



HERITAGE HERALD

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William O'Bryan

From Child Actor to WWII Pilot

By Tim McCann, Association of the 4th Fighter Group, WWII

Lt. William C. O'Bryan traveled to England for his second WWII tour and reported to the 4th Fighter Group in January 1945. Like several other pilots that arrived from prior flying duties later in the war, O'Bryan did a different type of flying prior to being assigned to fighters and the 4th.

However, O'Bryan's history was unlike that of any other member of the 4th Fighter Group. Since his first flying assignment was not in a combat zone, his follow-on tour was in combat at 2nd Air Division's Debden air base. Given what he did prior to joining the U.S. Army Air Forces, it seemed unlikely he would have ended up as a military pilot at all.

William was born William Charles Allen Butts in Dallas, Texas on 18 September 1918. He had Native American blood on both sides of the family, being half Comanche on his father's side, and half Cherokee on his mother's. When he was young, the family moved to southern California, and settled near Hollywood. How and why young Billy found his way into the movie business is not known but by age 6 he was appearing in silent films. By age 8, he was sharing the silver screen with some big time Hollywood stars.

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1st LT William C. O'Bryan upon his 2nd Air Division fighter assignment at Station 356, January 1945. Quite the follow-on from his movie actor youth as Billy Butts. Photo: 4th Fighter Group Association.

Lady Be Good

By John Lowery, Reprinted by permission of Air Force Magazine

The B-24 crew broke all records for human endurance without water, food, or shelter, but died before escaping the Sahara.

Editor's note: This is the second part of the *Lady Be Good* saga which complements the story we ran in the last issue of the *Herald*. It covers the exploits of the crew and the recovery efforts some 15 years later.

A World War II mystery began to unravel in May 1958. British geologist Ronald G. MacLean of D'Arcy Exploration Co., flying in a DC-3 and carrying out an aerial survey in the hardpan of the Libyan Sahara, spotted the wreckage of a B-24. It had bellied-in to the sand about 440 miles southeast of Benghazi and

59 miles from the Egyptian border.

It was *Lady Be Good*, which had been based at a hastily built desert airstrip in Soluch, Libya, about 34 miles southeast of Benghazi. The bomber had disappeared April 4, 1943, while making what was for the aircraft and crew of nine its first—and last—combat mission of the war. Due to the undercast on that stormy night, the green crew made a gross navigational error; it missed home base and flew two hours deep into the Sahara Desert.

(continued on page 9)

Mark Your Calendars—Heritage League Convention

Join us for our combined event with the 93rd Bomb Group Association

October 7-11, 2022 Boston, MA Details on pgs. 13-16

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE —Marybeth Dyer



Summer is upon us and we have a lot to be thankful for. We are hopefully coming out of a very difficult couple of years and life seems to be headed on a better track. I wonder if that is how people felt back in 1945; it had been a horrendous 4 years then, both abroad and at home.

So much sacrifice and so much changed. Would things ever get back to the way it was?

Our experience over time teaches us that people can adapt and recover for the better. It is what we make of it going forward. The Greatest Generation carried on. They delivered us 'boomers' and made a good life for themselves while carrying all that burden of those intense four years, most did it in silence. They were resilient and we are, too.

We have some exciting events coming up:

The Heritage League Convention will be in Boston this fall. We will join with the 93rd Bomb Group's Reunion to take advantage of the activities in that area associated with the 2nd Air Division in WWII. The dates are October 7-11, 2022, with an added 2-day excursion for those interested. At press time, we are still finalizing exact events timing. A general schedule and hotel information is contained in this *Herald*. Reunion registration forms are not available at this time, but it will be posted on our website: <https://heritageleague.org>, and we will also mail our members the registration form and updated events schedule when it is available. Please note that the 8th Air Force Historical Society is holding their reunion in Washington, DC later that month, Oct 19-23, and some of you may wish to attend both events.

Are you interested in attending the Boston Convention and Annual Members' Meeting? If so, we would greatly appreciate hearing from you to assist in our activity planning. Please send an email to: heritageleagueinfo@gmail.com and let us know if you will be attending and how many people. We appreciate the information and will look forward to seeing you in Boston.

Some of our Executive Board will be in Norwich, UK for the May 16th 2AD Trust Governors annual meeting and May 18 American Library rededication (formerly 2nd Air Division Memorial Library). Beverly Tomb, Jim Birmingham, Irene Hurner, my husband Steve and I are excited to see our UK friends again. We will report on our trip in the next *Herald*.

Speaking of excited, **Heritage League is headed back to Norwich next year** for our 2023 Annual Members Meeting and Convention. We have not completed many details yet but are aiming for July 2023. We will send out information when we have more to share. We are really hoping to get more 3rd and 4th generations (our kids and grandkids) to attend. You will not be disappointed. Mark your calendars—more info in the next issue.

We are very pleased to have 14 new members join the Heritage League this year. Our 2022 membership drive is still ongoing. If you have not renewed, please do so now. There is a form in this *Herald*, or you can go online at: <https://heritageleague.org/membership/>.

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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(William O'Bryan, continued from page 1)

Child Actor—Silent Films

In 1926, Billy played an orphan boy in the Mary Pickford film, *Sparrows*. The following year, he



A movie studio publicity photo of Billy Butts from the late 1920s. Photo: imdb.com.

was in the western *The Last Outlaw*, which starred Gary Cooper. It was a genre in which he would frequently appear. According to imdb.com, he made several appearances “as the young sidekick of Western stars Fred Thomson and Rex Bell. He later took over from Jackie Morgan in the popular *Gumps* two-reel comedies.”

Described as a “delicate-looking child actor,” Butts was in high demand, and was one of the better-known child actors in the late ‘20s and early ‘30s. He

made a seamless transition from silent movies to talkies. In all, Billy would appear in fifty-four movies between 1924 and 1936. Some of his more notable appearances were in *Wild West Romance* (1928), *Are These Our Children* (1931) and *Scarlet River* (1933). In later years, Billy would say he was proudest of his work in *Sparrows* and *Are These Our Children*.

However, by his teenage years, his roles became few and far between. As noted by the movie review site imdb.com, Billy’s “waif-like qualities didn’t survive puberty and he retired at the ripe old age of 17.” Billy returned to normal life, living in North Hollywood. About this time, his mother would remarry, and Billy and his



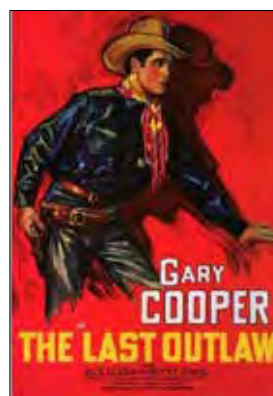
Mary Pickford and orphaned children in the 1926 silent film *Sparrows*. Young Billy Butts is the youth between the two adults. Photo: nitrateville.com.



Billy in a scene from the 1933 western *Scarlet River*. That’s Tom Keene and Yakima Canutt to his left. Photo: imdb.com.

brother Timothy were adopted by their new stepfather, John H. O’Bryan. Both boys took the surname O’Bryan.

After high school graduation, Billy enrolled in college and began working as an insurance salesman. But there was a higher calling for Billy and on 15 July 1941, he enlisted in the Army Air Corps and was accepted as an aviation cadet. He completed his basic training and qualified for advanced training as a fighter pilot, earning his wings in 1942. Sometime in the early summer of 1942, he was posted to *The Rock*, a base at the time that was considered so secret, that its name and location were taboo even in military circles.



Source: imdb.com.



First Tour

The Rock, turned out to be Ascension Island, a volcanic mass covering 34.5 square miles, situated in the middle of the South Atlantic, 1400 miles east of Brazil and 1,000 miles west of Africa. In April 1942, U.S. Army’s 38th Engineer Combat Regiment began construction of the runway—6,000’ long and 150’ wide. The task was completed in a mere 91 days. *Wideawake Field*, as it was soon known, became a hub of activity for south Atlantic flights by the Ferry Command and Air Transport Command, among other entities. So precise was the navigation required to reach the island, that the

phrase “If I don’t hit Ascension, my wife gets a pension” became popular among the fliers there.

On *The Rock*, O’Bryan was assigned to fly an-



Ascension Island was not a tropical garden spot. Vegetation was sparse on the volcanic rock adorned with plenty of bird guano. Photo: David F. Mitchell.

tisubmarine patrols with the 1st Composite Squadron. Based there from 14 August 1942 until 21 October 1944, the 1st Composite Squadron employed a mix of aircraft to complete a specific mission. Outfitted with sixteen P-39 Airacobra fighters and five B-25 Mitchell medium bombers, the 1st was tasked with eradicating the U-boat menace in the South Atlantic shipping lanes, providing rescue of downed aircraft, and air cover for convoys passing within range of the island.

Not designed for anti-submarine work, the aircraft were used simply because they were what was available and were adapted to fit the role. Because it was a fighter, the P-39 possessed the speed to arrive quickly over a reported target and its 37-millimeter cannon could easily inflict heavy damage on a lightly armored U-boat. Additionally, they were modified to carry a single 325 lb. depth charge. The fighters worked in conjunction with the B-25s, whose longer range combined with heavier payload allowed for long patrols and immediate attack of any U-boats they spotted or rescue of any downed aircrew. The P-39s would sit in alert status and scramble when U-boats were sighted.



Tactical and transport aircraft alike line the ramp at *Wideawake Field* on Ascension Island. Photo: National Archives.

Unusual Rescue Mission

On 7 May 1943, the U.S. Liberty ship *SS Samuel Jordan Kirkwood*, with a crew of seventy-one, was torpedoed and sunk by the U-195, 125 miles southeast of Ascension Island. On 16 May, Robert W. Younger, a B-25 pilot in O’Bryan’s squadron, spotted the lifeboats and rafts of the survivors over 150 miles south of Ascension Island. After dropping a raft and supplies, Younger radioed the position back to base. But the new base was not yet equipped or manned for open ocean rescues. O’Bryan, who was familiar with small boats, volunteered to get the survivors. Gathering five other volunteers, O’Bryan took one of the base’s 40-foot crash boats and headed out to sea. Meant for coastal work, these Army rescue boats could usually be found scooping up air crew who went into the drink near the island, not traversing several hundred miles of open ocean.

With Younger aloft again and providing constant location updates, O’Bryan successfully piloted the small craft to the survivors, who after nine days adrift were now almost two hundred miles from Ascension



A 42-foot Army Crash boat, similar in size to the one captained by O’Bryan to rescue the survivors of the Liberty ship *SS Samuel Jordan Kirkwood*. Photo: uscashboats.org.

Island. Taking aboard as many people as the small boat could tolerate, and towing some of the lifeboats and rafts, O’Bryan and team set course for Ascension.

Upon disembarking the survivors, he immediately turned around and made a second trip to pick up those he was unable to take on the first trip, ensuring the entire crew—all 71—were rescued. It was quite a day’s work for a fighter pilot! For his unselfish and courageous act, O’Bryan was awarded the Soldier’s Medal.

Younger and O’Bryan’s efforts made national news, and after thirteen months of flying long patrols, at the end of July the two men were sent home for a few weeks of deserved R & R. Both men hailed from Los Angeles; Younger lived in Burbank, just a few miles down the road from O’Bryan’s North Hollywood home. A photo of the two pilots with O’Bryan’s mother, taken

at the O'Bryan home, went out on the wire services and appeared in newspapers around the country.

The two men told and retold the tale of their rescue mission, as well as what duty was like on the Atlantic Patrol. Despite the isolation they said, duty at the remote island base wasn't so bad. The food, said Younger, was "plentiful, but static. It's the same old thing every day, almost." He quickly added, "But the thrill of patrolling the ocean wastes for enemy craft is ample compensation." Mostly, they just wanted to experience some of the simple pleasures they had gone without on *The Rock*, among them "showers, hamburgers and milk."

It is not known to what duty station Lt. O'Bryan was assigned once his leave was up. He may have gone back to Ascension or remained stateside as an instructor. Traditionally, serving in a unit which performed patrol and or search and rescue missions was not considered a path which would get a pilot a ticket to a crack front-line fighter unit. Whatever the case may have been, at some point in late 1944 O'Bryan requested a transfer to an operational fighter group and it was approved.

Second Tour—England

On 23 January 1945, William C. O'Bryan reported for duty with the 4th Fighter Group at USAAF Station 356 in Debden, Essex. He was assigned to the 334th Fighter Squadron, which had begun fighting the Germans in 1940 as the RAF's 71 Squadron, the first of the three Eagle Squadrons. Well known aces like Duane Beeson, Ralph 'Kidd' Hofer, Howard 'Deacon' Hively, Gerald Montgomery and Nicholas 'Cowboy' Megura were among those who'd preceded O'Bryan in the 334th. The unit had recently become the first fighter squadron in the ETO to destroy three hundred enemy aircraft.

Once settled in, he began the process of familiarization, getting the latest on tactics, local landmarks, and how to get along in the 4th Fighter Group. Unlike earlier in the war when there was a shortage of pilots, the squadrons now had plenty of pilots on hand, and it was 25 February before O'Bryan got his first chance to fly a single engine fighter in combat over The Continent. But he made the most of it.

For his first show, O'Bryan was assigned QP-N, a P-51D-10 Mustang. The call sign for the 334th was 'Cobweb' and O'Bryan flew in the customary 'new guy' slot as Number 2 man to Cobweb Red Section leader Donald Malmsten. The show was a fighter sweep in

the Dessau area. The group took off at 0800 with Pierce McKennon, CO of the 335th Fighter Squadron, leading the group. At 0900, they crossed over the Hook of Holland at 10,000 feet. No sooner had they crossed when four aircraft reported as FW-190s were spotted. Tanks were dropped, but before the bounce commenced, they were identified as friendly.

The 334th arrived over Dessau at 1010 and let down to strafe any targets of opportunity they might en-



P-51 Mustang fighter, 4th Fighter Group Red Dog VII stationed at Debden Airbase. Photo: 4th FG association.

counter. Malmsten quickly located some trucks and Red Section went to work on them. At about 1030, just as he pulled up from a strafing run, Malmsten spotted a 190 'stooging around' and quickly pounced on the unsuspecting German flier. O'Bryan stayed with his Number 1 as Malmsten fired away, getting strikes on the 190's left wing.

Suddenly, much to Malmsten's consternation, his guns fell silent, right when he was ready to finish off his quarry. The truck strafing had severely depleted his ammunition supply, and as the last of his 1,760 rounds struck the 190, he called his wingman on the radio and told O'Bryan to "finish him off." In his combat report, O'Bryan succinctly described what happened next:

I pulled in astern and fired from 350 yards to point blank, finishing him off at an altitude of 200 feet, observing him half roll to the left and crash. Pilot did not jump and aircraft exploded.

Between them, O'Bryan and Malmsten expended almost 3,100 rounds of .50 caliber ammo. Elsewhere, Cobweb Blue Section had left the Dessau area and strafed an airbase with 60+ aircraft on it southwest of the city of Naumberg. The squadron claimed ten destroyed; in all the group claimed thirteen, which pushed its total number of destroyed over the eight hundred

mark. It was an auspicious beginning for Lt. O'Bryan.

By April, O'Bryan had earned the right to have his own kite [British term for fighter-*Ed.*], and he was assigned QP-Y, taking it up on each of his last nine missions. In total, Billy would participate in two dozen missions before the war ended, including the big strafing show on 16 April 1945.

While on ops, O'Bryan spent most of his time flying in the #2 or #4 positions, usually depending on who else was assigned to his section. On 21 April, his last show, he flew as element lead (#3) in Cobweb Purple Section. The group stood down on 26 April. In his short time with the 334th, he racked up 3.5 destroyed, adding three ground kills to his shared victory over the FW-190 on his first show. During his tour he earned the Air Medal with two oak leaf clusters.

O'Bryan remained with the 4th through the summer, right to the end of the group's time in England. He was among those who were aboard the RMS *Queen Mary* when she sailed for the United States on 8 November 1945.

We know little about what O'Bryan did after the war. He did remain involved in aviation, hold-

ing several different positions through the years. For some time, he was a flight instructor, working out of Glendale Airport, and later, Burbank Airport. William C. O'Bryan succumbed to cancer at the age of 68, passing away in Redondo Beach, California on 30 May 1987.

Editor's Note. Of the eight pilots assigned to the 4th FG who completed prior tours as bomber pilots, half were from 2nd Air Division groups. Robert Kanaga had served with the 453rd Bomb Group from 1943-44 and was CO of the 733rd Bomb Squadron. Two other pilots, Gervais Ford and James Scanlon, also served with the Liberator outfit from Old Buckingham. George Ridler had flown his thirty missions with the 446th Bomb Group at Bungay.

Others were Warren Williams who completed a tour as a B-17 co-pilot with the 388th Bomb group at Knettishall while Charles Hewes had flown B-25s and A-20s with the famous Air Apaches, the 345th Bomb Group, in the southwest Pacific. In addition to the bomber boys, men who flew with photo reconnaissance and air-sea rescue units also wound up as fighter pilots with the group. 🇺🇸

Atlantic Air Routes of World War II

By Kelsey McMillan, reprinted from Heritage Herald #34, 2004

The Luftwaffe onslaught against England in the summer of 1940 alarmed Americans who feared that England might fall, bringing the Nazis one step closer west to the United States. Nevertheless, Americans continued to eschew direct involvement in the war. Not so for the Roosevelt Administration, which devised several creative and covert means for aiding our Allies and preparing the U.S. for war while maintaining a façade of neutrality. One step was to establish numerous defensive positions outside the Continental U.S. and its territories, including the construction of airfields throughout the North and South Atlantic. After the U.S. joined the fight, these airfields formed the backbone of America's military air routes to theaters of operations in the western hemisphere. Most were in regions alien and exotic to Americans.

From intriguing to boring, beautiful to dreary, freezing to broiling, heavenly to hellish, it is not surprising that 60-year-old memories of these way stations have not faded, and are often vividly recounted in veterans' articles and letters. Their fascinating stories inspired this writer to learn more and share this article.

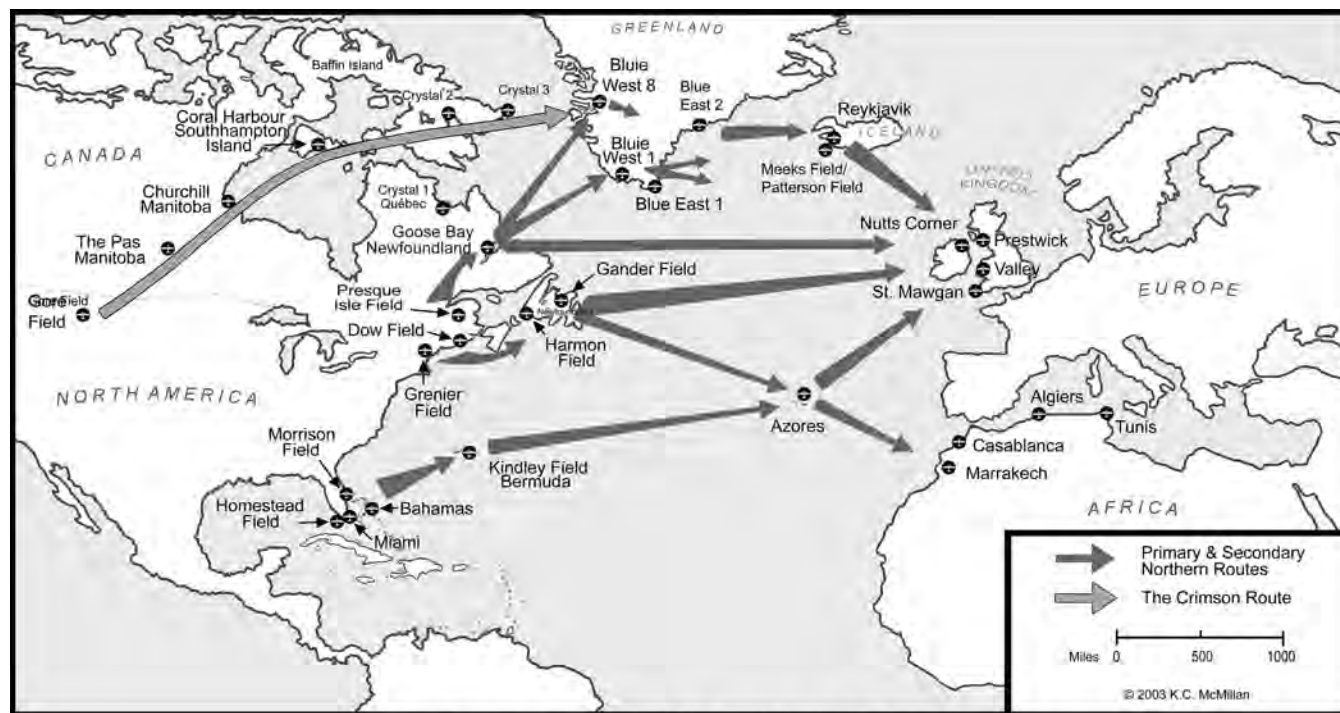
On the Northern Route, the stopovers in

Canada were surrounded by coniferous forests, lakes and rocky terrain, or they skirted the Arctic Ocean within glacier-carved valleys and mountains. Airfields on the sub-arctic coasts of Greenland were secreted away within crooked, glacial fjords with dicey approaches. The mild, yet changeable climate of Iceland's coasts were a surprising contrast to the inland ice fields. Reykjavik (name of the capital of Iceland), means "Smoky Bay." It was so named by the first settler in the 9th century because of steam rising from geothermal hot springs.

Stopovers on the Southern Route included tropical paradises of the Caribbean, and the steamy, exotic mouth of the Amazon River. From bleak tiny volcanic islands in the middle of the Atlantic, to the primitive grasslands and deserts on the west African coast, and the exotic Casbahs of northwest African cities, this route offered infinite cultural variety. Many of the airfields also doubled as weather stations or bases for air squadrons assigned to hunt U-boats or to escort and protect Allied shipping convoys across the Atlantic.

Gaining a Foothold

In September 1940, President Roosevelt



THE NORTH ATLANTIC AIR ROUTES OF WORLD WAR II

traded 50 aging destroyers for the right to establish American air and naval bases in seven British possessions in the western hemisphere. In November the War Department secretly contracted with Pan American Airways to build or expand commercial airfields in Central and South America and the Caribbean with the understanding they would be designed to accommodate future military conversion. The U.S. government fully funded all construction, but as far as the host nations knew, they were strictly commercial enterprises. This covert plan precluded any appearance of U.S. mobilization and obviated the need for any formal military accords with those countries. In cooperation with the Army Corps of Engineers, Pan Am built several of the Brazilian airfields on the Southern Route including Amapá, São Luís, Natal, Recife, and Belém. In April 1941, the U.S. entered an agreement with the Free Danish authorities whereby the U.S. would provide defense of Greenland in exchange for the right to construct air bases and other facilities on the subcontinent. The U.S. also took over defense of Iceland in July 1941 in a similar agreement with Britain, releasing His Majesty's forces there for more essential military operations elsewhere.

The Northern Route—Red, White and Blue

The U.S. War Department originally conceived a plan to build secret AAF bases on the subcontinent of Greenland as a forward defense, and from which a bombing campaign could be conducted against

the Nazis in the event that Great Britain was conquered. Code named "Blueie" by Secretary of War Harry Stimson, there were eventually nine bases on the west side of Greenland commonly used on the ferry route: Blueie West 1 through 9, and five bases on the east side known as Blue East 1 through 5.

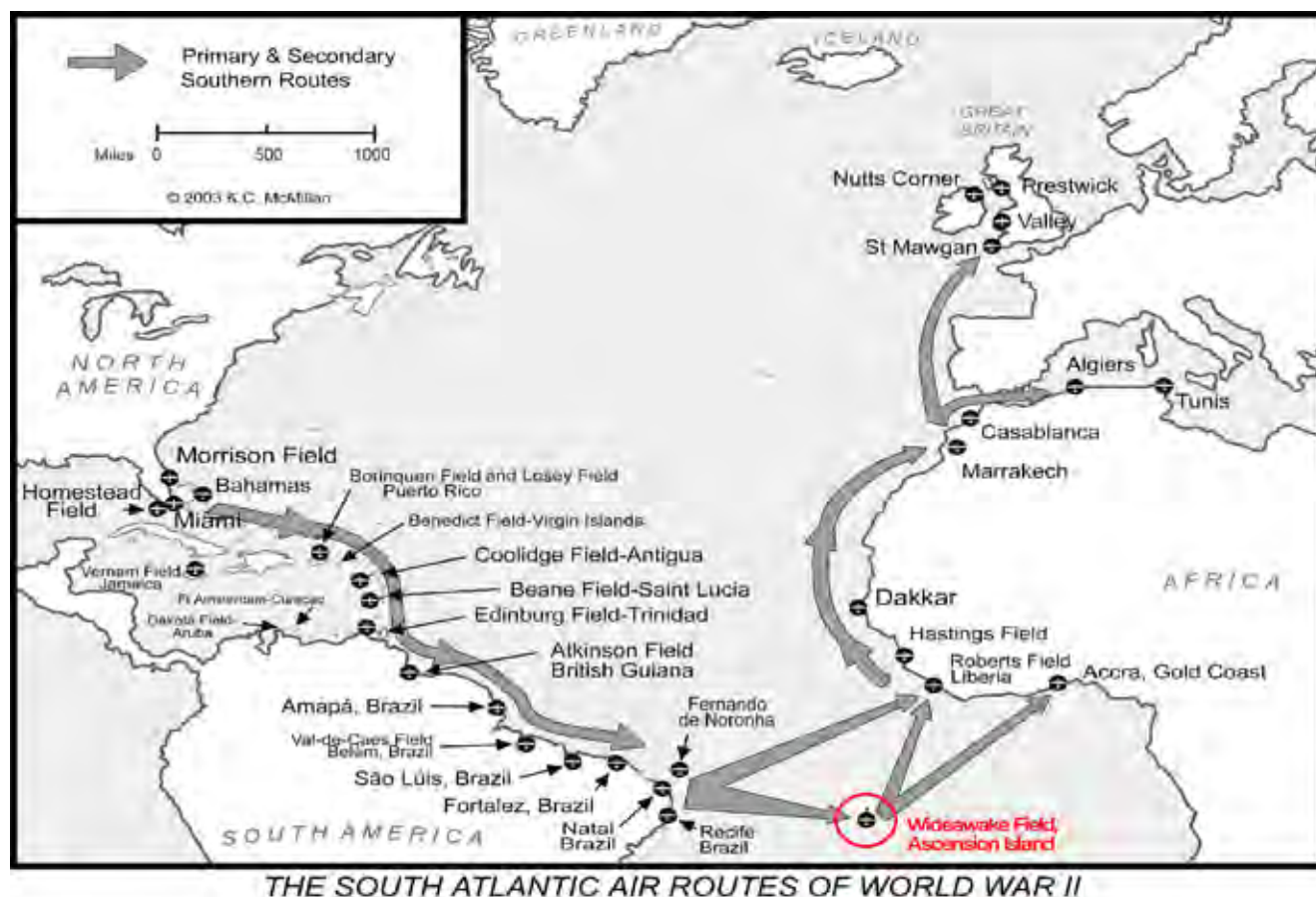
Blueie West 1, or BW-1, stands out in the memories of the many Air Transport Command pilots and combat replacement crews that landed there en route to the United Kingdom. It was primarily used by these ferrying groups in the events of emergency or bad weather on the leg from Newfoundland to Iceland. The landing strip, which was located inside an inverted L-shaped fjord, was carved into the base of a mountain at sea level. A comparatively short runway ran uphill from the water's edge and ended at the foot of the mountain. Large chunks of ice floating in the azure blue waters were visible from the air. Not your typical landing approach! Most of the BW and BE air bases also included weather stations, artillery emplacements, rescue support sites, and navigation aids. Weather fronts sweeping down from the arctic toward the European continent encountered Greenland first, enabling meteorologists at Blueie and other Greenland stations to provide fairly reliable forecasts to Headquarters 8th AF where bombing targets were selected each day.

The Crimson Route—Short-Lived

As deployments of AAF combat units to Great Britain were planned, it was anticipated the airfields in

New England and Labrador would be unable to handle an ever-increasing volume of overseas movement and ferry traffic. Thus, an alternate route from the western states to the British Isles was devised. The AAF first began using this route in the summer of 1942; it included bases in Manitoba, Southampton Island, and Baffin Island, the Canadian jumping-off point to Greenland. Two of the bases, code-named Crystal 2 and Crystal 3, were also weather stations. The AAF's use of the Crimson Route tapered off and eventually was discontinued in late 1943 as additional airfields built or enlarged in New England and Newfoundland proved capable of handling the increasing traffic.

Southern Route—The Looooong Way!



The Southern Atlantic Route covered roughly 10,000 miles. Despite being almost four times longer than the Northern Route at 2,700 miles, its superior weather made it generally safer, especially in the winter months. President Roosevelt used this route when traveling to and from the Casablanca and Teheran conferences in January and November 1943.

Fliers of this route likely hoped to fly direct from South America to Africa and bypass *Wideawake Field*. This dismal and isolated airfield was on Ascension Island, a 34-square mile volcanic rock about midway between Brazil and Africa. When the landing strip was first opened, huge flocks of birds on the island posed a serious danger to air traffic as they swarmed into the flight path during airplane takeoffs. The birds were finally persuaded to relocate to another part of the island with the assistance of an ornithologist from the American Museum of Natural History. Water was scarce, amenities nonexistent. Everything was in short supply except bird guano. Leave it to the Army Corps of Engineers to find a use for this resource... housing on the post was constructed of guano bricks. Lovely! 🐛



Comforts and diversions were few, fresh water and supplies were strictly rationed at *Wideawake Field* on Ascension Island, over 1,100 miles from the nearest continent. Photo: National Archives, USAF collection.

(Lady Be Good—continued from page 1)

The British surveyors quickly reported their find to authorities at the U.S. Air Force's Wheelus AB, Libya. Nine months later, in February 1959, three D'Arcy geologists drove through the desert to the wreck and found the airplane in remarkably good shape.

However, there were no obvious clues as to the fate of the airmen who had gone missing more than 15 years before.

The Search

In the summer and fall of 1959, Air Force and Army mortuary teams began an exhaustive search for the crew's remains. The bomber had crash-landed on the gravel plain located within the Sand Sea of Calanscio. The teams determined that as fuel began to run out, each propeller had been feathered in turn, until only the No. 4 engine was still running. With the aircraft carefully trimmed, the crew had bailed out, and the pilotless bomber had made a wings-level crash-landing in the desert, coming to rest in a near-level position.

Reasoning that the crew members would recognize that they were southeast of Soluch, the mortuary team guessed the survivors would have walked northwest. Over a six-day period, the team covered some 450 square miles, but found no sign of the B-24's crew.

With daytime temperatures reaching 130 degrees Fahrenheit and nighttime near freezing, the teams searched along a northerly route for 35 miles, then east and west for 10 miles, but still they found nothing.

Then, on June 16, a clue appeared: Some 19 miles north of the crash site, searchers found a pair of small-size, fleece-lined flight boots. They appeared to have been deliberately placed, as they were left close together with toes pointing north.

The team then made random sweeps to the northwest and found the wheel tracks of five large, heavy vehicles, heading northwest. Guessing that the tracks could be 16 years old, the searchers looked along them.

In only 2.3 miles, they found a pair of medium-size flight boots, along with a mound of parachute shroud-line cuttings and the small spring-activated frame of a pilot-chute. About 1.5 miles further on was the liner of an electrically heated flight suit.

A few hundred feet beyond that were two parachutes. One had been cut, weighted down with small stones, and placed in the form of a six-foot arrowhead, pointing northward along the five-track trail. Searchers found the parachute sign chiefly because of the pattern made by the stones.

At the base of the pattern was a section of parachute harness with the name V. L. Moore stenciled inside.



Lady Be Good was discovered in 1958 by British geologists conducting an aerial survey. Photo via John Lowery.

ciled inside. SSgt. Vernon L. Moore was the B-24's assistant radio operator. Over the next few miles, pieces of equipment and parachute halves were laid out as arrows marking a route.

On July 17, Maj. Gen. H. R. Spicer, commander of 17th Air Force, joined the search and brought along helicopters to assist. They followed the five vehicle tracks 51 miles into the dunes but found no further sign of the crew.

Three days later, a radio operator in the general's party was being driven back to the B-24 site to establish contact with Wheelus when he spotted a seventh parachute-centered, stone-outlined arrowhead. Only

faint traces of shredded white parachute silk were visible through the sand at the center of the marker.

Located 60 feet east of the five vehicle tracks, it was pointing on a heading of 335 degrees. This led to finding still more gear.

By this time, the comprehensive search had revealed numerous items of equipment, but there was still no trace of human remains or of the crew's fate.

Finally, on Sept. 2, 1959, the teams felt they had done all they could and called off the search. A C-130 cargo aircraft landed in the desert and airlifted the investigating team and its equipment back to Wheelus. The search was officially ended. The investigative report stated, "All the evidence indicates that if the crew members had died on the gravel plain their remains would be evident on the surface." Based on the "experience of



desert personnel, in addition to observations of investigators," the team determined "that remains would be covered with sand during the intervening years."

The case of *Lady Be Good* was closed. Over time the story of the wreck—which had initially attracted considerable attention because of the bomber's highly intact condition—faded from the news.

Gone, But Not Forgotten

Five months later, in February 1960, members

of a British Petroleum Co. subcontractor team unexpectedly discovered the nearly buried bodies of five of the B-24's crew: 1st Lt. William J. Hatton, the pilot; 2nd Lt. Robert F. Toner, copilot; 2nd Lt. D. P. Hays, navigator; S.Sgt. Samuel E. Adams, gunner; and TSgt. Robert E. LaMotte, radio operator.

A diary kept by Toner was recovered along with the crew's remains and told the airmen's tragically heroic story. They had bailed out at 2 am on Monday, April 5, 1943. All but bombardier 2nd Lt. John S. Woravka found each other in the desert; the other airmen never saw Woravka again. The remaining group of eight proceeded northwest for five days. They pressed on for the better part of a week with very little food and



A C-47 from Wheelus AB, Libya, lands on the Sahara to retrieve flag-draped remains of five *Lady Be Good*'s crew. Photo: via John Lowery.

only a pint of water, under extreme conditions of heat by day and cold at night.

On Thursday, they reached the dunes, and Toner's diary noted, "Good wind but continuous blowing of sand. [Everyone] now very weak, thought Sam & Moore were all done. LaMotte's eyes are gone, everyone else's eyes are bad. Still going [northwest]."

After five days, they were so dehydrated and exhausted that only three of the group could go on. These were flight engineer T/Sgt. Harold J. Ripslinger, gunner S/Sgt. Guy E. Shelley Jr., and Moore.

On Friday, April 9, Toner's diary revealed: "Shelley, Rip, Moore separate & try to go for help, rest of us all very weak, eyes bad, not any travel, all want to die. Still very little water. Nites are about 35 degrees, good [north] wind, no shelter, 1 parachute left."

The next day, Toner wrote, "Still having prayer meetings for help. No signs of anything, a couple of birds; good wind from [north]—really weak now, can't walk, pains all over, still all want to die. Nites very cold. No sleep."

On Monday, April 12, Toner's final entry read, "No help yet, very cold nite."

Perseverance and Endurance

Medical experts had previously estimated the limit a man could travel without water as 25 miles, with a life expectancy of two days. Yet with only a negligible amount of food and water, these eight men had journeyed 78 miles together, while three went even farther. They managed this under the most severe conditions. The airmen had pressed on through wind-blown sand, in extreme weather, for at least seven days—all without shelter.

On May 12, 1960, the BP oil explorers found the remains of a sixth crew member, Shelley. He had traveled an additional 37.5 miles into the Sand Sea, journeying a total of 115.5 miles from the bailout point.

This find implied Ripslinger had died earlier and that Shelley took these effects to give to Ripslinger's family.

At this point, however, Shelley's recovery effort had to be called off because of the danger from desert vipers found hiding in the sand.

The recovery team moved on and began searching for Ripslinger, starting from where the five had been found and moving toward where Shelley's remains were discovered.

On May 17, after traveling 26 miles through the dunes, the team found Ripslinger's remains. They were almost completely buried in the sand, with only a small area of skull, right shoulder, and a few ribs exposed. The sleeves of his olive drab wool shirt had tech sergeant stripes attached, and in his pocket was a small diary.

Despite further searches, neither the remains

of Woravka nor Moore were found at the time. The team chief theorized they had been covered by the wind-blown sand and that further effort was futile. Thus, the case was again closed.

In August 1960, however, another British Petroleum team found the remains of Woravka, about 12 miles northeast of the crash site. He had died instantly on impact when his parachute failed to open completely. His corpse was still encased in his high-altitude suit and Mae West life jacket, while harnessed to



Lady Be Good's Crew: (L-R) 1st LT. William J. Hatton, pilot; 2nd LT. Robert F. Toner, co-pilot; 2nd LT. D.P. Hays, navigator; 2nd LT. John S. Woravka, bombardier; T/Sgt. Harold J. Ripslinger, flight engineer; T/Sgt. Robert E. LaMotte, radio operator; S/Sgt. Guy E. Shelley, gunner; S/Sgt. Vernon L. Moore, gunner; S/Sgt. Samuel E. Adams, gunner. Photo: American Air Museum in Britain.

Both of Shelley's dog tags were uncovered, three to four inches beneath the sand. Two hours of diligent search uncovered 95 percent of his remains.

Adjacent to the remains were Shelley's trousers. In one pocket were his papers and wallet. In the other they found the papers and billfold of Ripslinger.

the partially open parachute.

His canteen was also intact. It contained almost a quart of still-potable water.

By taking a line from Woravka's body, investigators were able to locate the crew's rendezvous point

after the bailout. Burned-out flares documented their effort to signal their missing comrade. After he failed to join up, though, they were forced to depart without him.

The remains of Moore are still lost in the Sahara's Sand Sea of Calanscio. But he clearly broke all records for stamina and desert survival.

The silk survival maps provided to the crew for escape and evasion terminated 20 miles north of the Kufra Oasis, 130 miles south. Since the airmen covered 115 miles, heading in that opposite direction might have brought them into contact with nomadic Arab traders in the well-traveled and populated oasis area.

Shortly before the case was closed, a propeller was taken from one of Lady's large engines. It was placed on a small stone monument in front of 17th Air Force headquarters at Wheelus. Soon after, however, Libya's King Idris and his government were overthrown, and the expansive, well-equipped air base was taken over by the Libyan Air Force and its Soviet advisors.

Lessons Learned

While the navigational error that led to their predicament speaks for itself, the subsequent survival performance of the eight-man group was extraordinary. Their superhuman progress over the desert testifies to both good training and discipline, combined with an exceptional will to survive. Moreover, they never gave up and remained rational and organized to the very end. The mission and crew provided the inspiration for a 1960 "Twilight Zone" TV series episode titled, "King Nine Will Not Return."

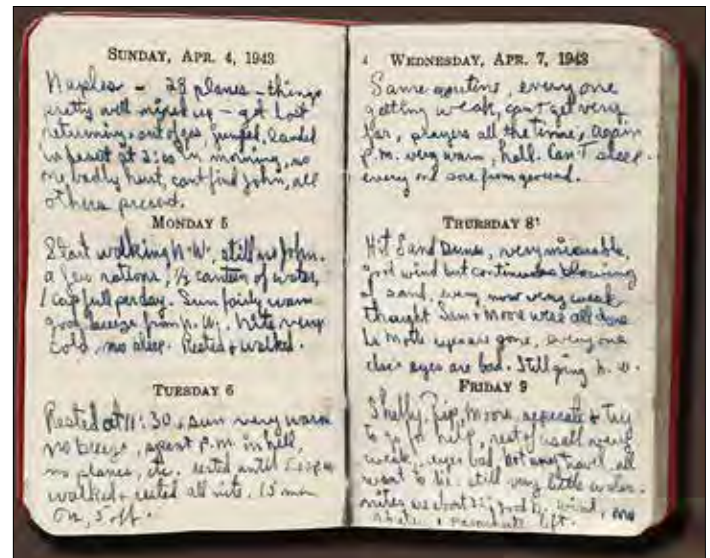
Lady Be Good's airmen obviously followed their aircraft commander, Hatton, in an orderly fashion. And in the best survival tradition, they left behind a trail to be followed by anyone who might search for them. While going blind from the sun's glare and blowing sand, and too weak to continue, five of the group urged the remaining three to go on and continue searching for help.

The crew of *Lady Be Good's* eight-day survival in the Sahara Desert —without shelter, food, or water—exceeded contemporary estimates of human capability—and by a wide margin.

Despite the torturous conditions, they continued in the best traditions of military airman: They died trying. 🛩️

Lady Be Good Co-Pilot's Diary

Editor Note: Thanks to www.LadyBeGood.net, we provide the diary of Co-Pilot Robert F. Toner. The small pocket-sized date-book journal was found in association with their remains and chronicle the crews' actions from the day of the mission until 8 to 9 days after bailout.



Though useful in enriching the story of the *Lady Be Good's* crew, the hard fact remains that these few diary entries, along with the artifacts found with the crew's remains and along the path of their trek, are the only hard evidence we have of the thoughts, activities, and theoretical interactions or dialogue of the crew during their desert ordeal.

Sunday, April 4, 1943

Naples—28 planes. Things pretty well mixed up—Got lost returning. out of gas, jumped. landed in desert at 2:00 in morning, no one badly hurt, can't find John, all others present.

Monday 5, 1943

Start walking N.W., still no John. a few rations, 1/2 canteen of water, 1 cap full per day. Sun fairly warm. good breeze from N.W. Nite very cold, no sleep. Rested & walked.

Tuesday 6, 1943

Rested at 11:30, sun very warm, no breeze, spent P.M. in hell, no planes, etc. rested until 5:00 P.M. walked & rested all nite, 15 min. on, 5 off.

Wednesday, April 7, 1943

Same routine, every one getting weak, can't get very far, prayers all the time, again P.M. very warm, hell. Can't sleep. Every one sore from ground.

Thursday, April 8, 1943

Hit Sand Dunes, very miserable, good wind but continuous blowing of sand, everybody now very weak, thought Sam & Moore were all gone. LaMotte eyes are gone, everyone else's eyes are bad. Still going N.W.

Friday, April 9, 1943

Shelley, Rip, Moore separate and try to go for help, rest of us all very weak, eyes bad. Not any travel, all want to die, still very little water. nites are about 35, good N. wind, no shelter, 1 parachute left.

Saturday, April 10, 1943

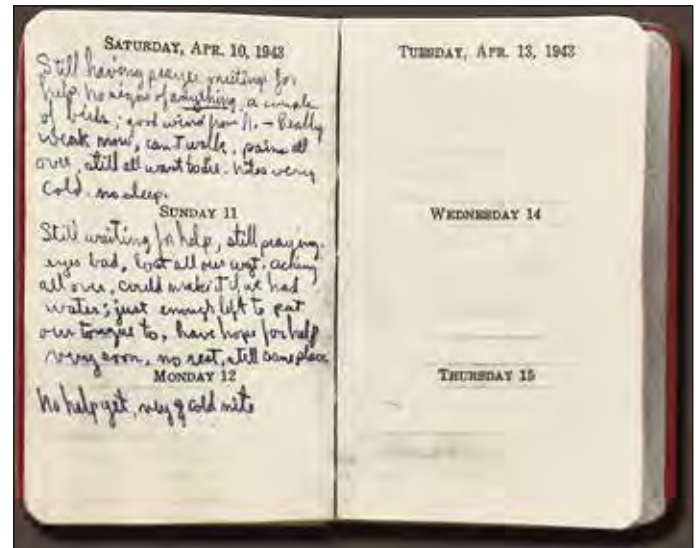
Still having prayer meetings for help. No signs of anything, a couple of birds; good wind from N. Really weak now, can't walk, pains all over, still all want to die. Nites very cold, no sleep.

Sunday, April 11, 1943

Still waiting for help, still praying, eyes bad, lost all our wgt. aching all over, could make it if we had water; just enough left to put our tongue to, have hope for help very soon, no rest, still same place.

Monday, April 12, 1943

No help yet, very (unreadable) cold nite.



Heritage League/93rd Bomb Group Convention and Reunion Boston, Massachusetts October 7-11, 2022

The convention/reunion is being conducted jointly with the 93rd Bomb Group. This effort is our first joint event, and we are pleased to have the opportunity to work together.

We will conduct our annual event at the Four Points by Sheraton, Boston Newton. The Four Points is located less than 12 miles from the Boston Logan Airport. There is no shuttle service from airport to hotel but several options do exist. The Massachusetts Bay Transit Authority (MBTA) provides commuter rail service from the airport to within 6/10ths of a mile of the hotel. There is also taxi, Uber and Commuter bus service available.



Rooms with two queen beds or a single king bed are available for \$183.19, including breakfast and tax. If there are more than two persons in a room, additional breakfasts can be arranged for \$10 each.



The deadline for hotel reservations is Wednesday, September 7, 2022. Dial 877-822-6666 for the hotel's reservation service. Ask to speak to a representative and identify yourself as a member of the 93 BG/Heritage League. If you provide the hotel code for our event (BGH), it will speed the process. Please make your hotel reservations as soon as possible.

Registration will take place in the next several months after the arrangements are complete and the final costs are determined. A draft schedule is included for your consideration. We will have a separate mailing for registration and post it on our website when it is available.

An optional two-day extension, for an additional cost, is planned for those who would like to explore the Revolutionary War history in the Boston area. A draft schedule is provided for your consideration. Participants will remain in the hotel extending their stay by two nights.

As stated in the President's message, we ask that if you are planning to attend, please let us know by emailing us at: heritageleagueinfo@gmail.com. We would like to know how many people are attending, and if you are interested in the 2-day extension. This information is helpful for planning purposes.



We are so excited to join the 93rd Bomb Group and this promises to be a fun and exciting Convention. See you Boston!!!

Share Your *Herald*
Rather than recycling your *Herald*, please consider sharing your copy with family, friends or neighbors.



93rd Bomb Group/Heritage League 2022 Reunion/Convention Four Points by Sheraton Boston Newton

As of April 15, 2022

Day 1 – Friday October 7

10:00 AM – 5 PM	Charles Ballroom - Memorabilia Room Setup – Everyone is welcome!
12:30 – 1:30 PM	University A - Officer's Coordination Meeting
2:00 – 5:00 PM	Lobby - Registration
5:30 – 7:30 PM	Charles Ballroom - Welcome Dinner
7:30 – 9:00 PM	Attendee Introductions

Day 2 – Saturday – October 8

7:00 – 9:00 AM	Charles Ballroom - Breakfast
9:00 – 10:00 AM	Enroute to American Heritage Museum, Hudson
10:00 AM – 4:00 PM	Battle for the Airfield WWII Re-Enactment
11:30 AM – 12:30 PM	Box Lunch at airfield - TBD
4:00 – 4:45 PM	Travel to Off-site Dining
5:00 – 6:30 PM	Dinner TBD
7:00 – 7:45 PM	Return to Hotel

Day 3 – Sunday – October 9 (Hotel all day)

7:00 – 8:45 AM	Charles Ballroom - Breakfast
9:00 – 10:00 AM	Charles Ballroom - Religious Service (non-denominational)
10:30 – 12:30 AM	Charles Ballroom - 93 rd Business Meeting
10:30 – 12:30 AM	Heritage League Annual Business Meeting
12:30 – 1:30 PM	Charles Ballroom - Lunch
1:45 – 3:00 PM	Charles Ballroom - Education Session #1
3:30 – 4:30 PM	Charles Ballroom - Education Session #2
5:00 – 5:30 PM	TBD - Group Photo
5:30 – 6:00 PM	Charles Ballroom - Reception
6:00 – 8:00 PM	Charles Ballroom - Memorial Dinner

Day 4 – Monday – October 10 – Columbus Day

7:00 – 9:00 AM	Charles Ballroom - Breakfast
9:45 – 10:30 AM	Travel to Boston
10:30 AM – 3:30 PM	Tour Boston National Historic Park (Lunch on your own) Freedom Trail, Faneuil Hall, Charleston Navy Yard & USS Constitution, Old South Meeting House, Old State House,
3:30 – 4:00 PM	Return to Hotel
6:30 – 8:00 PM	Charles Ballroom - Dinner
8 PM - Closing	Memorabilia Room Pack-up – Everyone is welcome!

Day 5 – Tuesday – October 11

7:00 – 9:00 AM	Charles Ballroom - Breakfast
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Optional Reunion Schedule Add-On (Draft)

93rd Bomb Group/Heritage League 2022 Reunion Add-On Revolutionary War in Massachusetts

Day 5 – Tuesday – October 11

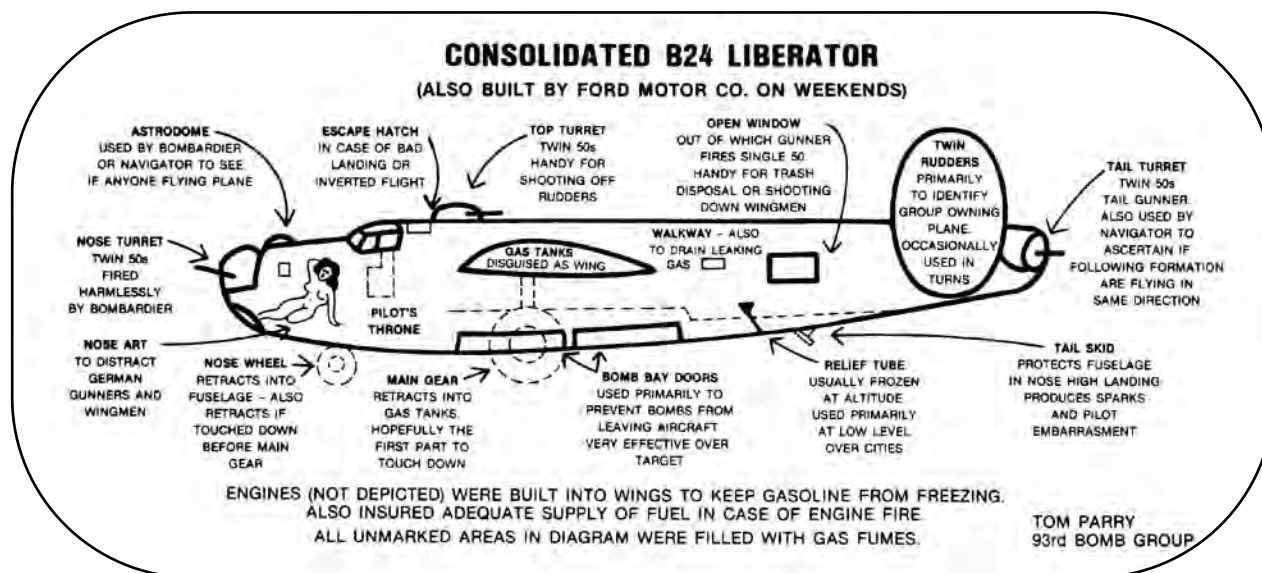
6 – 9:30 AM	Breakfast at Hotel
9:30 AM	Depart Hotel for Boston Tea Party Ships & Museum, 306 Congress Street
10:00 AM	Experience the Boston Tea Party
11:30 AM	Abigail's Tea Room & Terrace (Lunch on your own)
1:00 PM	Depart for Lexington and Concord (22 miles)
2:00 PM	Concord's North Bridge
2:30 PM	North Bridge Visitor's Center & Video
3:00 PM	Minute Man Visitor's Center
3:30 PM	Hartwell Tavern
4:45 PM	Lexington Battle Green Site
5:30 PM	Return to Hotel
6:30 PM	Dinner (on your own)

Day 6 – Wednesday – October 12

6 – 9:30 AM	Breakfast at Hotel
9:00 AM	Transportation departs Hotel
9:30 AM	Old North Church
10:30 AM	Paul Revere House
12:00 PM	Lunch (on your own)
1:00 PM	Travel to Cambridge
1:30 PM	Longfellow House - Washington's Headquarters National Historic Site
3:30 PM	Harvard Square – Stroll and Shop
5:00 PM	Bunker Hill Monument
6:00 PM	Return to Hotel
7:00 PM	Dinner (TBD)

Day 7 – Thursday – October 13

6 – 7:30 AM	Breakfast at Hotel
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News Briefs

Heritage League Overseas Cemetery Wreath Program Resumes

We have wonderful news from the Deputy Director, Cemetery Operations for the American Battle Monuments Commission (ABMC), the organization that handles U.S. overseas cemeteries: "All ABMC cemeteries will be hosting Memorial Day ceremonies this year and will receive flowers. Ceremony dates and times vary by location but all will take place between the 28th and the 30th of May."

There are 13 cemeteries where the Heritage League places flowers on the date of their Memorial Day ceremony.

If any of you reading this are near one of these cemeteries on the right date, it would be a memorable experience to attend the ceremony! And if you're willing to share your impressions in writing and photos for a future issue of the *Heritage Herald*, even better!

Beverly Baynes Tomb

Heritage League Project Report: News from the Greatest Generation

It's scanning time! We are about to send several hundred individual newsletters to the same print and production firm that helped us several years ago with the Second Air Division Journals. These periodicals represent almost the full cross section of periodicals generated by 2nd Air Division veterans. Most newsletters were published in recent decades, but a few extend all the way back to European hostilities. Newsletters of several ground support units will round out the bomber and fighter groups that published.

This is to thank the efforts of several of our readers (nice to be back in touch with Kathleen Storms) and coordination by several members of the Executive Committee (Irene Hurner and Chris Clark were the heavy lifters).

By the time you read this, we will be arranging this substantial collection of PDF files, all having a searchable text layer because of OCR (optical character recognition) processing, on a shared drive where volunteers can do very, very powerful searches upon your request! (If you would like to be on this special team, please read the Volunteer Program Mission Briefing in this *Herald*.)

What does this mean for you? It means that you can enrich your personal 'research journey' on a particular 2nd AD vet or unit by applying a search term to the entire collection at once, with complete confidence that the resultant list of 'hits' (individual search returns matching your 'find request') is thorough. Imagine that in one of these publications, unknown to you, we find a reference to your veteran...at a minimum this will open for you an entirely new lead to follow. Similarly, you might be interested in Operation Market Garden, as recalled by various participants from multiple groups, and round out what you already know. And what if you were curious about all the units in which Jimmy Stewart served the 8th Army Air Force? Or when B-24 BGs started removing their ball turrets? Maybe you want to assess whether the Liberator's nose wheel was as bad as you have heard...it was! This search should have a very rich return, with scores of 'hits'.

In time, we hope to open access to the collection so that anyone with an internet connection can do their own search via their browser. Until we can implement this tall order, we encourage you to be thinking of searches that would be good use of this resource. If you have practical implementation ideas, we want to hear from you.

Brian Mahoney, VP for Volunteers

Overlooked Heroes— Dedication at Wendover Airfield, Utah

Three years ago, at the reunion of the 467th BG Association, researcher and VP Peter Horne proposed a memorial to the group's nearly 50 men lost in training in western states, or in transit via the Southern Route to Rackheath, close to Norwich. The memorial has been enthusiastically adopted. On Friday, September 23, 2022, it will be dedicated at historic Wendover Airfield in Utah from where they headed to England in early 1944. <https://wendoverairfield.org/>.

Leaders in both the 467th and the unique Wendover restoration project soon realized that several other B-24 groups had training losses there, and moreover, Wendover was only one of hundreds of training sites in the continental United States (CONUS) that experienced fatalities. The scope of our memorial focus widened dramatically from the losses of a single combat group to encompass the 15,500 personnel lost across the entire USAAF during WWII. Read that num-

ber again...it exceeds all USMC losses in WWII and is more than double the number commemorated in the Second Air Division Memorial's Roll of Honor in the American Library in Norwich, England.

Our intense research efforts have yet to uncover any memorial anywhere by any veteran organization or the Air Force, that specifically calls out the ultimate sacrifice of this huge, completely unheralded group. What had started as a solemn memorial gesture for a relatively small list of known and named men, became a mission to see that all of those who died in training, typically in early phases before most of them even had assignments to specific combat organizations, would finally be given due recognition.

The B-24 memorial at Wendover will consist of a hand-built, extremely accurate and detailed 1:20 scale aluminum B-24 aircraft and plaques and panels that memorialize a few dozen named individuals, but now is designed to reflect the larger context. The 467th's Wendover Memorial Committee is reaching out to other 'stakeholder' veteran and memorial organizations to attend this first-ever solemn recognition, and possibly combine efforts to produce additional memorials and ceremonies to this previously unnoted huge category.

Details of the actual ceremony, to which all are invited, will be updated regularly on the 467th BGA Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/209080115899870> and web page <http://www.467bg.com/>. Further, the 467th is opening its reunion (September 21-25 at the Sheraton Salt Lake City Hotel) to any and all interested in participating. It will include transportation to and from the dedication at

Wendover, a visit to the Hill AFB Museum, and other suitable activities. There is even a special group rate registration at the hotel you can use for any nights from September 18th through September 28th, 2022: <https://www.marriott.com/event-reservations/reservation-link.mi?id=1643145811517&key=GRP&app=resvlink>.

Brian Mahoney

8th Air Force Historical Society Reunion, Washington, DC

The Society will hold its reunion in Washington, DC, October 19-23, 2022. Tours will include the Washington Mall and memorials, Arlington Cemetery and the Air and Space Museum extension at Dulles Airport. Exploring Old Town Alexandria is also on the agenda. Registration and hotel information is located at: <http://www.8thafhs.org/>. Please note that the Heritage League annual membership meeting and convention will be held in Boston with the 93rd Bomb Group Association reunion earlier in the month, October 7-11.

Heritage League planning for trip to England in 2023

We are making plans to hold our 2023 Convention/Annual Membership Meeting in Norwich along with a tour of the area. Not many details have been ironed out yet but we are aiming for July 2023 and will forward more information as it becomes available. We hope to attract more 3rd and 4th generations (our kids and grandkids) to attend. Mark your calendars—more info in the next issue.

Shopping Alert

The Heritage League participates in the AmazonSmile program. The idea is simple: you shop AmazonSmile, and it donates 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 amazonsmile, 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!



Happy Birthday VETS!

The Heritage League is pleased to acknowledge our Veterans' birthdays who have recently, or are about to celebrate their 'special day.'

HELP! 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 but we need your help as we do not have photos of all. If you have a fairly recent photo of your Vet, please email it 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 our freedoms today. 🇺🇸



Joe Haenn, an assistant crew chief with the 467th BG reached a milestone this past April, 105 years young! He is our most senior of this group and we missed wishing him a Happy Birthday in our last *Herald*. Looking sharp in his study in Telford, PA, he has loads of good stories about all the work they had to do to keep those planes flying. Go Joe, Go! Photo: Yvonne Caputo.



Congratulations to 93rd BG pilot Bill Brown. Happy birthday, 102 years this July. He completed 35 combat missions and last year received the French Legion of Honor. Photo: Jim Root, 93rd BG.



Mo Morris, waist gunner with the 453rd BG. Ever vigilant, he celebrates his 101st birthday this July. Photo: D. Dovey.



453rd BG bombardier Francis Cartier will mark his special day, 99 years this July. Photo: Irene Hurner.



David Borland, radio operator with the 389th BG, marked 98 years young in May. Photo: Borland family.



446th BG nose gunner/bomb toggler Keith Babcock, marks a youthful 98 years this August. Photo: Babcock family.



Max Minear, a ball turret gunner with the 446th BG turned 97 years last February. We enjoyed visiting with him at Savannah but unfortunately, we missed wishing him a Happy Birthday in our last *Herald*. We thought it appropriate to include wishes for his past birthday. Photo: C Dubisher.



392nd pilot Joe Cook spent time at Stalag Luft 1 as a POW. His 94th birthday was this May. Congratulations. Photo: American Air Museum.

Whatever you guys are doing—keep it up!

Award Medals Series—Part IV

The Distinguished Service Cross and Distinguished Service Medal

This presentation covers two awards which are generally at the same level of precedence, just below the Medal of Honor. This is the fourth report in our series on medals awarded to airmen during World War II beginning with the Air Medal and will conclude with the Medal of Honor in this summer's Heritage Herald. First, the Distinguished Service Cross.

Distinguished Service Cross



The Distinguished Service Cross (DSC), originally an Army award presented as the second highest military decoration for soldiers who displayed extraordinary heroism in combat against an armed enemy force. Actions that merit the Distinguished Service Cross must be a high degree above other U.S. combat decorations but do not meet the high criteria for the Medal of Honor. The Army Dis-

tinguished Service Cross was for specific combat action and grew over time. Each Service now has its own Service Cross: Army Cross, Navy and Marine Corps' Navy Cross, the Air Force and Space Force's Air Force Cross, and the Coast Guard Cross. All are equivalent at one level of precedent below the Medal of Honor.

The Army Distinguished Service Cross was first awarded during World War I. In addition, a number of awards were bestowed for actions which took place before World War I. In many cases, the medal was awarded to soldiers who had received a Certificate of Merit for gallantry; at the time, this certificate was the only other honor for gallantry the Army could present to combatants in lieu of a Medal of Honor. Others were furnished in belated recognition of actions which occurred in the Philippine-American War, during the Boxer Rebellion, and Pancho Villa Expedition.

World War II

Overall, just over 5,000 DSCs were awarded from WWII. Roger Freeman's 8th Air Force collection mentioned that 220 Service Crosses were awarded to 8th Air Force airmen with an additional six oak leaf clusters awarded again to individuals. Army Air Forces Lieutenant Colonel John C. Meyer, Major General James

A. Van Fleet, and Master Sergeant Llewellyn Chilson were three-time recipients. Jeannette Guyot and Virginia Hall were the only two women to receive the award.

Several recipients of the Distinguished Service Cross in earlier conflicts were again honored in World War II. Three recipients of two Distinguished Service Crosses in World War I—Douglas MacArthur, Hanford MacNider and Harry H. Semmes—received their third in World War II. A handful of men who had received the Distinguished Service Cross in World War I received a second in World War II. Among these were George S. Patton Jr., whose second Distinguished Service Cross came as commanding general of the Seventh Army in Sicily.

A little over fifty soldiers (and one sailor) received two Distinguished Service Crosses in World War II. Several fighter aces also received two Distinguished Service Crosses, including Donald Blakeslee, Paul P. Douglas Jr., William E. Dyess, Dominic "Don" Gentile, Gerald R. Johnson, Charles "Mac" MacDonald, James B. Morehead, Jay T. "Cock" Robbins, David C. Schilling, William T. Whisner Jr. and Ray S. Wetmore. Bomber pilot Richard H. Carmichael also received two Distinguished Service Crosses. Among Army recipients of two Distinguished Service Crosses were Creighton W. Abrams, Jr., later the Chief of Staff of the Army, William O. Darby, one of the fathers of the U.S. Army Rangers, James M. Gavin, Arthur F. Gorham, Matthew B. Ridgway, Reuben Henry Tucker III and Benjamin H. Vandervoort. The sailor was John D. Bulkeley, who also received the Medal of Honor and the Navy Cross and was one of the most highly decorated Americans of World War II.

During World War II, twelve soldiers, three airmen, and two sailors received both the Medal of Honor and the Distinguished Service Cross: from the Army Air Forces, Richard I. Bong, Horace S. Carswell, Jr. and Thomas B. McGuire, Jr.; from the Army, Bernard P. Bell, Maurice L. "Footsie" Britt, Herbert H. Burr, Leonard A. Funk, Gerry H. Kisters, James M. Logan, George L. Mabry, Jr., Douglas MacArthur, Audie L. Murphy, Junior J. Spurrier, Jack L. Treadwell and Jonathan M. Wainwright; and from the Navy, John D. Bulkeley and Samuel D. Dealey (who also received four Navy Crosses). One World War II Distinguished Service Cross re-

cipient, Raymond Harvey, would earn the Medal of Honor in the Korean War.

General Paul W. Tibbets, commander of the 509th Composite Group (509 CG), was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross by General Spaatz for piloting the Enola Gay, the B-29 Superfortress plane which dropped the first nuclear bomb on Hiroshima.

The Distinguished Service Cross is distinct from the Distinguished Service Medal, which is awarded in recognition of exceptionally meritorious service to the government of the United States in a duty of great responsibility.

Distinguished Service Medal



As the Distinguished Service Cross is only awarded for actions in combat, the Distinguished Service Medal (DSM) has no such restriction. It is a military decoration originally of the United States Army presented to servicemen who have distinguished themselves by exceptionally meritorious service to the government in a duty of great responsibility. The performance must be such as to merit recognition for service that is clearly exceptional. The exceptional performance of normal duty will not alone justify an award of this decoration.

Approved by Congress in 1918, it was to be awarded by the President to any person who, while serving in any capacity with the Army since 1917, "distinguished himself or herself by exceptionally meritorious service to the Government in a duty of great responsibility in time of war or in connection with military operations against an armed enemy of the United States."

The Army's original award was followed by the Navy and Marine Corps' Navy Distinguished Service Medal, and by Air Force and recent Space Force's Air Force Distinguished Service Medal, plus the Coast Guard Distinguished Service Medal. Prior to the creation of the Air Force Distinguished Service Medal in 1960, airmen were awarded the Army's Distinguished Service Medal.

Notable recipients

Roger Freeman noted that 11 DSMs were awarded to 8th Air Force airman from WWII. Overall, the Army's Distinguished Service medal were principally awarded to general officers. A list of recipients would include

nearly every general and some admirals since 1918, many of whom received multiple awards, as well as a few civilians and sergeants major prominent for their contributions to national defense.

Among notable recipients below flag rank are: X-1 test pilot Chuck Yeager and X-15 test pilot Robert M. White, who both received the DSM as U.S. Air Force majors; Air Force Major Rudolf Anderson, the U-2 pilot shot down during the Cuban Missile Crisis; director Frank Capra, decorated in 1945 as an army colonel; actor James Stewart, decorated in 1945 as an Army Air Forces colonel (later Air Force Brigadier General). Among notable civilian recipients are Harry L. Hopkins, Robert S. McNamara and Henry L. Stimson.

Here is an abbreviated list which includes: **Army Air Service, Army Air Corps and Army Air Forces.**

- General of the Air Force Hap Arnold—commander of the Army Air Forces
- General Jimmy Doolittle—commander of 8th AF
- General Hoyt S. Vandenberg—Air Force Chief of Staff and Director of Central Intelligence
- General George C. Kenney—commander of Allied Air Forces, Southwest Pacific Area
- General Curtis Lemay—Air Force Chief of Staff
- General Carl Spaatz—Air Force Chief of Staff
- Lieutenant General Claire Lee Chennault (with oak leaf cluster)—leader of the Flying Tigers
- Major General Billy Mitchell—US Army Air Corps – military air power prophet
- Brigadier General Chuck Yeager, legendary test pilot
- Colonel Bernt Balchen, USAF—legendary Norwegian-American pilot and arctic explorer
- Captain John Birch, USAAF—missionary, guerilla leader and namesake of the John Birch Society

U.S. Army

- General of the Armies John J. Pershing—commander of the American Expeditionary Force
- General of the Army George C. Marshall—US Army Chief of Staff (two awards)
- General of the Army Douglas MacArthur—Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers (five awards)
- General of the Army Dwight D. Eisenhower—NATO Supreme Allied Commander Europe (five awards)
- General of the Army Omar N. Bradley—Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (four awards) 🇺🇸

Source: Wikipedia

How much were our airmen paid back in WWII? Not much, but there were some extras. Thanks to the 361 Fighter Group Association as published in their Newsletter from August 2000, Vol40. --ED

NOSTALGIA

It didn't take long for the songwriters of Tin Pan Alley to memorialize the institution of compulsory peacetime conscription after Congress passed the Selective Service Act in September of 1940. Early inductees were paid the princely sum of \$21.00 per month, which no doubt was the incentive for this lovely ballad.

Do you remember:

*"They get you up at 5 o'clock every morning
For 21 dollars a day once a month.
They take you on a hike without any warning
For 21 dollars a day once a month.
Your feet will hurt, your back will ache,
And you'll be muscle bound.
But all of that will disappear
When pay day rolls around.
For seven days a week
They build up your physique,
For 21 dollars a day once a month."*

In time, wiser heads prevailed, and the following pay scale was introduced and remained in effect for the duration.

OFFICERS				ENLISTED	
<u>Rank</u>	<u>Yearly Pay</u>	<u>Rent Allowance</u> (With dependents)	<u>Monthly</u> (Single)	<u>Rank</u>	<u>Monthly Base Pay</u>
General	\$8,000	\$120	\$105	1st Sgt	\$138
Lt. General	\$8,000	\$120	\$105	M/Sgt	\$138
Major General	\$8,000	\$120	\$105	T/Sgt	\$114
Brigadier General	\$6,000	\$120	\$105	S/Sgt	\$96
Colonel	\$4,000	\$120	\$105	Sgt	\$78
Lt. Colonel	\$3,500	\$120	\$105	Cpl	\$66
Major	\$3,000	\$105	\$90	PFC	\$54
Captain	\$2,400	\$90	\$75	Pvt	\$50
1st Lieutenant	\$2,000	\$75	\$60		
2nd Lieutenant	\$1,800	\$60	\$45		
Chief WO	\$2,100	\$75	\$60		
WO jg	\$1,800	\$60	\$45		
FO	\$1,800	\$60	\$45		

Notes:

FLYING PAY— Flying officers and enlisted men receive an increase of 50% of their base pay when by orders of competent authority they are required to participate regularly and frequently in aerial flights and when as a result of orders they do participate in such flights. Non-flying officers receive flying pay at the rate of \$60.00 per month when they participate in regular and frequent flights ordered by a competent authority.

SUBSISTENCE — Officers with dependents receive \$42.00 per month (30 day period) subsistence allowance; single officers \$21.00 (exceptions: Lt. Col. and Maj., married, receive \$63.00.)

LONGEVITY — Every enlisted man receives an increase of 5% of his base pay for each 3 years of service up to 30 years.

FOREIGN SERVICE — The base pay is increased by 10% (enlisted men 20%) for any service while on sea duty or duty in any place beyond the continental limits of the U.S or Alaska.

News from the American Library, Norwich



*By Orla Kennelly,
Memorial Trust
Librarian*

In 2022 we celebrate the official reopening of the American Library, Memorial to the 2nd Air Division, 8th Air Force, United States Army Air Forces. With reduced COVID restrictions, our official rebranding ceremony was May 18, 2022. As part of this occasion, we believe it appropriate to restate a brief history of our library.

The 2nd Air Division Memorial Library, 8th Air Force, United States Army Air Forces, first opened in 1963 as a living memorial to the nearly 7,000 American personnel from the 2nd Air Division who were based in East Anglia during World War II and were killed in action.

Our aim is to honour their memory and be a place of cultural exchange between the people of the United Kingdom, specifically East Anglia, and the people of the United States of America. The library is funded by the Memorial Trust of the 2nd Air Division, United States Army Air Forces. This is a registered British charity established in 1945 by officers of the 2nd Air Division with the intention of establishing a permanent living memorial in Norfolk.

To recognize this occasion, we will host a **conference focused on the 2nd Air Division**, its history and legacy, placing the 2nd Air Division experience within the broader context of the experience of WW2 in East Anglia and WW2 for the U.S. Army Air Forces. We are also interested in papers which explore other histories present in the 2nd Air Division Archive, for example the experience of local people who lived near air bases or American Red Cross personnel who came to East Anglia.

The conference will take place on Friday November 18th and Saturday November 19, 2022. It will be a blended event with speakers and a live audience at the library in Norwich, as well as attendees and speakers who will join us online.

We welcome submissions of **papers** that will last 30 minutes, all formats will be considered.

Suggested topics include but are not restricted to:

- African American Service Personnel in WW2
- Aviation Art
- Commemoration and Memory
- Digitizing our WW2 history
- Gay men and women in WW2
- Healthcare in the USAAF
- Interpreting WW2 in the 21st Century
- Landscapes of WW2 East Anglia
- Love and Friendship
- Life in the Air
- Life on the Ground
- Post War Life back in the USA
- Psychology, trauma and the effects of war
- The American Effect – culture and society after the Friendly Invasion
- Women and the 2nd Air Division
- 2nd Air Division objects and artefacts in Gallery, Library, Archive and Museum collections

Submissions

Please submit a paper proposal of not more than 300 words and biographical information of not more than 100 words by July 25th to: americanlibrary@norfolk.gov.uk. Please indicate if you wish to attend in person or participate digitally. The conference will be available live online via zoom webinar and will be recorded.

You will be informed by August 5th if your proposal has been accepted. If you have any queries prior to submission, please contact the library for clarification.

The 2nd Air Division Archive

This is a collection of over 30,000 original photographs, letters, memoirs and other historical items, as well as sound recordings. The archive has been almost entirely digitised thanks to a legacy by veteran Bernard Newmark and is available online at: <https://digitalarchive.2ndair.org.uk/>. The physical archive is on deposit at the Norfolk Record Office (NRO). The NRO is the county archive for Norfolk. NRO collects and preserves unique archives relating to the history of Norfolk and makes them accessible across the world.

Upcoming Web based Library events

Librarian Live: 1:1 Research Support using zoom. Get advice for using our library and archive collections in a 30 minute zoom with the Trust Librarian.

These are on Tuesdays at 4pm UK time but if that doesn't work for you let us know and we can open up some additional appointments.

Archive how to: A practical guide to the 2nd Air Division digital archive. On behalf of U.K. Libraries Week 2022 – celebrating lifelong learning. Wednesday 5th October, 6pm UK time, via zoom.

American airmen at war--In their own words. Saturday 8th October, 6pm UK time, via zoom. Testimony and memoirs from the 2nd Air Division Archive, giving us a glimpse of WW2 Europe from the perspective of these service personnel. 🕒



MISSION BRIEFING

Heritage League Volunteer Program

by Brian Mahoney, VP for Volunteers

We are encouraged by the interest in various tasks on our 'wish list' this past year. We made a handful of matches of individuals to projects or roles that bring to life the Heritage League's mission of honoring and remembering.

For example, we once again have a 'Sunshine Person' reaching out with birthday greetings and wellness check on our esteemed WWII vets (Honorary Life Members) or communicating our condolences or congratulations with that personal touch we all appreciate. Other notable examples are three new Herald staffers assisting Editor Doug Dovey in enhancing our newsletter.

Your Executive Committee members have worked with Chris Clark and me to generate a rather exhaustive list of the myriad ways your particular interests, skills and availability can really help, and give you the satisfaction of making a difference on something important and rewarding. Here is a sampling of tasks or ongoing roles, ripe for your volunteer contribution:

- make regular posts to our social media site
- find/generate suitable photos and stories for Facebook and Instagram
- find/create content for our YouTube channel
- webpage maintenance— refresh content to structured locations as requested
- web engineering— help us with the architecture of our web page to contain an extensive and searchable library (see Project Report: 'News from the Greatest Generation' in this *Herald's* News Briefs)
- contribute to projects under League auspices:
 - Mighty D8a (create powerful and definitive research tool linking harvested data of all the Eighth's bomber and fighter groups)
 - USAAF Forums webpage relaunch, requiring considerable programming migration

If you are interested, please fill out the Volunteer Form found at: <https://heritageleague.org/volunteer/>. As a recent volunteer pointed out, the form tends to oversimplify one's talents and interests. Let me assure you that it will be followed up with us discussing these via phone or internet. We will candidly answer your questions about the opportunities and strive to engage you in valuable work.

Another subject during such an interview can be your own particular idea for a volunteer task or position that fits Heritage League priorities and mission. May we hear from you? 🕒

Nose Art—The Story of Virgo 1

Heritage Herald Series on Aircraft Nose Art

By Lisa Niehoff



VIRGO's nose art, painted by Phil Brinkman on Charlie Macgill's B-24. Photo: National Archives.

This nose art, loosely associated with its astrological sign, was part of the “Zodiacs” of the 834th Bomb Squadron, 486th Bomb Group at Sudbury air base. Virgo 1, a B-24H #42-52532, was piloted by 1st Lt. Charlie Macgill. The crew had the honor of flying the first combat mission of the 486th Bomb Group and remained together as a crew until about the 20th mission.

The 834th Bomb Squadron had the distinction of having their bombers with a squadron theme depicting the 12 signs of the zodiac. Thus, the squadron became known as the Zodiacs. Eventually, only 11 planes would have their artwork completed. The group was further distinguished by its war record, flying their first 77 missions without a loss, which set an 8th AF record.

In our photo of Virgo 1, the astrological M-like symbol for Virgo (Latin for maiden) is adorned by a fair damsel wearing a chastity belt in reference to her maidenhood or, in other words, a virginal status. She is variously identified as a fertility goddess or the maiden of the harvest. She is pert, pretty and sexy, the opposite of what ancient history depicts as virginal.

The commander of the 834th Bomb Squadron,

Capt. Winfred D. “Jip” Howel, had noticed the artwork of a corporal assigned KP (kitchen duties) while stationed at Davis-Monthan Airbase, Tucson, AZ, and was duly impressed. He arranged to have Cpl. Philip Brinkman, a commercial artist, reassigned to his squadron for a special project. Howel wanted to set his B-24s apart from other airplanes in the Group and came up with a theme of distinctive markings for the 12 planes and the “Fighting Zodiacs” were born. We are not sure if pilot Macgill chose or was assigned Virgo, but he and Brinkman undoubtedly collaborated with their version of the maiden.

Of the 12 astrological signs, Taurus was never completed, as Brinkman started the project three times and each time the aircraft never returned. When the squadron transitioned to B-17s early in July 1944, Lt. Macgill added a Virgo 2 version for his four final missions. He flew a total of 30 combat missions, was discharged from the Army Air Corps in 1945, re-upped in 1947, and retired in 1965. Charlie was 88 years old when he passed away in 2009.

Thanks to: *Friends Journal*, Summer 2017, and the 486th BG website: <https://www.486th.org/BS834/>.



A reproduction of VIRGO painted by Clarence Simonson for pilot Charlie Macgill. It was painted on an engine access panel salvaged from another B-24 to honor Macgill. Photo: *Friends Journal*.



Flashback—Victory in Europe—77 years ago

SUPREME HEADQUARTERS
ALLIED EXPEDITIONARY FORCE
Public Relations Division

8 MAY 1945

VICTORY...ORDER OF THE DAY

Men and women of the Allied Expeditionary Force:

The crusade on which we embarked in the early summer of 1944 has reached its glorious conclusion. It is my especial privilege, in the name of all Nations represented in this Theatre of War, to commend each of you for valiant performance of duty. Though these words are feeble they come from the bottom of a heart overflowing with pride in your loyal service and admiration for you as warriors.

Your accomplishments at sea, in the air, on the ground and in the field of supply, have astonished the world. Even before the final week of the conflict, you had put 5,000,000 of the enemy permanently out of the war. You have taken in stride military tasks so difficult as to be classed by many doubters as impossible. You have confused, defeated and destroyed your savagely fighting foe. On the road to victory you have endured every discomfort and privation and have surmounted every obstacle, ingenuity and desperation could throw in your path. You did not pause until our front was firmly joined up with the great Red Army coming from the East, and other Allied Forces, coming from the South. Full victory in Europe has been attained. Working and fighting together in a single and indestructible partnership you have achieved a perfection in unification of air, ground and naval power that will stand as a model in our time. The route you have travelled through hundreds of miles is marked by the graves of former comrades. From them have been exacted the ultimate sacrifice; blood of many nations—American, British, Canadian, French, Polish and others—has helped to gain the victory. Each of the fallen died as a member of the team to which you belong, bound together by a common love of liberty and a refusal to submit to enslavement. No monument of stone, no memorial of whatever magnitude could so well express our respect and veneration for their sacrifice as would perpetuation of the spirit of comradeship in which they died.

As we celebrate Victory in Europe let us remind ourselves that our common problems of the immediate and distant future can be best solved in the same conceptions of co-operation and devotion to the cause of human freedom as have made this Expeditionary Force such a mighty engine of righteous destruction. Let us have no part in the profitless quarrels in which other men will inevitably engage as to what country, what service, won the European war. Every man, every woman, of every nation here represented, has served according to his or her ability, and the efforts of each have contributed to the outcome. This we shall remember—and in doing so we shall be revering each honored grave and be sending comfort to the loved ones of comrades who could not live to see this day.

DWIGHT D. EISENHOWER

This copy has been transmitted to MOI London and OWI Washington for release to Combined U.S. and Canadian Press and Radio.

8 MAY 45

SHAEF RELEASE No. 1453.

**We appreciate gifts from members inspired by
an individual to whom we are all connected. We wish to thank
members who have contributed to the Heritage League**

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—Folded Wings—

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Harry L. Ahlborn	12/13/21	93rd BG
Laurence Raymond Gulick	3/11/22	466th BG
George A. Washburn	4/19/22	44th BG
Bill J. Jurczyn	Unknown	392nd BG

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





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: smbdye@sbcbglobal.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 _____
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(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 Vet's 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 Honorary Lifetime Members (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) \$ _____

Contribution to Flower Fund for Overseas Cemeteries \$ _____

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

In Memory of (deceased) _____

OR

In Honor of (living person) _____

TOTAL ENCLOSED \$ _____

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

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



April

1942-Doolittle bombing raid on Tokyo. April 18.

1945-Last B-24 lost to combat action in Europe, Black Cat, 467 BG, April 21.

1945-Final 2nd Air Division combat missions in Europe, April 25.

May

1945-V-E Day. End of the war in Europe. May 8.

June

1941-The Army Air Corps becomes U.S. Army Air Forces. June 20.

1944-D-Day. Landing of occupied France takes place at Normandy. 76th anniversary, June 6.

July

1942-First American bomber raid to German occupied France. July 4.

1943-President Roosevelt announced the end of coffee rationing which had limited people to one pound of coffee every five weeks since it began in November 1942. July 28.

August

*1943-Operation Tidal Wave. Attack by B-24s based in Libya on nine oil refineries around Ploesti, Romania. Three groups from the 2nd AD took part. This mission was one of the costliest for the USAAF in the European Theater, with 53 aircraft and 660 air crewmen lost and was not able to curtail overall product output. Medals of Honor were awarded to four 2nd AD airmen. August 1. **

1943-Women Airforce Service Pilots (WASP) were officially formed when the WAFS and WFTD were combined. August 5.

September

1939-Germans begin their invasion of Poland forcing England and France to declare war. September 1.

1943-The 2nd Air Division came into being following the reorganization of the VIII Bomber Command as the 8th Air Force. Existing as a separate entity the 2nd Bomb Wing began operations on 7 Nov. 1942, was reorganized as the 2nd Bomb Division on 13 September 1943 and redesignated the 2nd Air Division in January 1945. The division continued operations in Europe until the end of the war, flying the last combat sortie on April 25, 1945. It flew 95,948 individual aircraft sorties operating the B-24 Liberator from airfields in Norfolk England.

*Within the 2nd Air Division, six groups received presidential citations for outstanding actions. Five airmen received the highest U.S. 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. **

1943-General Eisenhower announced Italy's surrender. September 8.

1944-Operation Market Garden begins with Allied airborne forces landing in Holland. September 17.

October

1943-Large losses by 8th Air Force over Schweinfurt restrict operations for several months. October 14.

* Wikipedia.

** Art Credit: www.roncole.net/collections

the write stuff

book notices
& reviews

Attlebridge Letters Home

By Art Peterson

Self-published hardcover

\$45.00; 8.5"x11.5" size; 399 pp



Intro, Six chapters, each with summary, copies of handwritten letters, V-mail, and official U.S. Government correspondence, NARA records, some newly published photographs and newspaper clippings, article written by the author from 2015 Heritage Herald, no index. Available from

the author at ghost rider44@mchsi.com,
3416 Chelmsford Drive, Spring Grove,
IL 60081

—Reviewed by Beverly Baynes Tomb

WWII as experienced by the newlywed family of Staff Sgt. Robert E. Peterson, Sr., gunner on the B-24 *Black Cat*, the last American bomber shot down over Germany, 21 April 1945, two weeks before V-E Day.

This large and intriguing book is authored by Gold Star son, Art Peterson, whose father was killed in action when Art was only two years old.

The story is told in reproduced letters and V-mail* from Robert Peterson, Sr. to his wife Marie. Later, the tragedy unfolds in an official telegram, and follow-on government correspondence that provides frustratingly few details. A letter to Marie from one of the two survivors offers the deepest sympathy and brought me to tears. The final chapter covers later memorial activity by both Marie and Art.

Be aware that the letters are hand-written in cursive, and the V-mail* letters are physically small. For those old enough to have learned cursive in school, these may be a challenging read. But the story of “ordinary people involved in extraordinary events and making unimaginable sacrifices” as Richard Middleton, Chairman of the 2AD Memorial Trust said, is well worth the effort.

The book also provides an interesting format for *Herald* readers who have or discover treasures from a WWII veteran and want to share them.

As a memorial from Art to his father, all proceeds from the sale of the first printing of the book are being donated to the 466th Visitor Center Project on the former air base in Attlebridge, England.

* In V-mail, a letter was photographed by a special Kodak machine that created microfilm that could be printed in the states to save precious airplane space for war supplies instead of bulky letters, and it was free to servicemen. 📷

Heritage Herald Staff

Published three times a year, the *Heritage Herald* is the official publication of the Heritage League of the Second Air Division (USAAF). The mission is to educate future generations about the sacrifices of our forebearers of the bomb and fighter groups of the 2nd AD in WWII. Membership is open to all those who follow this ideal.

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Summer/Fall 2022 Heritage Calendar

Upcoming Events of 2nd Air Division Interest

May

Seething Airfield Control Tower Museum. Home of the 448 Bomb Group, the Seething Airfield Control Tower Museum opened May 1 for select Sunday visits. Info at: <https://www.448bombgroup.co.uk/>.

93 BG Hardwick Museum opens for the season on the 3rd Sunday of each month. May 15. Info at: www.93rd-bg-museum.org.

2nd Air Division Trust Governors Annual Meeting, Norwich U.K. May 16.

American Library formal dedication ceremony, Norwich U.K. May 18. www.americanlibrary.uk/.

Memorial Day. May 30, 2022. Heritage League wreath placements at ABMC cemeteries. American Battle Monument Cemeteries overseas are open for wreath placement ceremonies this year. Now that the cemeteries are again holding Memorial Day ceremonies, the Heritage League Flower Program will provide wreaths at 13 American Battle Monument Cemeteries overseas, where 2nd Air Division souls rest.

Flags of Fallen ceremony at Mighty 8th Museum, Georgia. May 26-30. Info at: www.mightyeighth.org.

July

Airshow at Old Buckenham. July 30-31. Contact www.oldbuckenhamairshow.com or email: airfield@oldbuck.com.

September

467 BG Association annual reunion. Salt Lake City, Utah. September 21-25. Reunion will include a special B-24 dedication ceremony at Wendover on September 24. Info at: www.467bg.com.

B-24 Dedication at Wendover, UT. Special ceremony to recognize USAAF aircrew lost in state-side training accidents (over 15,500). September 24. Sponsored by the 467th BG Association, a scratch built 1:20 Liberator model will be dedicated at historic Wendover Airfield. Tour the reconstructed airfield as well. Info at: www.467bg.com.

October

Heritage League convention/annual meeting with 93rd BG Association reunion. Boston, Massachusetts October 7-11. Info at Heritage League of the Second Air Division website: <https://heritageleague.org>.

8th Air Force Historical Society Reunion. Washington DC, Crystal Gateway Marriott. October 19-23. Info at: www.mightyeighth.org.

November

American Library. Conference focused on 2nd Air Division history and legacy. November 18 and 19.

General 2022 activities

American Library. Monthly Zoomcasts. The Library conducts their regular 'Coffee Afternoon' the second Saturday of every month on Zoom at 11am U.S. Eastern time [16:00 British time]. Hosted by library assistants Jane Appleton and Linda Sheppard, it is an opportunity for 2nd Air Division families and friends on both sides of the Atlantic to get together. Email for an invite at: americanlibrary@norfolk.gov.uk. Additional library presentations can be found at: www.americanlibrary.uk.

Mighty 8th Air Force Museum weekly webcasts. 'Target for Today' lecture series digging into the history of the Eighth Air Force. It broadcasts each Thursday at 2pm ET via 'Mighty 8th Vimeo' or 'Mighty 8th Facebook.' More info at: Target for Today | National Museum of the Mighty 8th Air Force: mightyeighth.org.

453rd Bombardment Group Museum & 8th AF Heritage Gallery, Old Buckenham, England. Open all year Friday, Saturday and Sunday 10am to 4pm, and by request other days. Contact: James Clarey, Museum Curator, email: curator@453museum.com. Telephone: 01366 386119.

2022 notable occasions

25th anniversary of American Air Museum, Duxford

75th anniversary of USAF

80th anniversary of American forces arrival for European campaign

Also, check the following websites for more information:

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

<https://www.mightyeighth.org>

<https://www.nationalmuseum.af.mil/upcoming/calendar/>

<https://www.8thafhs.org/>

<https://www.abmc.gov/>

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

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