gordon	39040098
S/Sgt Herman A Kessler Jr	15377195	Sgt Walter A Grabski	12173619
S/Sgt Leon M Lawrence	11056636	Sgt Ben Green	32699822
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The format for Special Orders displayed above to help you search through all those old papers. The data contained could unlock a new piece of your veteran's WWII experience previously unknown, or confirm what you thought. Source: Chris Clark.

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book notices
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Flying with Dad by Yvonne Caputo

©2019 Ingenium Books Publishing, Toronto
284 pp. hardbound; photos and bibliography

—Reviewed by Brian Mahoney

Disclosures first: I have come to know the author in the course of the research journey that led to this book, wrote a ‘blurb’ from an advance copy, and my father served in the same WW II bomb group as hers. That all said, even if I *could* dislike her, I would still have to admire this personal recounting of her late-in-life relationship with her father in his last years.

Most readers of WWII memoirs and biographies, and especially you with Second Air Division affiliation,

would not have been holding hope for another child-parent reconciliation account at this late date. You are unlikely to have thought of how the viewpoint of a very mature daughter, taking care of her infirm father in recent years, could bring yet another perspective to the sub-genre of second-generation researchers treating ‘their vet’ as a primary source. Without any spoilers, let me say that Yvonne Caputo, in her insightful thinking and rather fearless living and writing, has given us an engaging account of how her relationship with her father, after a long midlife fallow period, resumed in wonderful ways.

Twenty years ago, I wrote a very different book, presenting my own father’s post-war reflections, with ‘framing matter’ supplied by me after his death. A theme that inevitably coursed through my ‘research journey’—and you have all experienced this, or heard of it frequently in our circles—was trying to figure out why our combat survivor fathers were exceedingly tight-lipped about the personal aspect of their experience. Yvonne adds a new perspective, and you will find her maturing relationship with her long-lived, then frail father, achieved a remarkable depth, while adding fresh insight to that compelling question.

Flying with Dad is a most worthwhile read.

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