



HERITAGE HERALD

Issue Number 75, September 2022 • www.heritageleague.org
Periodical of the Heritage League of the Second Air Division (USAAF)

Raid on Ploesti—Operation TIDAL WAVE



By Tom Eisele

The American Air Force raid on Ploesti, 79 years ago, was an attempt to destroy the largest source of Axis oil and other petroleum products in a single gargantuan attack. On the American side alone, it involved 178 heavy bombers with crews amounting to 1,765 men, combining three bomb groups (the 93rd, 44th, and 389th) from what would become the 2nd Air Division of the Eighth Air Force, with two bomb groups (the 376th and the 98th) of the Ninth Air Force.

In the actual execution, this grandiose plan failed miserably with a loss rate approaching 50%.

Such failure was not uncommon in 1943 for the fledgling American Army Air Force. Planners also tried for a "knock-out" punch against the German ball-bearing industry in and around Schweinfurt. Twice in 1943—in August and then again in October—the Eighth Air Force sent thousands of its men and hundreds of its machines against this target. Each time, 60 or more aircraft were shot down, with many more damaged, costing hundreds of lives and casualties, with little discernible effect on German production levels.

At Ploesti, a similar sacrifice was made. The raid led to five Medals of Honor *(continued on page 8)*

American Library Dedication Ceremony

By Marybeth Dyer and Beverly Baynes Tomb

Last May, three Heritage League presidents (present and past) traveled to Norwich, England for the long-delayed celebration of the re-opening and dedication of the *American Library*—memorial to the 2nd Air Division, originally scheduled for April 22, 2020. *(continued on page 3)*

Mark Your Calendars—Upcoming Heritage League Conventions

October 7-11, 2022. With the 93rd BG Reunion Boston, MA See pages 24-27

July 23-28, 2023. Return to Norwich with 392nd BG Assoc. See page 6

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

—Marybeth Dyer



Where did the time go! We are headed into Fall and I wonder where the days, months and where did 2022 go? Is time going faster because we are busier than we were before? Perhaps. Speaking on behalf of our Heritage League Executive Committee, we are busy planning events for this

Fall as well as for 2023. We hope you will enjoy our upcoming events and we look forward to seeing you there.

Several of us headed to Norwich last May for the *American Library* re-opening. It was so nice to see our U.K. friends, and the weather was splendid. You can read about it in this *Herald*.

Our Boston Convention together with the 93rd Bomb Group Association will be held this October 7-13. All Heritage League members should have received the registration forms and schedule by U.S. mail. The event will have great speakers, our annual members meeting, educational sessions, and visits to the American Heritage Museum of military history

located on the grounds of the Collings Foundation, plus tours of Boston historic sites. An additional two-day add-on will visit historic revolutionary war locations such as Lexington and Concord, the Paul Revere house and more.

Heritage League will be joining the 392nd Bomb Group in Norwich in 2023. While many daily details need to be worked out, we can announce the dates: July 23-28, 2023, with an optional 4-day add-on excursion to Normandy beaches and cemetery. More information will be printed in the Winter issue of the *Herald* and we will also mail out more information as soon as we can. This promises to be a great trip. Mark your calendars and join us!

I should also note that due to our convention in Boston, the Heritage League will NOT be formally joining the 8th AF Historical Society's October Reunion this year in Washington, DC.

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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On the cover: The low-level B-24 raid on the Romanian oil refineries. This depicts Colonel Johnson's *Suzy-Q* leading the 44th Bomb Group over the Columbia Aquila Refinery. Artwork by Robert Perry: www.rdperry.com.

(American Library Ceremony, continued from page 1)

Our presidential team of Marybeth Dyer, Beverly Baynes Tomb and Irene Hurner were pleased to attend the COVID delayed event in the central lobby of the Norwich Millenium Forum. The 2nd Air Division Memorial Trust Governors and staff planned a marvelous evening with sparkling drinks offered as we arrived, photos on screens from the American Library digital archive, a live band, bouquets of red, white, and blue flowers, delicious canapes and great guest speakers.

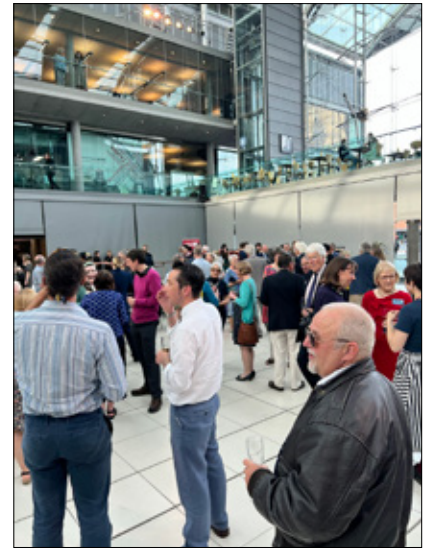


On the steps of the Norwich Millenium Forum, proceeding to the American Library reopening ceremony are key Library supporters. (L-R) Michael Keitch of the Norfolk Suffolk Aviation Museum in Flixton, Laurie Atkins with the local chapter of Daughters of the American Revolution, Steve Dyer with President Marybeth Dyer and Irene Hurner, past president. Photo: Marybeth Dyer.

Richard Middleton, Chairman of the Memorial Trust of the 2nd Air Division, served as the Master of Ceremony. The highlight of the evening for many of the attendees was guest appearances via Zoom from three of our 2nd Air Division veterans: Earl Wassom (466th) from Kentucky, Bob Birmingham (458th) from Wisconsin, and Allan Hallett (389th) from Massachusetts, appearing on large video screens beside the stage. Mr. Middleton interviewed each

of the Veterans, getting their thoughts on their library, and what it means to them. It was delightful to launch the celebration with the virtual visits from our Veterans.

Richard also shared a brief history of the 2nd Air Memorial Division Library from its start in 1963 as the American Room in the Norwich Central Library, to the fire that destroyed the library in 1994, and its rebirth in 2001 as the 2nd Air Division Memorial Library in the Norfolk County Council's Millenium Library in the Forum. The goal of the £400,000 refurbishment project begun in 2019 and celebrated at this event was to keep the library "relevant,



Attendees awaiting the ceremony in the voluminous hall of the Norwich Forum. In the foreground is our special "forward located" Heritage League action officer, Colin Mann. Photo: Marybeth Dyer.

inspirational and a guiding influence, in line with the aims the veterans laid down 77 years ago."

Research showed that the name "2nd Air Division Memorial Library" didn't resonate with users and rebranding became part of the project. The full name of the library is American Library, Memorial to the 2nd Air Division, 8th Air Force, United States Army Air Forces. In day-to-day usage, it is the American Library.

Honored speakers were Counsellor Margaret Dewsbury, Cabinet Member for Communities and Partnerships at Norfolk County Council, and Colonel Charles Metrolis, U.S. Air Attaché to the U.K., from the U.S. Embassy who told the



The official ceremony presided by (L) Richard Middleton, Chairman of the 2AD Memorial Trust, with speakers Counsellor Margaret Dewsbury, Cabinet Member from Norfolk County Council; and Colonel Charles Metrolis, U.S. Air Attaché from the U.S. Embassy. Photo: BB Tomb.

Veterans Guest Appearance



Our three special 2nd Air Division veterans who joined the ceremony via Zoom webcast. (From left) Earl Wassom (466th), Bob Birmingham (458th), and Allan Hallett (389th). Photo: Marybeth Dyer.

audience that the U.S. Ambassador was slated for the event but had not yet been formally appointed.

After the speeches, attendees had the opportunity to tour the new *American Library*. It was a special night and we were all excited to visit with our British friends and catch up after such a long time away.



Colonel Metrolis, U.S. Air Attaché from the American Embassy addresses the crowd on behalf of the American Ambassador. Photo: Beverly Tomb.

The event was live-streamed on YouTube and can still be viewed at this link: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9to0lt_dyws. Note: The video begins with WWII photos and music until the ceremony itself starts at 38min:38sec. 🎧



Past Heritage League president Irene Hurner with library assistant Jane Appleton enjoying refreshments while awaiting the ceremony. Jane hosts the library's monthly webcast Zoom coffee meeting the second Saturday of each month. Photo: Marybeth Dyer.



Delicious canapés and beverages were served at the ceremony. Photo: Beverly Tomb.

Our Trip to Norwich

By Marybeth Dyer, Heritage League President

It has been a long time since we have seen our special friends in Norwich. Several of our Heritage League Board Members: Beverly Tomb (past president and Memorial Trust Governor), Irene Hurner (past president) and my husband Steven and I, made the trip to the U.K. for the American Library re-opening (formerly the 2nd Air Division Memorial Library) in Norwich in May. We attended the 2nd Air Division Memorial Trust Governors Meeting where we presented a check on behalf of the Heritage League to Trust Chairman Richard Middleton.

It was a busy five days. We visited Jim and Tricia Clarey at Old Buckenham airfield (453rd Bomb Group). Then we visited locations for our upcoming

2023 Heritage League Convention, looking for the perfect place for our banquet. Thank you, Colin Mann for driving us around Norwich. We also had time to explore the Norfolk and Suffolk Aviation Museum.

We could not leave the U.K. without having

High Tea at the Maids Head with Laurie Atkins. And of course, attending the lovely ceremony and reception at the Norwich Forum for the American Library re-opening. We were honored to have three Veterans join us by Zoom. Earl Wassom (466th), Allan Hallett (389th) and Bob Birmingham (458th). It was the highlight of the evening.

We all went home looking forward to seeing everyone in Britain again next year. 🇬🇧



Heritage League President Marybeth Dyer presents the annual Heritage League contribution to 2nd Air Division Memorial Trust Chairman Richard Middleton during the meeting of the Trust Governors. Photo: Beverly Tomb.



High Tea in the wisteria adorned atrium at the Maids Head. Steve Dyer, Beverly Baynes Tomb, Laurie Atkins, and Irene Hurner are prepared to experience the tradition before they depart Britain. Photo: Marybeth Dyer.



Norwich Cathedral. Marybeth and Steve Dyer with Irene Hurner on a chilly day before the heat waves of the summer of 2022 set in. This will be the location of the welcome reception on the first day of the Convention next summer. Photo: Beverly Tomb.

Back to Norwich Next Summer!

Heritage League 2023 Convention

The date for the 2023 Convention at Norwich is set. Mark your calendars for July 23-28. With this summer date, we hope our 3rd and 4th generations (our kids and grandkids) can join us. We are excited that the 392nd Bomb Group Association is joining us in the planning, and we look forward to our joint involvement. Also, we have planned a great optional add-on excursion to Normandy for July 29-August 2, following our Britain schedule.

Five days are planned for the Norwich area which will include an opening reception, airbase visits, annual members meeting, and banquet. Lodging will be at the Maid's Head Hotel, Norwich, and our banquet will be at Dunston Hall. The visit concludes with a trip to London and special ceremony for the 2nd Air Division at the American Chapel in St Paul's Cathedral.

A four-day add-on trip to D-Day Normandy will depart London via special bus transit on the ferry direct to Normandy. Visits are planned to the American, British, Canadian, and German cemeteries in this area, landing beaches, and villages associated with D-Day. The convention committee has arranged a dedicated guide to accompany us for the entire special event.

Details are still being finalized and registration forms will be mailed to members in the Fall and printed in the next *Heritage Herald*. A \$100 deposit will be required before the final registration deadline later in the winter. 🐼



As in the past, the Maids Head Hotel will host us next July in Norwich. Convention schedule details will be mailed to members this Fall and printed in the next *Herald*. Photo: Brian Mahoney.



St Paul's Cathedral, on the final day. Photo: courtesy St Paul's.



Dunston Hall will be the location for the Heritage League Banquet next July 2023. Photo: M.B. Dyer.

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. 🇺🇸



Most senior of this group of our Birthday Veterans, Havey Naber, waist gunner, 392nd BG at Wendling, is going strong and hits 104 this November. Wow! Photo: Doug Dovey.



Clair Rowe a tail gunner from 448th BG at Seething marks his 102nd year this October. Photo: Lynelle Rowe.



Happy in his Savannah reunion hat, Don O'Reilly, military policeman with the 305th, 491st, and 44th Bomb Groups. This November, he turns 101. Photo: Doug Dovey.



93th Bomb Group veteran Harl Burnell reaches the 100 year mark this September. Photo: Mary Evans.



453rd BG pilot Russell Neatrou reaches the 100 year mark this October. Photo: Doug Dovey.



466th BG veteran Earl Wassom, always beaming, and inspirational when pressed into Chaplin duties by his groups: Heritage League, 8AFHS, and 466 BG. He celebrates his 99 years young this September. Photo: Doug Dovey.



466th BG pilot Jim Lorenz, will celebrate 99 years this December. Photo: Mary Lorenz.



Bob Birmingham, a nose gunner/bomb toggler from the 458th BG at Horsham St Faith. Looking sharp in his bomber jacket, he marks 97 years this December. Photo: Jim Birmingham.

Whatever you guys are doing—keep it up!

(Operation TIDAL WAVE, continued from page 1)

being awarded—more than any other air operation during World War II—and countless awards of the Distinguished Service Cross and other medals.

Courage was not wanting. Still, although the sacrifices were made, the total adverse impact on the Axis forces and oil production at Ploesti was minimal.

In hindsight, it must be admitted that there was method to the madness of the American planners of Operation TIDAL WAVE.

Objective: Destroy Axis Oil Production

In World War II, the Nazi war machine ran on oil. Whether in the form of diesel, gasoline, aviation fuel, naval bunker oil—the key ingredient to grease the wheels of that machine was oil. Germany lacked vast oil resources, so where did the Germans get their oil? From central Europe in general and particularly from Romania.

Once the Second World War began and Romania joined Hitler in the Axis grouping, the Romanian oil fields produced 30-35% of the oil resources for the entire Axis war machine. At that time, those oil facilities were central to every mechanized activity that the Axis armed forces undertook then.

Of all the oil fields feeding the German war machine, the Romanian oil fields at Ploesti were, by far, their single largest source of oil. "By the late 1930s Ploesti was surrounded by thirteen major refineries, many smaller complexes, and the infrastructure to support all of them." [Jay Stout, *Fortress Ploesti* (Casemate, 2003), p. 3.] The entire complex at Ploesti produced 10 million tons of oil per year, including having the ability to produce high-grade aviation fuel.

The Allies knew all this. If the Allies could cut off the German access to Ploesti oil, the Allied chances of ending World War II successfully would be greatly enhanced. In the inner circles of the U.S. Army Air Force, a plan gradually developed. It directed the Eighth Air Force and the incipient Ninth Air Force to pool their resources and to have their combined forces attempt a 2400-mile round-trip bombing raid on Ploesti from airfields located in North Africa. This operation was eventually called TIDAL WAVE.

The plan was based on secrecy and surprise. Secrecy, in that radio transmissions between the planes were strictly forbidden. Once airborne, the airmen were not to speak on their intercoms or radios at all. In addition, the element of surprise would be gained (it was thought) by the planes flying *beneath* the German radar, howling along at low levels, just off the deck.

This was not intended as a suicidal mission. The intelligence gathered by Allied forces early in the war indicated that the air defenses around the Ploesti oil fields were relatively light. *If* the men were disciplined enough to stay off their radios, and *if* the men stayed together in formation until it was time to break apart and zoom in toward their targets, then the planners calculated that the German air defenses could be overwhelmed, and the American attackers could escape almost before the Axis defenders knew what hit them.

Attack force: three of the five were future 2nd Air Division Groups

Only the B-24 Liberator had the range to make the round-trip attack – and even then, the planes would require extra gas tanks for the flight. Thus, it came about that five bomb groups, equipped with B-24Ds, drawn



B-24s practice low-level formation flying against mock targets in the desert near Benghazi, Libya, in July 1943. AAF photo.

from the Eighth and Ninth Air Forces, were challenged with the task of eliminating (or down-grading) the ability of the Ploesti oil fields in Romania to supply German war needs for fuel.

Five bomb groups, 178 planes strong, were involved. Their plan of attack (based on a quaint "red-white-and-blue" pattern or layout) was as follows:

- There were 29 planes from the 376th Bomb Group (the "Liberandos," led by Colonel Keith K. Compton). This group would lead the bombing column. Its target was the large Romana Americana oil complex, eastern-most of the targeted areas. ["White One"]
- Second in the formation would be the 93rd BG ("Ted Timberlake's Travelling Circus"), comprising 39 B-24Ds led by LT. Colonel Addison Baker, whose co-pilot was Major John L. Jerstad. This group would split into two elements, one element heading to the Concordia Vega facilities ["White Two"]; the other element, led by Majors George Brown and Ramsay Potts, would attack the Standard Petrol Block and the Unirea Speranza refineries ["White Three"].
- Next, in the middle of the formation, would be the 98th BG (the "Pyramiders," led by Colonel John [Killer] Kane), which comprised the most aircraft of any participating bomb group. They were 47 planes strong, and their target was to attack the Astra Romana and the Unirea Orion refineries. ["White Four"]
- Then, fourth, would be 37 bombers from the 44th BG (the "Flying Eight Balls," led by Colonel Leon Johnson). As with the 93rd BG, the 44th BG would split into two elements, one element attacking the Colombia Acquilla refinery ["White Five"], while the other element, led by LT. Colonel James Posey, would separate and strike the Romanian Creditul Minier operation in Brazi ["Blue"], which was geographically separate from the Ploesti area.



A long mission. Over 1350 miles to the target, even the long-range B-24 needed supplemental fuel tanks loaded in the bomb bay. The formation had to climb to clear the mountains in Albania. Lasting over 15 hours, crews didn't return to Benghazi until after 10pm. By Zaur Eylanbekov, courtesy of *Air Force Magazine*, February 2015.

Fifth and final in the column of bombers would be 26 planes from the 389th BG (the "Sky Scorpions," led by Colonel Jack Wood). This group would also separate from the main column of bombers and attack the Steaua Romana refinery at Campina, again, some miles distant from the Ploesti area. ["Red"]

Although the five bomb groups would fly in this sequence while enroute to the targets, it should be noted that the plan called for the column of bombers to split up when they approached the area and, as much as humanly possible, the five groups were tasked with attacking their respective targets simultaneously.

This way, the planners thought, the airmen would achieve the added value of surprise and distraction, presenting an overwhelming array of fast-moving targets for the German and Romanian air defense forces. In the

confusion, with a dispersion of attacking planes and consequent disarray for the Germans, it was hoped that the defenders would panic and lose their focus.

The actual event would not work out as planned. Still, without that foreknowledge, yet perhaps with some foreboding, the airmen practiced assiduously. They flew low level practice missions across the North African desert, coming in toward their respective targets and practicing bombing of rough-and-ready sand models of the Ploesti oil facilities. As much as possible, the crews were made ready for their mission.

The Mission: Heading Out

On August 1, 1943, across numerous American airfields in the North African desert, the B-24Ds warmed up and took off, heading over the Mediterranean Sea toward Romania and the oil fields of Ploesti. Almost immediately, the mission went awry. In the blinding sandstorm whipped up by the revving engines of 178 four-engine heavy bombers, one plane (called *Kickapoo*) had engine trouble, or failure, and it crashed attempting to return to base.

Then, over the Mediterranean, one of the lead ships in the first group, the 376th BG, a plane called *Wongo-Wongo*, suddenly began to behave strangely. It flew erratically, climbing and diving, until it abruptly spun into the sea and disappeared beneath the waves. There were no survivors (and because of the prohibition of radio transmission, no calls or distress messages had been received from the crew of the stricken plane).

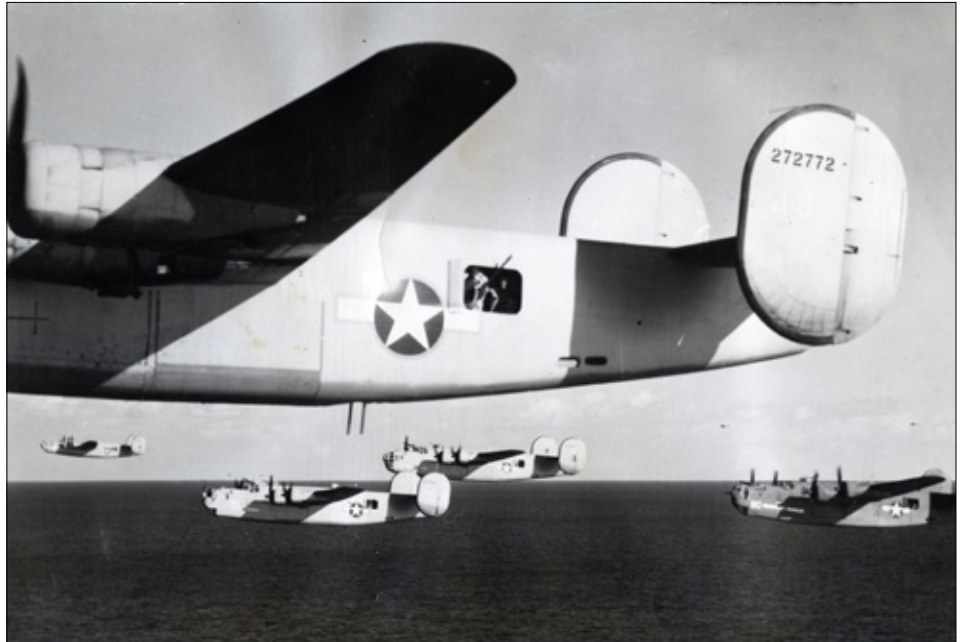
It has been said (in a number of subsequent studies of TIDAL WAVE) that the lead navigator was in *Wongo-Wongo*. The claim is then made that this crash eliminated the guidance of that lead navigator from the remainder of the mission. This claim has been disputed, however, and it now appears settled in the literature that the lead navigator for this mission was in fact riding in a different plane. [See Stout, *Fortress Ploesti*, pp. 42-44.]

Nonetheless, this incident proved to be distressing for the airmen who witnessed it. And it seems to have led to a reduction of unit cohesion—because at least one plane then left the formation and flew low over the Mediterranean, searching for remnants of the plane wreck and any sign of survivors.

Even before having crossed the Mediterranean, the formation of bombers was suffering attrition. Eventually, at least 10 planes (because of excessive fuel consumption, or due to mechanical problems) would leave the formation prematurely and return to base.

Unknown to the remaining American flyers, there was an additional important development. First, some German spotters on the island of Corfu, and then a German listening post in Greece, monitored Allied air activity. Both units picked up indications of this extensive Allied air fleet launching from North Africa heading toward central Europe. While the Germans could not know at that early time the exact target for this vast American air force, there were only a few Axis targets worthy of such a massing of American bombers, and Ploesti was first among them. The German units promptly alerted the defenders of the Ploesti oil fields.

Before the B-24Ds had even crossed the coast of southern Europe, secrecy was lost, and so too was surprise. As the long column of heavy bombers crossed the coastline and began climbing above mountain ranges that easily rose 9,000-10,000 feet and more in height, clouds clinging to those mountains now began to enshroud the bomber column. To give adequate cushion while flying over mountains shrouded in clouds, the bombers climbed



The formation had to stay VERY low enroute to avoid detection by enemy radar. Unfortunately, the Germans found out they were coming. AAF photo.

to 15,000 feet. Cohesion again became a casualty. Bombers became separated in the clouds, and the leading two bomb groups—the 376th BG and the 93rd BG—surged ahead of the trailing three bomb groups in the column.

Partly due to the surge of power and speed, with planes climbing mountains, then diving down ridges and hills, the individual planes and the five bomb groups became more and more separated. As the two groups in the lead, the 376th Bomb Group and the 93rd Bomb Group, came down off the mountain slopes, their air speed naturally accelerated, and they outdistanced the remaining three bomb groups. Of course, the intermittent clouds added to the loss of cohesion—and radio transmissions to tighten back up the bombing column were not permitted, according to the plan orders.

Things were falling apart. Secrecy and surprise had already been lost, perhaps unknown to the flyers. Chaotic weather conditions and natural forces were pushing, then pulling the extended bomber column ever farther apart. Pilots may have assumed they had lost the element of surprise and were already on enemy radar.

More chaos would ensue.

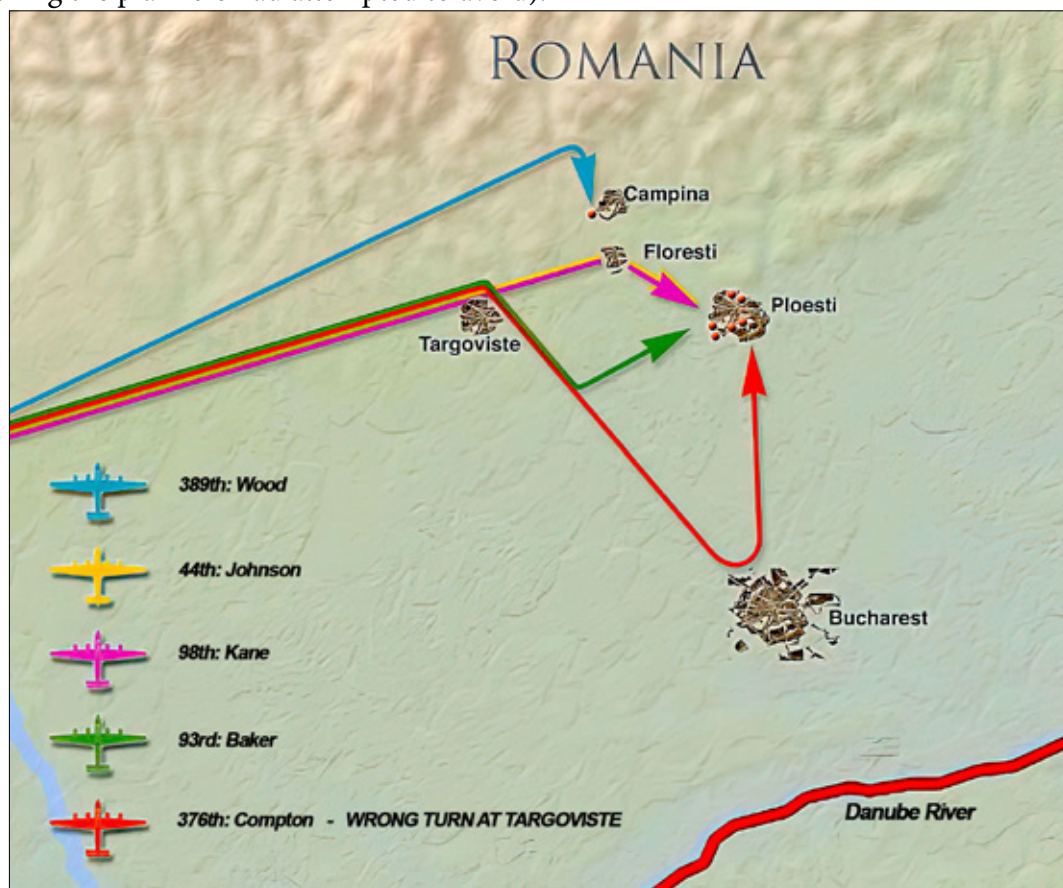
Final Headings to the Target

The plan of attack called for the bombing formation to follow an easterly course, using the Romanian towns of Pitesti, Targovisti, and Floresti as navigational checkpoints along the way. For some reason, still inexplicable (other than the confusions naturally incumbent while flying at 190 miles per hour at low altitude), the lead plane in the 376th BG turned early, at Targovisti, rather than Floresti. Flying the lead plane was Colonel K.K. Compton, with General Ent riding along as an observer. (From later reports, it appears that they made the wrong turn and then overrode the objections from their navigator.)

This inadvertent turn put the leading portion of the formation on course to Bucharest, southeast of the Ploesti oil fields (not on the attack plan). This put the entire two Groups leading the bomber formation between a rock and a hard place, as there were significant Axis air defense units near Bucharest, as well as those surrounding Ploesti – and now the front end of the bomber column was threading its way smack in between both air defense units and installations (something the planners had attempted to avoid).

The immediate following group, 93rd BG, initially preserved formation integrity and stuck to the tail of the 376th BG. Yet, very quickly, the pilots and navigators in the 93rd BG realized the inadvertent wrong turn had been made. First reluctantly, and then more strenuously, the men of the 93rd BG broke radio silence. Their alarm-calls to the lead Group went unheeded. After a short time, while the 376th BG continued to head in the wrong direction, southeast toward Bucharest, the lead ship for the 93rd BG, broke ranks and headed north toward Ploesti.

The 93rd's lead pilot and co-pilot were LT. Colonel Addison Baker and

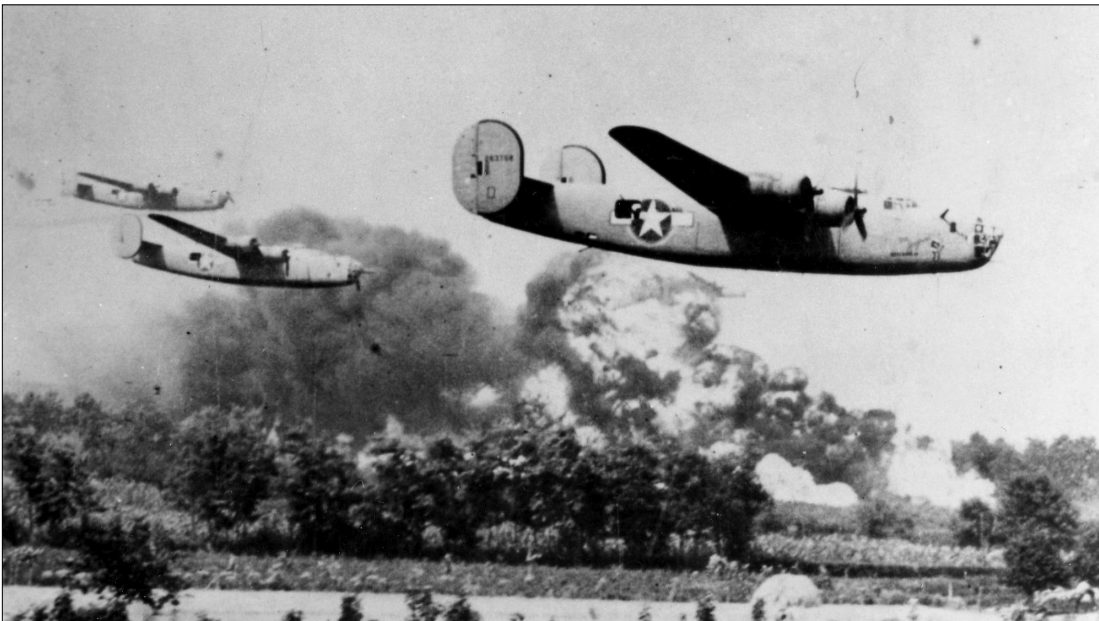


Attack tracks depict the wrong turn to the South by mission lead, COL Compton's 375th Group along with 93rd BG which corrected, and also the regular attack axes of the other groups. Courtesy of *Air Force Magazine*, February 2015

Major John Jerstad in a B-24 named *Hell's Wench*. Being south of their intended approach point, the lead plane and the rest of the 93rd BG (along with a few strays from the leading group, the 376th) turned north. But now they were out of position, and somewhat out of sequence, according to the initial plan.

Doing the best that they could do under the circumstances, they improvised. As the bombers in the 93rd BG broke away from the lead bomb group and flew north, the target that became most accessible to this unit (led by Baker and Jerstad) was not their assigned target, "White Two," but rather the "White Five" target, the Columbia Aquila refinery intended for the 44th BG.

This latter facility is the target that the 93rd BG then chose to attack. The bombers came under withering fire from the numerous anti-aircraft batteries in the Ploesti area. It is said that some ack-ack batteries located in the surrounding hills actually had to depress their gun barrels in order to track the low-flying Liberators. The B-24s were so close to the deck that several surviving bombers returned to base with cornstalks and other vegetation stuck in their undercarriage and bomb-bay doors! Their low altitude approach—which was supposed to give the raiders the element of surprise—merely rendered the planes vulnerable to every type and caliber of gun on the ground. The fire was intense and deadly.



Working hard to maintain their formation after the attack run, this formation egresses the target area. AAF photo.

The 93rd BG made its way through this twisting, burning cauldron of death, but with heavy losses. Their losses included LT. COL. Addison Baker and

MAJ. John Jerstad in the lead plane, *Hell's Wench*, which crashed with no survivors. For their intrepid leadership, refusing to bail out or to leave the attack, despite being mortally wounded, both Addison Baker and John Jerstad received posthumous Medals of Honor.

The trailing three bomb groups—the 98th, the 44th, and the 389th—took a slightly different course of attack. While they were 15-20 minutes behind the two lead groups, these three bomb groups did not make the same mistake as the lead group; they turned at the proper third navigational town and bored in from the northwest. Simultaneously, the 389th BG split off from the other two groups and headed toward its separate target at Campina.

However, for the 98th and 44th BGs, many of their targets were now obscured with the smoke from the fires caused by the earlier attack of the 93rd BG. (The bulk of the planes in the 376th BG, purportedly the lead Group, ended up missing the Ploesti targets altogether, and they ended up selecting targets of opportunity in the Ploesti-Bucharest vicinity.)

The 98th BG and 44th BG hit their assigned targets in the White Four, White Five, and Blue target areas, albeit with all the confusion and chaos generated by the melee of twisting, turning planes in the attacking and defending forces.

Men fought desperately to reach their targets, to hit their targets, and to get back to base. Some survived, but many did not.



This classic photo of the Ploesti attack over the Astra Romana refinery has been retouched and colorized by the *Herald* to portray the scene as pilot LT. Robert Sternfels (98th BG) flew it in *Sandman*; raising his right wing to clear the smokestacks. The original **B&W AAF** photo was taken via a mirrored installed camera depicting an opposite arrangement. Turbulence from delayed action bombs, dropped by the previous wave of B-24s on opposite headings, rocks the aircraft. Some crews received burns from the fireballs. AAF photo.

Return to Base

The return flight as planned was to retrace their steps (roughly speaking), back over the mountains and over Greece to the protection of the Mediterranean. COL. Compton in the 376th BG (the "Liberandos") was the first group to return, mostly along this route; trailing 70 miles behind was the fifth and final group, COL. Woods' "Sky Scorpions" of the 389th BG. Scattered within this bomber stream were remnants of the 93rd, the 44th, and the 98th (some groups more intact than others).

I will not recount details of the mighty exertions of the surviving crews and planes to return to their bases in Libya. Suffice to say that the remaining B-24s on their return trip were set upon by Axis fighters. Some planes were shot down; some were lost in the clouds (or the fog of war); and some simply ran out of fuel, crashing into the land or

the sea. Some ships made it to other countries (mostly Turkey), where their crews were interned. Additional B-24s made it to allied airbases in Cyprus, in Sicily, and in Malta. It appears that approximately 30 planes escaped enemy skies, and returned to friendly (or neutral) skies, albeit still failing to return to their original bases in Libya.

Aftermath of the Mission

All in all, the bombing raid accomplished much less than the Allies expected. True, there was a 40% reduction of oil production and refining in the weeks and months that followed the raid. Thereafter, the Ploesti oil fields and refining complex roared back to life, soon producing more oil and oil-products than the Ploesti complex had been producing prior to the August 1st attack.

Here are some of the details of the bombing, group-by-group:

- The bulk of the planes in the lead group, the 376th BG, ended up missing Ploesti entirely; at best, they only bombed railway yards and other opportunistic targets.
- The 93rd BG (and a few stragglers from the 376th) corrected the navigational error in time to attack Ploesti, albeit from an opposite southerly direction.
- The 98th BG and 44th BG hit most of their targets, although some of those same targets had already been attacked from the milling mob of B-24s in the two lead sections.
- The fifth and final group, the 389th, made another initial navigational error of its own, but then corrected the error in time to bomb the Campina works, as originally planned.



Post attack egress. Throttles to the stops! *Suzy-Q* and wingman. After pressing through delayed bomb blasts, fire plumes and severe turbulence, artist Robert Taylor dramatically portrays the drama of battle-damaged B-24s escaping the target area. Courtesy Robert Taylor art, www.aces-high.com.

50 Percent Loss Rate

Essentially, since both surprise and synchronization-of-attack were lost, the Raid was much less effective than hoped for, and its loss-rate was horrendous.

In all, 178 B-24s took off on Operation TIDAL WAVE, and it is believed that 167 of those heavy bombers reached the target area around Ploesti. The enemy shot down 54 bombers over the target, and many others were lost in trying to return to their North African bases. By most counts, only 88 B-24s eventually returned to Benghazi, out of a total of 178 planes that began the mission – a staggering loss rate of 50%.

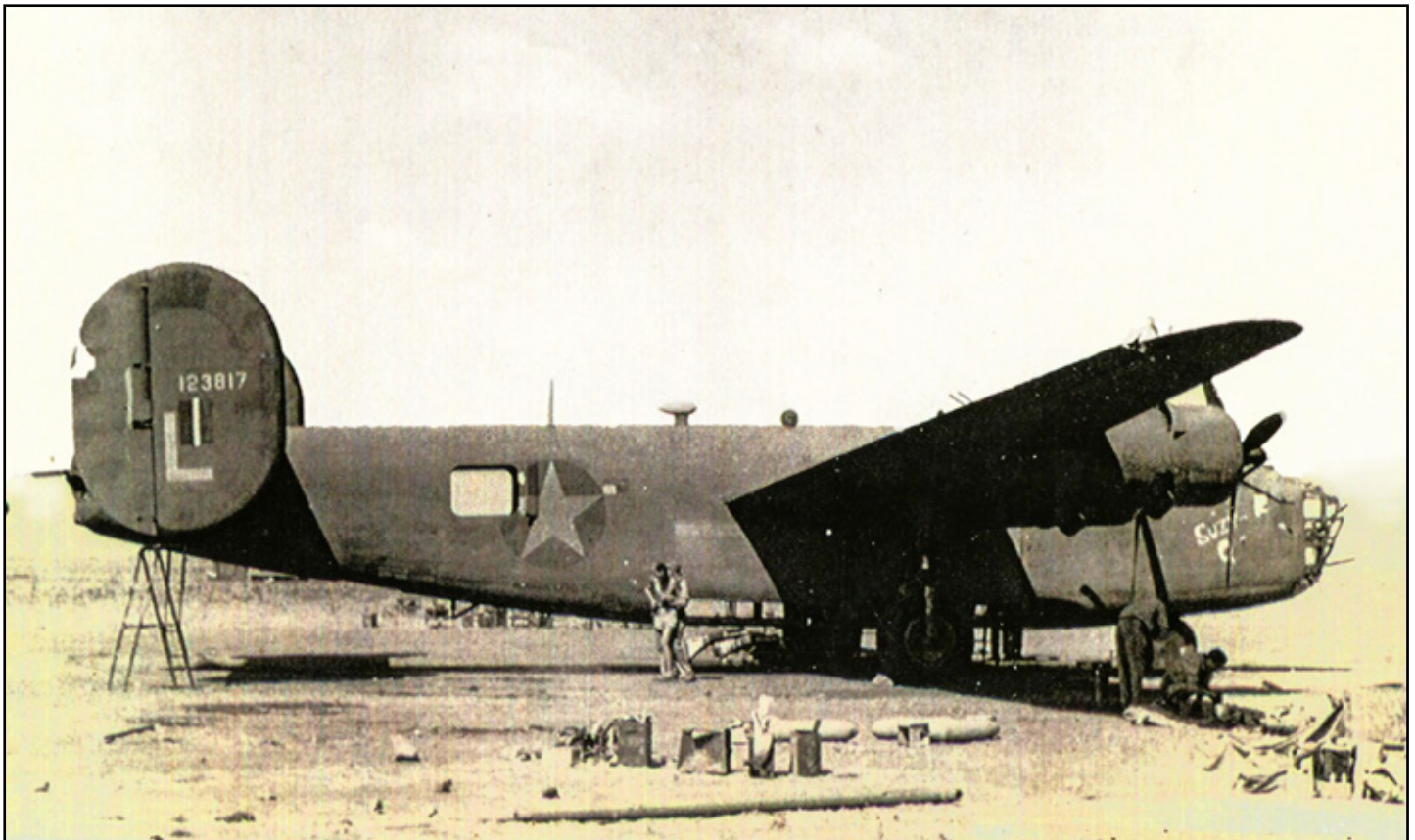
Lessons learned

Was the Ploesti Raid a failure? Candidly, the answer seems to be, *Yes*. History certainly has judged Operation TIDAL WAVE a failure; and many harsh judgments on the operation planners and the formation leaders have been expressed and reasonably defended. Let's look more closely at some specific lessons learned from the failures associated with this operation:

- Faulty assumptions. The planners assumed the planes could achieve surprise by flying low and staying radio silent. Yet the radio silence made it impossible to redress basic issues of formation integrity, and some unforeseen events, such as the very earlier loss of *Wongo-Wongo* which broke unit cohesion. The later stringing-out of the long bomber stream by clearing the mountains also went unaddressed, while radio silence was maintained. Despite their best efforts, the pilots and planes were noticed early in the operation by German listening posts and observers. So, the secrecy and surprise so sought after by the planners were illusory at best. In addition, the low-level attack exposed the B-24s to saturated ground-fire from any weapon (even rifles) that the enemy possessed.

- Faulty intelligence. The planners believed they knew that the Axis defenses in the Ploesti area were minimal, or at least much less significant than those found within Nazi Germany itself. They were wrong, having been misled by the earlier HALPRO mission of the Americans, and some earlier bombing efforts effected by the Russians against Ploesti from the East. The Germans realized, in the light of those earlier bombing efforts, that the Allies were coming after Ploesti. Accordingly, the Axis air defenses were improved and hardened by the Germans to a point where they were the single best air defenses in the Axis, outside of Germany proper.
- Faulty execution. The airmen made mistakes, or misjudgments, in executing the plan. (1) Unit cohesion was threatened when one plane left the formation to search for survivors from the mystifying crash of *Wongo-Wongo*, and additional ships turned back prematurely. (2) Additional harm came from the separation of the five bomb groups going over the mountain ranges; and their maintaining radio silence exacerbated the problem. The problem was foreseeable, but no one took charge and addressed it. During the mission, it probably was too late to address it. (3) The lead plane in the 376th BG turning at the wrong point, missing its initial run-in point, was devastating to the mission results and to the survival of the airmen involved.

The Ploesti Raid was a calculated risk gone terribly wrong. And yet, especially in war, we often learn only on a trial-and-error basis, by stretching ourselves, trying to do the improbable. How do we, today, measure the costs? I doubt that anyone has a satisfying answer for that conundrum. 🕊



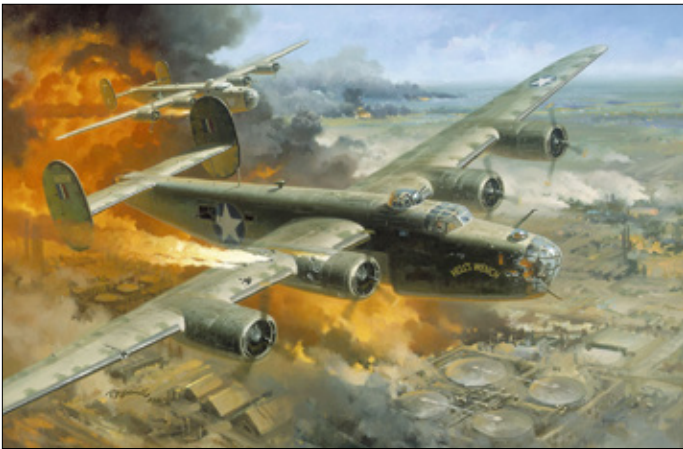
Colonel Johnson's *Suzy-Q* after the mission with char-blackened fuselage and flak holes in the tail and wing. Several flak rounds flew through the cockpit area: fortunately missing the crew and not exploding. Photo: Pete Frissele 44BG collection.

Ploesti—Merit and Medals

By Tom Eisele

This mission resulted in the unparalleled award of five Medals of Honor (MOH) with four awarded to air-men of the soon-to-be formed 2nd Air Division. Here is a look at the actions of the five bomb groups in terms of the attacks, the mission leaders, and the recognition of their leadership and ingenuity.

Leading the entire bomber stream were the "Liberandos" of the 376th BG of the Ninth Air Force. Colonel Keith K. Compton flew in *Teggie Ann*, the lead ship of the Liberandos, with General Uzal Ent joining Compton's crew as the mission commander. Colonel Compton received the Distinguished Service Cross for his leadership efforts, but he did not receive a Medal of Honor. In this regard, it must be remembered that COL. Compton made the crucial mistake of turning too early and leading the entire group toward Bucharest, instead of Ploesti. In addition, Compton and Ent agreed to allow their then-disoriented ships to bomb "targets of opportunity," thus missing their assigned target altogether.



Baker/Jerstad's *Hell's Wench*. Art image by Roy Grinnell.

The immediately following group was the 93rd BG, from the Eighth Air Force, nicknamed "Ted Timberlake's Travelling Circus," in affectionate regard for its original commanding officer. The front element of the 93rd BG was led by . Colonel Addison Baker and Major John Jerstad in a B-24 named *Hell's Wench*. The rear element of the 93rd BG was led by Major Ramsay Potts in *The Duchess* and by Major George Brown flying in *Queenie*. Addison Baker and John Jerstad were to take their element toward target "White Two," while Majors Potts and Brown were supposed to take their element toward target "White Three." This sequence, however, is not how the actual attack worked out.

Realizing the navigational error made by

Colonel Compton in the 376th BG, Addison Baker and John Jerstad in the lead element of the 93rd BG attempted to contact Compton about his error and to correct the course of the bomber stream. When their efforts failed, however, they independently changed course for their bomber element and began flying north toward Ploesti. The closest target for them to hit, from this unplanned direction, was "White Five" (the Columbia Acquila refinery).

Baker and Jerstad led their section through the cauldron of fire and continued in the lead even after jettisoning



LT. COL Baker, 93BG. AAF photo

their bombs. In the end, although their plane attempted to climb to allow crew members to bail out, ultimately, *Hell's Wench* crashed and there were no survivors. Both men were awarded Medal of Honor (MOH) for their heroism in correctly re-routing the bomber stream and then pressing the attack. (It is reported that some mem-



MAJ Jerstad, 93BG. AAF photo.

the heroic actions of Baker and Jerstad did not prevail.)

The rear element of the 93rd BG (led by Majors Potts and Brown) also broke away from COL. Compton's errant lead, and they managed to bomb targets in both "White Four" and "White Five" target areas. This inspired flexibility showed, again, the American daring and ingenuity under the most extreme adverse

bers of the MOH review board objected, initially, to their receiving the MOH, on the specious grounds that Baker and Jerstad had disobeyed orders in breaking radio silence and in failing to follow COL. Compton's errant lead. I am happy to note that, in the end, this incredibly literal and legalistic perspective on

conditions. Majors Potts and Brown survived the mission, bringing their planes back to base in Libya, and both of them received Distinguished Service Crosses.

As I mention in the Ploesti attack story, during the long flight, the forward portion of the bomber stream—comprising the 376th BG and the 93rd BG—became separated from the trailing three Bomb Groups. This inadvertency became a virtue, however, since the third and fourth Bomb Groups—the 98th BG from the Ninth Air Force and the 44th BG from the 8th Air Force—avoided the errant early turn taken by COL. Compton.

Colonel John "Killer" Kane, leading the 98th BG in *Hail Columbia*, turned correctly at Floresti, the third initial point, and their planes bored in toward the assigned target, "White Four," from the pre-planned direction. Clouds of smoke obscured their vision due to the re-routed prior attack from the 93rd BG. In addition, the 93rd BG planes coming from the south were on a collision course with the planes of the 98th BG and 44th BG; both groups heading in from the north. B-24s were now flying in numerous directions and trajectories, as were German and Romanian fighters. The attacking forces and the defending planes descended into a chaotic scrum.

Doing the best that they could under such difficult conditions, both Colonels Kane and Leon Johnson (who led the fourth Bomb Group, the 44th BG in his plane, *Suzy-Q*) managed to bomb their assigned targets, "White Four" and "White Five," respectively, despite the most trying

conditions imaginable. Both Kane and Johnson received Medals of Honor recognizing their undaunted efforts to pursue their aims unerringly, despite the chaos and the severe anti-aircraft fire directed against their two bomb groups.

Kane and his crew survived the crash-landing of their



COL Johnson, 44BG wearing his Medal of Honor. AAF photo

B-24 in Cyprus, while COL. Johnson, in his char-blackened *Suzy-Q*, managed to return to base in North Africa.



COL Johnson's *Suzy-Q* was shot down 15 days after Ploesti. Art image by Robert D. Perry.

Meanwhile, LT. Colonel James Posey led the rear element or echelon of the 44th BG against its target, "Blue," with very good bombing results, despite the maelstrom of metal through which they flew. Posey, who was flying in a B-24, *Victory Ship*, piloted by Captain John Diehl, received a Distinguished Service Cross for his superb leadership.

The fifth and final Bomb Group, the 389th BG from the 8th Air Force, was initially misdirected in attacking its separate target near Campina, yet it too fought back and eventually bored in against its assigned target, "Red." The leader was Colonel Jack W. Wood, and he received a Distinguished Service Cross for this mission. The group that COL. Wood was leading, the 389th "Sky Scorpions," comprised a number of relatively inexperienced bomb crews in 1943.

Nonetheless, during their attack, one of their B-24s, called *Ole Kickapoo*, piloted by 2nd LT. Lloyd Hughes exemplified the courage of this group by continuing to hold its course and bomb its target, despite an ignited fuel leak and the chaos in the target area from previously dropped bombs.

Approaching his bombing target at the Steaua Romana refinery complex, German flak guns made two direct hits on *Ole Kickapoo*, blowing large holes in the left wing and one of the two 300-gallon aux gas tanks in the bomb bay. Gushers of raw gasoline began streaming from LT.

Hughes' left wing and fuselage, his top turret, his waist gun windows and bomb bay. Hughes would decide to



LT. Lloyd Hughes, 389BG. AAF photo.

climb, withdraw, and drop his bombs from a higher altitude because, ahead, they were about enter a "solid room of fire" above the already burning oil tanks and refineries in their flight path. But Hughes and his co-pilot, LT. Ron Helder, drove *Ole Kickapoo* straight into the wall of fire and emerged from the high flames with their left wing and fuselage streaming long sheets of flame. Still, severely on fire, Hughes and Helder, staying with their squadron at low level, continued to their target and released their bombs successfully, hitting the Steaua Romano refinery. Only, then, did Hughes attempt to slow his plane and make a crash landing in the Prahova River Valley. As *Ole Kickapoo* settled, the right wing hit the Prahova valley's riverbank. The plane cartwheeled and crashed into the ground in a ball of fire. Hughes, his copilot, and crew died in the crash, minus two gunners, who escaped from the burning crash, but survived with terrible burns.

2nd LT. Hughes received a posthumous Medal of Honor. LT. Helder and the remaining ten-member crew received the nation's second highest award, Distinguished Service Crosses. 🇺🇸



Animator Jeff Blyth produced an image resembling *Ole Kickapoo's* dire condition in his video *Day of Valor*.
Email: filmjeff@aol.com.

Post Scripts

Department of Defense identifies remains of WWII pilot and Medal of Honor recipient Addison Baker

Stars and Stripes, April 14, 2022

Last April the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA) announced that Baker's remains, unaccounted for all these decades, had been identified.

His B-24 burned after crashing into the town of Ploesti, and immediately after the end of the war in 1945, the remains of five crew members were recovered and identified, DPAA said. Unidentifiable remains — Baker among them — were buried as unknowns at U.S. military cemeteries in Europe. The entire crew of 10 perished in the crash, and Baker's body remained unrecovered.

In 2017, DPAA began exhuming and examining unknown remains associated with Operation TIDAL WAVE, and a set of remains that had been interred at Ardennes American Cemetery in Belgium was determined to be Baker using DNA matching from his nephew, DPAA said. His family stated final interment will be at Arlington National Cemetery.

Remains of T/SGT Alfred Turgeon Identified

Air Force Magazine, August 2021

The remains of USAAF Technical Sergeant Alfred Turgeon were identified January 2021 after the Army used DNA analysis from remains buried in Europe. On August 1, 1943, Turgeon served as a B-24 gunner and radio operator assigned to the 98th Bomb Group during Operation TIDAL WAVE at Ploesti, Romania. His unidentified remains were buried as "unknown" in the Hero Section of the Civilian and Military Cemetery Romania, then later moved to Belgium. Turgeon was received with honors at Evergreen Washelli Cemetery in Seattle. 🇺🇸

Terror in the Sky—Ploesti

By Lisa Niehoff from War Scars In My Heart

*I once was a boy, not many years ago
And fought for a cause in a war.
Among the brutal men-in-arms
I became the mouse that roared.*

*It was on August first, nineteen forty-three
Where dusty airfields surround Benghazi.
One hundred seventy-eight Libs took flight
To bombard nine refineries.*

*They were the Nazi's largest oil fuel source
An epicenter of natural petroleum.
Heavily defended of targets, they were
The Allies' planned, to destroy them.*

*Under the Ninth Air Force's supervision
The refineries would be ripped open.
To cut one-third of Hitler's oil supply
And to fail would be verboten.*

*With massive defensive reinforcements obtained
Axis powers prepared their war chest.
It was a pre-planned, calculated resistance act
Thirty-five miles north of Bucharest.*

*We were extensively trained, this form of attack
Final mock runs were deemed a success.
Some called the mission a mass suicide
I suffered greatly from homesickness.*

*Quarters were cramped, flight checks all complete
We maintained strict radio silence.
Bombloads were ready, on course, on time
Combining a bomber alliance.*

*I learned my plane, what made her tick
As she picked up speed we depart.
Landing gear raised, we're clear, air borne
Twelve-hundred long miles to start.*

*I was scared and plagued with severe diarrhea
A new meaning for the term 'bombs away.'
For my crew, they took great pains to ignore
My loose stools never stopped that day.*

*Through overcast skies, plane 'Hot Lips Fay'
Disappeared from our unit formation.
I heard she was skinned by Romanian shells
Her demise, a forgone conclusion.*

*We muscled our bomber very low to the ground
While avoiding machine-gun fire.*

*Though no cushion of miles were seen below
We evaded the funeral pyre.*

*We were dragged painfully through pits of hell
Still, I account for ten planes down.
While under fire, it was John's know-how
That kept 'Lucy Lu' off the ground.*

*I heard Ozzie Joe was knocked from his turret
A burst of flak pummeled 'Plain Jane'.
Though Oz was bloodied, unable to speak
He maintained control once again.*

*Turbulence caused from delayed action bombs
Rocked an aircraft that went topsy-turvy.
We saw Colonel Hal's burning torso emerge
Stripped his clothes and cried for a clergy.*

*One plane was hit at the target zone
While in the air at two hundred feet.
However, her crew, they all bailed out
But crash time for dear 'Sally Sweet'.*

*One plane took a dreadful finishing blow
Anti-aircraft guns blasted her nose.
Colonel Sal was blown out from his bomber
How he survived, the mystery grows.*

*Doug sought the target, dropped their payload
He said time went by all too slow.
But made it through this mission unscathed
He had twenty-four missions to go.*

*With combat damage, we hobbled back home
It was aviation combat history.
More airmen died than civilians that day
This failed mission 'twas no mystery.*

*My slab-sided, high-winged Liberator lady
Never flew another mission again.
As she, along with others that day
Were thrown in the spare parts bin.*

*In my mind I seek distant shores
I get on my knees and pray.
So ends my story of a prolonged campaign
Posthumously called Black Sunday.*

Authors note: All names of men and planes are a work of fiction. However, the stories are true experiences. With permission from Wingless Dreamer Publisher.

Editors note: Lisa's poem was picked up by two publishers: Wingless Dreamer Publishers (where she won a War Poems contest last May 2022) and Silent Revelations Press. 🐛

Award Medals Part V—The Medal of Honor

By Doug Dovey

This is the fifth and final report of our series on medals awarded to airmen during World War II. We began with the Air Medal, then covered the Distinguished Flying Cross, Legion of Merit, and Silver Star, Distinguished Service Medal and Cross. Now, the Medal of Honor.

The Medal of Honor is the United States government's highest and most prestigious military decoration that may be awarded to recognize American soldiers, sailors, marines, airmen, guardians, and coast guardsmen "for conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of life, above and beyond the call of duty, in action involving actual conflict with an opposing armed force." The medal is normally awarded by the president of the United States, but as it is presented "in the name of the United States Congress", it is often referred to (erroneously) as the "Congressional Medal of Honor".¹

According to the Medal of Honor Historical Society of the United States, there have been 3,530 Medals of Honor awarded to 3,511 individuals since the decoration's creation, with over 40% awarded for actions during the American Civil War. Roger Freeman in his book *The Mighty Eighth* stated 17 Medals of Honor were awarded to 8th Air Force personnel during the War. Five MOHs were awarded to airmen of the 2nd Air Division and five were also awarded on a single mission—the 1943 raid to Ploesti (three were awarded posthumously).

There are three distinct variants of the medal: one for the Department of the Army, awarded to soldiers; one for the Department of the Navy, awarded to sailors and marines, as well as coast guardsmen of the Department of Homeland Security and one for the Department of the Air Force, awarded to airmen and Space Force guardians. The Medal of Honor was introduced for the Department of the Navy in 1861, soon followed by the Department of the Army's version in 1862. The Department of the Air Force used the Department of the Army's version until they received their own distinctive version in 1965. The Medal of Honor is the oldest continuously issued combat decoration of the United States Armed Forces. The President typically presents



the Medal of Honor at a formal ceremony intended to represent the gratitude of the American people, with posthumous presentations made to the primary next of kin.

History

The MOH was first approved to recognize and honor distinguished naval service after the Army shunned the idea. During the first year of the Civil War (1861–1865), a proposal for a battlefield decoration for valor was submitted to Lieutenant General Winfield Scott, the Commanding General of the United States Army. Scott, however, was strictly against medals being awarded, which was the European tradition. After Scott retired in October

1861, Secretary of the Navy Gideon Welles forwarded the proposal which became a Senate resolution for a Navy medal of valor and signed into law by President Abraham Lincoln in December 1861. Shortly after this, a resolution similar in wording was introduced on behalf of the Army and signed into law in July 1862. On March 3, 1863, Congress made the Medal of Honor a permanent decoration.

In 1917, based on the report of the Medal of Honor Review Board, established by Congress in 1916, 911 recipients were stricken off the Army's Medal of Honor list because the medal had been awarded inappropriately. Among them were William Frederick "Buffalo Bill" Cody and Mary Edwards Walker. In 1977, Congress began reviewing numerous cases; it reinstated the medals for Cody and four other civilian scouts in 1989. Walker's medal was restored in 1977.

Each Service medal is constructed differently. Congress considered a bill in 2004 which would require the Medal of Honor to be made with 90% gold, the same composition as the lesser-known Congressional Gold Medal, but the measure was dropped. The Army medal awarded to our WWII airmen has an eagle clasping a bar with the word VALOR suspending a five-pointed

star depicting Minerva, the Roman goddess of wisdom, justice, law and victory. On each ray of the star is a green oak leaf.

Five MOHs were awarded to airmen of the 2nd Air Division in WWII. They were then Colonel Leon W. Johnson, 44th BG; LT. Colonel Leon R. Vance, 489th BG; and posthumously to LT. Colonel Addison E. Baker, 93rd BG; 2nd LT. Lloyd B Hughes, 389th BG; Major John L. Jerstad, 93rd BG (201stPCBW). Four MOHs were awarded to 2AD airmen for the Ploesti 1943 mission. [See *Ploesti—Merit and Medals* story on page 16 of this *Herald—Ed*]

¹ Wikipedia *Medal of Honor*.

Sources: Wikipedia and Roger Freeman *Mighty Eighth*. U.S. Army Center of Military History *The Medal of Honor* 🇺🇸



Current day Medals of Honor from three armed services: From left: Air Force, Army, Navy.

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

IN MEMORY OF... *Donors*

Martin Jarabek, Jr. (453rd)	Martin Jarabek
Bruce Jones and	
Brad Eaton (BG unknown)	William Long
Aud Risley (446th)	Steven Risley

—Folded Wings—

Charles B. Screws	5/3/20	361st FG
Ben E. Grimm	11/9/20	445th BG
Gerald Opitz	3/30/21	389th BG
Harry L. Ahlborn	12/13/21	93rd BG
Val D. Mann	3/13/22	389th BG
Joseph M. Cook	3/14/22	392nd BG
Frank P. Davidson	6/30/22	453rd BG
Joseph McCracken	7/14/22	453rd BG
George McLean	7/23/22	93rd 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

Nose Art—Ploesti Mission

By Lisa Niehoff

In light of this Herald's emphasis on the Ploesti mission, we temporarily shift from our usual storyline about rationale and motivations of aircraft artwork. Instead, we offer a more general view of the aircraft names in which our Medal of Honor awardees flew in the 1943 attack on Ploesti.

Suzy-Q, 44th Bomb Group. USAAF photo

Suzy-Q was commanded by group commander Colonel Leon Johnson with pilot 2nd LT. Robert I. Brown. Colonel Johnson received one of the four Medals of Honor awarded to 2nd Air Division airmen for the mission and the only one of them to survive the mission. He was later given command of the 14th Bomb Wing and promoted to brigadier general.

The nose art consists of the symbol of the 44th Bomb Group "Flying Eight Balls" with the *Suzy-Q* aircraft name. The group's logo is a flying bomb with 8 ball middle (the number 8 as its eyes), wings, and tail fin. We assume then commanding officer of the 44th Group, Colonel Robinson, picked the name in 1942 by referencing the task of the tight preparation time for deployment overseas. Given the many challenges of forming and training the Group in a short amount of time before deploying, Robinson said he could not understand how the Air Force could send the unit to combat with a group of "misfits, ninety-day wonders, and odd-balls." He had never seen such a bunch of *eight balls* in his entire career and the name stuck, or so the rumor goes. The aircraft *Suzy-Q* may be named after a popular dance-step of the 1930's and 1940's. It was the jitterbug style, a lively dance for couples usually accompanied by swing music. Susie Q [the dance name is spelled 'Susie'] had a lot of arm and hand motion. Sadly, *Suzy-Q* was shot down fifteen days after the Ploesti raid on a mission to an airfield at Foggia, Italy.



Hell's Wench, 93rd Bomb Group. Art image by Roy Grinnell (www.roygrinnellart.com).

We have not been able to uncover the rationale behind the name and although it's not a drawing, its bold letters certainly stand out. Hell did hit this *Wench* that day! Damaged by anti-aircraft artillery fire before their target "White Four", it led the 93rd Bomb Group in its daring low-level attack. LT. Colonel Addison E. Baker, an Ohio National Guardsman, 93rd commander, ignored the fact he was flying over terrain suitable for safe landing. He refused to break up the lead formation by landing and led his group to the target upon which he dropped his bombs. Then he left the formation, but his valiant attempts to gain enough altitude for the crew to escape by parachute failed and the aircraft crashed. Sadly, all perished. Both Baker and his pilot, Major John L. Jerstad, received the Medal of Honor, posthumously.



Credit: www.nationalguard.mil.

Ole Kickapoo, 389th Bomb Group.

There were two *Kickapoo* aircraft. We have a photo of *Kickapoo* which was lost after takeoff for the Ploesti raid and believe it referred to a soda coined by the "Li'l Abner" comic strip of the 1930-40s as "Kickapoo Joy Juice—a liquor of stupefying potency." The name was also picked by Lt. Lloyd Hughes' co-pilot and adopted for their aircraft as 'Ole' *Kickapoo* (no photos of 'Ole' *Kickapoo* could be located but we believe it followed the same quick-

ly painted narrowing letter style). This 'Ole' *Kickapoo* may have been motivated by the name of Native American tribes who are Algonquian-speaking Native American and Indigenous Mexican tribes, and originate in the region south of the Great Lakes where LT. Helder grew up. Today there are three Kickapoo tribes in the U.S.: Kansas, Oklahoma, and Texas. We conclude that this name alluded to Native American courage and determination.



Unfortunately, the *Kickapoo* pictured above crashed after takeoff on the Ploesti raid. We believe *Ole Kickapoo* piloted by LT. Hughes had a similar design. AAF photo.

LT. Hughes' *Ole Kickapoo* exemplified the courage of this group by continuing to hold its course and bomb its target, despite an ignited fuel leak and the disruption in the target area caused by previously dropped bombs. Second LT. Hughes held course until after his bomb run when his plane crashed and exploded in a cart-wheel motion within the target area.

LT. Hughes was awarded the Medal of Honor for his leadership, his skill, bravery, sacrifice, and determination to carry out his mission. LT. Helder and the remaining ten-member crew received the nation's second highest award, Distinguished Service Crosses. 🇺🇸

History Flashback—The Atlantic Charter

August 10, 1941



The President of the United States, Franklin D. Roosevelt and Prime Minister of the United Kingdom, Winston Churchill aboard HMS Prince of Wales off Newfoundland prior to signing the Atlantic Charter. Immediately behind them are Admiral E.J. King, USN and General George C. Marshall, US Army. The President's sons, Ensign Franklin Roosevelt Jr. USNR and Captain Elliot Roosevelt USAAF, along with General Henry Arnold, USAAF, Air Chief Marshal Sir Wilfred Freeman RAF, are conversing to the left. Photo: National Archives.

The agreement laid the basis for initial American support for the U.K's fight against Germany in the form of Operation BOLERO. Implementation was modified several times after the attack on Pearl Harbor four months later which resulted in a shifted emphasis to Operation TORCH, the assault of North Africa in November 1942. That allowed basing of aircraft in the region and the capability to launch Operation TIDAL WAVE attack on Ploesti. 🇺🇸

Heritage League Convention 93rd Bomb Group Reunion

October 7-11, 2022 Boston, Massachusetts

Our convention and annual members meeting are being conducted jointly with the 93rd Bomb Group's reunion. This is our first joint event, and we are pleased to have the opportunity to work together. The 93rd members bring many historical relics to showcase. We will station at the Four Points Hotel by Sheraton, Boston Newton.

Highlights of this event include a visit to the Collings Foundation Military Museum with a WWII Battle for the Airfield reenactment. An optional two-day extension, for an additional cost, is planned for those who would like to explore Freedom Trail Revolutionary War history sites in the Boston area. Participants can remain in the hotel and extend stay by two nights.



Registration deadline is September 15, 2022. Registration is available online at our website: www.heritageleague.org. Registration information and form was also mailed out to members in August. If possible, we prefer you use the online registration for this event. You'll notice the registration fee is higher than usual but please note that the \$450 includes meals, all transportation, and admissions for the core four-day event.



Charles Ballroom.

The Four Points Hotel is located less than 12 miles from the Boston Logan Airport. There is no shuttle service from the airport to the 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-sized beds or a single king-sized bed are available for \$183.19, including 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 93BG/Heritage League. **Our group code for the event is BGA.** Please reserve as soon as possible.

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

93rd Bomb Group/Heritage League 2022 Reunion

Four Points by Sheraton Boston Newton

Day 1 – Friday October 7

10:00 – 5:00 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 – 8:00 AM	Charles Ballroom - Breakfast
8:00 – 9:00 AM	Travel to American Heritage Museum, Hudson
9:00 – 11:00 AM	Museum and Displays
11:00 – 11:45 AM	Battle for the Airfield WWII Re-Enactment
12:00 – 1:00 PM	WWII Veterans Interviews
1:30 – 2:15 PM	Return to Hotel
5:30 – 6:00 PM	Travel to Filippo Ristorante, Boston
6:00 – 8:30 PM	Dinner
8:30 – 9:00 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 PM	Charles Ballroom – 93 rd Business Meeting
10:30 – 12:30 PM	University B&C - Heritage League 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
10:00 – 10:30 AM	Travel to Boston
10:30 – 3:30 PM	Tour Faneuil Hall/Boston National Historic Park (Lunch on your own) Freedom Trail, Charleston Navy Yard & USS Constitution
3:30 – 4:00 PM	Return to Hotel
6:30 – 8:00 PM	Charles Ballroom - Dinner
8:00 - 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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93rd Bomb Group/Heritage League 2022 Reunion Add-On Revolutionary War in Massachusetts

Tuesday – October 11

7:00 – 9:00 AM	Charles Ballroom
9:30 AM	Depart Hotel for Boston Tea Party Ships & Museum
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)



Wednesday – October 12

6:00 – 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	Travel to Restaurant
5:30 – 7:30 PM	Dinner at Cheers (on your own)
7:30 – 8:30 PM	Stroll Boston Commons
8:30 – 8:45 PM	Return to Hotel

Thursday – October 13

6:00 – 9:30 AM	Breakfast at Hotel
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These men would attend the Boston reunion if they could.
Photo: 458BG.com.

REGISTRATION FORM

One per guest

Please complete form and make payment for the total amount by September 15th. A single payment for multiple guests is encouraged.

Name: _____

Organization (Circle): 93rd Bomb Group Heritage League

Address: _____

(Street) (City) (State) (Zip)

Telephone: _____ Email: _____

Emergency Contact: _____

(Someone not traveling with you) (Name) (Phone Number)

When do you plan to arrive/depart? _____
 (Arrival Time/Date) (Departure Time/Date)

If traveling by plane: Airline and Flight#: _____**Age** (if a child) _____ - Contact JoAnne Sargent for Registration Fee – 303-915-7546 or joyridecp@msn.com**Relationship to the 93rd Bomb Group or Heritage League:**

Veteran's Name: _____ Rank: _____

Duty Position: _____ Bomb Group/Squadron/Section: _____ Relationship: _____

Meal choices: Circle one entrée per meal (Food descriptions follow):

Special Need _____
 Please identify any special dietary requirements

Saturday Box Lunch: (Includes Chips and Cookie)

1. Bacon Turkey 2. Steak and Arugula 3. Mediterranean Veggie 4. Tuna Salad

Sunday Memorial Dinner:

1. Chicken Breast 2. Salmon 3. Vegetarian – Penne Stir Fry

Calculate your registration fee: (Registration does not include your hotel room) = Total \$ _____**Basic registration fee: \$450.00** Multiply by Number of registrations _____

The registration fee includes dinner for 4 evenings, 2 lunches, Memorabilia room, Color Guard and Guest Speaker dinners, transportation, education sessions, and business meeting.

Optional Add-On: \$125.00 Multiply by Number of registrations _____

The optional add-on registration fee includes transportation, Boston Tea Party Museum, Paul Revere House

The registration form must be completed for **EACH ATTENDEE** and payment complete by **September 15**. The total fee is **\$450**. If you plan to attend with children, please contact JoAnne for details at 303-915-7546 or joyridecp@msn.com.

Pay online at: <https://heritageleague.org/2022-convention-registration-form>.

There will be a \$9.50 processing fee added to each registration. If you register and pay online, you do not need to mail a copy.

Or mail a completed registration form (for each attendee) and check, payable to **93rd Bomb Group** to: **JoAnne Sargent, 1458 Locust St, Denver, CO 80220-2833**.

REUNION REGISTRATION REFUND POLICY

We recognize that there will always be unforeseen events beyond your control, and we truly regret your personal inconvenience. No refund will be made after September 21st

News Briefs

Governors of the 2nd Air Division Memorial Trust meeting

The Trust Governors convened its meeting in the American Library on May 16, 2022, in advance of the library's reopening ceremony two days later. Chairman Richard Middleton chaired the meeting attended by ten Governors, American Library staff, guests from the Heritage League and local friends of the Trust. Governors were renominated for terms and a new Governor representing the U.S. Embassy was introduced.

Governor Beverly Baynes Tomb (466 BG), Heritage League representative, reports that topics presented included a report on trust finances, updates from the American Library, and a report on the state of our Heritage League accompanied by a contribution of \$7,500 Heritage League funds to the Trust. The Trust finance committee reported there were no funding concerns for staffing and library special expenses. Although the portfolio value has declined, the investment firm managing the portfolio expects a 5% return above inflation over the long term.

The Trust Librarian Report was delivered by Orla Kennelly who announced that most COVID restrictions are lifted, and the library is now able to welcome people with no restrictions on the number of attendees.

- A Writing Competition to be launched soon will be open with no age restriction.
- The recruitment process for next year's Walker Scholarship has begun.
- A recent grant award from the Daughters of the American Revolution has allowed staff to enlarge the e-collection.
- The 3rd phase of the Digital Archive project is underway—96% of the archive has been digitized and the next step is to enable the public to search these materials online by name, place, etc. The Norfolk Record Office has been exploring possible methods.
- All Library events are currently advertised via Eventbrite, accessible as a link here. <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/o/2nd-air-division-memorial-library-11347222408>.

The next Annual Governors meeting is planned for November 14, 2022 the Monday after Remembrance Sunday. The special 2nd Air Division Remembrance Service at St Paul's Cathedral in London will be November 17th.

Daughters of the American Revolution contribute to several 2nd Air Division projects

The London based Walter Hines Page DAR chapter made contribution to several projects related to 2nd Air Division for 2022. Sometimes a small but specifically focused donation can make the difference to keep projects going. For 2022, donations ranged from \$500 to \$3,000 for the three projects below:

Digitization Project to the
[Heritage League of the Second Air Division](#)

Display case for veteran's uniform to the museum of
[93rd Bombardment Group, Station 104](#)

American Library Digital Books to the 2nd Air Division Memorial Trust

Heritage League finalizing plans for England trip

Our Norwich-based 2023 annual convention, membership meeting and tours of airbases are scheduled for July 23-28, 2023. With the summer timeframe, we hope to attract more 3rd and 4th generations (our kids and grandkids) to attend. Five days are planned for the Norwich area which will include an opening reception, airbase visits, annual members meeting, and banquet. Lodging will be at the Maid's Head Hotel, Norwich, and our banquet will be at Dunston Hall. The visit concludes with a trip to London and special ceremony for the 2nd Air Division at the American Chapel in St Paul's Cathedral.

A four-day add-on trip to D-Day Normandy will depart London via special bus transit on the ferry direct to Normandy. Visits are planned to each cemetery, landing beaches, and villages associated with D-Day. The convention committee has arranged a dedicated guide to accompany us for the entire special event.

Details are still being finalized and registration forms will be mailed to members in the Fall. A \$100 deposit will be required before the final registration deadline later in the winter. Mark your calendars—more info will be mailed out to members and also included in the next *Herald*.

8th Air Force Historical Society Reunion, Washington D.C.

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 are 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. Therefore, Heritage League will not be formally represented at this event. ✈️



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. To date, the League has received \$861. Thanks for the support and KEEP SHOPPING!



Videos We Like

by Lisa Niehoff

Videos can be a reliable tool to use when reliving the past. There are many quality videos around and we try with every issue to provide you with well-produced, in-depth videos we feel you may be interested in. If there is something that you would like to see, please let us know.

Day of Valor/Ploesti Short Animation

2:18 minutes/Color. Wow, watch this! Grab your seat, almost like being there! This colorized short, vivid animation of the Ploesti operation. It is not a game. Although there is no narration, captions provide the basic story at the beginning. It's a gripping 'feel' and excellent use of imagination of this historical mission. This short film presents only a small fraction of planes involved and it's not the only raid on Ploesti. <https://youtu.be/GBXNOcVCRZE>.



The Pilot of *Sandman* Speaking About the Ploesti Raid

58:30 minutes/Color filmed in 2010. Pilot Robert Sternfels talks about his experience flying the Ploesti raid. Hear his unabashed opinion about mission leader, COL. Compton's wrong turn that compromised the entire mission. Also, as the pilot of the aircraft in the iconic picture of the attack, he sets the record straight on the differences between the official Army picture and the way it really was (at 54:30 minutes into the video). www.youtube.com/watch?v=a6tkTqUmi9I.

The Bombing of Romanian Oil Fields in WWII

26:31 minutes/Black and White. This is a newsreel footage of the 1943 Ploesti attack. The overall theme to this video is... "Don't underestimate the enemy, for they may very well surprise you." https://youtu.be/0f47_6ciR_g.

B-24 Nose Art—Eighth Air Force

4:48 minutes/Color. This short video displays the best color stills of those warbirds of which artists, some professional and others not so much, displayed many greatest generation crew's yearnings of home. <https://youtu.be/DE-FVKN73n5o>.

American Library Reopening Ceremony

Over 2 hours. YouTube. The formal May 18, 2022 rededication ceremony at the Norwich main library forum begins with music and photos for the first 38 minutes. Then the ceremony begins at 38:38. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9to0lt_dyws. 🙏

Share Your *Herald*

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

Heritage League Flower Program— Back in Action!

By Beverly Baynes Tomb

The Heritage League was delighted to resume our program honoring our 2nd Air Division veterans for Memorial Day 2022, after two years when COVID made that impossible. Many thanks to all who donated to the Flower Fund, we again placed wreaths at the 13 overseas cemeteries managed by American Battle Monuments Commission (ABMC) where 2nd Air Division airmen are interred or on walls of the missing.

Those 13 cemeteries are: Ardennes, North Africa, Luxembourg, Henri-Chapelle, Sicily-Rome, Rhone, Normandy, Epinal, Lorraine, Netherlands, Brittany, Cambridge, Florence.

We are also very grateful for the special support of our "forward located" friends who make the effort to personally place our honorary wreaths and flowers:

Colin Mann at the Cambridge American Cemetery (Madingley, England) assisted this year by George Rubin.

Luc Dewez at Ardennes American Cemetery (Neupré, Belgium)

Arie-Jan van Hees at Netherlands American Cemetery (Margraten, Netherlands)

We were happy to get photos of our flowers at the Normandy American Cemetery from a Heritage League Facebook follower who happened to be visiting and at the Rhone American Cemetery from interpretive guide, Elise Van Riet.

Other overseas friends placed wreaths funded by or for individual bomb groups. Our thanks to:

David Crow—at Cambridge (355th FG)

Leda Hayton—North Pickenham (491st and 492nd BGs)

Trevor Hewitt—at Cambridge (458th, 466th and 467th BGs)

Paul Hindle—Attlebridge (466th BG)



Laying the wreaths at Cambridge American Cemetery, U.K. on behalf of the Heritage League is George Rubin son of S/Sgt Martin Rubin Nose gunner 93rd BG and, on behalf of the 93rd BG, Mary McGuire daughter of Captain Edward McGuire, 93rd BG Pilot. Also special thanks to Colin Mann for making this happen. Three 2nd AD airmen are listed on the wall of missing behind them: S/SGT Albert H Oser, 93rdBG and S/SGT James J Osterheldt, 392BG, SGT Harold Owens, 446BG. A total of 1442 2nd AD airmen are there (537 buried, 905 wall of missing). Photo: Colin Mann.



From Ardennes cemetery, Belgium. Our friend Luc Dewez salutes the grave of William Sheely (father of Heritage League past president Billy Sheely). 694 2nd AD airmen are there (635 buried, 59 wall of missing). Photo: via Luc Dewez.



Our thanks to Arie-Jan van Hees for placement of the large flower arrangement from the Heritage League at Margraten Cemetery wall of missing, Netherlands. Four 2nd Air Division airmen are listed on the wall by the flowers: Peter M Cunneff 453rd BG, Thomas R Curry 93rd BG, Wallace W D'Aoust 392nd BG, and Ivan L Cushenberry, 466BG. In all--598 2nd AD airmen are there (330 buried, 268 wall of missing). Photo: via Arie-Jan van Hees.



Our Heritage League wreath at the wall of missing North Africa Cemetery, in Tunisia. 2nd Air Division flyers were involved in crashes during transit to England from the southern route. A total of 92 2nd AD airmen are there (34 buried, 58 wall of missing). Photo: ABMC.



Heritage League wreath at Rhone Cemetery wall of missing, France. Thanks to Rhone interpretive guide Elise Van Riet for her photo. Twelve 2nd AD airmen are there (7 buried, 5 wall of missing). Photo: Elise Van Riet.



A visiting traveler, Kathy Dow, happened to come across our wreath at the American Cemetery, Normandy, and knew about our Facebook page to post this picture. 114 2AD airmen are there (100 buried, 14 wall of missing). Our thanks to her for posting her photo. Photo: Kathy Dow.



Flags of the Fallen at the National Museum of the Mighty 8th Air Force, Savannah, Georgia. The second annual event posted 26,000 flags in their memorial garden recognizing 8th AF airmen who made the ultimate sacrifice in World War II. Photo: Mighty 8th Museum.

Summer/Fall 2022 Heritage Calendar

and Historic Events

July

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

August

National Museum of US Air Force, Dayton OH. Visit inside the: <https://www.national-museum.af.mil/Visit/Museum-Exhibits/Fact-Sheets/Display/Article/196286/consolidated-b-24d-liberator/> B-24D *Strawberry Bitch*.

August 13.

1943-Operation TIDAL WAVE, first raid on Ploesti oil refineries is conducted by B-24s 79 years ago, August 1.

September

467nd BG Association annual convention. Salt Lake City, Utah, September 21-25. Highlight of the reunion will be dedication of an unusual memorial to 'hidden heroes.' (see below). Info at: www.467bg.com.

B-24 Dedication at Wendover, Utah. Friday September 23. A ceremony recognizing USAAF aircrew lost in stateside training accidents (over 15,500) before deploying to the war as a special event during the 467th BG Association reunion. Ceremony will dedicate a newly built 1:20 sized model of the Liberator plus tour the restored Wendover training airfield. Info at: www.467bg.com.

US Air Force's Convention- 75th birthday, September 17-21, Air Force Association Convention, Gaylord Resort and Convention Center, National Harbor, MD. (Washington, DC.). Info at: www.afa.org.

National Museum of US Air Force. Plane Talks, Dayton OH. – 75th Anniversary of the Air Force and National POW/MIA Recognition Day. Friday, September 17. www.national-museum.af.mil.

1944-Operation MARKET GARDEN begins with Allied airborne forces landing in the Netherlands, September 17.

October

Heritage League convention with 93rd BG Association reunion. Boston, MA. October 6-10. Annual members meeting, educational sessions, visit to Collings Museum and WWII airfield reenactment. Two additional days are available for Freedom Trail historical revolutionary war Boston tours. www.heritageleague.org.

American Library presentations: "American Airmen at War—in their own words". Web-cast. Testimonies and memoirs from 2nd Air Division Archives giving us a glimpse of WWII Europe. October 8. Also October 19, "Archive how to." **A practical guide to the 2nd Air Division digital archive.** Explore the collections and get top research tips from trust Librarian Orla Kennelly. www.Americanlibrary.uk or www.eventbrite.co.uk/o/2nd-air-division-memorial-library-11347222408#search.

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

November

Norwich England Veterans Day events—Remembrance Sunday November 14. (the Sunday over there nearest our November 11 Veterans Day). American Library, events TBA.

Annual Meeting of 2nd Air Division Memorial Trust Governors. Norwich U.K. November 14.

Special 2nd Air Division Remembrance at London's St Paul's Cathedral. November 17.

July 2023

Heritage League convention/annual members meeting and airbase visits. Norwich, July 23-28, 2023. Visit will conclude in London for a Special 2nd Air Division remembrance at St Paul's Cathedral. An optional add-on trip from London to Normandy sites will follow. www.heritageleague.org.

General 2022 activities

93 BG Hardwick Museum opens for the season on the 3rd Sunday of each month, ending October 16. Info at: www.93rd-bg-museum.org.

448 BG Seething Airfield Control Tower Museum. Home of the Seething Airfield Control Tower Museum opens for select Sunday visits. Info at: www.448bombgroup.co.uk.

453rd Bombardment Group Museum & 8th AF Heritage Gallery, Old Buckenham. 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.

American Library. Monthly webcoffee. The Norwich U.K. Library hosts a regular web-based activity "Coffee Afternoon" the second Saturday of every month on Zoom at 11 AM

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 covering 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: www.mightyeighth.org.

2022 notable occasions

80th anniversary of American forces arrival for European campaign

75th anniversary of United States Air Force

25th anniversary of American Air Museum, Duxford U.K. August 1.

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/>

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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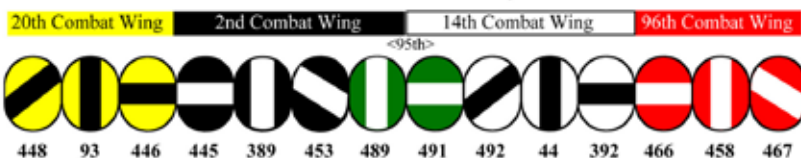
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