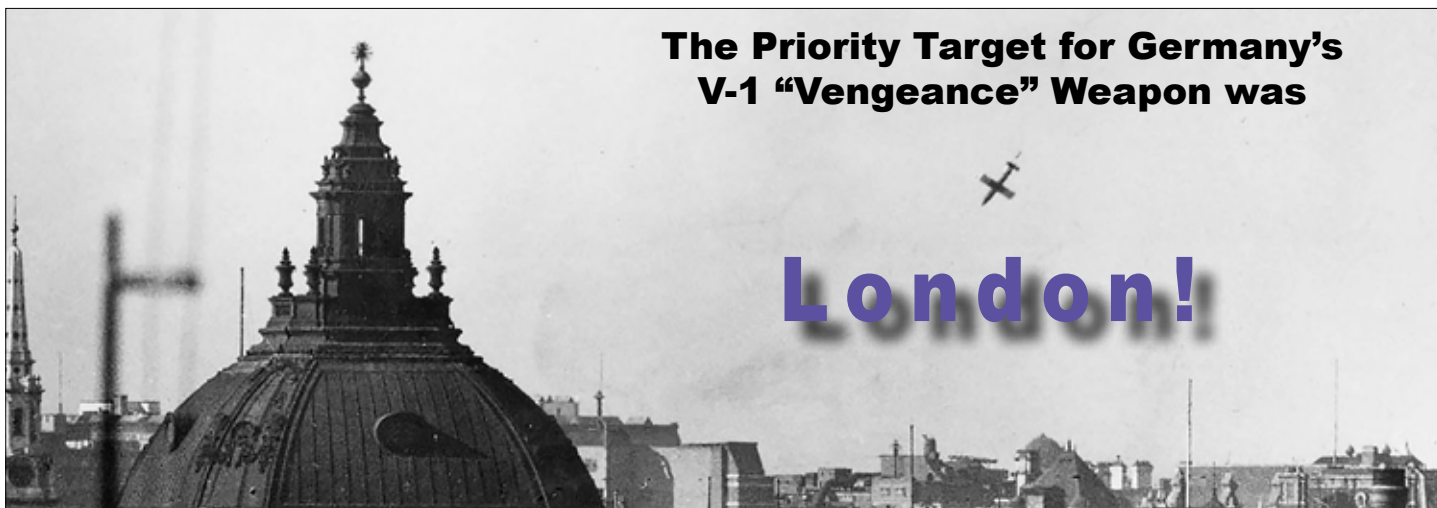




HERITAGE HERALD

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Hitler's Buzz Bombs —by John T. Correll



A V-1 makes it through London's air defenses. The first phase of the Vengeance Weapon attacks by Nazi Germany on Britain and Belgium lasted only three months in 1944 before Allies overran the launch sites in Europe, but there was more to come. Photo: USAF.

Just before sunrise on June 13, 1944, the Royal Observer Corps in Kent sighted several small aircraft with loud engines and bright exhaust plumes trailing behind. Shortly thereafter, one of them crashed to the ground in the east end of London, causing a large explosion in Bethnal Green.

Six people were killed, 266 left homeless. Remains of the little airplane were found in the enormous bomb crater. Newspaper accounts attributed the damage to German Luftwaffe “raiders,” but British officials knew better.

Pressed by boastful claims from Germany about strikes by new weapons, the British *(continued on page 3)*

Bob Birmingham—A Wisconsin Flyer's Experiences in WWII

—by Tom Eisele



A young Robert Birmingham, soon to be a nose gunner at age 18, heading off to war in 1944. Photo: Birmingham family.

In World War II, life expectancies in some military units were short. In the U.S. Marine Corps, for example, when Americans began to battle back against the Japanese in the Pacific, first in 1942, and then into 1943, at Tarawa, and even in to 1944 and 1945, at Iwo Jima and Okinawa, many Marine units were decimated. Amphibious landings on exposed beaches in

reels of these events were often shocked by the horrific images and the mounting Marine casualties.

Would it surprise you to learn that the 8th Air Force in WWII had a higher casualty rate than the U.S. Marine Corps? Survival in heavy bombers, attacking Nazi Germany across the crowded skies over Europe, was a high-risk gamble. During the course of those aerial battles over Europe, many young men lost their lives.

One young Wisconsin man, Bob Birmingham, who had grown up in the Milwaukee area, beat those long odds—albeit barely. Here, just in time for Memorial Day, is his story.

Bob was an 18-year-old nose gunner on a

the face of hardened defensive gun positions were costly ways to re-take islands. Americans who watched news

(continued on page 9)

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

—Marybeth Dyer



Happy New Year to all of our members and friends of the Heritage League. I am hopeful for a better 2021.

Like everything in 2020, the Heritage League had to be creative on how we would have our annual meeting. Instead of traveling to

Memphis in October, we held our very first virtual Zoom meeting on October 3rd. I have to say I was a little nervous but after it started, I was so happy to see all the new and familiar faces. It felt like a family party. My favorite part was the Veteran panel. We hope to do more of those in the future. For all who joined, thank you for allowing us to be a part of your Saturday afternoon. A special thanks to all of our friends in the UK who joined.

Our 2021 Membership drive has started. By now you have received our Christmas membership letter with all the information. How did you like the bookmark? Thanks to Brian Mahoney for designing and printing. You will find another membership form in this Herald. Speaking of membership, you will find a story in this Herald on how Veteran Bob Birmingham (458th) got his whole family to join the Heritage League. He is a big inspiration, and I hope we all encourage our family and friends to join our mission.

One thing to note: for 2021 only—we replaced our Flower fund with a new project we started. Our project—News from the Greatest Generation—will allow us to create online, searchable versions of past newsletters

from the individual Bomb and Fighter groups that were part of the 2nd Air Division. The proceeds from our 'Giving Tuesday' fundraiser last November will go to this project and it was a big success thanks to all of you. We raised over \$4,145 which was matched 10% by a generous donor.

The Flower Fund is currently well funded as no placements occurred last year. We are hoping to sponsor wreaths this year but time will tell if COVID related cemetery restrictions are lifted. Flower Fund donations will return on our Membership form in 2022. If you are interested in contributing to the Flower Fund now, you can find it on our website: <https://heritageleague.org/donate/>.

All of your donations are greatly appreciated. Thank you to everyone who has been so generous. We are grateful and could not do this without your support.

We are still planning to join the 8th AFHS in Savannah this year on October 27-31, if everything is better by then. We will pass on information as soon as we can.

We wish everyone a safe and healthy year. We hope you will take some time to take care of yourself, check up on your family and friends, but especially check on our Veterans.

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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Combatting the V-1

Germany launched more than 24,000 V-1 buzz bombs at Britain and Belgium from June 1944 to March 1945. Thousands crashed after takeoff and up to half were shot down. In a few instances, pilots chose to tip the bombs off course, rather than risk shooting them and flying into a blast of debris. This tactic was used successfully at least three times.

- 1 Pilot maneuvers plane to place one wingtip beneath the V-1 wing.

- 2 Steering away from the V-1, the pilot's wing would rise, tipping the V-1 out of control.

- 3 This actual image shows a Spitfire engaging the technique, but the fastest British defender was the Hawker Tempest.

Hawker Tempest

Gyrocompass

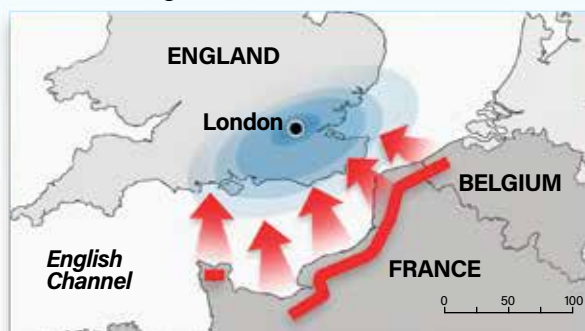
Pulsejet engine

Compressed air for system control

1,830 pound warhead

Defending Britain

Britain used an active defense in four layers: A fighter belt at sea, a coastal belt of anti-aircraft guns, an inland fighter belt, and, closest to London, a belt of barrage balloons.



● British four-layer defense

■ V-1 launch sites in Nazi-occupied France and Belgium

Measuring Up

The V-1 buzz bombs flew a swift 400 mph, faster than most aircraft in the Allied inventory:



Source: *Airpower Classics*

home secretary disclosed that Britain was being bombarded by “pilotless aircraft,” also described as “robot planes.”

The Bethnal Green attack was the first by the V-1 flying bomb, designated Vengeance Weapon 1 (Vergeltungswaffen 1) by the Germans. The British called it the “doodlebug,” or “buzz bomb,” because of the distinctive sound of its pulsejet engine.

The V-1 was not the technological marvel initially imagined. That description applied better to the V-2—Vengeance Weapon 2—a ballistic missile introduced later. Whereas the V-2 was

technically advanced, the V-1 was constructed mainly of sheet metal, cheaply produced, and quickly assembled. It resembled a small airplane with short, stubby wings. It was propelled by a simple jet engine that ran on 80-octane gasoline.

With a limited range of 148 miles, the buzz bomb had to be based forward on the French side of the English Channel. From there, it was fired from a slanted ramp pointed toward London. That determined its direction in flight.

Over the next three months, the Germans launched more than 8,000 V-1 strikes, nearly all of them against London, killing 5,500 people, injuring 16,000, and forcing the evacuation of more than a million.

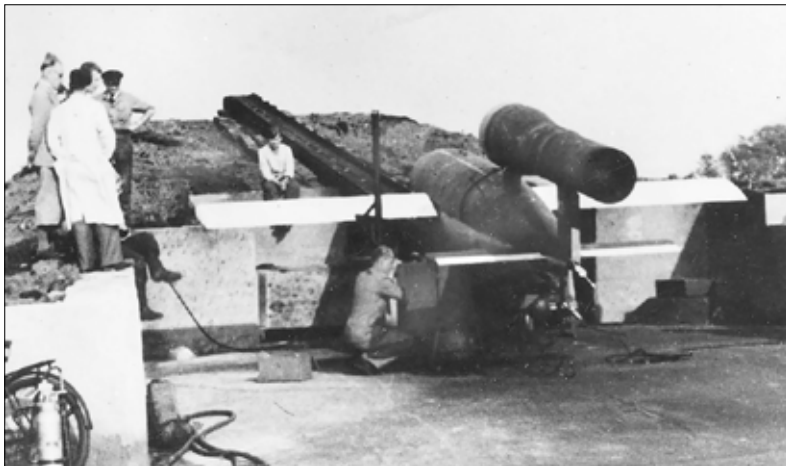
The British had considerable success in fighting the V-1s with anti-aircraft guns, fighter interceptors, and barrage balloons. The first phase of the V-1 assault on Britain ended in September 1944 when Allied

V-1 Launches, June 1944–March 1945

Target	Launch	
	Ground	Air
England		
London	8,839	1,440
Other areas	53	163
Total	8,892	1,603
Belgium	11,988	
Totals	20,880	1,603

Sources: Kirk Kloppel; Dieter Holsken

Graphic: Mike Tsukamoto, and Dash Parham/staff; Photos: Imperial War Museum; USAF



Crews ready a V-1 for launch at an unidentified location in Europe. Of one variety or another, 10,500 V-1s were launched against Britain during the war. They were useful as a weapon of terror, but had little operational impact. Photo: USAF.

armies in Europe overran the launch sites.

The attack on Britain continued for a while with an air-launched version of the V-1, carried aloft by He-111 bombers, but the main targeting for the buzz bombs shifted to Belgium, principally the port of Antwerp. An improved ground-based variant, introduced late in the war, could reach Britain, but only about a dozen got that far.

About 30,000 V-1s of all kinds were manufactured. Between June 1944 and March 1945, almost 25,000 were launched against targets in England and Belgium. Of these, 7,000 managed to hit somewhere in England, with fewer than 4,000 landing in the greater London area.

V-Weapons

The Germans had been working on flying bombs and rockets since the 1930s. The program was concentrated at Peenemünde, a sprawling complex of laboratories and test facilities on a remote section of the Baltic coast near the Polish border. The technical director at Peenemünde was Wernher von Braun, who was the driving force behind the V-2.

Development moved into high gear in 1942 because of the interest of Führer Adolf Hitler, who wanted new weapons to strike back at Britain for the bombing of German cities. The Vengeance weapons, with their potential for spreading terror, suited his wishes.

The A-4 rocket—later the V-2—was a project of the ordnance branch of the German army. The Luftwaffe, unwilling to concede the bombardment mission to the army, devised its own program, the FZG-76 pilotless bomb, which became the V-1.

The V-2 was flight-tested in June 1942. First

flight of the V-1 was in December 1942. Operation Eisbar (“Polar Bear”) was supposed to begin in December 1943, devastating London with a combination of V-1s and V-2s.

Hitler would not listen to proposals to use the vengeance weapons against other targets, such as the ports in southern Britain where the armada for the D-Day invasion was gathering. He was obsessed with retribution against London, although he also hoped that the V-weapons might help reverse the course of the war.

In the German plan, London was “Target 42,” with the Tower Bridge on the River Thames as the specific aim point. As it turned out, no V-1 ever hit the Tower Bridge.

Crossbow

British intelligence had been aware since 1939 of the experimental station at Peenemünde but they did not know its full purpose. In May 1943, a skillful Royal Air Force photo interpreter determined that a curving shadow on an aerial photo was an elevated ramp, and that a T-shaped blot on the ramp was an airplane without a cockpit.

The British had seen and recognized the V-1 for the first time. Reconnaissance in July discovered a V-2 prototype on a transport trailer near its test stand.

The attempt to eliminate the V-weapons was “Operation Crossbow.” In August 1943, hundreds of RAF bombers destroyed Peenemünde, but the essential research work was done. The Germans moved the production work elsewhere.

Crossbow turned to the “ski sites”—so called because the launch ramps looked like ski jumps—on the French coast. Between August 1943 and August 1944, 14 percent of Allied heavy bomber sorties and 15 percent of the medium bomber missions were allocated to Crossbow targets.

Scattered reports of German “secret weapons” found their way into the news. In February 1944, British Prime Minister Winston Churchill acknowledged the existence of installations in France for rockets or robot planes (or both). The erroneous public assumption, often repeated, was that the weapons were radio-controlled.

The bombers succeeded in destroying most of the ski sites, approximately 100 of them, and about 2,400 V-1 missiles in the production and delivery pipeline.

The Germans replaced the ski sites with simpler, modified sites. There were few outbuildings and little construction other than the launch facility itself. Modified sites could be built in eight days each, and were much easier to camouflage and hide. It was several months before the Allies identified the first one of them.

Crossbow did not stop the V-1 program, but it did slow it down. Hitler missed his goal of starting Operation Eisbar in December 1943. It was not ready to go until June 1944, a week after the D-Day landings began in Normandy.

It would not have mattered much to the invasion if the V-1s had been used. They were so inaccurate that they would have been as likely to hit the German defenders as the Allied soldiers on the beaches.

Flying Bomb

The V-1's wings had no ailerons or other control surfaces. The missile was placed on the inclined ramp and launched toward London. The takeoff was assisted by a piston catapult, after which the pulsejet engine took over. At its cruising speed of 400 mph, the buzz bomb was across the English Channel in five minutes.

The pulsating sound—described as “similar to a Model T Ford going uphill”—could be heard from 10 miles away. It was generated by the opening and closing of the combustion chamber as the jet engine fired at 50 cycles or “pulses” per second.

Distance was measured by counting the revolutions of a propeller in the nose of the bomb. When the propeller had spun a predetermined number of times, the ignition stopped, and the nose of the bomb tipped downward into a steep dive.

In theory, the ignition cutout happened when the V-1 was above the target. In fact, there was considerable variation from the intended flight path. Of the four buzz bombs launched in the first attack on June 13, one landed on the periphery of London. None of the others came closer than 22 miles.

Residents of London and the surrounding territory learned quickly that when the noise of the buzz bomb quit, they had about 12 seconds to take cover before the missile exploded on impact with the ground.

The V-1 was not that powerful in an absolute sense. Its 1,830-pound warhead was equivalent to less than two of the general-purpose bombs carried by aircraft. However, the random nature of the attacks created

great fear. Nobody knew when or where the next buzz bomb might fall.

Under Attack

Following the explosion at Bethnal Green, the V-1 attacks on London continued for seven weeks. “Between 100 and 150 flying bombs, each weighing about a ton, are being discharged daily,” Churchill said in July. The casualties were running at “almost exactly one person per bomb,” he said.

The damage was extensive. “Soon not a pane of glass remained in the city buses,” said historian Rick Atkinson. “Tens of thousands of houses were smashed.”

The peak of the assault came Aug. 3, when 316 missiles were launched, about 220 of them getting to London. One of the buzz bombs narrowly missed Buckingham Palace. It struck a tall ash tree on the grounds and exploded before reaching the ground, blowing out a number of windows in the royal residence.



Firemen and civil defense workers look for survivors in a cavity formed by a large pile of rubble following a V-1 attack in Upper Norwood, London. Although the V-1 and V-2 weapons were largely ineffective in a military sense, they were clear precursors to modern day cruise missiles. Photo: Imperial War Museum.

The only information the Germans had on where the buzz bombs struck was what they could glean from the British, who used double agents to send back false reports. Deceived, the Germans retargeted with the result that the bombs were more likely to fall on less-populated places. “The subterfuge had to be kept secret of course—not only to fool the Germans but also to keep from the population of the southeast suburbs and countryside that their lives were being endangered to make central London safer,” said Nigel Blundell in a *Daily Express* look back.

V-1 launches declined in the middle of August

as the Germans retreated from launch sites in northern France to avoid capture by the advancing Allied invasion forces. The last buzz bomb fired from France was on Sept. 7.

Between June and September, the total of V-1s launched was 8,617. More than 1,000 crashed on take-off and almost half were shot down by the British defenses. Many landed far afield and only a quarter of them struck anywhere in London. The Germans began relocating the launch sites to eastern Germany for use against continental targets.

The British government announced on Sept. 7 that, "Except possibly for the last few shots, the Battle of London is over." Within 24 hours, the first of the V-2s fell on the city. They kept coming intermittently for the next six months, although not in numbers comparable to the V-1s.

BIG BROTHER

The V-2 rocket, much larger than the V-1, was a ballistic missile rather than a pilotless airplane. It was fired from a mobile transporter-erector-launcher called a Meillerwagen.

Although the technology was more advanced, the explosive yield of the V-2 warhead was no greater than that of the V-1. Since there were fewer of them—a total of 3,170 launched against England, Belgium, and other countries—the damage inflicted was limited.

A little more than a third of the V-2s aimed at London and Antwerp hit the cities. And since the V-2 could not normally be intercepted in flight, it did not tie down defensive fighters and antiaircraft guns the way the V-1 did.

An exception occurred when by coincidence a V-2 overtook and **passed through a formation of B-24 bombers** returning to England after a mission. One of the machine gunners opened up on the rocket and demolished it.

"The cost of the development and manufacture of the V-2 was staggering, estimated by a postwar US study as about \$2 billion, or about the same amount as was spent on the Allied atomic bomb program," said historian Steven Zaloga. "Yet the entire seven-month V-2 missile campaign delivered less high explosives on all the targeted cities than a single large RAF raid on Germany."

The Defense Belts

The Operation Crossbow attacks on the V-1 sites, never all that effective, were abandoned. What worked was an active defense in four layers: a fighter

belt at sea, a coastal belt of antiaircraft guns, an inland fighter belt, and closest to London, a belt of barrage balloons.

The best of the RAF interceptors was the new Hawker Tempest V, fast and maneuverable at low altitudes, but available only in limited numbers. Between June and August, Tempest pilots shot down 638 flying bombs. Other fighters, the Mosquito, Spitfire XIV, and Mustang, were also effective.

A shell from a 20 mm cannon could blow a hole through the steel covering of the buzz bomb, but the pilots dared not get too close. When a V-1 exploded in the air, it threw metal in all directions. A few pilots discovered that they could slide a wing under the V-1 wing and tip it over and out of control. Three V-1s were destroyed this way.

In good weather, the fighter-interceptors were more successful than the guns, and the Germans concentrated their main efforts on days when bad weather kept the fighters out of action. Results from the guns improved markedly with the arrival of proximity-fuzed shells from the United States.

The barrage balloons caught a few of those making it through, accounting for about eight percent of the V-1s intercepted. As a countermeasure, some of V-1s were equipped with balloon cable cutters on the leading edges of their wings.

"By the end of August, not more than one bomb in seven got through to the London area," Churchill said.

More V-1s

As the war progressed, the Germans developed several more variants of the V-1. On July 9, a Heinkel He-111 bomber approached within 60 miles of England and fired a buzz bomb it carried under the port wing, inboard of the engine.

Between July and January 1945, some 1,600 air-launched V-1s were employed against Britain, nearly all of them aimed at London. The accuracy was even worse than the ground-launched weapons. In September, half of those dropped from He-111s missed London by 24 miles.

In October, the V-1 threat shifted to Belgium, especially the key port of Antwerp. Between then and March 1945, the Germans rained 11,988 V-1s against Belgium—more than were sent against England. Accuracy was still poor. Only 211 buzz bombs ever fell into Antwerp.

V-2 rockets struck Belgium as well. The most deadly day was Dec. 16, when a V-2 hit a movie theater in Antwerp, killing 567.

Meanwhile, the Germans were working intensively on a longer-range version of the V-1 that could target Britain from launch sites in Holland. The result was the F-1 variant, which had a larger fuel tank and smaller warhead. It achieved greater range but at the sacrifice of explosive impact. Only 275 of these variants were fired at England, all in March 1945, with just 13 of them reaching London.

The last V-1 development was a piloted version, intended for attack against high-value targets. Supposedly the pilot could bail-out at the last moment. Several test flights were conducted before the Luftwaffe canceled the whole thing in 1945 as a bad idea.

About 10,500 V-1s of all kinds were fired against England. Two thousand crashed on takeoff or shortly after. The defenses shot down 52.8 percent. Some got through, but they had no real effect on the outcome of the war.

Legacies

“The average error of both weapons [the V-1 and V-2] amounted to more than 9.3 miles,” Churchill said. “Even if the Germans had launched 120 weapons per day and had we not shot down any of them, their effect would not have exceeded the dropping of two or three one- ton bombs per square mile per week.”

The Germans paid a substantial opportunity cost for the V-weapons. “The resources that went to build them could, according to the American bombing survey, have produced an additional 24,000 aircraft,” said historian Richard Overy.

The Americans shipped a supply of V-1 parts to Wright Field in 1944 and built their own copy of the buzz bomb, the JB-2 “Thunderbug,” but the program dwindled away with the end of the war.

Hanson Baldwin of *The New York Times* was among the first to perceive the legacy of the V-weapons. “The flying bomb will not win this war,” he wrote in August 1944. “And unless its cousin, the giant rocket the Germans are preparing for use against London, has undreamed of potentialities, neither will the rocket. But both of them are weapons of the future. Both have had and will continue to have considerable effect upon military operations.”

A major role for ballistic missiles and space boosters was not long in arriving. Peenemunde research chief von Braun went on to become director of NASA’s Marshall Space Flight Center in Huntsville, Ala. And the V-1 is clearly recognizable as the forerunner of the cruise missile, which has been pervasive in modern military operations.

John T. Correll was editor-in-chief of *Air Force Magazine* for 18 years.

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Operation Crossbow

2nd Air Division Attacks V-1 sites

Missions were directed at V-Weapon sites on December 24, 1943 at the Pas-de-Calais area of France. The mission was composed of three elements. The second element was a force of 196 B-24s from 2nd Air Division that included: 44th BG (24), 93rd BG (25), 389th BG (30), 392nd BG (28), 445th BG (35), 446th BG (27), and 448th BG (27). 192 were effective on a target. There were no losses, claims or casualties. Source: *American Air Museum*.



Buzz Bomb Close Call— a 2AD Airman's Story 'Uncovered'

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

Uncle Frank did not talk about WWII very much, but I will never forget when he showed me the medals he earned in the 8th Air Force. He had the Air Medal with 3 Oak Leaf clusters and the Distinguished Flying Cross. Before Staff Sergeant Charles Franklin Clark (Uncle Frank, as he was called) died in Aug. 1987, all I knew was that he had flown in the war on a B-24 airplane. Since starting research on my Uncle in 1992, each little bit of information builds on another until one day, a whole picture develops. While building on my Uncle's story, along with first hand stories from crew members and from finding his own letter home about his London R&R visit, more of his story comes out.

I understood he had a close call with a buzz bomb attack. What I read in his letter home about his R&R in London was very interesting. His letter written on Sept 7, 1944, from the 489th BG base at Halesworth begins:

I have been to London a few times since I have been here and I must say it is a pretty nice town. The Buzz Bombs were the only things I worried about since I came very close one time to getting hit by one. It was exciting though. I guess now I can go there and enjoy myself in peace.

Sometime later, I was able to uncover more about this visit. While driving with Uncle Frank to Baltimore to see the Orioles play baseball, I asked him what kind of bombs he helped drop on Germany. Well,

the question was out of the blue, but he shot back a reply real fast.

Ah, Chrissy, every mission was different, some were general purpose bombs and some were incendiaries, do you know what that means?

I did not, but I learned real fast. He quickly changed the subject to his memories of that R&R visit to London. It was November 1944, and he was supposed to go to the 8th Air Force rooms at the Palace Hotel but his crewmates couldn't find him there.

Uncertainty! Still driving to Baltimore, Uncle Frank said that the memory of danger was always on his mind. *You never know when a German anti-aircraft shell would hit your plane or someone else's; never knowing if you would come back or not.* He said when he did get a visit to London, *I made the most of it.* It seems he was having such a good time in London, he missed a group picture with his crew. In his letter home, all he could mention due to censoring was that he had a close call with a Buzz Bomb.

Well, 35 or 40 years after the fact, I guess he finally could tell someone what really happened, and I was that someone. And now, the uncovered story. He was in a hotel, but not alone. He had met an English woman. When the Buzz Bomb went off both of them landed on the floor, still embraced. It was only later, after they were ready to get dressed, that they looked to see the damage the bomb had caused!



GI issued matchbooks—sharp and practical. Targeted images and language distributed by the military for 'safety' were a small part of the never-ending campaign to keep GI's healthy and out of trouble when away from the base. The phrase 'SNAFU' is best explained by a Vet, in person. Ask them!



(continued from page 1)

B-24H Liberator heavy bomber in the 458th Bomb Group, 8th Air Force. The group flew out of an airbase at Horsham St. Faith, which was located in the East Anglia area of England, just miles outside of Norwich. Bob's crew and plane had arrived in England in November, 1944, along with dozens of other crews and planes. The D-Day invasion of Normandy had already taken place months before, but Allied troops were bogged down on the continent of Europe and there was a respite in combat activity going into the Christmas season (until, that is, the Germans pulled their holiday surprise attack, which developed into the Battle of the Bulge).

Bob and his crew started slowly, with four missions at the end of December 1944 and into January 1945. Nothing much happened on those early missions; they mainly served as what the air crews called "milk runs," easy missions, largely uneventful. Not so their fifth mission.

January 17, 1945, the crew awoke at 4:00 am, got their breakfast, and received their briefing: the day's mission was to bomb oil refineries near Hamburg. This was different. At the time, Hamburg had approximately 440 flak batteries in its vicinity, and those anti-aircraft guns could put up massive amounts of defensive fire against any bomber flying through the area on its bomb run. Crews did not look forward to running that flak gauntlet around Hamburg.

This was a big mission, with over 700 heavy bombers and 300 fighters participating from throughout the 8th Air Force. It took lots of time to get so many planes in the air and organized over England and the North Sea; Bob's plane did not actually take off until 9:30 am. The 93rd Bomb Group from its base at Hardwick was leading the 2nd Air Divisions echelon of B-24s heading east, and the 458th BG was farther back in the pack.

Bob Birmingham, at 140 pounds and a small frame, fit snugly in the nose of his B-24. He was the nose gunner, but he also had the important job of dropping the bombs on cue when he saw the lead B-24 dropping its bombs.

Lt. Roger Hicks was the pilot and commander of Bob's crew, Flight Officer Sirotnak was co-pilot, Flight Officer Haslauer was the navigator, Sgt. Brittain was the radar counter-measures man, Sgt. Berdar was the radio operator, Sgt. Quarford the engineer and top turret gunner, Sgts. Betz and Bennett were the right and left waist gunners, and Sgt. Schauseil the tail gunner.

Ten men, then were riding this B-24H toward Hamburg, their lives on the line. Initially, after climbing and joining up over the North Sea, the flight was routine. Soon, however, as their planes crossed the coast near the Netherlands, their formation of B-24s began receiving anti-aircraft fire. The flak was light to begin with, and fortunately, no Luftwaffe fighters appeared that day. Then, as the men flew into German territory, the anti-aircraft fire began to increase in intensity and accuracy. Soon the formation was nearing Hamburg, and the fire from the ground became intense and much more accurate. The German gunners were finding the range of the American bombers.

When the formation of bombers reached its Initial Point (the "IP"), the planes had to turn as one and begin their bombing run toward their target. At that stage, the planes could not dodge or adjust the rigid order of their formation—otherwise, if they had, the bomb drop would become disorganized and the saturation of the target area might become negligible, or even non-existent. Everything depended on those planes dropping their bombs as an organized unit. But now the shells from the anti-aircraft guns below were coming hot and heavy, and the German gunners were right on target. Bob Birmingham remembers, as his plane turned onto the bomb run, the flak being heavy and accurate—the black explosions were everywhere, crowding out the available light.

This situation created a serious problem, because Bob literally could not see the lead plane at the front of his formation, and that meant that Bob could not see when to drop his plane's bombs. Despite the noise and smoke and violent explosions all around him, Bob did not panic; instead, he told himself, "Just do your job." Then, suddenly, there was a small clearing in the flak up ahead, and he saw the lead plane dropping its bombs. Immediately, Bob toggled his bomb switch and yelled into the intercom, "Bombs away!"

Within seconds of the bombs' release, there was a loud explosion inside the plane and the B-24H lurched upwards several yards. An anti-aircraft shell had gone in the open bomb-bay doors, had cut the hydraulic lines of the plane, and had opened a gaping hole in the plane's gas tank. Amazingly, however, there was no secondary explosion of the fuel. For whatever reason, gas was leaking out, but it did not ignite.

Almost simultaneously, another flak shell exploded near the plane's wing, knocking out the #3 engine and damaging the #4 engine to the extent that it

could only generate half of its normal power.

Bob's plane was wounded, but the wound had not yet proved to be mortal. The B-24H had lost most of its hydraulic controls, it had a leaking gas tank, and

ly functioning, they lost altitude but also made their way over the northern edge of Germany, first toward Denmark, and then over the Baltic Sea, gradually nosing their way towards Sweden.



Original crew in Bob Birmingham's B-24H, plane 978, 458th Bomb Group, 8th Air Force, 2nd Air Division before deployment to the war. Standing (L-R): Blum; W. Haslauer; J. Sirotnak; R. Hicks. Crouching (L-R): J. Berdar; M. Bennett; R. Birmingham; R. Schauseil; R. Betz; E. Quarford. Not shown: R. Brittain (radar operator). [Original bombardier Blum did not accompany crew overseas.] Photo: USAAF

two of its engines were less than fully functional. Still, the plane flew on, although it was gradually losing altitude. The crew men conferred and soon realized that it would be pointless to try to return to base in England. Under the best of conditions, that return trip would require several hours of hard flying at high altitude—if they could remain at their height. Yet, heading back west would require them to buck the prevailing easterly flow of the jet stream winds. And they would be re-running the gauntlet of German anti-aircraft guns, and possibly even German fighters, waiting to pick off strays. Plus, no one wanted to bail out over Germany and end up a POW.

The three officers—Hicks, Sirotnak, and Haslauer—decided that the best chance of the crew surviving this mission would be for the plane to head toward neutral country, into Sweden. This would require them to cross the Baltic Sea, if they could, and land safely in Sweden. Could they manage it?

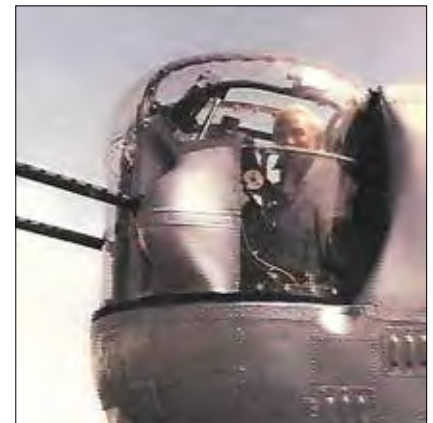
Without knowing exactly how to get there, the pilots and navigator set an approximate course for Sweden, as they left the formation of B-24 bombers returning to England. Slowly, with only two engines ful-

wrapped scarves around the hydraulic lines and managed to slow the flow of fluid, to the point where the pilots might be able to use landing gear and flaps while landing. Quarford also slowed the gas loss, which enabled the plane to keep flying and which gave the crew a chance of making it to Sweden. In doing all this, however, Quarford became so soaked with hydraulic and fuel fluids that he stayed out in the bomb bay area, freezing in the cold. Sgt. Quarford even refused to turn on the electrically-heated flight suit that he wore, because he feared a fire or an explosion if he turned on the electric heating current to his fuel-soaked flight suit.

This was all educated guess-work and seat-of-the-pants flying. The crew began lightening the plane's load by throwing out items and objects—anything that was not bolted down but that might drag them down, was thrown out.

More importantly, the engineer, Eddie Quarford, took charge inside the shattered bomb bay area and went to work trying to stanch the gas leak and the hydraulic fluid loss. Sgt. Quarford worked tirelessly. He

In his familiar nose gunner/bombs away toggler position, Bob Birmingham in a B-24 nose turret decades later. He was one of the first 'multi-taskers.' Photo: Birmingham family.



About a half-hour later, the battered crew and plane reached the coast of Sweden. Would they land? Could they land? Lt. Hicks, the pilot, thought not. The nose wheel wouldn't operate due to the loss of hydraulic fluid; in addition, there was a real risk of fire or explosion upon the impact of landing. Too much of the plane was soaked with flammable fluids. Accordingly, Lt. Hicks gave the order to bail out.

This order caught Bob Birmingham by surprise. He had worked his way toward the center or rear of the plane, away from the nose, assuming that they would either be ditching or else attempting a crash landing. Now, back near the other gunners, Bob suddenly realized that his parachute was stowed up front behind the pilot's seat. He hurried forward in the ensuing confusion and met Lt. Hicks coming back through the bomb bay area. Luckily for him, Lt. Hicks quickly found a spare chute for Bob and clipped the chute onto his harness. Away Bob jumped.

As Bob cleared the plane, he tried to pull the ripcord, but his heavy flight glove wouldn't allow him to grasp the release clasp. He tried three times, unsuccessfully, to pull the chord with his glove on, then he frantically threw off the glove and finally was able to pull the chord. The chute opened, he swung once, and suddenly was jerked to a halt in the branches of a tall pine tree. Welcome to Sweden. And safety.

But this jump doesn't end the crew's story. Most of the men had bailed out at Lt. Hicks' order. Sgts. Betz and Bennett, however, who were gunners back in the waist of the bomber, had not gotten the order—likely due to mechanical malfunction, or perhaps to the chaotic state of events unfolding so quickly and unpredictably. For whatever reason, the two waist gunners were crouched in their ditching positions, waiting for the plane to crash-land. But both pilots had already bailed out!

Hard as it is to believe, the unmanned plane righted itself in flight, after having been abandoned by the rest of the crew. The engines turned over a few times, just enough to give some power and stability to the plane, and then the stricken B-24 touched down - first the tail hitting the ground, tearing off the left vertical stabilizer, then it all went straight down, snapping one wheel, breaking the fuselage, and finally snapping the other wheel.

Sgts. Betz and Bennett suffered exactly one black eye between the two of them, and nothing else. Other than the aforementioned black eye, they walked away without a scratch.

As with other combatant crews during WWII who reached neutral Sweden, the men were interned for the remainder of the war, which ended in Europe on May 8, 1945.

As Bob Birmingham put it many years later, he and his crew survived their fifth mission by the grace of God. Today, Bob lives comfortably and quietly outside of Milwaukee, thankful for having done his part in the fight.

Printed by permission from *Forward in Flight*, Summer 2019.



Bob is eager to show his A2 flight jacket last fall with patches depicting 458th BG, 732nd BS, and Caterpillar bailout parachute colorfully adorned. Photo: Jim Birmingham.

Shopping Alert

The Heritage League is participating in the AmazonSmile program. The idea is simple: you shop AmazonSmile and they donate a portion of the proceeds to the Heritage League of the 2nd Air Division—USAAF. Here is how it works: visit <https://smile.amazon.com/>. Log in with your Amazon account username and password. If you don't have an account, create one. Select Heritage League of the Second Air Division as your designated charity.

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

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



The Air Medal—by Doug Dovey



A 16 point compass rose centered on an eagle diving with lightening bolts in each talon. The ribbon is ultramarine blue with two gold-orange stripes, honoring the original colors of the Army Air Force. Photo: Medals of America.com.

Many of our veterans received an Air Medal (some more than one time) during the European Air Campaign of WWII. Although many of us are familiar with it, knowledge of its origin and criteria is not

as widely known. Here we provide the background and specifics about the award which was approved in 1942 by President Franklin D. Roosevelt for “anyone who distinguishes himself by meritorious achievement while serving with the Armed Forces in aerial flight.” The ribbon has a broad stripe of ultramarine blue in the center flanked on either side by a wide stripe of golden orange, and with a narrow stripe of ultramarine blue at the edge, the original colors of the Army Air Corps.

Awards recognized single acts of merit or heroism or for meritorious service. It is primarily intended to recognize those personnel who are on current crew member or non-crew member flying status which requires them to participate in aerial flight on a regular and frequent basis. Oak leaf clusters were initially used to denote subsequent awards of the Air Medal. When the number of additional awards were so great that the oak leaf clusters did not fit on the ribbon, they were replaced by a number.

The original 1942 award criteria was for one Air Medal award per 25 operational flights during which exposure to enemy fire is expected, or 100 operational flights during which exposure to enemy fire is not ex-

pected, or per each naval vessel or three enemy aircraft in flight confirmed destroyed. An entire aircrew would be credited for the destruction of a ship. However, during war time, field commanders could select the award criteria and approval authority. During World War II, the medal’s award criteria varied widely depending on the theater of operations, the aircraft flown, and the missions accomplished. In Europe, the airspace was considered completely controlled by the enemy and heavy air defenses were encountered, so the criteria were altered from those of the original medal. Bomber and reconnaissance crewmembers received it for five sorties in the early days; elsewhere in the Pacific much higher criteria were used. Fighter pilots received it for ten sorties, and individual pilots or air crewmen received one award



Major Jimmy Stewart being awarded an oak leaf cluster to his Air Medal after his 10th mission with the 445th Bomb Group at Tibenham. Photo: USAAF via American Air Museum (IWM Duxford).

per enemy aircraft shot down. Anti-submarine patrols from the United States could qualify for the medal if an airman logged 200 hours of flight time.

The Distinguished Flying Cross would usually be awarded for roughly twice to five times the requirements of the Air Medal. More on that in the next Herald.

Sources: *Wikipedia* and Air Force Personnel Center fact sheet.



8th Air Force Historical Society Announces its 47th Annual Reunion

8th Air Force Historical Society 47th Annual Reunion will be on October 27-31, 2021, Savannah, Georgia. Marriott Riverfront. The Heritage League will attend. More details around March 2021 at: <https://www.8thafhs.org/>.

News from the American Library



By Orla Kennelly, Memorial Trust Librarian

The dawn of a New Year was sadly overshadowed by new lockdown restrictions in the UK. All public buildings are again closed and all staff are working from home including those of the American Library. There is no current end date for these restrictions and so we are not currently planning for any in-person events or activities.

We have been working to answer remote inquiries and we expect to see a number of our archive images in upcoming documentaries—we'll keep you posted on this. Our Library Assistant Team are part of the overall Norfolk Libraries effort to make “warm and well” calls. This means we are contacting regular library customers who are older and without email addresses. Through this we are hoping to keep in touch with many Norfolk citizens who haven't been able to visit a library since March 2020.

Internet Events

During this closure, we have started a new internet-based event and welcome your participation. First is 'Coffee Afternoon' sessions via Zoom to converse directly with library staff. Hosted by our new staff member, Linda Sheppard with Jane Appleton it will be on the second Saturday of each month at 4:15 P.M. GMT (11:15 U.S. Eastern standard time). We hope this will be an opportunity for us to connect across the pond and chat all things 2nd Air Division over a cup of coffee or tea. Request an invitation by emailing to: americanlibrary@norfolk.gov.uk.



Our HerStory book club, a reading club 'by, for and about women,' will move to the third Tuesdays of the month at 4:15 GMT (11:15 U.S. Eastern standard time). If you are interested in joining get in touch. Please note all digital events are hosted on Zoom and for the log in information please email: americanlibrary@norfolk.gov.uk.

Unfortunately, I'm afraid we don't have a lot to update in terms of our reopening. We are currently in the worst days of the pandemic and there is no current end date for this lockdown.

Library Renovation

Our refurbishment is complete and the library has been made COVID secure. We look forward to



Scratch-built model of 467th *Witchcraft*, as if turning for final approach, has new place of honor in the redone Library.



Frosted glass portals look out to the atrium of Forum, main library, are retained features in new American Library. Photos: courtesy American Library.

opening as soon as restrictions are lifted. Improvements to our facilities make our Library more open, welcoming and accessible. The new layout has a larger meeting room, softer furnishings and new portable shelving which can be moved to free up space for group activities.

Heritage League welcomes new staff member

The latest member of the American Library staff is Linda Sheppard. Linda was first hired by the library in 2015 as an American Scholar and has worked continuously for the library since that time. She is primarily responsible for bringing to life elements of American culture and the World War II experience to patrons through a variety of projects. These projects include the recording of patron's experiences with the friendly invasion [U.S. servicemen—*Ed*] so as to construct a living history of an individual's experiences of the Second World War; the organization of school visits so as to bring the war, American culture and the connections between Norfolk and the states to school children, and the production of videos for Reading

America so as to showcase the library's collection of fiction to audiences both old and new. Thanks to the help and financial support of the Second Air Division Memorial Trust, Linda was able to complete her Doctorate in Film, Television and Media from the University of East Anglia in 2017 and continues to teach film at the university level in addition to her library duties. Before moving to the UK, Linda lived in New York City where she worked for The Brooklyn Museum as an Assistant Film Curator, for The Andy Warhol Foundation as a Promotional Materials Archivist and for Women Make Movies as a Fundraising Assistant. In her spare time, Linda enjoys watching horror films, walking with her 14-year-old daughter, producing a podcast, Hallowed Histories with her husband, and playing with Howie her cat.



New library staff member Linda Sheppard returns after an earlier term there as an American Scholar in 2015. Now, after completing her Doctorate in film, television, and media with the University of East Anglia. Photo: L. Sheppard.



The new roll of honor alcove anchors the memorial area of the library. It allows quiet reflection of the roll of honor containing the names of fallen 2nd Air Division servicemen. A page of the roll is turned daily. On the wall are photos of the fallen, adding faces and perspective to the solemn setting. Photos will be changed yearly and the Library welcomes photographs from those interested in displaying their lost servicemen. You can browse through the roll of honor on your computer by going to the American Library website: The Second Air Division Roll of Honor—American Library. Photo: American Library.

**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*

Persons who help keep this group going
Robert Birmingham (458th)
Robert Birmingham (458th)
Burton Madison (453rd)

Russel Neatrou
Jim Birmingham
Shary Whalen
Deborah Simms
-Watson

Dr. Herbert S. Leopold (466th)
Stanley L. Marr (93rd)
Sam Mastrogiacommo (445th)
Milton A. Nichols (448th)
Henry Nykamp (93rd)
Gale M. Rucker, SSGT (491st)
Leo W. Ryan (453rd)
Lt. Col. Richard M. Stenger (489th)
Jack (John) Stevens
J. Fred Thomas (392nd)

Cathy Leopold
John C. Marr
Joan Mastrogiacommo
Susan DeHart
Jean Koznarek
Maj. Stephen J. Rucker
Geraldine Suskin
Paula Blum
Pam Stevens
Terry Johnson

IN MEMORY OF...*Donors*

James Arthur Adovasio (389th)
Albert (453rd) and Claire Biel
Frank Birmingham (458th)
Frank Birmingham (458th)
Frederick Bromm (445th)
James L. Bruner (466th)
Capt. Alexander D. Ciurczak
(USAAF DFC)
Lt. Col. Dario A. de Julio (458th)
James V. Goar (392nd)
Jean A. Hallett
Robert R. Harvey (491st)
Brad Eaton & Bruce Jones
(BG unknown)
Perry Kerr (466th)
Frank (392nd) and Helen Koza
Margaret (Peggy) Learman

Dr. J. M. Adovasio
Barbara Mello
Jim Birmingham
Shary Whalen
Jacqueline Bromm
James E. Bruner
Alexis Ciurczak
Diane de Julio
Deborah Beigh
Allan Hallett
Dorothy J. Harvey
William Long
Penny Kerr
Susan Scavone
Richard Learman

—Folded Wings—

<i>Russell Harriman</i>	12/26/12	453 rd BG
<i>Richard Ghaster</i>	03/10/13	453 rd BG
<i>John Gately</i>	01/16/18	44 th BG
<i>Raymond Houghtby</i>	02/22/18	44 th BG
<i>Luther Carl Williams</i>	04/13/18	458 th BG
<i>Alexander John Kissimon</i>	11/25/18	389 th BG
<i>Ed Roloff</i>	04/12/19	445 th BG
<i>Richard Skattie</i>	09/21/19	44 th BG
<i>Jonathan Ray Bickel</i>	12/19/19	467 th BG
<i>Paul Dickerson</i>	02/12/20	445 th BG
<i>Russell Marion Robinson</i>	10/19/20	453 rd BG
<i>Frederick James Gerritz</i>	10/31/20	466 th BG



The late David Hart, longtime partner of Treasurer Sue Risley (446th BG) was very helpful at reunions, friendly and humorous supporter of The League. Lost to COVID on October 2nd, 2020, he will be missed by all who had the good luck to meet him. Photo: Colin Mann.

Happy Birthday VETS!

The Heritage League is pleased to acknowledge our Veterans with upcoming or recent birthdays. 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: ddovey@hotmail.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 pilot Joe Cook spent time at Stalag Luft 1 as POW. His 93rd birthday is this May. Photo: American Air Museum.



389th pilot Alan Carlton celebrated his 102nd birthday this past January. He holds a piece of his bomber recovered and sent to him for his 100th. He spent over a year as a POW. Photo: Howard Lipin San Diego Union-Tribune.



Burt Madison is always ready to share a good war story. The 453rd ball turret gunner tells us how to shoot while lying down. He turns 98 this June. Photo: Doug Dovey.



389th top turret gunner Allan Hallett will celebrate his 95th this April. Photo: Doug Dovey.

Heritage League Board Sends Birthday Greetings

Even though these times of 'social distancing' keep us home, Heritage League Board members were honored to 'virtually' visit and celebrate our veterans Bob Birmingham and Don O'Reilly on their respective birthdays with a Happy Birthday song and cheerful words via Zoom video conference. Thanks to Jim Birmingham and Colleen Mersman for arranging. Thanks to Brian Mahoney for Zoom screenshot photos.



Heritage League Board members send a special birthday greeting to Veteran Bob Birmingham 458th BG nose gunner/bomb releaser on his 95th birthday last December. He received 145 birthday cards from friends and Heritage League members. Bob in top row right box is displaying his flight jacket to: top row center, Beverly Baynes Tomb, past Heritage League president and 2AD Memorial Trust Governor. Middle row (L-R): past president Irene Hurner, current president Marybeth Dyer, and Sue Risley, treasurer. Third row (L-R) Chris Clark, volunteers' protégé; Barb Figueroa, membership protégé. Brian Mahoney, VP volunteers, and Doug Dovey (not pictured) also participated.

Heritage Leaguers send their special birthday wishes and song to Don O'Reilly (bottom row left sitting with birthday cupcake) on the occasion of his 99th birthday last November. Top row left: Heritage League President Marybeth Dyer; Brian Mahoney, VP volunteers. Second row: Sue Risley, Treasurer; Chris Clark, volunteers' protégé; third row: Doug Dovey, VP communications; Beverly Baynes Tomb, past Heritage League president and 2AD Memorial Trust Governor. Bottom row: Don with his birthday cupcake and Marybeth Dyer's daughter Amy Meier with granddaughters Hailey, Emilia and grandson Luke (4th Gen of veterans).



Don O'Reilly with daughter Colleen Mersman. He served as a military policeman at Metfield (which was closed due to a bomb dump explosion) and Shipdam bases. He wishes he could have that birthday cupcake pictured in the lower left Zoom frame next to them. Photo: Matt Cormia.



Spring 2021 Heritage Calendar & History Spotlight—Upcoming Events of 2nd Air Division Interest

February-April, 2021

American Library ribbon cutting. Norwich England Public Library. To be announced when Library reopens after Coronavirus restrictions are lifted. Latest info at their new website: <https://www.americanlibrary.uk/>.

Easter Sunday, April 4th

1942—*Doolittle bombing raid on Tokyo April 18th*

1944—*Big Week. Maximum effort missions, also known as 'Operation Argument,' to suppress German air superiority in preparation for the future land invasion, February 20th-25th*

1945—*American aircraft bomb Berlin in one of the largest raids of the War, March 18th*

1945—*Final 2nd Air Division combat missions in Europe and last combat losses, April 25*

May

2nd Air Division Trust Governors' mid-year meeting. May, Norwich England

American Battle Monuments Cemeteries on Memorial Day, Monday May 31st. Note: ceremonies have not been announced as of press time. If public ceremonies resume, Heritage League will provide wreaths to the 13 overseas cemeteries honoring 2nd Air Division airmen. Check their website at ABMC.gov for latest information.

1945—*Germany surrenders, Victory in Europe Day, V-E Day, May 8th*

June

1941—*US Army Air Corps becomes the U.S. Army Air Forces, June 20th*

1942—*General Eisenhower takes command of U.S. forces in Europe, June 25th*

1944—*D-Day invasion at Normandy, June 6th*

Other

467th BG Association. Fundraising to honor airmen from bomb groups who were lost while training at Historic Wendover Field, Utah. An accurate B-24 model (approx. 6 foot wingspan) will be placed in the restored officers club. \$45,000 raised so far toward a \$52,000 goal. More info at: <http://www.467bg.com/>.

93rd BG Association. The planned 2021 reunion at Hardwick UK this spring is postponed, due to the UK "lockdown" and travel restrictions. Planning continues for the 93rd BGA reunions in the United States, at Salt Lake City, UT in October 2021, and Boston, MA in 2022. For updates go to: <https://www.93bg.com/reunions/>.

8th Air Force Historical Society Reunion with Heritage League Annual Meeting. Savannah Riverfront Marriott, Savannah, GA. October 27-31, 2021. More info this March at: <https://www.8thafhs.org/>. Heritage League will attend. Other 2AD BGs anticipating attending: 392nd BG Wendling, 466th BG Attlebridge, 458th Horsham St Faith.

Also check the following websites for more information:

<https://www.americanlibrary.uk/>

<https://abmc.gov/>

<http://aomda.org/en/content/ceremonies/>

<https://www.nationalmuseum.af.mil/Upcoming/Calendar/>

<https://www.mightyeighth.org/>



HERITAGE LEAGUE VOLUNTEER PROGRAM

—MISSION BRIEFING—

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

We are very excited to announce a special project: **News From the Greatest Generation**. We now have 62 years of 2ADA Journals and 19 years of the *Heritage Herald* available on our web page, and we can expect improvements to the way you can search these collections. It has been a natural step to broaden this process to encompass other publications of post-war associations of the fighter groups and bomber groups that comprised the Second Air Division. Bob Books (392nd BG Gold Star son, former Heritage League webmaster and vice president) not only helped in completing the Journal collection, but has advocated for this exciting expansion of the collection.

This project entails many volunteer roles, and we hope you see one that would engage you during this time when we are staying home so much! We have started to survey what has already been compiled; starting with assembling full collections of the various publications, through digitizing and processing them for optical character recognition (OCR). Do you have a complete or substantial portion of original publications from one of the Group associations? Are you willing to help find missing editions for various collections? How about overseeing some portion of the process, such as working with scanning services or volunteer scanning teams? If so, please let us know by clicking on our Volunteer form at: <https://heritageleague.org/volunteer/>.

We have scores of other volunteer openings and are excited every time we find a perfect fit between your talents/availability, and a task or role that contributes to our overall mission of honoring and remembering. One recent volunteer has been sidelined by COVID but is mending well, and she will be welcomed back to the role she was fulfilling so well. Since our last publication, we have the terrific good luck to put new member Dallas King right to work. His father-in-law, the late William Espich, served in the 448th BG. Dallas did superb photo-sweetening of half the images in this edition, which had two immediate, appreciated benefits: Brian no longer is the sole person doing this and thus, one of the choke points in *Herald* production has been relieved. Brian has many more hours now free to help with other pressing tasks with the new project and the board. Everybody wins!

Here are a few more ‘openings’ that, if filled right away, will immediately enhance our effectiveness in practical activities that bring our noble mission to life in visible, useful ways:

- research and implement a ‘photo tagging’ project that will greatly improve the usability of our impressive, growing collection of images submitted to the Herald
- telephone wellness calls to our Honorary Life Members
- send our best wishes to members who are ill, grieving, or celebrating a milestone birthday
- social media manager, to post suitable content on our web and FaceBook pages
- content makers for our Youtube channel (in development)

Thank you to all who have stepped up recently, and a warm welcome to all of you who are willing to give a bit of time and talent to our worthy cause. Again, please access our Volunteer form at: <https://heritageleague.org/volunteer/>.

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

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



- January 27, 1943. USAAF bombers mount the first all-American mission against Germany, bombing Wilhelmshaven.*
- February 1944. VIII Bomber Command was redesignated as the 8th Air Force. At the end of the War, six groups of the 2nd Air Division 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.*
- June 6, 1944. D-Day landing of occupied France takes place at Normandy*
- February 13, 1945. Royal Air Force Lancasters begin firebombing of Dresden*
- **Mission 23: 19 March 1945 Baumenheim, Germany Mission Diary.** By Lt. Col. Harold H. Dorfman (448th BG).

Today's mission was an extremely interesting one from a sightseeing point of view. Again I flew as pilotage navigator. I love that nose turret position, most comfortable seat in the plane. But this time it was really worthwhile. CAVU [ceiling and visibility unlimited—*Ed.*] all the way in and most of the way out. Flying time 8 hours and 5 minutes. Takeoff was at 1030 hours. Much too late for a mission of that length. We were to lead the 20th Combat Wing today. Colonel Westover was flying with us as command pilot. Forming was in Belgium, just south of Brussels. It went over extremely well. We went into Germany somewhere around Strasbourg and headed for the target near Munich, a jet aircraft parts factory. We bombed visual. Bombs away at 1448 hours, altitude 17,900 feet, temperature -47°F. We really plastered the target. Coming out we passed north of Frankfurt and then across the Rhine south of Coblenz. Frankfurt was a mess. Coblenz was leveled, just nothing there, no blip on the radar. You could see north to Cologne and Dusseldorf. One of the two was really burning; at that distance I couldn't tell which it was. I could see the flashes of the artillery on the west bank of the Rhine and the shells bursting on the east bank. Up at Remagen, where our troops had crossed the Rhine, you could see the heavy artillery marking the area. We held on the east bank. It looked like hell down there from here. We passed directly over Aachen. That was another pitiful sight. It's beaten to a pulp. Hit from behind by a jet. Took a picture I would rather forget [see accompanying photo—*Ed.*] From then on out the trip was uneventful. I almost went to sleep in that nose turret. put on quite a flare show in the traffic pattern, celebrating the end of dead reckoning nav's tour. That is it for my #23. Reprinted from 2ADA Journal, Winter 1994, Vol 33 No 4, pg.16.



"Mission 23, 19 March 1945" A picture he would rather forget. Navigator Dorfman, while viewing bomb wrecked cities on their return from target Baumeheim, saw the aftermath of a bomber hit from behind by a jet. Photo: H. Dorfman.

- April 25, 1945. Final 8th Air Force combat missions in Europe and last combat losses.
- May 8, 1945. V-E day. End of the war in Europe.

* Source: www.americanairmuseum.com

** Source: [https://roncole.net/collections](http://roncole.net/collections)

Remembrances

—by Doug Dovey



Remembrance Day past. A photo of from 2019 when our Veteran Allan Hallett reviewed the many commemorative wreaths placed on the downtown Norwich War Memorial facing City Hall during that special ceremony. Last year's ceremonies were cancelled due to COVID. Photo: Beverly Tomb.

Because travel was greatly restricted last fall due to COVID, no one was able to travel to England last November on the occasion of Remembrance Sunday (analogous to our Veteran's Day). The usual public memorial ceremonies were cancelled but a small cadre of our British friends managed to hold small commemorative events at their respective bomb group memorials. We are grateful to them and have included some, but not all, of those events captured on photos. Also, a special memorial service was held at London's St Paul's Cathedral by The Very Reverend Dr. David Ison—Dean of the Cathedral, on behalf of U.S. veterans.

Additionally during that timeframe, the Second Air Division Memorial Trust Governors held their annual general meeting via the internet on Zoom last November. The minutes of that meeting is included in our 'Members Corner' section, page 24.

Lastly, we will go back in time to WWII and read about a Christmas community event sponsored by the 392nd Bomb Group at Wendling.

At the Memorial Site on Halesworth Airfield, the fallen were remembered.

The flags were flown and wreaths were laid at this 489th BG memorial as well as memorials for the two other units on the base. We continue to be so very grateful for the Service given by those who served on Halesworth Airfield. Photo: Marjorie Shiers.



Remembrance Day Memorials

To all of the Heritage League and Halesworth, I wanted to share with all of you the work that Marjorie Shiers does for the 489th and the Second Air Division men who paid the price of freedom in WWII. THANK YOU Marjorie for doing this every year. It means a lot to me personally and as a member of the HL. If you all look real close, you can read the words on the stone memorial.

Christopher Clark

489th & 44th Bomb Groups and Heritage League.



Halesworth has three memorials for the three units on that base. The 489th BG, 56th Fighter Group and 5th Rescue Squadron were stationed there as signified by the three memorials. Of note, the pole supporting the windsock at far left is original from the War. Photo: Marjorie Shiers.



Owing to lockdown we were grateful our parson was able with David, and William our resident trumpeter, to lay wreathes and give a meaningful and solemn short service to all those who gave their all from the 93rd BG, Hardwick. We Shall Never Forget! Photo and credit: Jean Woodrow.

Remembrance Day Ceremony at London's St Paul's Cathedral

Many of us have visited the American Chapel inside St Paul's Cathedral which is seat of the Anglican Church in London. The Very Reverend Dr. David Ison—Dean, gave a special memorial service on behalf of U.S. veterans at the American Chapel last November and filmed it for us. They saved this video which includes music from their large choir, in order to provide the space and atmosphere needed for this remembrance. It is 11 minutes long, on YouTube in color. Watch it at: <https://YouTube/UKnEOqr7418>.

Christmas 1944 at a Liberator Station

Reprinted from 392nd BG Memorial Association News, December 2020.

The author of this news article, “For release Dec. 24,” was not named, but was likely Capt Donald B. McCammond, 392nd BG, 578th Squadron Intelligence Officer and Station Public Relations Officer.

AN EIGHTH AIR FORCE LIBERATOR STATION: England—Here's what your G.I. Joe will be doing tonight and tomorrow if he's on an Eighth Air Force bomber station. The program—from Col Lorin L. Johnson's 392nd Bombardment Group and fairly typical—begins Christmas Eve. A Glee club of men and officers is making its debut with selections of popular and semi-classical American songs, later leading a community sing. If he gets hoarse by joining in, Joe can wander over to the snack bar of the Red Cross Aero Club and pick up a coke, coffee and refreshments.

After that's over, he'll probably take off for his barracks and open what remains of his Christmas packages. For the past two months, living quarters have been the location of epicurean orgies supported by donations from the folks back home. Most men, however, have saved some of their gifts for Xmas opening.

At midnight, mass will be held in the station chapel. Then if he is not flying, or does not have to get a Lib in shape for a mission the following morning, Joe can “hit the sack.” Christmas Day, breakfast will be just the same. Fresh eggs, that just ran out with the man ahead of you in line at the mess hall, hot cakes that... well, anyway, it will be just the same, and powdered eggs do not taste much better even when scrambled for the benefit of 1,000 men.

Christmas services will be held during the morning by both Catholic and protestant chaplains.

Christmas afternoon, Joe and his Olive-Drab associates have planned a party for about 300 British orphans and school children. During the past year or two, Joe has become fairly well acquainted with the communities around the base, and he knows the conditions and circumstances of nearly every family within a 10-mile radius.



Our friend John Gilbert commemorated the day by following along as BBC Radio 4 broadcast the National Service of Remembrance and placed a wreath at the flagpole in his front garden, raised and lowered his British and American flags at the proper time and saluted during the two minute silence. Photo: John Gilbert.

When he found two orphanages nearby, he put it down for future reference. On November 31, he hauled out the reference and kicked in with a portion of his salary. Then with the aid of Miss Birdie Schmidt of Columbus, Ohio, he gathered ice cream, cakes, candy from his post exchange rations and one or two gifts snaffled from the stuff he received from home.

Or he took another pound or two from his pay

and searched British shops for a toy, or maybe he made something with the scrap lumber from a bomb box. At any rate, there is a stack of packages, most of them properly wrapped, waiting for distribution on Christmas afternoon.

The kids will have a real, turkey dinner. Joe saw to that. Another contribution to the party fund bought turkeys for the orphanages.

About Joe's own dinner. He may be the guest of a British family. Several weeks before Christmas, the Special Service Officer [Capt Emmett Fore] received invitations from families who wanted to make this holiday—the second over here for most of the 392nd—a little more homelike. Soldiers who wanted to accept let Special Service know and everything was arranged, down to transportation and ration points for an extra and particularly hearty appetite.

The menu for the men staying on the base is traditionally complete. Noodle soup, roast turkey, sage dressing, giblet gravy, mashed potatoes, cranberry sauce, brussel sprouts, mince and pumpkin pie, bread, butter, coffee, fruit, and hard candy.

Mess halls will be candle lit and decorated with holly cut from the hedgerows that line the roads crossing the base. If the day is not white, cotton will be pasted on the windows for effect.

In the evening a variety show will be put on in the Aero Club. As the holiday falls on Monday when the public houses—England's local clubhouses and community centers—begin their weekly ration of mild and bitters, Yank and Tommy can wish each other a "Merry Christmas" at their regular gathering-places.

War may intrude. Joe may have to regulate his schedule by a mission, going out or coming in. About this time last year, he was beginning the attacks on the



Santa brings Christmas cheer to British children—and, judging by their smiles, to 392nd BG airmen as well. Photo: US-AAF via McCammond family.

flying bomb sites [V-1 Buzz Bombs—*Ed.*] in France, and there are still men flying with the 392nd who took part in those missions.

In any case, out on the line working on the Libs, or in the air over Germany, Joe's most fervent wish will be for an end, quickly, with the next Christmas at home.

Editor's note: Miserable weather in December 1944 meant only six missions had been flown between December 1st and 22nd. The weather finally cleared and a mission against the railroad center at Ahrweiler took place on the 23rd.

On the 24th, 47 planes took off. Three squadron-size formations attacked a railroad yard and enemy traffic center at Ruwer while the other two hit a road junction at Pfalzel. All crews returned safely around 4:30 pm to enjoy Christmas Eve activities.

On Christmas Day, three squadrons arose for a 4:30 am briefing, but the mission was cancelled due to dense fog. A heavy hoar frost then made the 25th and 26th a welcomed and enjoyable "white" Christmas period for all.

When they returned to combat on the 27th, the 392nd BG flew missions for the next eight days.

Readers' Corner

Nissen hut conversion into family home near Ketteringham Hall A request for historical information

My family has owned the land behind Ketteringham Hall (former 2AD Headquarters) for many years, and this year I have purchased a small part of the land from them, for the last standing Nissen hut, I believe previously known as the 'Opry House'. Ever since I was small, this building fascinated me and I loved spending time in there. It still stands proud, but it is slowly falling down. It seems such a shame to lose such a stunning building, where many happy memories were created I'm sure. We have recently gained planning permission to convert it into our first family home. We want to keep as many of the original features as possible, and externally it will look just as it was designed when it was built. I've been trying to do as much research as I can about the hut, and I wondered if you could help me in any way. I've found some wonderful photos from the archives, and visited Norwich Library, but any stories or personal insights would be so greatly received and appreciated.

I look forward to hearing from anyone with background information,

Best Wishes, Lucy Gowing: lucyvictoriagowing@hotmail.com.



Preservation challenge and opportunity. Retaining original design features, suiting them for new use, always entails creativity and compromises; we look forward to the 'new' home owner's vision and success. Site is on grounds of Ketteringham Hall former headquarters of the 2nd Air Division. Photo: Lucy Gowing.



If these corrugated metal walls could talk! Most WWII airfield buildings were designed for a five year service life, but in many cases, practical uses since have saved them. Adaptation to living quarters was common with immediate post-war housing shortages, but is very rare 80 years after construction. Photo: Lucy Gowing.

2AD Memorial Trust Governors Annual Meeting

The AGM of the Memorial Trust of the 2nd Air Division USAAF was held on Monday, 9th November 2020 via Zoom Video Communications. Chairman Richard Middleton presided. Beverly Baynes Tomb, Trust Governor and Heritage League Rep and Marybeth Birmingham Dyer, President of the Heritage League, attended along with most Trust Governors and others affiliated with the American Library (new name for the 2nd Air Division Memorial Library).

New to the library are Linda Sheppard, a former UEA American Scholar who has recently been appointed as a part-time library assistant in the American Library, and Suzanne Solomon, the new UEA American Scholar who joins Margaret Sessa-Hawkins.

The Accounts were presented by Robert

Collin, Honorary Trust Treasurer. The Trust is in good order financially. Governor Jonathan Powell presented for the Finance Sub-committee and assured Governors that expenditure on the refurbishment project was well within the budget. The Investment Report showed a 6.9% return. Any suggestions for using surplus funds should be forwarded to the Finance Sub Committee for consideration before proposals are drawn up for a decision by Governors.

Simon Garnier, Governor and Project Chairman, reported on the Library Refurbishment Project. Photos had been sent to the Governors [some in this Heritage Herald]. He thanked Chairman Richard Middleton for his leadership and former chairman Matthew Martin for his successful fund raising efforts.

American Library is now a distinct identity within the Millennium Library and there is a clear brand and a unified visual style. All the elements are in place to continue meeting the wishes of the veterans for a living memorial.

Trust Vice Chairman Andrew Hawker reported for the Library Sub-committee. They are focused on increasing the library's on-line presence as well as future additional activities. The American Library could not have the opening celebration that was planned; there was no American Memorial service at St Paul's this year; and there is no Walker Scholar, all due to the pandemic.

Gary Tuson, Norfolk County Archivist, reported that the Digitization Project is expected to be 90% complete before the end of 2020. With budget

available, enhancing how users engage with the digital archive would be a benefit.

Governor Thomas Courtauld has updated the Trust's Risk Analysis to reflect the pandemic. The changes were approved by the Governors and will be issued as revised.

Governor Beverly Baynes Tomb presented the Heritage League report to the Governors.

The Chairman reminded the meeting that although the American Service at St Paul's Cathedral had been cancelled in 2020, the Dean did pray through the service and it is available on the St Paul's Cathedral YouTube Channel. The Dean was keen that the service should resume in 2021.

WWII Victory Flyover Armada Visited by Chris Clark

Originally intended for May 8, 2020, the 75th anniversary of V-E Day, the 'Arsenal of Democracy' Washington DC flyover was postponed to September 25 due to COVID. Some 60 WWII aircraft gathered at airports in Virginia only to have it again postponed, then scrubbed due to weather. Our Heritage League's Chris Clark visited the Manassas Virginia airport and here is what he saw.



Connie with her B-29 DOC crew waiting for the weather to improve for the flyby. She riveted the nose section of this aircraft at the Wichita Kansas factory and was honored to find out that only seven rivets were popped when the plane was brought out of the boneyard. She also participated in the refurbishment of DOC. Photo: David Tulis, © Aircraft Owners and Pilots association.

single rudder. An earlier version of that model was also Winston Churchill's favorite long distance plane, he had one customized.

Rosie the Riveter was there. Our last Heritage Herald #70 ran a story on Rosies in general so we thought it pertinent to update on a sighting. The lady is Connie Palacioz, a 95 year old from Brooklyn, NY. At age 17 and working in a Laundromat pressing military uniforms for 25 cents an hour she learned she could earn three times as much helping to build B-29 Superfortresses at Boeing's Wichita Kansas assembly line. She took classes for two weeks to learn the art of riveting and soon was transferred to the factory floor—first as a rivet buckler working the back side of the metal fasteners, and then as a riveter.

She actually worked on the B-29, DOC, parked on the ramp. "I riveted 1,644 B-29 nose sections, including DOC." She also volunteered to help restore that B-29 and was honored to learn that "only seven rivets were missing" from her section when it was resurrected. It was intended she fly in DOC for the Capital Flyover.

A flyable B-24 model was also there. It was the Navy version PB4Y which flew on observation missions and is distinguished by a



Connie Palacioz, 95, an actual 'Rosie Riveter' worked on B-29s during the war. She was there to fly in the B-29 for the Capital flyover which, unfortunately, was cancelled last September due to weather around the nation's capital area. Photo: David Tulis, © Aircraft Owners and Pilots association.



A flyable B-24 version parked on the ramp for the National Capital flyover. This is the PB4Y-2, one of two in flyable condition, which flew patrol for the Navy (note the straight tail). Longer and more stable than the B-24, it carried mines and bombs. Over 700 were built by Ford Motor. Photo: Chris Clark.

93rd BG Timberlake Awards

Our British friend of the Heritage League, Collin Mann honored two people for their wonderful contributions in preserving the memories of the 93rd BG at Hardwick airbase.

First to David Woodrow for his outstanding support to the 93rd Bomb Group Association throughout many, many years! As the owner and steward of the property where the Hardwick Aerodrome 104 and modern-day museum is located, he has always been magnificent in helping continue the legacy of the 93rd BG and our greatest generation veterans! As a veteran himself,

he knows the true sacrifices so many have made to ensure freedom around the world. Thank you David!

Next to Paul Thrower for his outstanding support and work to maintain the 93rd Bomb Group museum located at Hardwick. Paul has always been a tremendous curator to ensure the museum is world class in the exhibits and telling the story of 93rd BG during the war. He helps continue the legacy of the 93rd BG and our greatest generation veterans! His work is truly outstanding, passion-driven, and enjoyed by all. Thank you Paul!



David Woodrow, property owner and noted museum contributor, after receiving his Timberlake Award from the 93rd Bomb Group Association for helping continue the legacy of the 93rd BG and our greatest generation veterans. Photo: Colin Mann.



Paul Thrower, curator of the 93rd BG museum, after receiving his Timberlake Award for his efforts in making the museum world class. Photo: Colin Mann.



Bill Brown, a 93rd BG Hardwick pilot, receiving the news of his award of the Medal of Knight of the French Legion of Honor last winter. It is never too late for a member of the greatest generation to receive an award. Bill, age 100 and a veteran of 35 missions, was interviewed in the documentary *Return to Hardwick* which was recently released. Congratulations Bill! Photo: Jim Root, 93rd BG.



The Legion of Honor is the highest French merit recognition, both military and civil. This prestigious distinction underlines the deep appreciation and gratitude of the French for the American contribution to the liberation of their country during World War II. In order to receive it, one must have been on a mission that directly led to the liberation of France. Photo: Jim Root, 93rd BG.



—by Pete O'Tube, Expert

Dear Pete,

Every time I look at images of the B-24, I am struck by how small the cockpit windows ('greenhouse') seem, especially the ones 'looking straight ahead.' Is it just me?

Open my view?

Bonnie Plexinnia Gordon

Dear Plexi G., Lass,

The first time you get to see one of your favorite warbirds 'in person,' you may need a minute to adjust your expectations to its actual size. The literature of the times, and recollections of many who flew in them, are full of references to most of them being large, especially the bombers. But for us born after WW II, used to flying in passenger jets, or seeing military cargo planes,

'large' would apply to two-aisle planes, like the Boeing-747 or Airbus A-380, or the military transports like the C-5 Galaxy or C-17 Globemaster. Understandably, there has been 'meaning creep' for terminology around plane sizes since the 1940s.

Park the Collings Foundation's 'Witchcraft' next to a 'small' Boeing-737 single aisle and you will see that today's medium or small can dwarf WW II's 'large.' Then there's this other matter: scale really does not photograph! If you have ever been disappointed in the photos you took from a mountaintop, you know how hard it is to convey just how high you were, how deep the canyon was, and how far it was to the horizon. The trick of putting a foreground or middle ground human in there helps a great deal, as this gives us lots of cues about size and distance, based on our innate knowledge of 'human scale.' Pictures of a Lib being serviced, or with a posing crew, go a long helping us wrap our minds around the size of the beast.

But in terms of the relative size of cockpit to the overall Liberator, yours is still an interesting observation. The short answer is that all things in aircraft design need to strike the compromises that suit the use of the plane. If windshields are overly big, it will increase drag and slow the plane down. It will mean carrying more weight in terms of armored glazing to protect the pilots. Think of how light aluminum fuselage skin is,

compared with thick plexiglass, and how that difference gets more significant as window size increases.

Limiting the cross sectional area of a plane to the essential requirements is critical to streamlining, allowing reasonable speed and long range while delivering 4 tons of ordinance to the target.

Competing demands for cross sectional area amidships were: the left and right bomb racks of both bomb bays; the thick spars of the Davis Wing; structural framework; minimal accommodation for crew passage fore and aft; and runs of electrical, mechanical, fuel and hydraulic lines. The cross-section of the fuselage just ahead of the cockpit had to be smaller, yet still accommodate cockpit forward vision, movement of crew to and from the nose, hydraulic, mechanical and electrical connections, a nose holding defensive guns, and the bombardier's unobstructed view forward and down.

The competing requirements for 'frontal area' needed to be balanced, providing the minimum needed for each job, and not a single bit more. The windshield, like the front turret and bombardier's window, were only as big as needed, because any excess meant pushing a fatter shape through the air, at the cost of speed, range and payload.

Taken together, the size, placement and complexity of every single part or system of a particular air-



Placing authentic WWII pilot John Horan (466th BG) in the left seat of Collings Foundation's Witchcraft helps us gauge the size of the plane and proportioning of the cockpit windows. Photo: Art Peterson.

plane, show how the competing demands of the various essential functions were prioritized, and what the technology and materials of the day could allow.

When I had my first chance to touch a Lib—the 'Bungay Buckaroo' at the Pima Air Museum—I had over-prepared myself for how small it might be, then was actually surprised at how big it was! But it is still dwarfed by a 737, and the C-5 could *easily* transport six Liberator *fully loaded* fuselages.

Proportionately yours,
Pete



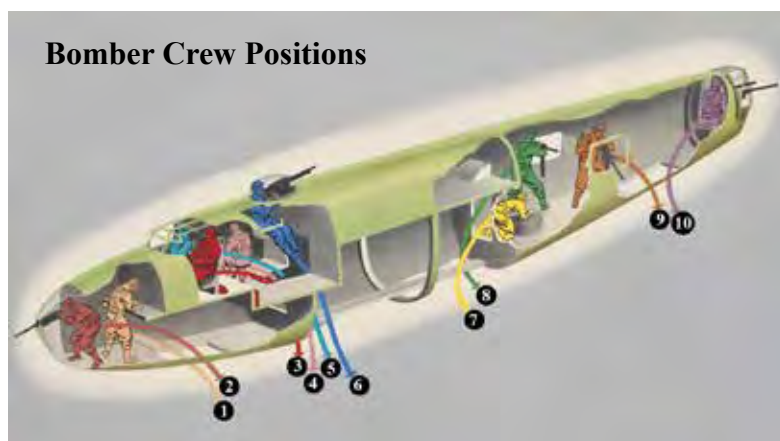
All business. Front view of this early D-model Liberator, in the USAF Museum collection in Dayton, shows navigating, piloting, functions competing for up-front placement, and suggests impact the very thick Davis wing had on the plane's very crowded midsection. Photo: Brian Mahoney.

Kids Corner—Word Puzzle

Please share this crossword with family or friends in order to assist their understanding of our ancestor's participation in the Second Air Division during WWII. Our Heritage League mission is to educate our next generations about the actions and sacrifices of our ancestors in the Bomber and Fighter Groups of the Second Air Division in England.

B-24 Bomber Crew Positions

Fill in your B-24 crew position answers to the questions in the corresponding numbered rows and columns.



1. Navigator
2. Nose Gunner/Bombardier*
3. Pilot
4. Radio Man
5. Co-Pilot
6. Flight Engineer*
7. Ball Turret Gunner
8. Right Waist Gunner
9. Left Waist Gunner
10. Tail Gunner

Asterisk crew position items

- * 2. Nosegunner also served as bombardier on many missions. Bombardiers were in short supply and did not man all aircraft.
- * 6. Engineers were generally not referred to as 'flight engineers' in the B-24. However the Navy version PB4Y did have a flight engineer. When the B-29 became operational, their position had engine controls and the title changed to flight engineer.

Across

3. Who directs the course of the plane
5. Who flies the plane
6. Who defends the plane from attacks from the rear of the plane
7. Which crew person was responsible for the engines and systems of the plane
8. What was the front gun operator position called
9. Who was the person responsible for sighting and release of the bombs

Down

1. Who defends the plane from attack from the side
2. What was the ball-shaped platform under the belly where the gun was fired from called
4. Who assists the pilot

See answers on page 30.

Videos of Interest—Compiled by Lisa Niehoff

We begin a new feature by highlighting interesting videos related to the 2nd Air Division. Aerial combat, impressive battles in the skies, flight training, and ceremonial occasions highlight the topics for your viewing. Enjoy the films that bring drama, technical detail, or ceremonies to your screens.

Remembrance Service for U.S. Veterans at the American Chapel, St Paul's Cathedral, 11 minutes, color. Our Veterans Day is commemorated in Britain on Remembrance Sunday November 8, 2020. Several have visited the American Chapel inside St Paul's Cathedral which is seat of the Anglican Church in London. The Dean of the Cathedral gave the memorial service at the American Chapel and thought it a nice idea to film it for us; so they created this video which includes music from The St Paul's Cathedral Choir. He hopes this goes some way in providing the space and atmosphere needed for this act of remembrance. <https://youtu.be/UKnEOqr7418>.

Heritage League 2020 Virtual Reunion and Annual Membership Meeting. A YouTube recording of our reunion last October 6, 2020. If you missed it, hear and see our veteran's panel, virtual tour of Rackheath airbase, and our annual membership meeting. Heritage League of the 2nd Air Division 2020 Reunion—YouTube: <https://youtu.be/Bwct6-hA2Hk>

Liberators Over Europe (1942-1945), 21 minutes, black & white. A Department of the Air Force historical film made in 1947 documenting B-24 missions over Europe during World War II from the attacks on Ploesti to the War's end. It shows the presentation of the Congressional Medal of Honor to Colonel Leon W. Johnson of the 44th Bomb Group. It contains numerous scenes showing bombing, bomb damage, and fires. Also noteworthy is Commander of the 2nd Air Division, Major General William E. Kepner, making a unique financial contribution by presenting the Lord Mayor of Norwich a check for the Second Air Division Memorial Trust Fund in honor of all the B-24 groups. It concludes with the return to the U.S. of the first aircraft from overseas duty—the B-24 “Boomerang.” <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uxuh9DX8VAI>.

Memorial Day 2020 Ceremony at Netherlands American Cemetery (Restricted last year). 2 minutes, color. Despite the pandemic and closure of the grounds, 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. The Royal Netherlands 322nd Fighter Squadron concluded the ceremony at Margraten with a missing man formation. Watch this outstanding 2 minute Facebook video of both the ceremony and F-16 flyover with actual in-the-aircraft cockpit footage. www.facebook.com/Commandantderstrijdkrachten/videos/285066906222924.

Flying the B-24, 58 minutes color. Want to start up the bomber and take for a flight? This restored Consolidated Aircraft color training video goes over the steps to get the Liberator preflighted, engines started, taxi and takeoff. After viewing, you will almost be ready to fly it. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JO0iSx-ZCAQ>.

Folded Wings Report

Please report the death of a member or spouse and provide a copy of the newspaper obituary if possible.

Name of deceased _____ Unit/Sqdn. _____

Address _____ City _____ State/Zip _____

Date of death _____ Survivors _____

Reported by _____

Address _____ City _____ State/Zip _____

Please return to: Marybeth Dyer, 6410 Valley Oak Plaza, Martinez, CA 94553

or Email to: smbdyer@sbcglobal.net

Answers to Kids Crossword from page 29

Across

3. Navigator
5. Pilot
6. Tailgunner
7. Flightengineer
8. Nosegunner
9. Bombardier

Down

1. Waistgunner
2. Ballturret
3. Copilot

2020 Annual Heritage League Reunion

A Virtual Event



Snapshot of Heritage League's Reunion and annual business meeting via Zoom last Oct 3, 2020. Over 61 Heritage League members, family, and friends were present for the three hour event. Zoom screen shot via Brian Mahoney.

Special note: You can see and hear the entire Reunion on
 YouTube at: <https://youtu.be/Bwct6-hA2Hk>
 Heritage League of the 2nd Air Division 2020 Reunion—YouTube

The Heritage League had to be creative last October due to COVID-19 restrictions. Instead of our plan to join the 8th Air Force Historical Society reunion in Memphis, we gathered via the internet for our Annual Membership meeting—virtually, October 3, 2020.

Heritage League President Marybeth Dyer welcomed us to the 33rd annual meeting and commented: “I was a little nervous but after it started, I was so happy to see all the new and familiar faces. It felt like a family party. My favorite part was the Veterans panel. We hope to do more of those in the future. For all of those who joined, thank you for allowing us to be a part of your Saturday afternoon, and a special thank you to all of our friends in the UK who joined us.”

Despite the new setting, 61 members and friends attended, including six from England and four of our WWII veterans. The Reunion consisted of three parts: the Heritage League annual membership meeting, a panel of our WWII veterans, and an airbase tour. Those who are normally travel-limited appreciated the opportunity to be a part of this event as were the rest of us ‘grounded’ by the COVID. Many valued the opening with a special *Pledge of Allegiance* by our Veterans’ great grandchildren—the fourth generation—followed by singing of our National Anthem and *God Save the Queen* by Mieka Dovey. In addition to our Heritage League board reports, Richard Middleton reported on

the 2AD Memorial Trust and Librarian Orla Kennelly about the refurbished American Library in Norwich. There was no election of officers this year as their two-year terms will be up for reelection at the next annual meeting. Please note that nominations for our officers next term are now open.

Veteran Allan Hallett told us he thought he was going to be a pilot, but related that somehow he ended up in gunnery training in the B-24 in 1944. Initial training was rudimentary as he practiced by firing a gun on the back of a pickup truck. His crew joined the 389th Bomb Group at Hethel base near war's end in the Spring of 1944. He related that after his crew arrived the Germans were so scared of them that "they quit."

Veteran Bob Birmingham (Heritage League President Marybeth Dyer's uncle) thought he was slated for bombardier training, but the Army reduced the requirement and he was assigned to be a nose gunner. He told us he and his brother Frank were initially assigned to the same crew which was later corrected. He trained as a nose gunner and deployed to the 458th BG at Horsham St Faith, England to find out that he had a switch in his turret to release bombs as he was also to be the bomb toggler. There weren't enough bombardiers to man every bomber so he took on that function by releasing bombs when he saw the formation lead drop. On Bob's 5th mission, his plane was hit and diverted to Sweden where he parachuted out and remained until war's end. [Editor's note: see Bob's story in this *Herald* pg. 1]

A moment of silence was included in honor of Heritage League treasurer Sue Risley's partner Dave, who unfortunately passed away of COVID-19 the day before.

Brian Mahoney completed the reunion guiding us around the environs of Rackheath airbase with lots of 'then-and-now' photos and maps. Ivan Bernard, joining us from England, showed us the impressive efforts of volunteers in restoring several of the WWII buildings there.

Attendees voiced their enjoyment of the Veterans panel and the virtual visit to Rackheath airbase. Some of the comments are provided below. Per requirements of our 501(c) 3 charitable organization status, we also provide minutes of the formal meeting and a list of attendees at the end.

Next year's membership meeting is planned to be in conjunction with the 8th Air Force Historical Soci-

ety Convention in Savannah, Georgia, October 27-31, 2021. It will include a visit to the National Museum of the Mighty 8th Air Force. More details will be made available by the Historical Society after this March. Check their webpage at: www.8thAFHS.org.

Attendees' commentary

"I had the honor and privilege to attend the Heritage League Annual meeting. It was my first time attending and can't think of a better way to spend my time" wrote Steve Risley, Son of J. Audley Risley, 446th BG, Bungay Airbase, and brother of board member Sue Risley. "I have always enjoyed hearing our heroes recount their WWII experiences. That never gets old for me. I also enjoy seeing others struggle with the technology as that makes me feel less incompetent. The meeting was very efficient and, as I said earlier, extremely worthwhile. The business portion was timely and full of good information. Thank you for including me and I am looking forward to future events."

Veteran Bob Birmingham was so motivated by the event, he enrolled his extended family in the Heritage League and sent us this note: "I have given my memorabilia from the war to a display by the VFW in the Welcome Center at the Village of Greendale, Wisconsin. I take my grandkids there when the opportunities present themselves and tell them that I am getting older and I need them to be in the club to represent me and remember the good flyers who gave their lives in WWII. I have paid their dues for the first year and hope they will make me proud and be there for me."

David Long, friend of Vet Allan Hallett commented: "I enjoyed it! It was great to see familiar faces from the UK whom we met at the 2019 Convention in Norwich, and really nice to see the photo tour of the updated American Library. Both of the WWII veterans were interesting to hear from, too."

"Hearing Veteran Bob Birmingham relate his experience about his last bomb run really gave me an appreciation and admiration about the difficult situations and challenges these airmen faced" commented Doug Dovey. "My father was a lead crew navigator charged with finding the target when it was obscured by clouds or smoke using rudimentary radar known as the 'Mick-ey.' When veteran Bob related his experience, as a nose turret gunner turned bombardier; I finally was able to sense the challenges of their efforts to get to the target. Bob was tasked to release bombs on this mission as there weren't enough bombardiers to man every bomb-

er. The plan was to release bombs when the lead bomber did but, as he related, the smoke from flak bursts aimed at them was so bad he couldn't see it. Wow! Quick judgment was demanded and the formation was able to release their bombs until the next misfortune hit them."

"It's always more fun to meet in person, but the Zoom reunion was an excellent option for 2020, and we saw more people together than would have been at an in-person meeting. I especially liked hearing from the WWII veterans, Allan Hallett and Bob Birmingham" commented Beverly Baynes Tomb, Heritage League past president and current governor with the 2AD Memorial Trust.

Minutes of 2020 Heritage League Annual Meeting—October 3, 2020 (Unapproved)

President Marybeth Dyer called the Meeting to order at 2:06 EDT as a component of Web-based virtual reunion.

Invocation

Volunteer Protégé- Chris Clark wrote the invocation and presented it to the meeting.

Pledge of Allegiance

We played a recorded version of the Pledge of Allegiance recited by Irene Hurner's grandchildren (4th generation) with some of their friends.

National Anthem/God Save the Queen. Sung by Mieka Dovey, daughter of Board member Doug Dovey

President's Report

Marybeth Dyer

- Introduced Executive Board and guests from the UK
- Protégé Program is very successful
- Fundraising
- In Memory/In Honor on Membership form and website
- Amazon Smile
- Giving Tuesday
- Our website—www.HeritageLeague.org—more modern, safer and works on mobile devices
- Facebook Page: Heritage League of the 2nd Air Division USAAF. 600 'Likes'

Secretary

Colleen Mersman

Minutes from last years 2019 Heritage League Meeting in Norwich UK were presented. Brian Mahoney made a motion to approve. Jim Birmingham seconded the motion.

Minutes for the 2019 Heritage League Meeting were approved by membership.

VP Report

Jim Birmingham

Reported that the 2021 Heritage League Convention will be in Savannah joining the 8th AFHS

Treasurer

Marybeth Dyer reporting for Sue Risley

Cash on hand on 10/1 - \$58,788

Funds due out:

Memorial Trust	\$4,860
Flower Fund	\$3,028
Next UK convention	\$5,000

Net cash on hand as of 10/1/20 \$45,900

The Flower Fund is large because we didn't place any flowers for Memorial Day 2020—due to COVID

Funds from Amazon Smile. Beginning in 2015, when the program started to date—\$451.23—everyone keep shopping!

VP for Volunteers

Brian Mahoney

More people are stepping up as volunteers, and using our online form.

Protégé Chris Clark is coming along in learning particular computer skills so as to help administer our program that uses the questionnaire and a list of needed volunteer tasks

Membership

Marybeth Dyer

As of August 1, 2020, our yearly calculation date

- 323 Active Members, 74 are HLM (Veterans)
- Membership letters are sent in December and April.
- An HLM Vitality project continues to validate our veterans count

Communications

Doug Dovey

- *HERITAGE HERALD* is published 3 times per year (Winter/Spring, Summer, Fall)
- Recently added features:
- Kid's Corner activities to involve 4th generation youth
- History Snapshots highlighting 2nd Air Division historic events
- Happy Birthday Vets. Photos of Vets with upcoming birthdays. [NOTE: we need pictures of Vets, please send]
- Members and Unit's Corner for announcement and opinions

2AD Memorial Trust Governors Update

Richard Middleton

The Memorial Library Trust Governor's report stated that the Library has gotten grants for over \$100,000 for the refurbishment project. The Library closed for the renovation last February 10th, 2020. Work on the refurbishment stopped in March due to COVID restrictions but resumed in May. The physical work was completed in August and the Library is physically near ready to reopen when COVID restriction are lifted in the future.

American Library Update

Orla Kennelly

Orla reported that there is a new MEMORIAL area which holds the ROLE OF HONOR—photos of those who lost their lives in WWII. Orla also reported that the digital archives are almost completed. The Library has added audio to some of the archives and they will be available soon.

Attendance total: 61

US Attendees: (54)

Andrew Argentieri, Patrick Argentieri, Bob Birmingham, Jim Birmingham, Nancy Bland, Bob Books, Brady Buzick, Norm Canfield, Trevor Chapin, Chris Clark, Richard Comingore, Linda Comingore, Karen Cormia, Doug Dovey, Marybeth Birmingham Dyer, Barb Figueroa, Raymond Gallagher, Allan Hallett, Greg Hurner, Irene Hurner, Gary Katz, Dallas King, Jean Koznarek, Cathy Leopold, David Long, Richard Lord, Mary Betz Lord, Mary Lorenz, Burton Madison, Brian Mahoney, Dave Mercado, Colleen Mersman, Charlie Millman, Barbara Misuraca, Tara Mitchell, Russell Neatrour, Judi Palmer, Anne Pancella, Martha Pederson, Brenda Piskin, Hannah Piskin, Steve Risley, Bill Sargent, Raymond O'Shaugnessy, Debbie Madison Simms, Beverly Tomb, Clare Vanderbeek, Vicky Brooks Warning, Kurt Warning, Earl Wassom, Ralph Winter, Mary Yamamoto, Ed Zobac, Rosie Zobac.

UK Attendees (7)

2AD Memorial Trust Governors: Richard Middleton, Chairman; Andrew Hawker, Vice Chairman; and Matthew Martin, Past Chairman; Peter Chapman MBE, First Lay Cannon of St Paul's Cathedral, London; Orla Kennelly, 2AD Memorial Trust Librarian; Colin Mann, HL Friend; Ivan Bernard, virtual base-tour guide (Pathfinder).

Special Recognition

The Executive Board recognized Joan Mastrogiacomio for her work on wellness checks to our beloved Veterans and Lisa Niehoff for her unceasing contributions to the Heritage Herald.

Report of the Delegate Committee

Irene Biel Hurner

The Heritage League of the Second Air Division (USAAF) is a non-profit, non-political organization composed of U.S. veteran's families, friends, and supporters. The veterans themselves are honorary members. It is registered with the Internal Revenue Service under Tax Code Section 501(c) 3. It's TIN (Tax Identification Number) is 36-3590698. As such, all voting members present are official delegates. The reasonable cost to such attendees is construed to be a charitable contribution and may be deductible by those who itemize deductions on their annual income tax returns. The Heritage League cannot provide advice on these matters. Members are advised to seek their own professional advice as may be needed. The convention Chairperson will make a finalized list of all regular members of the League who attended the meeting, and publish that list with the minutes in the Heritage Herald.

Irene Biel Hurner made a motion to accept the Delegate Committee report, to declare all regular members attending the 33rd annual business meeting be declared official delegates, and that it be so documented in the minutes of the meeting. The motion was seconded by Martha Pederson. Motion Carried.

Meeting adjourned at 3:07 EDT

Membership Application/Renewal for Heritage League

Please help us continue our work by encouraging all generations in your family to join in our mission.



Please RENEW ONLINE and pay through PayPal. It is a safe and secure way for you to pay your membership and contributions. LOG ON to <https://heritageleague.org/membership/> OR

return this page with your check, payable to the Heritage League Membership, 6410 Valley Oak Plaza, Martinez, CA 94553. If you have questions, please email- smbdyer@sbcglobal.net.

VOLUNTEER YOUR TIME AND TALENT. We are very appreciative of the strong financial support you have shown for The League and related entities. Would you also be able to share your time and talent with us? You can fill out a form at <https://heritageleague.org/volunteer/> that lets our expanded Volunteer Program pair you with work supporting our mission

NAME _____ SPOUSE _____

ADDRESS _____ TELEPHONE (____) _____

CITY, STATE _____ ZIP _____

E-MAIL _____ @ _____

(If you receive the newsletter by email, please make sure you provide your email address)

NAME of related 2nd Air Division Veteran _____ VET Birthday Date: _____

Their Bomb Group or Unit No. _____ Their relationship to you _____

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

____ PDF Newsletter via Email—provide email address above—\$20 \$ _____

____ Printed Newsletter sent by US mail—\$30 \$ _____

2nd Air Division Veterans are eligible to be an Honorary Lifetime Member (check one).

____ PDF Newsletter, via Email—provide email address above—\$0 (free)

____ Printed Newsletter sent by US mail—\$30 \$ _____

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

ADDITIONAL CONTRIBUTIONS (*We are a tax deductible 501(3)(c) organization*)

Contribution to the Heritage League operations \$ _____

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

2021 Project News from the Greatest Generation (digitalize BG newsletters for website) \$ _____

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

In Memory of (deceased) _____

OR

In Honor of (living person) _____

TOTAL ENCLOSED \$ _____

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